

# Buying Carcass Beef

*What sounds like a great buy could be a lot of waste.*

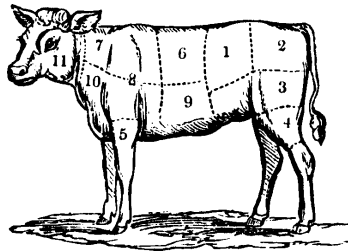
**B**uying extra meat to freeze when prices are attractive can be convenient and economical. But buying meat wholesale in quantity to last three to six months isn't always wise.

## Here are some reasons to be careful when buying meat in quantity:

- Advertised prices for wholesale meat usually refer to total weight before cutting into edible portions. Butchers usually count on losing about 1/3 of a carcass in boning, trimming, shrinking and other cutting losses. More careful studies estimate the cutting loss to be between 25 and 30 percent. A 300-pound side of beef will yield about 225 pounds of usable meat.

- The division of the 300-pound carcass can affect the buyer's satisfaction, too. An average side of beef yields about one-fourth steaks of all kinds, one-fourth roasts, one-fourth ground beef and stew meat, and one fourth waste.

- Always ask if cutting, wrapping and freezing costs are included in the advertised price or if there is an extra charge. Meat must be frozen quickly. It's best to have the freezing done by a commercial fa-



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cility than to rely on a home freezer.

- Consider the safe period of storage. Beef wrapped securely in moisture- and vapor-proof freezer paper will remain in good condition for nine months to a year at zero degrees Fahrenheit. Not all meat will keep this long. Use ground beef and stew meat within four months and pork, within six months. Smoked meats will lose quality after six to eight weeks.

- Always figure cash and credit costs when buying wholesale. Buying on credit can cancel any savings in price.

- Be sure you have enough freezer room to store the added quantity.

- Consider family likes and dislikes when buying meat wholesale. If your family doesn't eat all of the various cuts, or if the meat will not be eaten within the safe storage period, buying meat in quantity may not be a good idea.

***For more information on buying carcass beef contact your local county Extension office.***