



The **FACTS**

What's left in the **USDA Choice** box?

USDA Choice

Before branded programs have sorted product

Top Choice - 36%
Modest or Higher Marbling

Choice - 64%
Small Marbling



After branded programs have sorted product

11% - Top Choice
Modest or Higher Marbling

89% - Choice
Small Marbling

The Bottom Line

If you are buying commodity USDA Choice beef today, the reality of what is in the box after product is pulled for branded programs may surprise you.

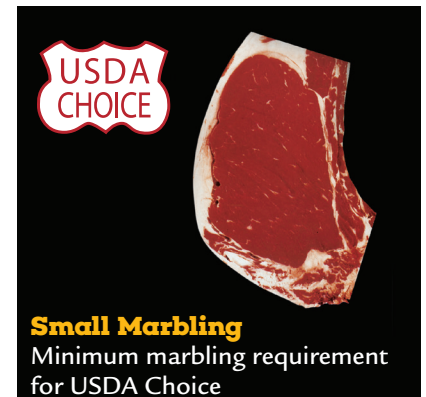
“**Top Choice**” beef (Modest or higher marbling) in the commodity Choice box shifts from 36% to 11% once branded beef programs sort out product. Basically, the amount of “top Choice” left in the Choice box is cut by more than half.

Beef grading USDA Choice is variable in eating quality because of its broad range of marbling levels. After branded beef programs sort out Choice beef with the most marbling, what's left in the Choice box is mostly (89%) Small marbling.

Further erosion of quality in the Choice box occurs when additional branded programs pull a portion of beef with Small 50 or higher marbling (the top portion of Small Marbling within the Choice grade).

Don't be fooled by the quality represented in the USDA Choice box. The reality is this beef has been sorted more than once, and the possibility of a superior eating experience is greatly reduced.

*Data Sources: 2011 National Beef Quality Audit
USDA – USDA Quality Grades as a percentage of federally graded beef Agricultural Marketing Service*



Photos courtesy of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ©NCBA

GRADES DO COUNT!

Reduce your risk of offering even a slightly tough steak:

<i>Certified Angus Beef</i> ® brand	1 in 50
USDA Choice	1 in 13
USDA Select	1 in 6

Our exacting standards reduce the odds of a tough steak by nearly 300% over USDA Choice.

Source: Oklahoma State University, 2004 Journal of Animal Science