Livestock and Poultry Program

Remote Grading Pilot for Beef

A Guide to Getting Started

Step 1: Determine Eligibility- The following must be TRUE to be eligible for USDA Meat Grading Service

1. I am a domestic business enterprise, physically located and operating in the U.S. or its territories.

2. I am a beef slaughter facility subject to the Federal Meat Inspection Act and operating under:

   a. A Federal Grant of Inspection (USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, FSIS),

   b. An FSIS-approved Cooperative Interstate Shipping Program (CIS), or

   c. An FSIS-State cross-utilization agreement (aka Talmadge-Aiken).

3. None of the conditions set forth in 7 CFR § 54.11 Denial, conditional withdrawal, or suspension of service are applicable to myself or my business entity.

Step 2: Determine Readiness- It is strongly recommended that these conditions be met before submitting a Request for Service

1. My slaughter facility currently receives—or has arrangements to receive—product (livestock) meeting the eligibility requirements for quality grading according to the U.S. Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef.

2. I have reviewed the information on the RGP Pilot, Carcass Beef Grading, understand why and how USDA official grading and certification works, and what the minimum requirements are to receive service.

   a. www.ams.usda.gov/remote-beef-grading

   b. www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/beef

   c. www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/RemoteGradingPilotforBeefProcedures.pdf

3. I have a secure internet connection and an imaging capture device (e.g., a smart phone with a minimum 8-megapixel camera, f/2.0 or lower lens size and aperture, and optical image stabilization).

Step 3: Contact the USDA, AMS Livestock and Poultry Program (AMS-LP)

Each packer has unique operations and capabilities, so it is important to consult with AMS before submitting a Request for Service. Please reach out to the AMS-LP at AskLP@usda.gov to express your interest in the RGP Pilot.

Step 4: Request Grading Service and Schedule an Initial On-Site Visit

1. An Application for Service (LP-109) and an Accounts Payable Information Request (LP-109A) must be submitted to AMS-LP. See also How to Apply for Service and Service Fees.

2. Once service is approved, AMS-LP will schedule an Initial Site Visit at the earliest available time.

IMPORTANT: It currently takes 4-6 weeks from the first Request for Service to the Initial Site Visit. It may take 4-6 additional weeks for an Applicant to be ready to begin grading service; however, the Applicant's level of preparation before requesting service significantly reduces this timeline.

Step 5: Submit Product for Remote Grading

When ready, the Applicant may begin submitting product images and data for remote grading following the Remote Grading Pilot for Beef Procedures.

To maintain product and USDA grade mark integrity, AMS periodically reviews an Applicant's internal documentation and controls, and conducts on-site visits to ensure program compliance.

Grading and certification services and on-site surveillance and compliance visits under the RGP Pilot are charged to the Applicant at the current Unscheduled Grading Service Fee rates: Service Fees.

Have Questions?

Visit www.ams.usda.gov/remote-beef-grading or contact AskLP@usda.gov.

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