



Grading and Verification Division

**PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND REPORTING
ERRORS IN MEAT GRADING AND CERTIFICATION**

PURPOSE

This Instruction outlines the procedures to be followed by supervisors when reviewing and reporting errors in grading and certification observed at locations other than origin.

Reviews of this nature -- destination reviews -- are essential to ensure the uniform application of official meat grading and certification standards and procedures.

POLICY

Review of graded and certified product by supervisory personnel, both at point of origin and at destination, is essential for maintaining the effectiveness, accuracy, and credibility of the meat grading and certification program. Accordingly, supervisors shall systematically review products at destination. When reviewing meat and meat products at destination locations, supervisors shall exercise the same degree of thoroughness, attention to detail, and judgment expected during an origin review. It is essential that the procedures set forth in this Instruction are followed by all supervisors.

I. RESPONSIBILITY

A. Director of Grading and Certification is responsible for:

1. Establishing a list of locations where graded and certified meat and meat products are stored in sufficient number for destination review.
2. Assigning an appropriate number of destination reviews to be performed in areas of Grading and Certification.
3. Establishing a Destination Review file. Information in this file shall be maintained for three years.
4. Storing copies of destination reports in the Office of Field Operations (OFO) office when appropriate.

B. Assistant Directors are responsible for:

1. Ensuring that random and periodic destination reviews are performed unless circumstances require specific reviews to be made.
 2. Reviewing destination reports to ensure that appropriate action was taken.
 3. Forwarding copies of destination reports and related documentation.
- C. Supervisors are responsible for:
1. Performing assigned destination reviews in addition to those performed during routine supervisory reviews.
 2. Preparing and submitting complete and detailed reports of observations to their Assistant Director.

II. PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND RECORDING ERRORS IN GRADING

- A. When reviewing incorrectly graded product, improper roller branding, or both, an accurate count of the number of pieces in the review and the number of pieces which exhibit quality or yield grade characteristics for grades, other than those assigned, must be obtained and included in the report.
- B. The following information must also be included:
1. Establishment number where the product originated.
 2. Grader's roller brand code.
 3. Original quality and/or yield grade, class, and type of product (e.g., carcasses, sides, unmatched or matched forequarters, and hindquarters).
 4. The color, texture, and/or firmness of the lean, if other than normal for the class and grade involved.

III. PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND RECORDING ERRORS IN CERTIFICATION

- A. The product shall be sampled in accordance with applicable specifications to the extent possible, and the supervisor shall use his/her judgment in determining the amount of product to be sampled. However, the following maximums shall be adhered to: (1) The sample size of items which were certified by statistical sampling shall not exceed those listed in the involved specification; and (2) The sample size of items not originally

certified using a statistical sampling procedure shall not exceed those listed in MGC Instruction 618, Final Acceptance of Frozen Products Examined and Certified in the Chilled State. These procedures shall apply to both chilled and frozen items.

- B. When recording incorrect certification, improper procedures, etc., include the following information:
 - 1. Establishment number where the product originated.
 - 2. Original grader(s) code, if available.
 - 3. The product observed including, if applicable, the specification number and the date(s) accepted.
 - 4. Deviations from specification requirements or established procedures.

IV. REPORTING ERRORS AND ACTION REQUIRED

- A. Observations of incorrect grading and certification, improper roller branding, etc., must be promptly reported to the Director of Grading and Certification. Errors that are determined to be (1) gross noncompliance or major deviations, or (2) of a lesser degree but are repetitive in frequency must also be promptly reported to the Director of Grading and Certification. Upon receipt of such a report, the Director of Grading and Certification will determine the appropriate course of action.
- B. Supervisors receiving a report of incorrect grading or certification, improper roller branding, etc., shall review the work of the involved graders to determine the cause of the error and prepare MGC-18, Employee Progress Review Report (MGC-18). The MGC-18 shall include a statement that the review was made in response to a report of improperly graded and/or certified product or incorrect procedures. When the review is made in response to a complaint, the supervisor will advise the Director of Grading and Certification by memorandum as to the results of the review and what steps are being taken to prevent recurrence. A copy of the memorandum will be attached to the file copy of the MGC-18 and be made available upon request for the involved grader's review. Reports of incorrect grading and certification are personnel records and shall not be made available to vendors or other private parties.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.