

Meat quality – raising the bar

Dr Phil Hadley,

Global Supply Chain Development,
AHDB

Outline

- Assessment of quality
- Not talking about carcass quality, but meat eating quality
- Not confusing classification with grading
- Improving eating quality
 - current state of beef tenderness in England
- What next?

What do we really mean? Classification and/or grading?

- Classification is a set of descriptive terms describing features of the carcass useful to those involved in trading
- Grading is the placing of different values on a carcass for pricing purposes depending on market requirements.

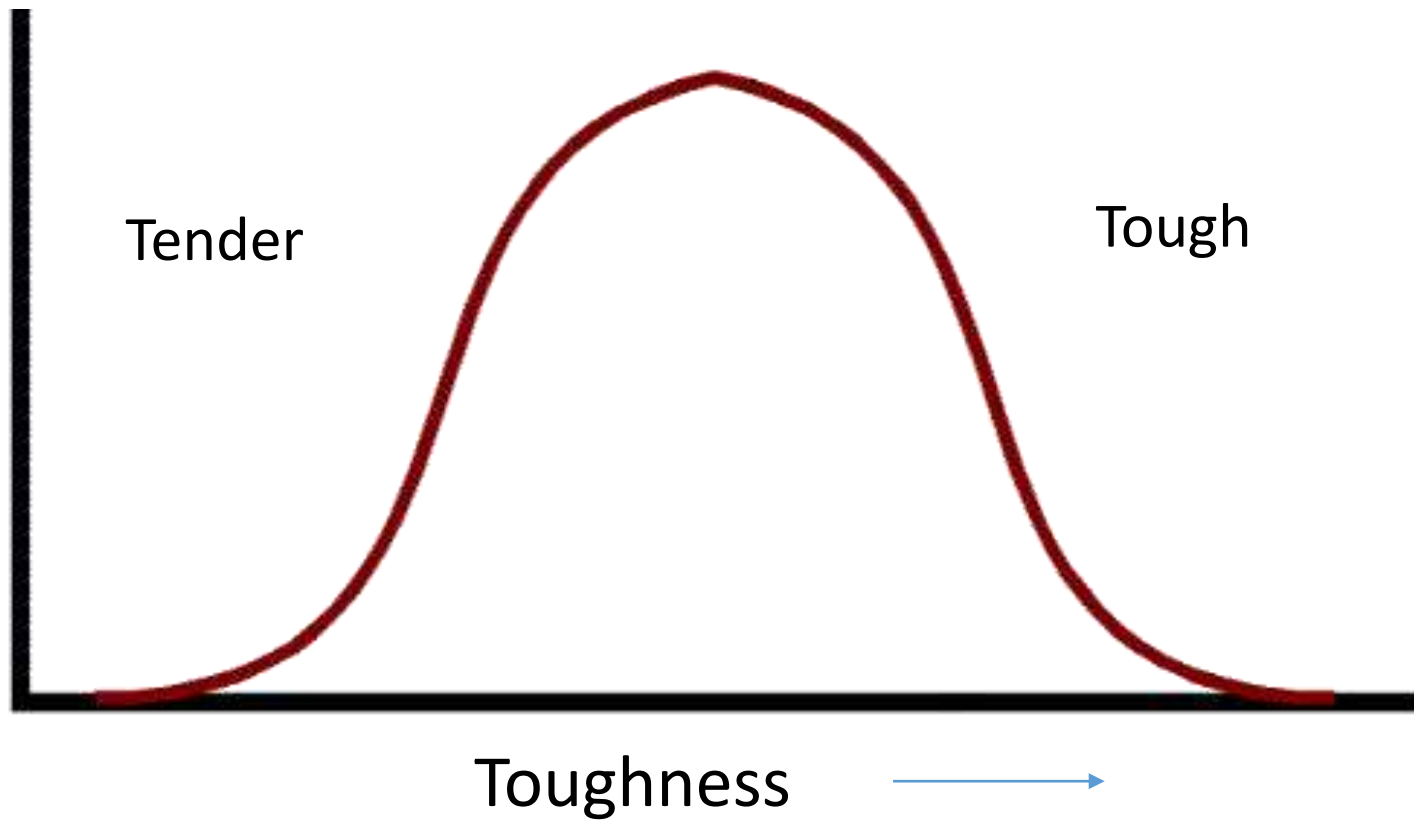
Currently

- Some perception among supply chain that quality is low
- Consumer perception/feedback doesn't necessarily support this, but remains a concern
- Issues with casserole/braising for example based on inconsistent use of product, not product itself - must try harder
- Moving forward?

