

MARBLING SCORES VS EITHER EXTRACT

By John Brethour

Marbling Scores

The values are numerical codes that represent the estimates of carcass marbling if the animal had been slaughtered immediately after evaluation.

- <3.9 = Traces = USDA Standard
- 4.0-4.9 = Slight = USDA Select
- 5.0-5.9 = Small = USDA Low Choice
- 6.0-6.9 = Modest = USDA Average Choice
- 7.0-7.9 = Moderate = USDA High Choice
- 8.0-8.9 = Slightly Abundant = USDA Low Prime

Bulls and Marbling Scores

Bulls will register a full degree less marbling and 30% less backfat than steers of the same age and feeding history. Also, when comparing scores among different herds, feeding intensity and age will affect the marbling score readings.

Marbling scores on bulls have ranged from below 3.0 to above 8.0. The average has been about 3.9. That leaves the impression that bulls above 5.0 are exceptional. Those with scores above 4.5 are excellent. The range of 4.0 to 4.5 constitutes satisfactory scores and below 3.6 is poor for the marbling trait.

Ultrasound marbling scores are best used to rank animals into high, medium and low marbling groups, rather than to compare individuals that differ by only a few tenths of a score.

Marbling	Either Extract	Marbling	Either Extract
2.60	2.12	3.90	3.20
2.70	2.19	4.00	3.30
2.80	2.26	4.10	3.40
2.90	2.33	4.20	3.50
3.00	2.41	4.30	3.61
3.10	2.49	4.40	3.72
3.20	2.57	4.50	3.83
3.30	2.65	4.60	3.94
3.40	2.73	4.70	4.06
3.50	2.82	4.80	4.18
3.60	2.91	4.90	4.30
3.70	3.00	5.00	4.43
3.80	3.10	5.10	4.55

Marbling

5.20
5.30
5.40
5.50
5.60
5.70
5.80
5.90
6.00
6.10
6.20
6.30
6.40
6.50
6.60
6.70
6.80
6.90
7.00
7.10
7.20
7.30
7.40
7.50
7.60
7.70
7.80
7.90
8.00

Either Extract

4.68
4.81
4.94
5.08
5.22
5.36
5.50
5.65
5.80
5.95
6.10
6.25
6.41
6.57
6.73
6.90
7.07
7.24
7.41
7.58
7.76
7.94
8.12
8.31
8.49
8.68
8.87
9.07
9.26