

Household Buyers Choose Beef

interviewees in Berkeley survey give reasons for selection between U. S. Good and U. S. Choice sirloin steak and rib roast

Jessie V. Coles

The leaner cuts of beef were preferred by the 1,125 buyers of the family meat supply who were interviewed in a study conducted in 15 large food stores in Berkeley. The preference for the leaner meat was indicated by what the buyers said they looked for in determining quality of beef, in the selections they made between steaks and roasts graded U. S. Choice and U. S. Good and in their reasons for their selections.

The shoppers—75 in each store—were interviewed in seven chain stores and eight large independent stores, including one consumers' cooperative store. The stores were located in shopping districts representative of the different income and nationality areas of the city.

About 38% of the buyers purchased beef twice a week, 33% bought it once a week, and 16% daily. At varying intervals 7% of those interviewed bought beef for storage in freezers.

A considerable portion of the buyers—37%—were not able to say how they decided upon the particular piece of beef they bought. Over one-third said they bought it according to the preference of the family and 17% bought according to price. About 10% mentioned quality and another 10% mentioned freshness.

Over two thirds of the buyers depended upon their own ability to judge quality of beef by looking at it. Others relied to some extent on the store or upon a particular butcher but also looked at it. Altogether more than four-fifths of the buyers determined the quality of the beef either entirely or in part by its appearance. Only 10% depended entirely upon a particular store.

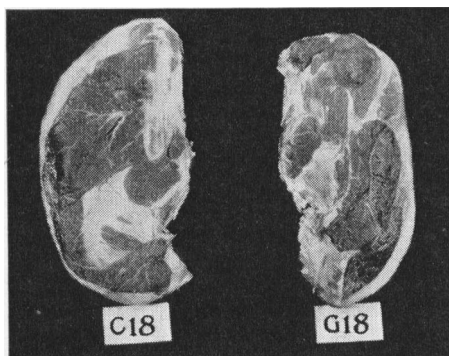
A large proportion of the buyers mentioned the amount of fat in a particular cut as one of the factors they looked for in determining quality; 52% spoke of the amount of fat; 15% said they considered the color of the fat. Of the one-third who observed the color of the meat, 12% said they looked for a small amount of bone, and 16% said they looked for the grade.

Of the buyers who mentioned the amount of fat only 3% said they wanted plenty of fat. On the other hand, 85% mentioned leanness of the meat—46% said they looked for lean beef and 39% for marbled lean. Only 12% said they

wanted a medium amount of fat. Thus 45% of all the buyers interviewed wanted lean or marbled lean beef, only 7% wanted a medium amount of fat and only 2% wanted plenty of fat.

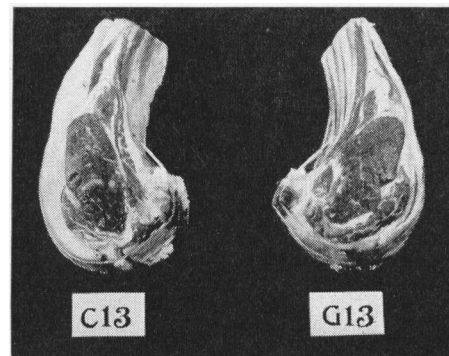
White fat was preferred by 14% of the buyers and only 1% said they wanted yellow fat.

About half of those who considered the color of beef said they wanted bright



Above—Sirloin steaks, U. S. Choice grade—C18—and U. S. Good grade—G18—showing distribution of fats.

Below—Rib roasts, U. S. Choice grade—C13—and U. S. Good grade—G13—showing comparison of fat.



red beef, less than a third specified medium red, and few wished dark red beef.

To test the buyers' preferences for beef with differing amounts of fat, two sirloin steaks, one graded U. S. Choice and one graded U. S. Good, and two rib roasts similarly graded but labeled only by number were displayed to the buyers interviewed. After they indicated what they looked for in determining quality, they were asked which one of the steaks and which one of the roasts they would choose if they were buying.

The majority of the buyers chose the U. S. Good grade of both steaks and roasts. The U. S. Good roast was chosen by 59% and 54% selected the U. S. Good steak. Slightly over one-third chose the U. S. Choice grade—36% chose this roast and 38% this steak.

No preference for either roast was expressed by 5% of the buyers and 8% had none for either steak. Thus 59% to 62% of those who had a preference chose the U. S. Good grade and 38% to 41% selected the U. S. Choice.

Although about one-sixth of the buyers said they determined the particular piece of meat they bought on the basis of its price, only 2% asked about any difference in price before they made a choice. Practically all of these persons said they would buy the U. S. Good in both steaks and roasts if the prices were the same.

When the buyers were asked if they would pay more for the particular cut selected from the two displayed, 55% to 57% were unable to decide. About 40% of them said they would not pay more for the chosen cut. Only 3% said they would pay more for the chosen steak and 6% for the chosen roast. About half of those who would pay more were willing to pay from 5¢ to 10¢ more per pound while a fourth would pay less than 5¢ more per pound for either the chosen roast or steak.

When the buyers were asked why they chose a specific cut, 59% of those choosing the U. S. Good steak and 72% of those choosing the U. S. Good roast said they did so because it had less fat than the other piece.

The fat embedded in the meat seemed to be as important or more important than that on the edge. Of the buyers who chose the U. S. Good steak, 52% did so because it had less fat all over and 7% chose it because it had less fat on the edge. The U. S. Good roast was selected by 61% of the buyers because it had less fat through the meat and by 11% because there was less fat on the edge. The color of the U. S. Good grade appealed to 10% of the buyers more than did the color of the U. S. Choice.