Meat eating quality

- Eating quality (rather than quality *per se*) relates principally to tenderness, juiciness and flavour
- Tenderness is a key aspect and is achieved with good process control and maturation
- Tenderness plateaus around Day 14 while the development of flavour continues
- Extended ageing can lead to off-flavours/rancidity, so control is vital
- Not all consumers recognise intense flavour as +

Variation



Measuring tenderness

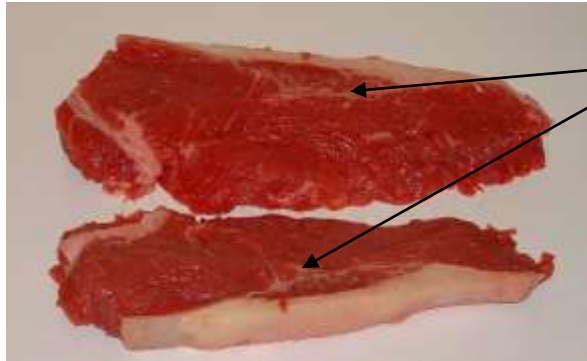


Or taste panel

Braising / casserole steak examples

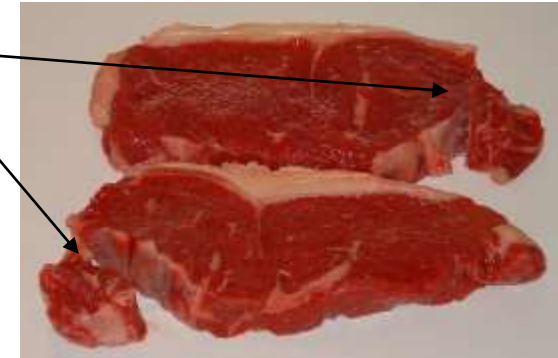


Sirloin steak



D-cut sirloin steak –
thin line of gristle

Borderline, but
could be
improved upon
removal of
chain?



Thick chain
muscle attached
toward rib end



Extended tail
left on

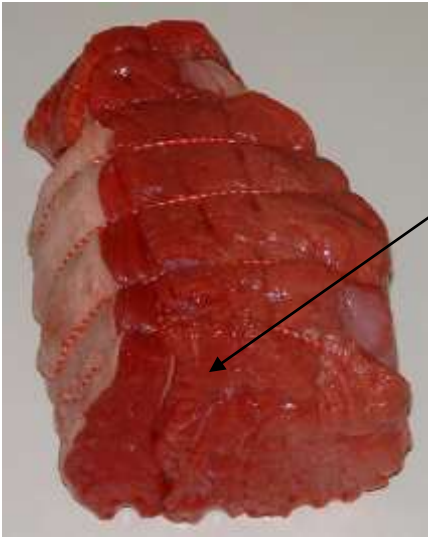


Centre cut, but back
strap gristle still on

Extreme example
from rump end
packed with
centre cut, but
with back strap
gristle attached

