

<p>Calves will spend at least 6 months with their mothers after birth.</p>	<p>While cows will eat grasses, calves will drink their mother's milk during this time while learning to eat grasses until they are weaned from their mothers.</p>	<p>Farmers keep close watch over their cows during calving and are ready to assist if needed. At birth, calves are given vaccinations to prevent diseases and an ear tag to identify them throughout their lives.</p>	<p>At birth calves weigh around 75 pounds, but will grow to around 500 pounds in the first 6 months of their lives.</p>
<p>After being weaned, cattle will spend 3- 6 months in pasture where they typically gain 300-400 pounds.</p>	<p>As cattle spend this time in pasture, their diet is mostly grass. When fresh grass isn't available, hay or silage may be fed to the cattle.</p>	<p>Farmers will provide access to water while rotating their cattle between pastures to ensure there is enough food available while preventing over-grazing.</p>	<p>After 3-6 months on pasture, cattle will typically weigh 800-900 pounds.</p>
<p>Beef cattle will spend 4-6 months finishing their growth as they are fed a nutritionally balanced diet until they reach market weight.</p>	<p>Cattle's food depends on the style of finishing the farmer chooses. Grass-finished cattle continue to be fed only grasses, while grain-finished cattle are fed grains and grasses.</p>	<p>Cattle are kept with other cattle at the same stage of finishing in pens with enough space to move around with easy access to water and food. Farmers make sure the pens are kept clean.</p>	<p>Once cattle reach market weight of around 1,300-1,400 pounds, they are sold and sent to packing plants where their meat and by-products are harvested.</p>

PRESENTS  
**THE BEEF  
 LIFECYCLE**



**1 COW-CALF**

Raising beef begins with farmers who maintain a breeding herd of mother cows that give birth to calves once a year. When a calf is born, it weighs about 60 to 100 pounds. Over the next few months, each calf will live off its mother's milk and graze on grass pastures.



**2**

**WEANING**

Calves are weaned from their mother's milk at about 6 to 10 months of age when they weigh between 450 and 700 pounds. These calves continue to graze on grass pastures. About 1/3 of the female calves will stay on the farm to continue to grow and to become new mother cows the following year.



**4 CALVES FOR SALE**

**LIVESTOCK AUCTION MARKETS**

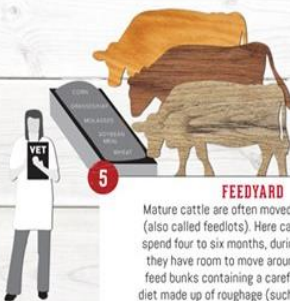
After weaning and/or during the stocker and background phase, cattle may be sold at livestock auction markets.



**3**

**STOCKERS & BACKGROUNDERS**

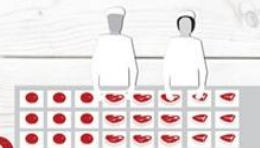
After weaning, cattle continue to grow and thrive by grazing on grass and pastures with farmers providing supplemental feed including vitamins and minerals to meet all of their nutritional needs.



**5**

**FEEDYARD**

Mature cattle are often moved to feedyards (also called feedlots). Here cattle typically spend four to six months, during which time they have room to move around and eat at feed bunks containing a carefully-balanced diet made up of roughage (such as hay, grass and fiber), grain (such as corn, wheat and soybean meal) and local renewable feed sources, such as the tops of sugar beet plants, potato peelings or even citrus pulp. Veterinarians, nutritionists and cattlemen work together to look after each animal. Feedlots can range in size, shape and geographic location.



**6**

**PACKING PLANT**

Once cattle reach market weight (typically 1,200 to 1,400 pounds at 18 to 22 months of age), they are sent to a packing plant (also called a processing facility). United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspectors are stationed in all federally-inspected packing plants and oversee the implementation of safety, animal welfare and quality standards from the time animals enter the plant until the final beef products are shipped to grocery stores and restaurants. If animals are sick or have an injury, the USDA inspector will deem the animal unfit for human consumption, and the animal will not enter the food supply.



**7**

**FOODSERVICE & RETAIL**

Beef is shipped and sold in the United States and abroad. In the retail and foodservice (restaurant) channels, operators take steps to provide consumers with the safest, most wholesome and nutritious products possible.