



LIVE ANIMAL AND CARCASS SPECIFICATION CERTIFICATION

1 Purpose

This Procedure defines general responsibilities of facilities and Quality Assessment Division (QAD) personnel for the certification of carcasses for conformance with approved specifications. Procedures for specific facilities are described in local QAD Quality Plans and, when applicable, applicant's Product Quality Control (PQC) plans.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to applicants who request QAD to certify carcasses conform to the requirements of a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-approved live animal or carcass specification.

3 References

The following referenced documents are used for the application of this document. The latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

[Applicable USDA-approved Live Animal and/or Carcass Specifications](#)

QAD 1408A Form: *Quality Plan for Grading and Product Certification*

[QAD 500 Procedure: Beef, Bullock, and Bull Grading Methods and Procedures](#)

[QAD 523A Form: AAA Live Animal/Carcass Specification Worksheet](#)

[Official U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Marbling Photographs](#)

[Official U.S. Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef](#)

[National Pedigreed Livestock Council \(NPLC\)](#)

4 Policy

Only specifications that have been approved by QAD shall be used to certify live animal and/or carcass characteristics. Local supervision shall ensure that plant specific procedures for certification activities are detailed in each applicant's QAD 1408A Form: *Quality Plan for Grading and Product Certification (Quality Plan)*.

All animals and/or carcasses of which QAD is requested to certify breed characteristics must be associated with a breed association recognized by the National Pedigreed Livestock Council (NPLC).

5 Responsibilities

5.1 Applicant Responsibilities

5.1.1 Identifying plant employees to be trained and licensed by QAD.



- a) These employees are responsible for maintaining the integrity of live animal and/or carcass specifications at the time of slaughter, and training and supervising plant employees who conduct live animal identification, carcass stamping, and other program related duties.
- b) Providing facilities and cattle/carcasses for training purposes.
- c) Upon satisfactory completion of training, trained plant employees will display identification when performing certification duties. These visible identification tags may be designed by the plant as long as it is approved by the local QAD supervisor.
- d) In addition, a record designating that each trained employee has completed the approved training, signed by the trainer and trainee, shall be issued and must be on file at the slaughter plant. It shall be kept up to date and must be presented to any QAD personnel upon request as well as a copy in each QAD office.

5.1.2 Providing equipment and/or stamps used to identify qualifying carcasses.

- a) Equipment and/or stamps must be approved by the local QAD supervisor.
- b) Only trained plant employees or QAD personnel are authorized to use this equipment.

5.1.3 Payment of Additional Charges for Providing Service.

- a) The applicant is responsible for paying the applicable QAD hourly fee, travel costs, per diem, and other related charges for certifying the specification(s) under continuous 100% USDA supervision.
- b) Charges for training and licensing plant employees by QAD supervisors shall be based on the actual cost of providing training--hourly fee plus expenses. Hourly fees, including travel time, shall be based on the current non-commitment QAD rate. Travel, per diem, and other related charges shall be reimbursed on an actual cost basis.

5.2 QAD Responsibilities

- 5.2.1 The National Meat Supervisor is responsible for approving changes in procedures prior to implementation for any participating facilities.
- 5.2.2 QAD local supervision is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the Procedure.
- 5.2.3 QAD local supervision is responsible for training and licensing plant employees who are responsible for maintaining the integrity of live animal and/or carcass specifications at slaughter.
- 5.2.4 QAD local supervision are responsible for approving program stamps and/or other identifying marks used for identifying carcasses. Only trained plant employees or QAD personnel are authorized to use the approved stamps and/or equipment.



6 Procedures

6.1 Applicant Procedures

- 6.1.1 Identify eligible carcasses on the chain or stationary rail in the cooler with a stamped impression of the applicable letters and/or numbers according to the specification or program for which certification is requested. Identify carcasses on each forequarter and/or hindquarter, or as specified in the approved PQC plan documentation. Alternative methods of identification may be approved by the National Meat Supervisor and must be included in the approved PQC plan and QAD Quality Plan.
- 6.1.2 Segregate carcasses offered for verification on a stationary rail in an easily accessible area under adequate lighting if not offered for certification on the grading chain

6.2 QAD Procedures

- 6.2.1 When required in the PQC program specifications, ensure the facility has a valid PQC program in effect for the product to be verified.
- 6.2.2 Review the applicable QAD Quality Plan for the carcass certification procedures at the establishment where service is requested.
- 6.2.3 Evaluate eligible carcasses or sides offered for conformance with specification requirements in accordance with the Official United States Standards for the applicable species.
- 6.2.4 Identify qualifying carcasses presented for grading and certification with the appropriate quality and/or yield grades and the Accepted as Specified bronze stamp. It is allowable to place the Accepted as Specified bronze stamp on the forequarter or hindquarter in lieu of the applicable quality grade stamp. It is also permissible for graders to select and certify carcasses prior to plant personnel stamping the carcasses with the applicable Carcass Specification stamp. In these cases, the Carcass Specification stamp shall be placed immediately adjacent to the Accepted as Specified bronze stamp, or an alternative identification method approved by the National Meat Supervisor may be used.

Note: For Live Animal Specifications where a Carcass Specification stamp or similar identification indicating a breed influence is used, it is permissible for the applicant to use the Carcass Specification stamp for private, non-USDA-certified breed labeling claims. Such labeling is under the approval and control of the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

- 6.2.5 Enter the applicable carcass certification data in the Conformance Assessment Management System (CAMS).

7. Change Record

The following changes were made to QAD 523: *Verification According to Live Animal and Carcass Schedules* version 08/24/2016.



- a. Added section 5.1: Applicant Responsibilities
- b. Added items 5.2.3 and 5.2.4
- c. Renamed items 6.1 and 6.2
- d. Administrative revisions such as: changing schedule to specification, verification to certification, facility to applicant, agents to personnel
- e. Replaced QAD 523A Form with the AAA Live Animal/Carcass Specification Worksheet

Jennifer G. Porter, Director
Quality Assessment Division
Livestock and Poultry Program

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.