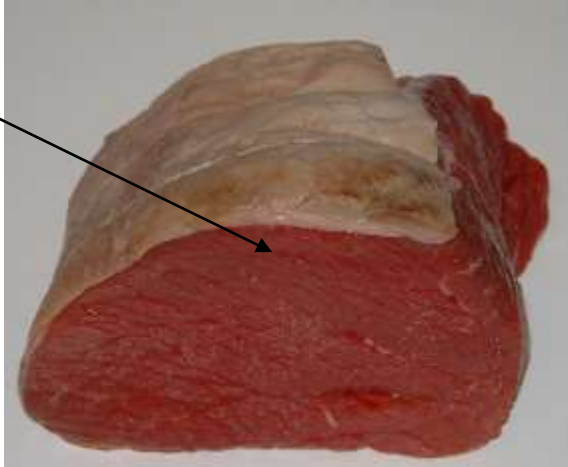


Topside

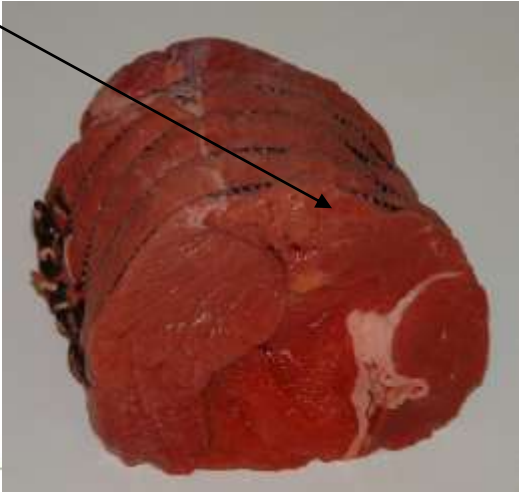
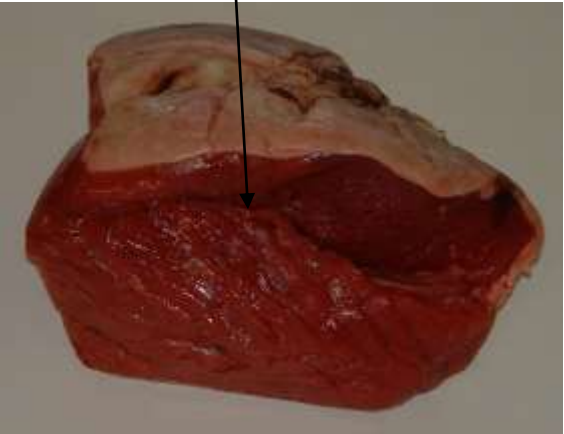
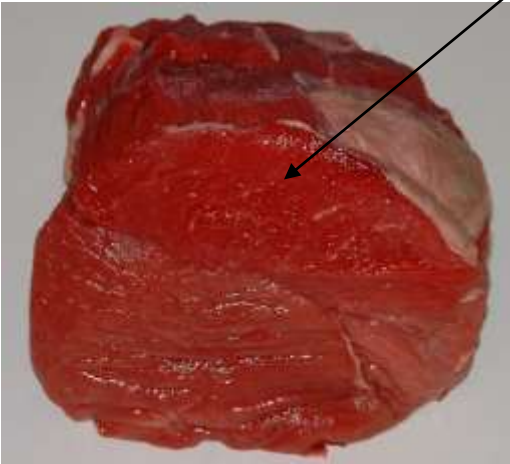


Middle cut

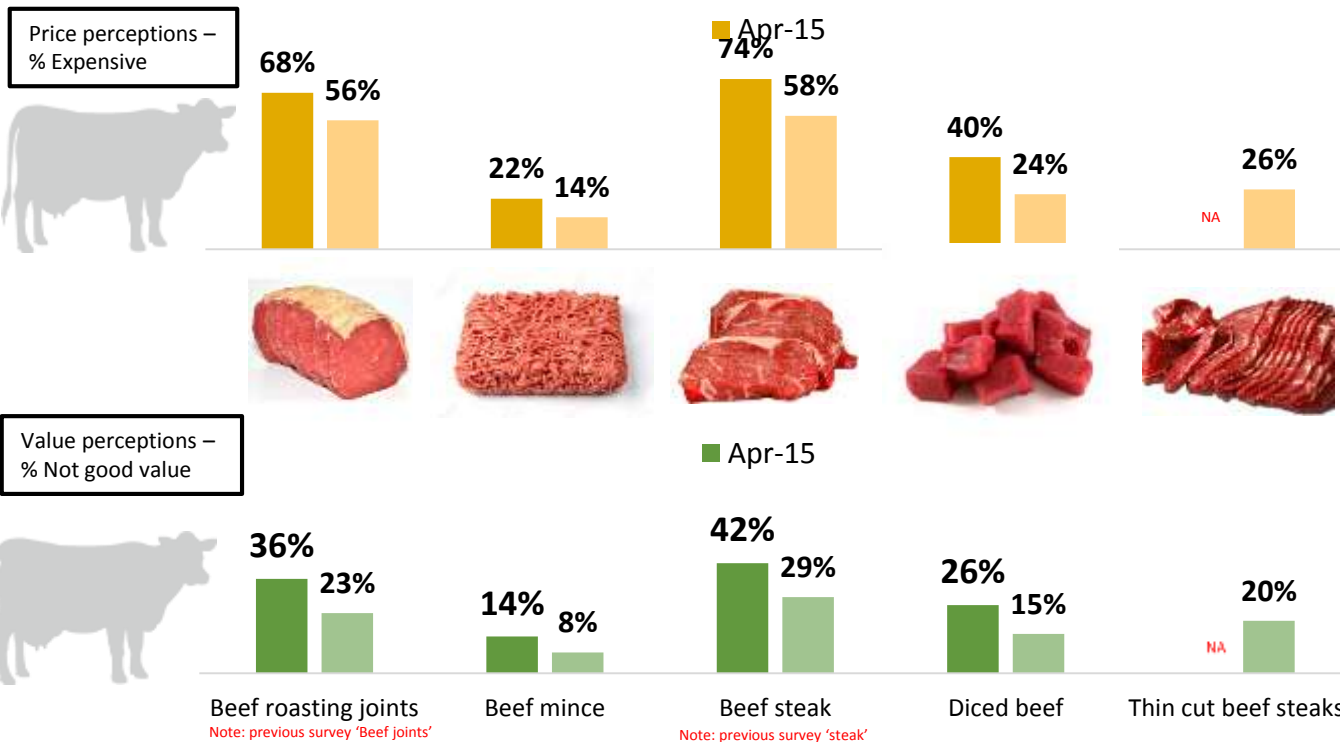
Corner cut only one third of topside joints are like this



