

FRESH HAMS

1. TERMINOLOGY

Muscling

Butt face:

- a larger butt face
- a greater area of exposed lean in the butt face
- a wider, deeper butt face

Cushion:

- a deeper, wider cushion
- a plumper, more bulging cushion
- a plumper cushion

Center-cut section:

- a wider, deeper, longer center-cut section
- a more muscular center-cut section

Forecushion:

- a plumper, meatier forecushion
- a fuller, more muscular forecushion

Trimness

Less fat:

- beneath the butt face
- over the forecushion
- extending from the cushion to the butt face
- along (side) the butt face

Less collar fat

Less seam fat in the butt face

Quality

Color:

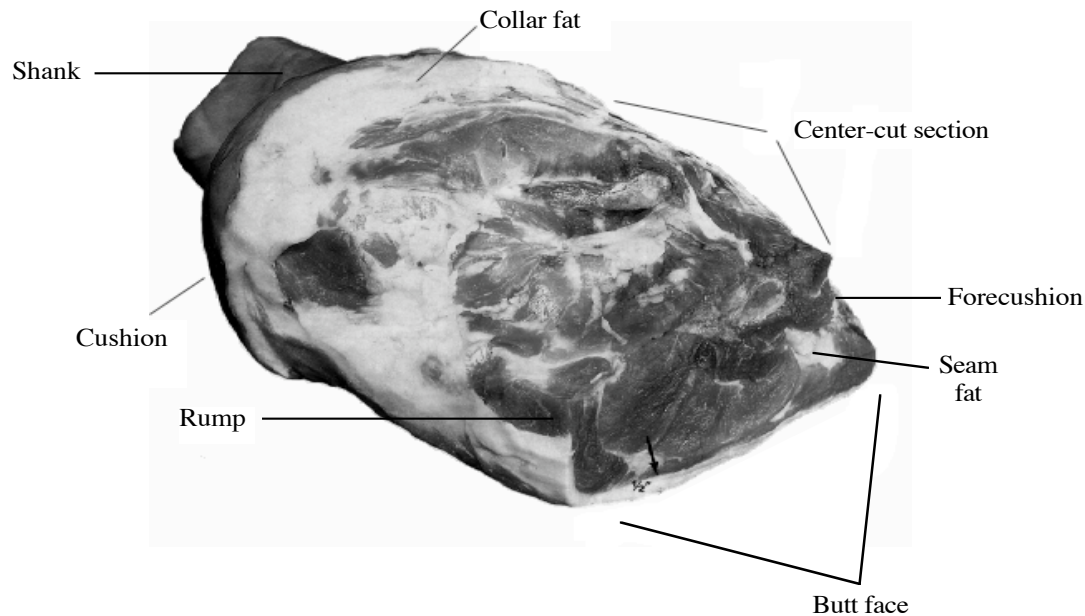
- a brighter more reddish-pink color of lean in the butt face
- a more uniform color of lean in the butt face

Marbling:

- a greater amount of marbling in the butt face

Firmness:

- a firmer lean in the butt face



2. HINTS ON JUDGING HAMS

One of the most profitable cuts from the pork carcass is the ham. The ham accounts for approximately 20% of the entire pork carcass. As with all other wholesale cut classes, students must evaluate both the front and back sides of the class before determining the placing. When evaluating hams, importance is placed on a combination of cutability and quality, with cutability emphasized over quality. The center-cut section is the most profitable area of the ham. A long, deep center-cut section will produce the most profit. The rump portion is also desirable, but the aitch bone in this area makes it less valuable than the center-cut section. The shank portion is of lesser value due to the high amount of connective tissue creating the least palatable product.

TRIMNESS

- Differences in trimness can be seen beneath the butt face, over the forecushion, and along the butt face, as well as differences in collar fat.
- Seam fat in the butt face is also important in evaluating trimness in hams.

MUSCLING

- Size of the butt face is an indicator of muscling, and advantages in muscling can also be seen by the length and width of the center-cut section.
- Depth and plumpness of the cushion is desired, as is a full and plump forecushion.

QUALITY

- Quality in hams is determined mostly by firmness and color of lean in the butt face. Hams that are pale, soft, and exudative (PSE) are very pale in color, soft, and watery, and should be placed last in the class. The lean of hams with PSE sags and has a “mushy” or “soggy” appearance.
- Amount of marbling in the butt face should also be evaluated, but it does not carry the same emphasis as marbling in beef.

3. EXAMPLE REASONS

FRESH HAMS

Placing: 2-4-1-3

I placed this class of fresh hams 2-4-1-3.

(2/4) I placed 2 over 4 because 2 revealed greater muscling as seen by a more muscular butt face, a plumper forecushion, a deeper center-cut section, and a plumper, more bulging cushion. In addition, 2 displayed less seam fat in the butt face, and a more greyish-pink colored lean in the butt face. I admit 4 had a greater amount of marbling in a firmer lean in the butt face.

(4/1) 4 placed over 1 as 4 displayed an advantage in muscling as indicated by a plumper, more bulging cushion, a deeper, longer center-cut section, and a plumper forecushion. Moreover, 4 exhibited less fat over the forecushion, and a firmer lean in the butt face. I realize 1 had less fat beneath the butt face and less fat in the collar region.

(1/3) I placed 1 over 3 because 1 exhibited greater trimness as revealed by less fat beneath the butt face, over the forecushion, less collar fat, and less fat extending from the cushion to the butt face. Furthermore, 1 revealed a more muscular butt face and a wider center-cut section. I admit that 3 had a deeper cushion (partially due to fat).

(3 last) I placed 3 last because it was the fattest ham in the class. This was evidenced by the most fat beneath the butt face, over the forecushion, in the collar region, and extending from the cushion to the butt face. Also, 3 had the smallest butt face. Therefore, 3 would yield the lowest percentage of closely trimmed center-cut slices and thus placed last.

I placed this class of fresh hams 2-4-1-3.