Only 25% of those who selected the U. S. Choice steak and 39% of those who selected the U. S. Choice roast selected

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DEER

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property under written permit. Actually, state law requires a written permit to hunt on cultivated, fenced, or posted land. Under the range permit plan the hunter assumes responsibility for his actions while on the property. Many landowners have found it desirable to place a charge on this access privilege. Game animals are public property administered by the State Department of Fish and Game, and a landowner can make a charge for taking game animals only if he possesses a commercial hunting club license, but he can—without such a license—charge for access privileges or other facilities provided.

For sportsmen who object to paying for hunting privileges there are the national forests and public domain lands which include over 30 million acres of some of the best deer range in the state. However, fees charged for good hunting on private land will usually be less expensive than the cost of traveling greater distances in search of deer on public lands.

The primary areas of California where deer management on private lands would be applicable are the coast ranges from Humboldt County south through San Diego County and along the lower foothills of the Sierra Nevada bordering the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. Many areas, particularly in parts of the inner coast ranges, support deer population densities of 20 to 50 per square mile and some areas are in excess of 100 head per square mile. Some ranchers in those areas have been leasing their lands for deer hunting, but only a few operate under a management plan or practice regular habitat improvement although range improvement for deer is usually of equal benefit to livestock.

The commonest arrangement of distributing hunting rights is for the landowner to lease his property to a self-formed group of hunters on a seasonal basis. Usually, in the better deer areas, the lease is for a flat fee of from \$25 to \$100 per hunter per season or from 10¢ to 50¢ per acre. Often the hunters take out public liability and property damage insurance and the landowner should take out such insurance protection. Lessees frequently agree to post the property and patrol it against trespass hunting. Under this system the rancher has a minimum of administration and the hunters have truly exclusive hunting. The chief disadvantage—from the landowner's point of view—is that there are seldom enough hunters involved to adequately harvest the available deer crop.

Another plan is followed by a few landowners who take in hunters on a daily or week-end basis at charges that

generally average between \$5 and \$10 per day. Under this system, more hunters per unit area are admitted and the owner is able to obtain considerably higher gross returns, but necessarily there is more administration involved.

A third variation of the plan is found in a few instances where ranchers lease their property to concessionaires or middlemen who in turn retail the hunting rights. This system relieves the rancher of all administrative details. Leases may be on a flat fee basis or on a percentage of the gross or net revenue.

A considerable number of properties are owned by individuals or groups primarily for hunting. Livestock and other ranching operations—if any—are of secondary importance.

The behavior of hunters using private lands under permit has been good. Common abuses associated with trespass hunting virtually disappear when permit-carrying hunters realize they must bear responsibility for their actions.

For the past two seasons a system of daily permit hunting has been in effect at the Hopland Field Station—in Mendocino County—as a cooperative venture with the Department of Fish and Game whose personnel posted the 5,000 acres of rangeland on the Station, distributed hunting permits, and checked hunters in and out.

This system has been used with considerable success on pheasant and a few quail areas during the past several years, but the trial at Hopland was the first attempt on deer. Nearly 300 deer hunters were accommodated in 1954 and slightly over 400 in 1955. There was no undue disturbance of property or livestock even though hunters with dogs were permitted to use pastures where sheep were grazing.

California hunters have been slow to accept the fundamental principle of deer management advocated by wildlife technicians which holds that deer populations should be controlled through hunting both sexes. It is only through such control of numbers that stocking rates can be kept within range carrying capacities and in balance with other land uses. Moreover, where surplus deer are removed by hunting, the remainder, because of lessened competition for forage, are in better health, grow larger, and are more productive. Either-sex hunting should be incorporated in management plans for private lands. Unfortunately either-sex hunting in California, because of public resistance, has been thus far confined to closely controlled special hunts on a few limited areas. However, the Fish and Game Commission has the authority to permit the take of both sexes of deer wherever desirable and has been attempting to do so as rapidly as public acceptance permits.

The graph on page 4 indicates the potential deer harvest in California if deer were taken at the same rate as in other nearby western states. Many of those states are harvesting nearly 30% of their herds annually in an attempt to remove as many deer as are being produced.

A program of deer management for private land—tailored to local conditions—should do much toward making the full potential of deer production available and reduce the possibility of deer starvation in severe winters. Sportsmen would have a larger crop to harvest and landowners would receive a much fairer return for the deer they support.

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The above progress report is based in part on Research Project No. 1555.

BEEF

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the grade because it had more fat than the other piece. Two-thirds of those who mentioned fat said they selected the steak or roast because it was better marbled with fat. The color of the U. S. Choice grade was preferred by 12% of the shoppers. Better texture, less bone, and miscellaneous reasons accounted for the remainder of the reasons given for selecting the U. S. Choice grade.

Because there was considerable fat on both grades of the steaks and roasts, the buyers were asked what they did with the fat when they bought such cuts of beef. Only 9% said they ate all the fat and one-fourth said they ate some of it. Of those interviewed 41% said that they trimmed away the fat on steaks before cooking, and 36% said they did the same on roasts. About 36% trimmed the steaks and 41% trimmed the roasts after cooking and about 15% trimmed the meat both before and after cooking.

About three-fourths of the buyers who said they did not eat all the fat added that they did not use it at all. About three-fourths of those who used the fat which was not eaten—about one-sixth of all the buyers—used some of it in food preparation, for flavoring, for shortening, and the like. The other fourth—about 6% of the total buyers—used some of it for feeding birds and pets. A few persons even said they used it for making soap.

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