bottom 3 examples come from 'mouse end' many muscles. Fat & thick vein, this example being from premium range



Despite slight drop in proportions, over half still regard beef joints and steak as expensive...



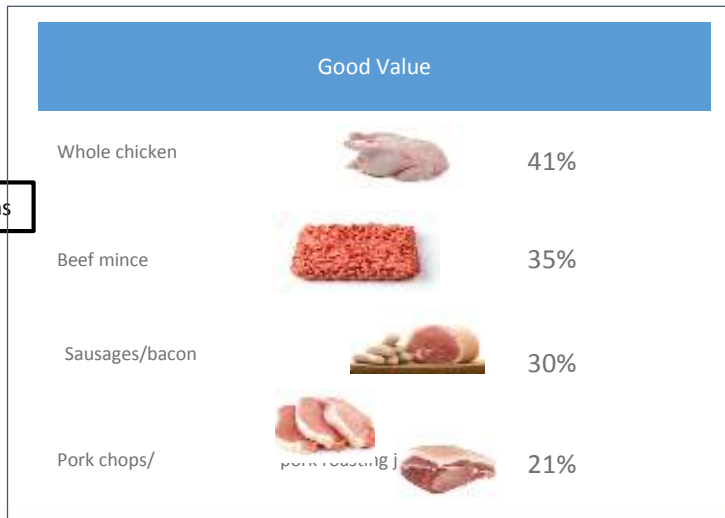
Base: All respondents in Meat 3 section (1026)

EQ15: Please select how you perceive the price of the following cuts of meat and fish?

EQ16: Please could you indicate if you feel the price that you pay for these types of meat and fish offers good value for money or not?



