



# Market Beef Cuts and Percentages

by David Outerbridge, Lindsey Crum, Dr. Chad Carr, and Arielle Pierce. Graphic Design Leah Welch

**Purchasing a live animal from a local beef producer or from the county fair livestock for processing can be a daunting process.** Some are surprised by the amount of meat and others are confused by the terminology and differentiation between live weight and carcass weight.

The information provided in this publication will help clarify some of this and help you understand the distinct types of cuts and percentages of a market animal. If you have more questions, please reach out to your local UF/IFAS Extension office for more educational resources.

## Terminology to understand when purchasing a market animal

**Dressing percentage** - hide, blood, horns, head, and organs removed (bone intact.) Dressing percentage of an animal will change depending on many varied factors such as horns, gut fill, hide, beef vs dairy, vow vs young steer or heifer, type of feed (grass finished, restricted, corn, over finished) and time/frequency/amount of feed etc.

**Hanging Weight, rail weight or hot carcass weight** - Weight of animal with hide, blood, horns, head, and organs removed (bone intact) without being refrigerated.

**Cold carcass weight** - This is the weight of the carcass after refrigeration

**Carcass fat** - Amount of fat on a carcass. This can affect the quality and percentage of the retail product produced.

**Carcass Muscling** - Amount of muscle on the carcass. Good carcass muscularity can increase the yield from a market animal. Anything that stays on the carcass adds to the dressed percentage. As weight, muscling, and fat increases so does dressed percentage, as dress of items increase dressed percentage decreases.

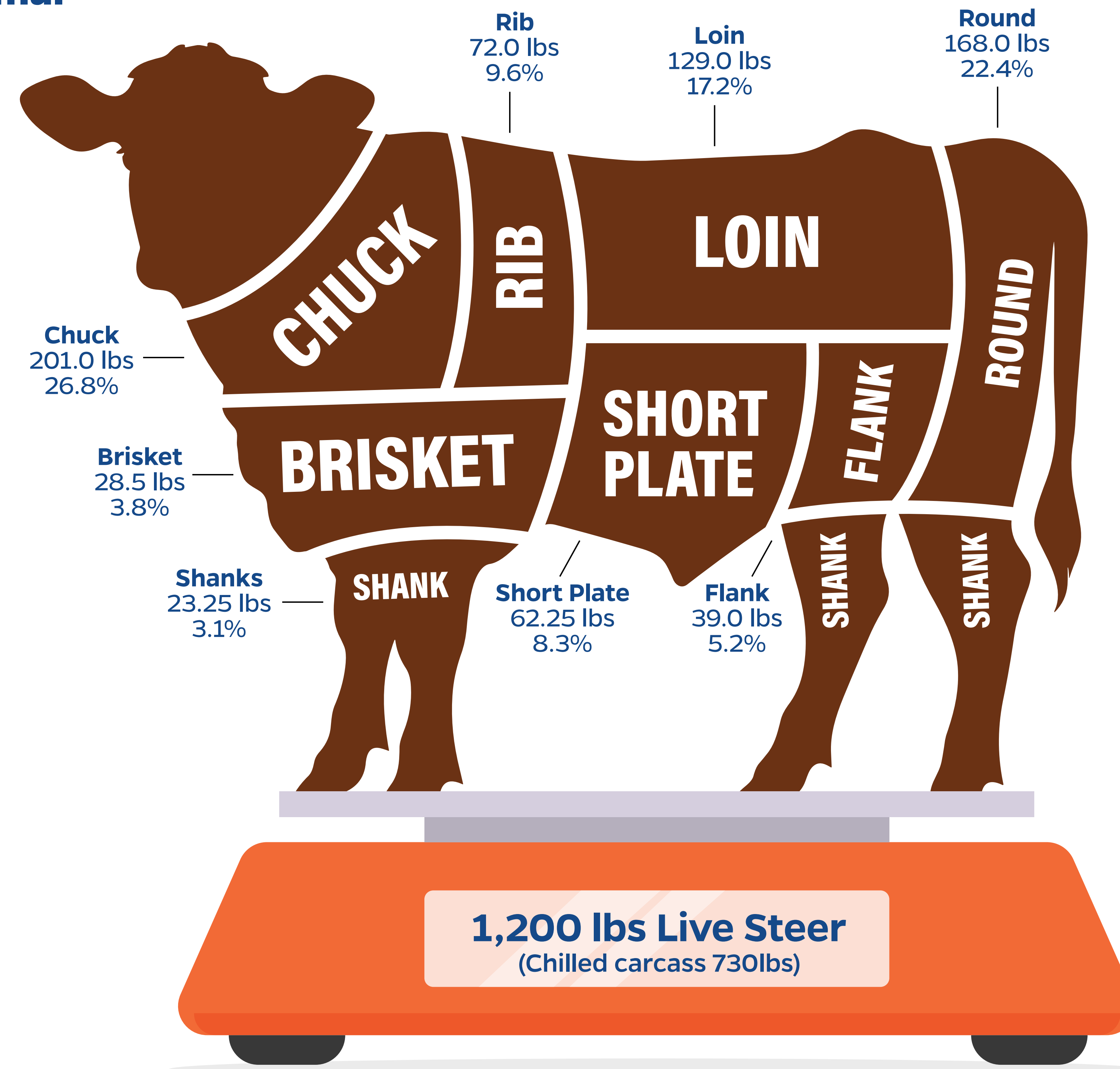
**Cutting Style** - This is the patterning and way the meat processor divides the animal. The quantity of bone vs boneless cuts, the amount of fat left on the cuts and the amount of fat in ground beef will differ depending on who is processing the meat.

## How to determine dressed percentage

**Dressed weight = hot carcass weight/live weight \* 100.** For example:

Live weight = 1,200 pounds, hot carcass weight = 750 pounds (750/1,200)100 = 62.50%

	Weight	% of live weight	% of hot carcass	% of chilled carcass
Live animal	1,200	100%		
Hot Carcass	750	62%	100%	
Chilled Carcass	730	60.8%	97%	100%
Trimmed and Boneless Cuts	500	41.7%	66%	68%



\*Citation: University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, et al. "HOW MUCH MEAT TO EXPECT FROM a BEEF CARCASS." University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, pp. 2-6. [rutherford.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/200/2022/05/PB1822-How-Much-Meat-to-Expect-from-a-Beef-Carcass.pdf](http://rutherford.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/200/2022/05/PB1822-How-Much-Meat-to-Expect-from-a-Beef-Carcass.pdf)