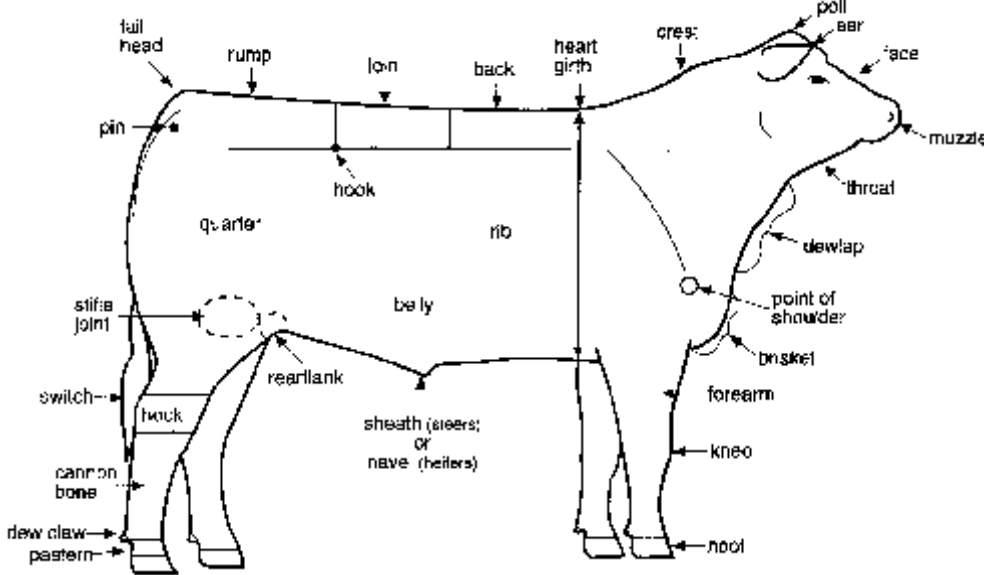# Beef Handbook
Beef Basics

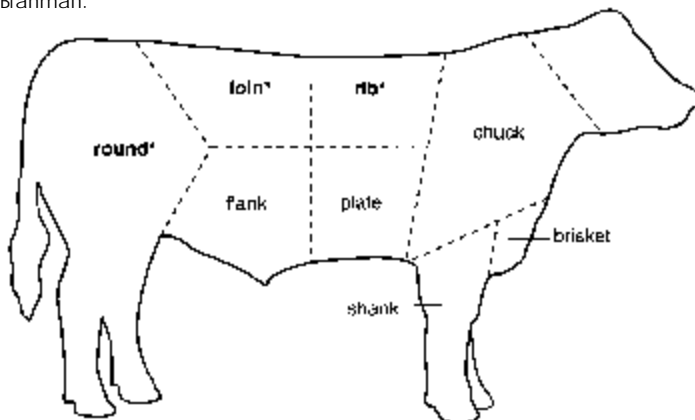

Background Basics

A breed is defined as a group of animals with a common origin which are distinguished by characteristics within a specie. Breed character is defined as the characteristics that allow the breed of the individual animal to be easily determined. There is a vast array of cattle breeds that are officially recognized in the United States. They are broken into the three distinct groups of British, Continental and American breeds. There are a great many breeds that we will not discuss in this section.

American breeds are known for adapting well to tropical environments, resistance to parasite populations, poor marbling ability, nervous temperament and good milk production. Breeds in this category are often a combination of two or more breeds. Crossbreeding is done in an effort to combine the favorable traits of each breed in their offspring. Hybrid vigor is the ability of the crossbred offspring to excel over the parents. The **American Brahman** is distinguished by their large hump and drooping ears and are usually grey to red in color. The **Santa Gertrudis** breed are usually deep red in color and are 5/8 Shorthorn and 3/8 Brahman. **Beefmaster** can be any color and are composed of 1/2 Brahman, 1/4 Hereford and 1/4 Shorthorn. **Braford** cattle are usually brindle and are 5/8 Hereford and 3/8 Brahman. The **Brangus** breed are black and 5/8 Angus and 3/8 Brahman.

British breeds are known for their high reproductive rate, high marbling score (amount of fat within the muscle tissue), average mature size and early sexual maturity. **Shorthorn** is the oldest breed of beef cattle and their color pattern can be red, white or roan. The **Hereford and Polled Hereford** breed is distinguished by a red body with white face, underline and switch **Angus** cattle are black and polled and **Red Angus** cattle are similar except they are red in color.

Continental breeds generally possess a large mature size, rapid growth rate, heavy muscling, low reproductive rate and low marbling ability. The **Simmental** breed are usually red and white and are known for their high milk production. **Limousin** cattle are red to tan in color with lighter circles around the eye and muzzle area. **Charolais** cattle are cream to light colored. The **Chianina** breed are white with black pigmented skin (nose and around eyes) and are known as the world's largest breed of cattle.

High Priced Cuts*		Low Priced Cuts	
T	Loin	T	Brisket
T	Rib	T	Chuck
T	Round	T	Flank
		T	Plate
		T	Shank

*The loin, rib and round together account for about 50% of carcass weight and about 70% of carcass value.