Both Big Packer and Small Packer cattle hides are selected, graded and sorted in the hide plant into the following general classifications:

**HEAVY NATIVE STEER HIDES** – This selection refers to steer hides with no brands. Generally, native steer hides are the most valuable and expensive hides in the U.S. and are preferred by automobile seat upholstery tanners due to the large cutting areas. Also, shoe leather tanners prefer to use this selection, if the costs justify the high price of the hide. Other uses of the native steer hides include belts, saddles, and footballs.

**BUTT BRANDED STEER HIDES** – This selection refers to steer hides with one or more brands located only in the butt area of the hide. Automobile seat upholstery tanners and shoe leather tanners both use the majority of these hides.

**COLORADO BRANDED STEER HIDES** – This selection refers to steer hides with one or more brands located in the midsection or front shoulder of the hide. Practically all these hides are used by shoe leather tanners and a few baseball glove tanners. These hides are sometimes referred to colloquially as “Collies.”

**HEAVY TEXAS STEER HIDES** – This selection refers to all steer hides produced in Southwest states primarily around the Texas pan-handle region. Native, butt and Colorado steer hides are all included in this selection and sold as one steer hide selection.

**BRANDED STEER HIDES** – This selection refers to steer hides produced in the Western states. Generally, the majority of these steer hides are branded but there may be native hides included as well.

**HOLSTEIN STEER HIDES** – This selection refers to steer hides that are of 100% Holstein breeding. A by-product of the dairy industry, the Holstein steer tends to be mostly native without any brands. Since Holstein steers are mostly kept in feed lots their whole lives, the hides generally have fewer defects and grade better than the beef-breed native steer hides. Tanners of high-end shoe, handbag, and automobile seat upholstery leathers prefer these hides.
HEAVY NATIVE HEIFER HIDES – This selection refers to fed female cattle that have not produced a calf and have no brands. Heifers are generally lighter in substance and have smaller yields than the steer hides. This selection is popular with automotive seat leather upholstery tanners and shoe leather tanners.

BRANDED HEIFER HIDES – This selection refers to fed female cattle that have not produced a calf and have one or more brands.

HEAVY NATIVE COW HIDES – This selection refers to female cattle with no brands that have been primarily raised on farms for breeding purposes before being processed for beef. This selection is preferred by tanners of handbag, furniture upholstery, and shoe leathers.

BRANDED COW HIDES – This selection refers to female cattle with one or more brands on any area of the hide that have been primarily raised on farms for breeding purposes before being processed for beef. This selection is preferred by tanners making furniture upholstery and shoe leathers.

HOLSTEIN DAIRY COW HIDES – This selection refers to female dairy cattle of the Holstein breed. Although there can be some branded hides in the Western area of the U.S., almost all of these hides are black and white and native. Due to the thin yet strong substance of the hide, this selection is preferred by tanners making furniture upholstery, garment, lace, and baseball leathers.

BULL HIDES – This selection refers to un-castrated male cattle used primarily for reproduction purposes. Grading separates these selections into native or branded bulls. Bull hides tend to be very large and the substance is thicker than other hides. This selection is preferred by footwear sole leather tanners and some automobile seat leather tanners.

MIXED HIDES – This selection refers to both steer and cow hides produced by small packers. There is no separation for natives or brands, but there are separations by weight. This selection is preferred by small leather article or shoe leather tanners.

RENDERED HIDES – This selection refers to both steer and cow hides that come from dead stock picked up by a rendering company on the farm, feedlot, or at the packing plant. Generally, the animal is dragged to the trucks that transport them to the rendering processing plant. The resulting drag marks on the hides limit their usage normally to tanners of shoe leathers.

NUMBER THREE HIDES – This term refers to the grading selection found in the Standards Governing the Sale of North American Cattle Hides and includes both steer and cow hides that are misshapen, have one hole longer than 6 inches or visible grain damages larger than a hand. These are low grade hides that work for tanners of specialty item and shoe leathers.