Excluding mince, beef regarded as most expensive meat



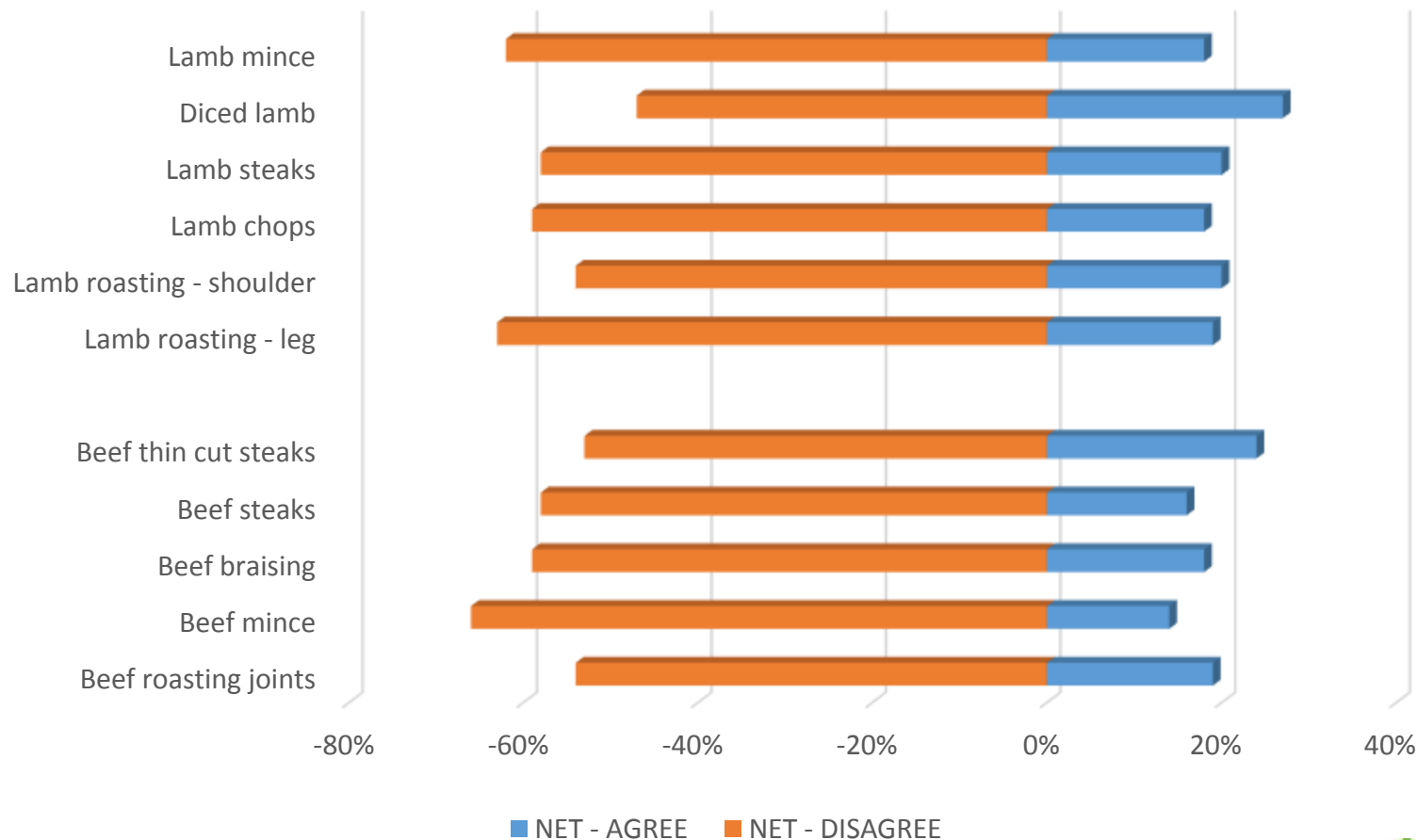
Price perceptions

Value perceptions

Base: All respondents in Meat 3 section (1026)
 EQ15: Please select how you perceive the price of the following cuts of meat and fish?
 EQ16: Please could you indicate if you feel the price that you pay for these types of meat and fish offers good value for money or not?

Over 50% of all consumers did not find the products tough and gristly

When cooked in the home I often find the product tough and gristly

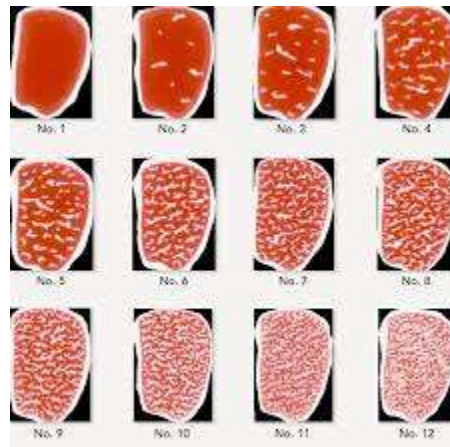


Figures do not add up to 100 as they do not include answers "OK"

What's happening globally?

