

**USDA SPECIFICATION FOR CERTIFICATION OF BEEF CARCASS
QUALITY AND YIELD CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFICIALLY GRADED BEEF**

This specification is for certification by an Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) agent of U.S. Prime, Choice and Select steer and heifer beef carcasses which: (a) are derived from cattle that meet the phenotypic or genotypic (AngusSource®) requirements of the USDA Specification for Characteristics of Cattle Eligible for Approved Beef Programs Claiming Angus Influence (GLA), (b) are derived from cattle that are younger than 30 months of age*, and (c) meet the following set of requirements:

1. Marbling score of:
 - a. Prime - Slightly Abundant 00 or higher;
 - b. Choice - Modest 00 to Moderate 99;
 - c. Choice - Small 00 to Small 99;
 - d. Select - Slight 00 to Slight 99;
2. Practically free (not detracting from visual quality) of capillary rupture in the ribeye muscle;
3. Free of “dark cutting” characteristics;
4. Moderately thick or thicker muscling and tend to be moderately wide and thick in relation to their length; and
5. No hump exceeding 2 inches in height.

*Age of the animal shall be determined in accordance with the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Directive 6100.4 *Verification Instructions Related to Specified Risk Materials* (Chapter 2, II *Verification Activities for Age Determination*) or through an approved USDA Quality Systems Assessment (QSA) Program or USDA Process Verified Program.

Item 1 shall be determined in accordance with the “Official United States Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef.”

Item 4, muscle thickness, is evaluated by averaging the thickness of the various parts, considering not only the proportion (%) each part is of the carcass but also the general value of each part. Superior muscle thickness implies a high proportion of meat to bone and a high proportion of the weight of the carcass in the more valuable parts.

Item 5 shall be measured from a line formed by the extension of the top line (including the fat) and measuring the lean muscle (excluding the fat) perpendicular to that line in the center of the hump.

CERTIFICATION:

Carcasses to be examined for compliance with the requirements of this specification shall be clearly identified when presented to the AMS agent for certification. Procedures for identification, certification, the removal of preliminary identification marks (or other methods of control) from non-qualifying carcasses, and control of certified carcasses shall be in accordance with established Grading and Verification (GV) Division procedures. The AMS

agent shall certify acceptable carcasses and complete the appropriate sections in the Conformance Assessment Management System (CAMS).

The costs of all grading and certification services performed by the AMS agent involving examinations, supervision, official documentation, and related services shall be borne by the person, group, or plant requesting the service.

LABELING:

Labeling of PM Beef – Black Angus Beef Program products shall be in compliance with Food Safety and Inspection Service regulations and policy guidelines, GV Division instructions and Livestock and Seed Program Policy Standardization Procedure 2.