



STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Instruction outlines the responsibilities of Quality Assessment Division (QAD) employees, involving the knowledge, application, and interpretation of official standards and specifications.

2.0 Policy

- 2.1 It is the policy of the QAD that all technical personnel be fully conversant with the contents of each Official U.S. Grade Standard for carcasses of all eligible species. Technical personnel shall discuss and explain grade placements in the official terminology contained in the standards and shall uniformly and consistently apply the standards. In addition, technical employees must have a working knowledge of specifications when performing certification duties and they must ensure that the products being certified meet applicable requirements contained in the specification. Each employee must maintain a complete set of or have Internet/Intranet access to current standards and specifications.

3.0 Supervisor Responsibility

- 3.1 Supervisors are responsible for:
 - 3.1.1 Reviewing Standards, Specifications, Instructions, Rules and Regulations.
 - 3.1.2 Requiring that all meat graders under their supervision are able to apply the standards and specifications consistent with the employee's job description and in accordance with QAD policies as set forth in the QAD Instructions, and Rules and Regulations.
 - 3.1.3 Requiring meat graders to discuss and explain their grade placements using the official terminology contained in the standards.
 - 3.1.4 Providing training and assistance to employees whose work performance requires improvement.
 - 3.1.5 Rotating duty assignments, in accordance with union agreement, so employees may maintain their proficiency in applying official standards and specifications.
 - 3.1.6 Providing an official interpretation of the standards or specifications when requested by meat graders or industry personnel.

4.0 Meat Grader Responsibility

- 4.1 Meat graders are responsible for:
 - 4.1.1 Knowing the contents of the official standards for grades of meat and specifications and being able to apply them in accordance with QAD policies and procedures.



- 4.1.2 Discussing, explaining and defending grade placements, to supervision and members of industry, using terminology established by the official standards.
- 4.1.3 Requesting an official interpretation from their supervisor on any issue if they are uncertain.
- 4.1.4 Having copies of or access to applicable official standards and/or specifications, a copy of "Meats, Prepared Meats, and Meat Products" and other required documents (e.g., "U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers," appropriate random sampling forms, laboratory analysis forms, official USDA marbling photographs) for the particular assignment readily available.

5.0 Official Grade Standards

Official United States Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef

Official United States Standards for Grades of Veal and Calf Carcasses

Official United States Standards for Grades of Lamb, Yearling Mutton, and Mutton Carcasses

Official United States Standards for Grades of Pork Carcasses

- 5.1 When performing official duties, QAD employees are to use the standards in conjunction with applicable QAD Procedures and the Rules and Regulations. Standards are available through the QAD Intranet at Standards and Specifications or by accessing the [Livestock and Seed Standards](#).
- 5.2 When a purchaser requests assistance in preparing new or modified specifications, a copy of the Standard Procedure 1 (Form SP-1) for Marketing Program Specification Development and Approval may be obtained by accessing the QAD Intranet SP1 Procedures for Marketing Program Requests. The purchaser shall submit proposed specifications to the QAD. The QAD shall forward requests to the Standards, Analysis, and Technology (SAT) Branch for consideration. The SAT Branch will consider the request, work with the purchaser to develop the specification and issue approved specifications. The QAD will implement certification procedures for approved specifications only.
- 5.3 Approved specifications, certification handbooks, and visual aids are available or linked to the QAD Intranet at Standards and Specifications.

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