- US/Canada: system based principally on intramuscular fat (marble) as a proxy indicator for tenderness (and satisfaction)
- Marble has some impact, but is not the single most appropriate indicator of quality
- Other factors have significant roles to play
- Also uses rib-eye area and colour (to a lesser extent) and is performed manually or by camera
- Prime, choice, select - recognised by consumer

Marble scoring



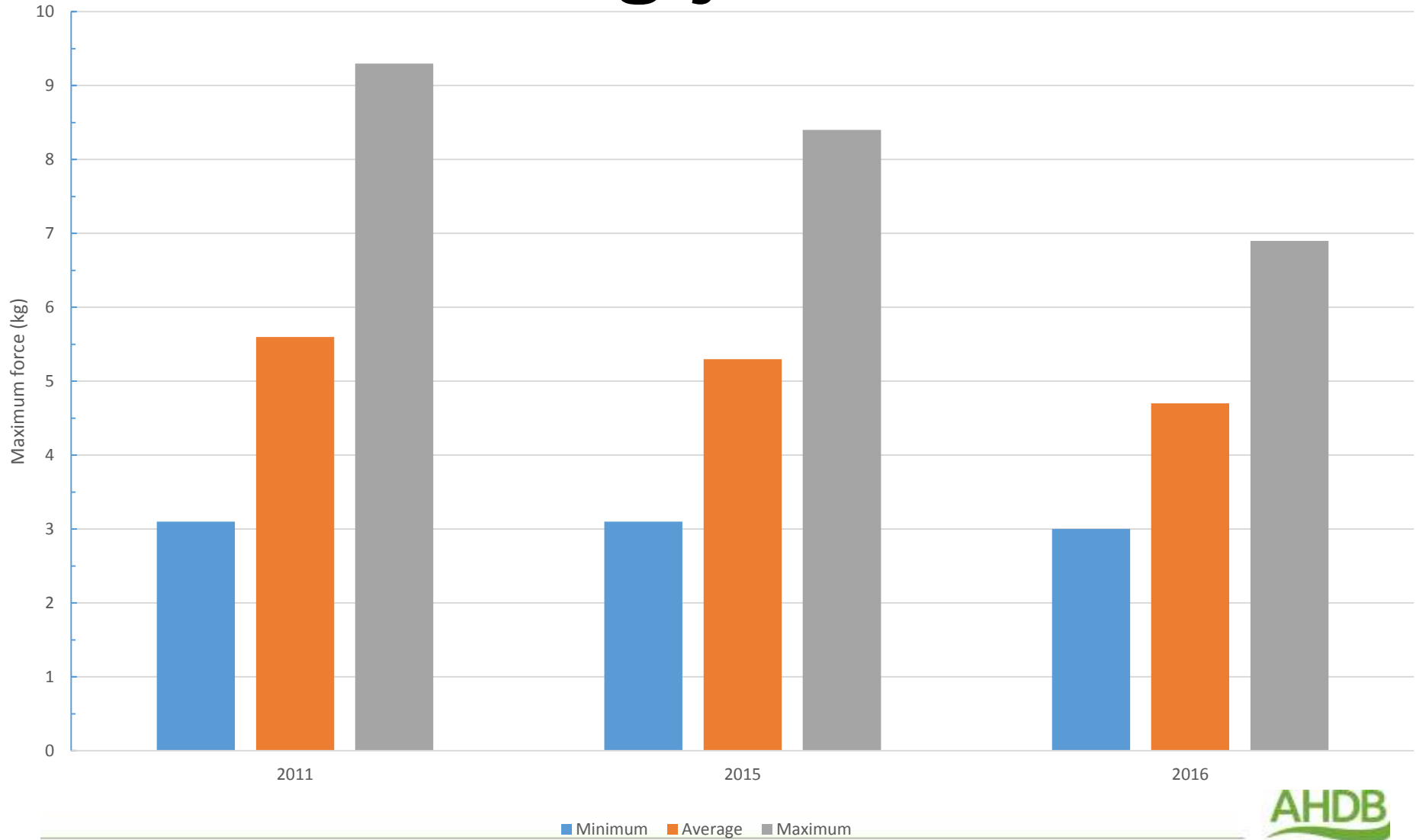
Meat Standards Australia measured attributes

- Marbling
- Tropical breed content/hump height
- Hanging method (Achilles/hip)
- Colour
- pH - both final (<5.7) and rate of decline
- Use of HGP
- Rinse and chill
- Ossification (proxy for age)
- QSM takes inc. hanging, age and rate of pH decline

