

# GRADING & LABELLING OF CANADIAN BISON

Grading evaluates meat quality. Grading is voluntary and is a service for fee provided by the Canadian Beef Grading Agency. The government of Canada maintains the regulations and grade standards.

## HOW BISON IS GRADED

Only carcasses that pass health & safety inspection may be graded. A certified grader assesses a carcass based on:

### 1. MATURITY (AGE)

Maturity of carcass is directly related to tenderness. Youthful carcasses are the most tender. Maturity is assessed by the amount of cartilage hardening (ossification) on the ends of 9, 10 and the 11th vertebrae.

### 2. CONFORMATION (MUSCLING)

Muscle development is related to meat yield.

### 3. FAT

Fat colour, thickness and firmness affect consumer acceptance and meat yield.

### 4. MEAT

Meat colour and texture affect consumer acceptance and shelf life.

Marbling descriptions are not part of the grading regulations because bison meat comes from animals that have little or no marbling in their muscle structure.

## PROPOSED CANADIAN BISON GRADES

AGE	QUALITY FACTORS	A GRADE				B GRADE			D GRADE		
		A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	D1	D2	D3
<b>Maturity Class I</b> (YOUTHFUL) CAPS OSSIFIED 80% OR LESS	MUSCLING	EXCELLENT TO GOOD				EXCELLENT TO GOOD	EXCELLENT TO MEDIUM	DEFICIENT TO POINT OF EMACIATION			
	FAT COLOUR	WHITE TO AMBER & FIRM				WHITE TO AMBER & FIRM	WHITE TO YELLOW	NO REQUIREMENTS			
	MEAT COLOUR	BRIGHT RED & FIRM				BRIGHT RED & FIRM	BRIGHT TO DARK RED	NO REQUIREMENTS			
	FAT MEASURE	2 to 6 mm	7 to 12 mm	12 to 18 mm	>18 mm	<2 mm		NO REQUIREMENTS			
<b>Maturity Class II</b> (MATURE) CAPS OSSIFIED OVER 80%	MUSCLING								EXCELLENT TO MEDIUM	EXCELLENT TO MEDIUM	< MEDIUM
	FAT COLOUR								NO REQUIREMENTS		
	MEAT COLOUR								NO REQUIREMENTS		
	FAT MEASURE								2 to 6 mm	6+ mm	<1 mm

## INSPECTION AND LABELLING



CFIA INSPECTION  
LEGEND



BISON GRADE  
STAMP

The Federal Government requires that all meats that trade across provincial or national boundaries be inspected for food safety. The inspection is done under the supervision of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). CFIA also inspects meat products that are imported into Canada. The Canadian inspection stamp means the meat product has met the federal food safety standards and is in compliance with government safety assurance programs.

All graded bison from a federally or provincially inspected plant must have the grade clearly marked on the carcass. Grades are stamped in three places on the hind quarter and two places on the front quarter — ten per carcass.