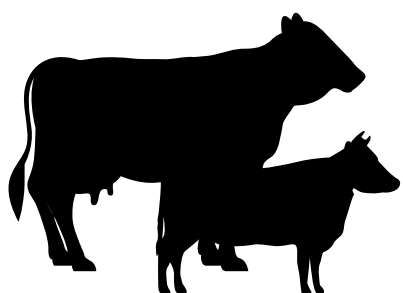


Understanding Common Beef Labels

'cow/calf phase'

'backgrounding phase'

'finishing phase'



Cattle that are meant to be market animals are put on pasture after they are weaned.

Before slaughter, most producers incorporate grain into the animal's diet to put weight on the animal.

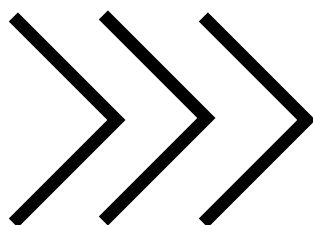
However, farmers ultimately have a choice when it comes to what they feed and how they finish their cattle before they go to market.

Some producers choose to forgo finishing their cattle on grain and keep the animal on pasture before they head to market.

This led to private labels distinguishing between 'grain finished' & 'grass finished' beef.

however...

The 'grass finished' label does not necessarily mean the same thing as the 'grass-fed' label.



'Grass-fed' implies

- the animal had access to pasture year round
- the animals were not grain-fed at any point

The 'grass-fed' beef label gave rise to the 'vegetarian-fed' beef label.

People often associate 'vegetarian-fed' with no animal by-products being used in feed rations.

However, animal by-products are RARELY used in the beef industry. Producers usually use the 'vegetarian-fed' label as a way to rebrand themselves. 'Vegetarian-fed' is simply another term for 'grain-finished'.

The 'grass-fed' label is intended for small producers marketing < 49 cattle a year.

The label 'farm raised' just implies the meat was produced on a small scale operation.

All of these labels are private & unregulated. This has led to confusion among beef labels in the market today.