

# Beef by the Numbers

by William Lipsey

The following are actual numbers for a finishing program with 4 purebred Highland steers.

On September 29 the steers were weighed and transported from the pasture where they had spent the summer to my farm for finishing. All four steers were April and May calves born in 2008 so they were 27-28 months at the time.

Tag # 4V - 1095 lbs.

Tag # 10V - 1043 lbs.

Tag # 13V - 982 lbs.

Tag # 16V - 909 lbs.

The steers were wormed upon arrival and then put out on pasture. They were started on feed and gradually worked up to 10 lbs. of corn per day. The corn they were fed was ground ear corn (cob + kernel). They stayed on this diet for about 1 month until Nov 1 when the pasture was finished. They then were fed free choice hay (round bales) plus 10 lbs. of corn plus 1 lb. soybean meal per day. Steer 4V was harvested on January 3, no live weight was taken but his carcass weight was 664 lbs. Steers 10V and 13V were harvested on January 17th weighing 1230 lbs. and 1180 lbs. respectively. Their carcass weights were (10V) 600 lbs. and (13V) 580 lbs. Tag 16V was the last to go on February 1 and his weight was 1200 and his carcass weight was 625.

10V gained 187 lbs. in 109 days for a gain of 1.72 lbs./day

13V gained 200 lbs. in 109 days for a gain of 1.84 lbs./day

16V gained 291 lbs. in 123 day for a gain of 2.37 /lbs./day

\* See photos on page 4.

They averaged 10 lbs. of corn per day so the two went through 1090 lbs. each and the other (16V) went through 1230 lbs. At \$150 per ton the cost on the two steers was \$87.20 each for corn. Soybean meal cost was \$15 and if you figure they ate 10 lbs./hay per day for 80 days that's 800 lbs. hay at 75 per ton equals \$32. That puts the total



*A front view of a finished steer. Notice the width of his stance and the fullness of his brisket, both signs of finish.*

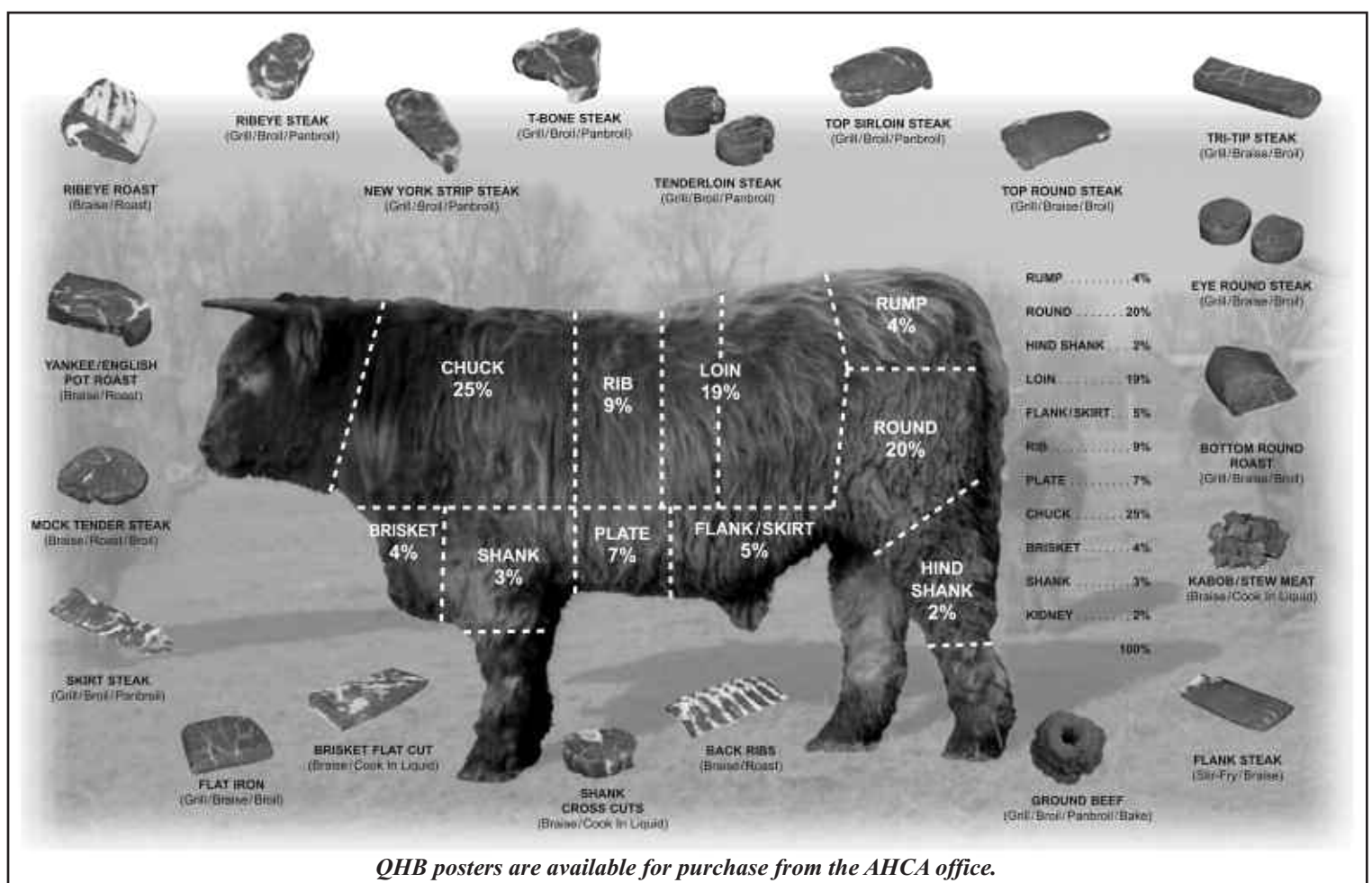
at \$134.20 per animal or about 75 cents per pound of gain. Tag 16V gained better so his cost would be less.

While these numbers would not turn the head of a feedlot operator it does show that you can get profitable gain. The carcass yields were disappointing, however, the marbling was good on three of them (the fourth, 16V is still aging and will not be evaluated for this article). Each one would have made the Choice Grade with a range of marbling from small to moderate.

Following is a list of the pounds of retail cuts from a 600 lb. carcass. This animal was a Highland Angus cross heifer and extremely well marbled:

Boneless Rib-eye Steaks (Delmonicos)	15.71 lbs.
Rib Roast	5.36 lbs.
Short Ribs	23.78 lbs.
NY Strip Steaks	18.20 lbs.
Tenderloin	8.36 lbs.
Sirloin Steaks	15.04 lbs.
Round Roasts	31.74 lbs.
Rolled Rump Roast	12.29 lbs.
Chuck Roasts	34.49 lbs.
Hamburger patties	51.37 lbs.
Ground Beef (Chuck)	124.10 lbs.
Stew beef (Chuck)	14.09 lbs.
Brisket	11.58 lbs.
Flank Steak	2.95 lbs.
Skirt Steak	3.75 lbs.
Soup Bones	9.56 lbs.

*(Note: all cuts except the rib roast, chuck roast, short ribs and soup bones are boneless)*





Look at the ribeye between the 12th and 13th rib to determine a quality grade. Here are 3 ribeyes – 2 from purebred steers (10V and 13V) and one from a crossbred heifer.\*

Below are the grading pictures used to determine a quality grade. Moderately Abundant would grade Prime while Moderate and Modest would be Choice. While most small processors do not grade their beef, you can purchase the grading pictures to help determine the grade of your beef.



\* Refer to page 17 Beef by the Numbers