



**CERTIFICATION OF MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS FOR TRUE NAME, WEIGHT,
GRADE, QUALITY, AND/OR CONDITION**

Purpose

This instruction defines Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch procedures for certifying meat and meat products for true name, weight, grade, quality, and/or condition and procedures for certifying rail and truck shipments.

Policy

It is the policy of the MGC Branch to facilitate marketing by providing services which will maintain product identification and traceability with regard to official grades or certified attributes. Meat graders, in cooperation with applicants, will develop local procedures for assuring product integrity while meeting the general guidelines outlined in the Procedures section of this instruction.

Certified product status may, at the applicant's option, be identified and maintained on individual containers or shipping units provided it complies with the terms of any existing contracts relating to the products.

When requested by the applicant, MGC Branch employees will break the seal on shipping units of products sealed by Branch employees at origin to ensure complete product traceability. In this case, applicants are responsible for scheduling activities with the receiver at the delivery point and the nearest MGC Branch area supervisor. Seals on trucks or rail cars to be opened by the grader at destination may contain both certified and noncertified products provided the receiving grader can accurately distinguish certified from noncertified products.

All products to be identified, regardless of whether they are to be delivered chilled or frozen, will be identified and sealed while in the fresh state.

Procedures for Certifying Individual Containers of Product

Graders:

1. Supervise weighing and packing of the product in the chilled state, including preidentification of product for grade or other requirements when necessary to maintain identity during fabrication.

2. Ensure the USDA quality and/or yield grade, individual weight range, piece count, and net weight of each container is as specified. Refer to the applicable MGC Instructions.
3. Supervise sealing and labeling of containers. Ensure legible entries are made on the labeled end panel of the box. These entries must include, when applicable, name of product, piece count, grade, date packed, weight range, and net weight. Reference to an IMPS item number is not permitted unless the product is certified by the Branch as meeting specification requirements. The statement "Certified for (insert certified aspect) only" must appear on the labeled end panel of the container and on the official certificate.
4. Seal the containers according to MGC Instruction 616 applying a legible imprint of the "USDA Shield" stamp to the overlap of the sealing strap or tape.

Procedures for Certifying Rail Car or Truck Shipments

Graders:

1. Supervise the weighing and loading listing pieces and weights on a tally sheet (original and one copy). Initial the tally sheet.
2. Attach a copy of the tally sheet to the certificate and secure in a conspicuous place inside the car or truck.
3. Seal the rail car or truck.
4. Forward the original tally sheet with the certificate to the Office of Field Operations.

Applicants may, at their option, request that an MGC employee break the car or truck seals at destination.

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