
**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 and Choice steer and heifer beef carcasses which: (a) are derived from cattle that are younger than 30 months of age*, and (b) meet the following set of requirements:

1. Marbling score of Modest 00 or higher;
2. Lean color, texture, firmness, and overall skeletal characteristics, each of which must meet the requirements for A maturity in the U.S. grade it qualifies for;
3. Medium or fine marbling texture;
4. Ribeye Area (REA) minimum of 9.0 in²*;
5. Hot Carcass Weight (HCW) of 600 to 850 lbs.*;
6. Fat Thickness (FT) of 0.4 to 0.9 inch;
7. White external carcass fat color;
8. Practically free (not detracting from visual quality) of capillary rupture in the ribeye muscle; and
9. Free of “dark cutting” characteristics.

*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 Program or USDA Process Verified Program.

Items 1, 2 and 3 shall be determined in accordance with the “Official United States Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef.”

Item 3 shall be evaluated using the USDA-AMS-LS-SB-02 Marbling Texture card.

Item 4, REA, allows for one side to meet the standard to consider both eligible for certification.

Item 5 establishes a minimum and maximum allowable HCW of 600 to 850 lbs. as determined and applied to the carcass at the hot scale. *(If Kidney, Pelvic and Heart Fat is fully or partially removed and not accounted for in the final HCW, then HCW must be 575 lbs. to 825 lbs.)

Item 6, FT, is to be determined at the 12th rib and represent solely an evaluation of subcutaneous fat over the ribeye at a point $\frac{3}{4}$ the lateral length of the eye muscle from the backbone. If the actual FT over the ribeye has been altered due to a hide pull, gouge, trim, or other irregularity, a predicted line shall be determined along the curvature of the ribeye to establish an accurate prediction of unaltered fat thickness at the 12th rib surface. FT may be determined on either side of the carcass with at least one side meeting the standard to consider both eligible for certification.

CERTIFICATION

An AMS agent will certify acceptable carcasses. 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 Quality Assessment Division (QAD) procedures.

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 Switzerland Export Certified Beef products shall be in compliance with FSIS regulations and policy guidelines, QAD procedures and Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program Policy Standardization Procedure 2.