AUSTRALIAN CARCASE IDENTIFICATION: CATEGORY & CIPHER

AUS-MEAT, Australia's red meat industry provider of agribusiness auditing, certification and training services, develops, maintains and reviews accreditation standards in consultation with the Australian Red Meat Industry.

AUS-MEAT Language is a common language which uses objective descriptions to describe meat products accurately to meet market requirements and provides customers with an accurate way of order meat products.

The language is a national uniform description system based on objective carcase measurements used in the classification of Australian meat and livestock, including Category and Cipher.

All Australian Beef when processed is allocated a Category and Cipher which identifies the age (based on dentition) and sex of the animal. The Cipher is the abbreviation or trade description of the Category name. The below summarizes the Categories utilized by JBS Australia.

Category	Cipher	Age	Dentition	Sex
Young Beef	*YG*	Up to 30 months	no more than 2 permanent incisor teeth	Female and Castrate Male
Young Prime Beef	*YP*	Up to 36 months	no more than 4 permanent incisor teeth	Female and Castrate Male
Prime Beef	*PR*	Up to 42 months	no more than 7 permanent incisor teeth	Female and Castrate Male
Steer	*S*	All Ages	no more than 7 permanent incisor teeth in Female up to 8 permanent incisor teeth in Castrate or entire Male	
Beef / Cow	*A* / *C*	All Ages	up to 8 permanent incisor teeth	Female and Castrate Male
Bull	*B*	All Ages	up to 8 permanent incisor teeth	Entire or Castrate Male Bovine

The Category or Cipher was one of the original metrics used to determine consistency and quality.

Typically it was understood that a younger animal resulted in a higher eating quality, so it was preferred especially in western markets where tender loin cuts are sought after. That being said, age and maturity can bring more marbling and flavour, and tenderness is not as important a factor when it comes to wet cook methods utilised in more eastern markets.

Now, the Category or Cipher is used in conjunction with Marble Score, Grading and a variety of other metrics to determine eating quality, tenderness and consistency.