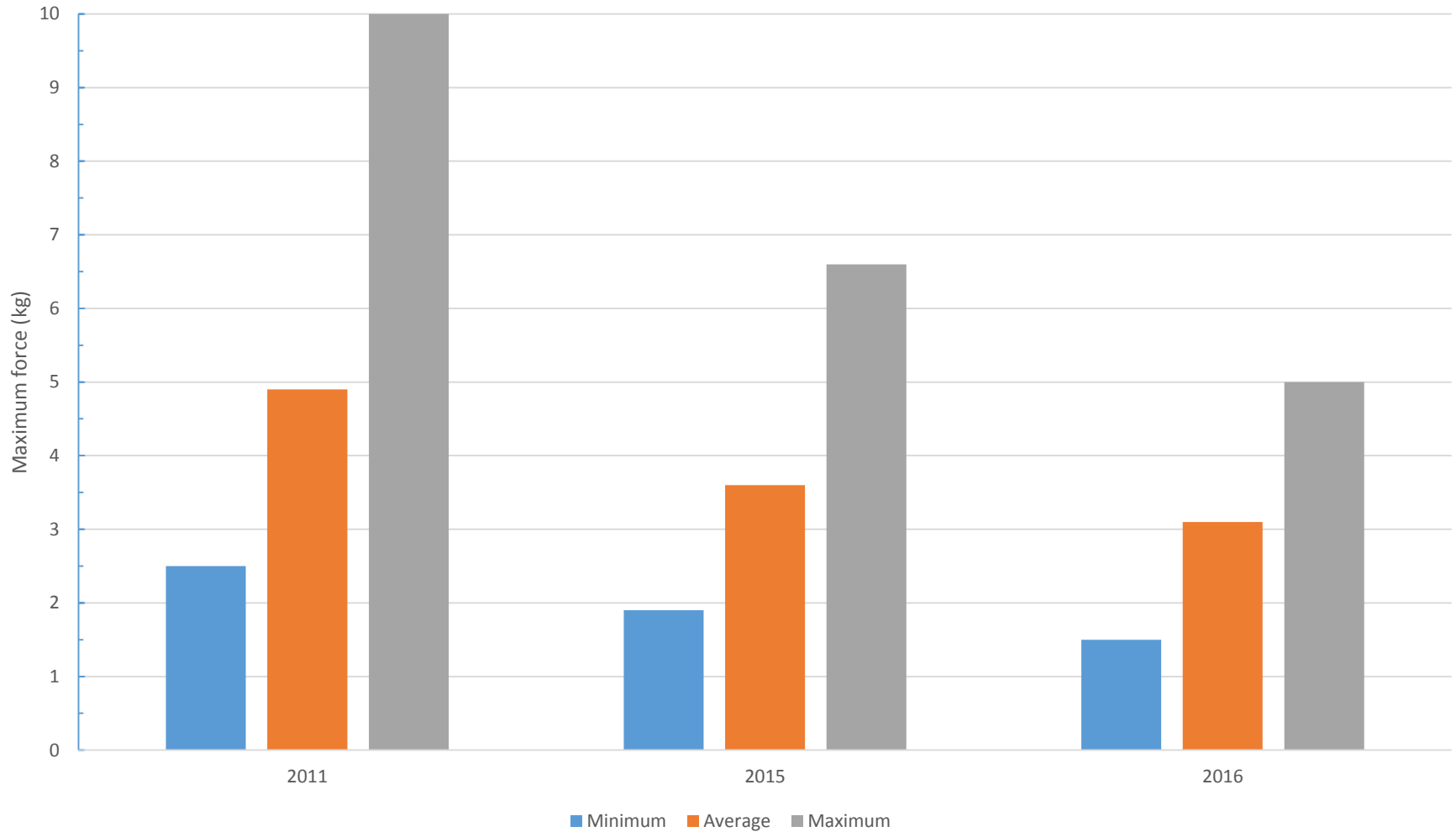
Retail survey

- Samples were collected from 8 major retailers
- Random store and purchase allocation
- N=80 steaks and 40 joints
- Compared results from similar, earlier 2011 and 2015 surveys

