



Meat Grading & Certification Branch

VEAL AND CALF GRADING METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

This instruction defines all procedures in the classing, grading, and application of official grademarks of veal and calf carcasses in accordance with the official grade standards. To simplify, the terms "carcass" and "carcasses" also means "side" or "sides."

Applicant Responsibilities

1. Provide Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) approved purple meat branding ink.
2. Make carcasses easily accessible in a manner which eliminates the need for the grader to move them.
3. When required, properly rib carcasses at least 10 minutes prior to grading.
4. Adequately chill carcasses.
5. Adequately illuminate grading area.

Grading Requirements

1. Grade only as carcasses or sides, split or round dressed, after the hide is removed and only in the establishment where hide removal occurs, except when an exemption has been granted (MGC Instruction 106, Procedures for Grading Exemptions).
2. All carcasses must bear the required inspection marks prior to grading or classing.
3. Retained carcasses shall not be graded without specific authorization from an FSIS inspector.
4. For split carcasses, the final grade will reflect the "highest" of quality grades as determined from either side.

Procedures

1. Classing.

- a. If indications of maturity other than color of lean are indicative of the beef class, carcasses shall be split in order to be properly classed.
- b. Both veal and calf require class identification directly above the quality grade stamps.
- c. Grade Identification Codes, Grademarks, and Roller Brand for Veal and Calf Carcasses and Cuts, (Exhibit A) shows the proper location of class identification stamps.

2. Do Not Grade.

- a. In natural light, on loading docks, at cooler doors, on rails from which carcasses may be directly loaded for shipment, or any other area that does not provide an ample opportunity for supervisory review prior to shipment (carcasses may be roller branded in loading areas if they have been previously grade and class identified).

3. Do Not Quality Grade.

- a. If the carcasses are dried out, aged, or distorted by sawing.
- b. If true color, texture, and/or quality factors cannot be accurately determined.
- c. If all grade factors cannot be determined.
- d. If a carcass has potential for a different grade with additional chill.

4. Identification Methods.

- a. Only Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch employees and officially licensed employees may apply grade identification stamps. Under special circumstances, plant personnel may apply grade identification stamps under the direct supervision of MGC Branch personnel. Each instance must be approved in advance by the Assistant Director.
- b. Carcasses shipped outside the plant must bear the appropriate designated roller brand. Use combination grade and class (veal/calf) rollers.
- c. Carcasses graded and fabricated at the same plant location have the following options:
 1. Final identification of carcass with pop stamps only (requires use of grade label bags and an FSIS approval program).

2. Pop stamp carcasses and roller brand only specific wholesale cuts (requires an FSIS grade label approval program).
 3. Pop stamp carcasses and roller brand entire carcass.
5. Roller Branding.
 - a. Graders must personally apply or directly supervise application of roller brands.
 - b. Roller brand individual wholesale cuts, when requested, prior to or after separation from carcass. Roller brand on cuts must begin and end at approximate wholesale cut separation line.
6. Do Not Roller Brand:
 - a. If area to be roller branded is obstructed by private tags, order tags, etc.
 - b. If more than 50% of the area to be roller branded is too wet to retain a legible roller brand.
 - c. Over the inspection stamp or preliminary grade identification stamp.
 - d. Over bruised or mutilated areas. In these instances, apply roller brand to the edge of the nearest unmutated or unbruised portion of the wholesale cut.
7. Rebranding.
 - a. Carcasses and cuts must exhibit previously applied, legible grademarks (pop stamp and/or roller brand).
 - b. Positive grade identity must be maintained throughout the process.

References

1. Official United States Standards for Grades of Veal and Calf Carcasses.
2. Title 7, Subtitle B, Chapter I, Subchapter C, Part 54. Meats, Prepared Meats, and Meat Products (Grading, Certification and Standards).

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Grade Identification Codes, Grademarks, and Roller Brand for Veal and Calf Carcasses and Cuts

Class (Veal or Calf)

 Location of class identification stamp

USD A Prime, Choice, Good

 Preliminary grade ident shields or official meat grading hammer on posterior end of loin (for Standard or Utility use insert on grade band)

USDA PRIME

USDA CHOICE

USDA GOOD



Indicates area to be roller branded.



Indicates optional areas to be roller branded.