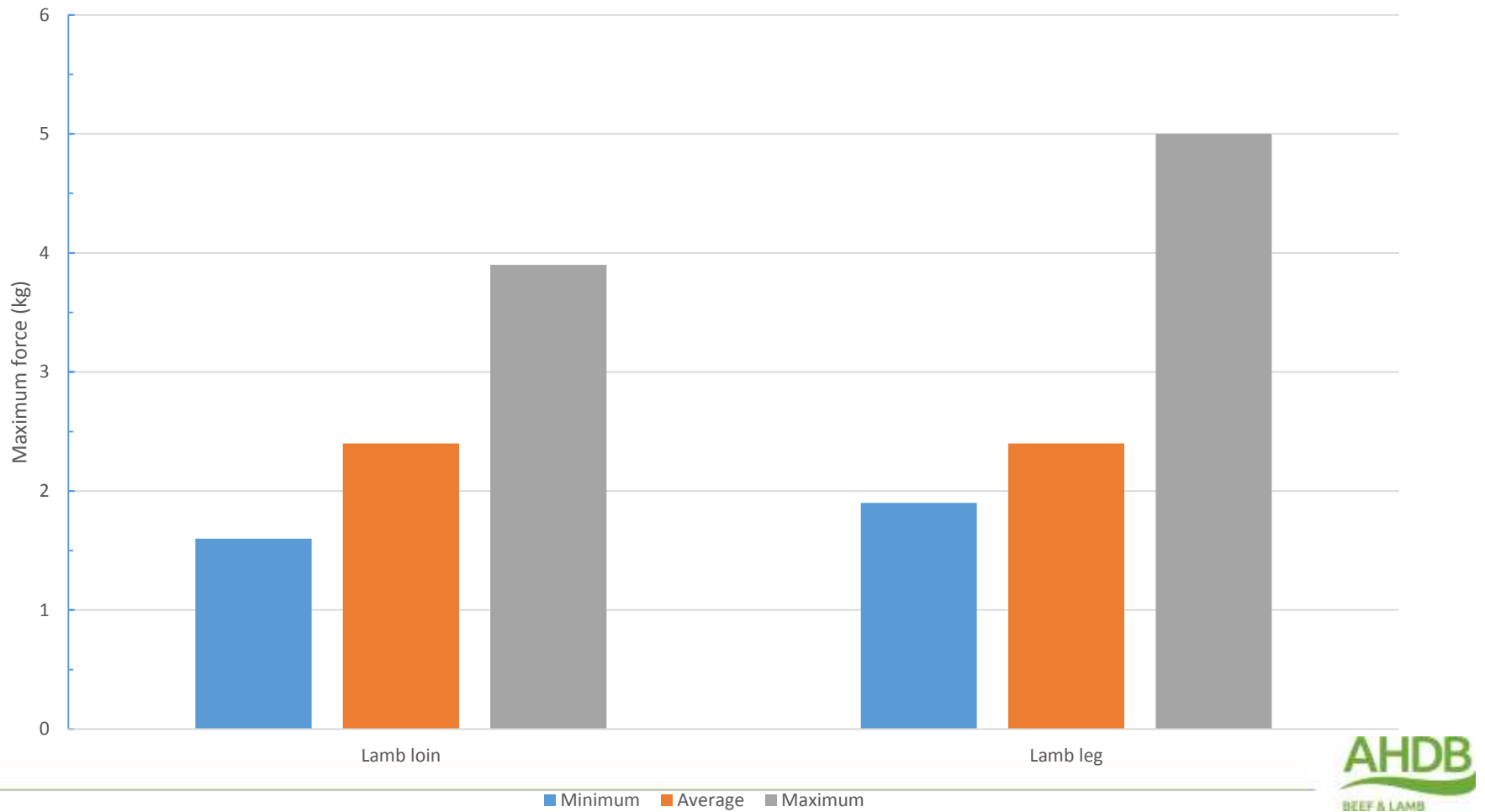
Beef roasting joints



Sirloin steak



Lamb



Why the improvements?

- Move to skin pac away from MAP
- More attention to detail on process
- However, the test only looks at shear on the individual muscle level
- Dissatisfaction may be linked to poor cutting spec and/or cooking practice
- Only one of these is within our direct control



Quality Standard Mark



Summary

- We are not in a bad place, with improvements seen over the recent past leading to a more consistent product overall
- Process controls have improved
- New packing methods employed, with wide consumer acceptance
- Still some poor presentation with potential for dissatisfaction - must address (cutting spec)
- Opportunities for quality marks going forward?

Conclusions

- Overall beef quality has improved and is now more tender and more consistent
- Some dissatisfaction still exists
- Focus on spec may mitigate incidence
- Consumers increasingly focused on 'value for money' at any price point
- There is an opportunity for development of a higher level quality mark for premium products