

Live Animal Specification Red Angus Association of America

1 SCOPE

This specification sets forth the requirements for live cattle eligible for certification in approved beef programs claiming Angus influence. Cattle may qualify for the breed influence specification by meeting the Genotype or Phenotype requirements specified below.

2 REQUIREMENTS

Cattle eligible for Angus influence certified beef programs must meet the following:

- 2.1 **Genotype:** Cattle eligible for Angus influence beef programs based on the genotype portion of the requirement must have positive identification (ear tags, tattoos, brands, etc.) and be traceable back to provable (e.g., registration papers) Red Angus parentage. Cattle enrolled in the RAAA, Red Angus Feeder Calf Certification PVP qualify by being traceable to one registered parent (typically sire) and have the Red Angus Feeder Cattle Certification Program yellow tag (program compliant visual, EID and/or EID combo tag).
- 2.2 **Phenotype:** Cattle eligible for certification in Angus influence beef programs need also possess the following phenotype (appearance); that is, they must have a main body that is solid red with no color behind the shoulder, above the flanks, or breaking the midline behind the shoulders, excluding the tail. Carcasses from live animals which display certain non-Angus characteristics (e.g., dairy conformation, Holsteins, Brahman humps) will be excluded as specified in the carcass specifications for approved programs.

3 VERIFICATION

Compliance with genotype and phenotype requirements will be determined and controlled through a quality management program approved and monitored by the Livestock and Poultry Program. Three options are available to ensure that live animals comply with the specified requirements: (1) continuous USDA, Quality Assessment Division (QAD) supervision, (2) ante-mortem lot inspection, and (3) program monitoring. Under the first two options, QAD personnel certify that the animals meet the specified requirements prior to slaughter. Procedures for these two options will be developed on an individual plant basis and must be approved by the local QAD supervisor. Under option 3, the procedure described in 3.1 are followed.



3.1 Program Monitoring Procedures

During the time of harvest, trained slaughter plant employees will determine those animals that meet the RAAA live Animal Specification and identify the carcasses of those animals with one of the following options: an “R” stamp, red ink on the Achilles Tendons (Gambrel Tendon), or through other identifying markings, approved by the local QAD supervisor. When the plant chooses to mark the carcasses with anything other than the “R” stamp or red dots on the Achilles Tendons, the plant will provide to QAD, a written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) identifying the designated area and marking. This documentation will be posted in each QAD office so that all QAD personnel can access this information.

Regarding cattle that are genetically identified under the Live Animal Specification, the identity of the qualifying lots must be maintained with the “R” stamp, red dots on the Achilles Tendons, or other approved identifying marking, applied to the carcass.

Employees conducting these program procedures must display program identification whenever they are performing live animal identification duties. USDA, QAD personnel will conduct unannounced, random checks of these approved employees’ work to monitor compliance with the procedures, as shown in Table I. USDA, QAD personnel will evaluate the employees work for a period of two to five minutes during each evaluation. QAD personnel will record any observations of the list of defects that are shown in Table II.

TABLE I. MONITORING FREQUENCY

Slaughter Rate Number of Cattle/Shift	Frequency of the Monitoring Periods**
Up to 500	2
501-1,000	4
1,001-1,500	6
1,501-2,000	8
Over 2,000	10

** QAD personnel can randomly determine the times of actual observations before the beginning of the slaughter shift based on the plant’s expected slaughter rate for the shift.



TABLE II. DEFECTS

Defect Categories		
Major	Minor	Defects
101	-	Not solid red (evidence of another color) behind the shoulders or above the flanks.
102	-	Untrained plant employee performing live animal identification.
	202	Trained plant employee performing live animal identification without displaying program identification.
	203	Carcasses offered to QAD personnel for certification that does not have approved stamp or mark as meeting the requirements.
	204	Designated stamp or mark not placed on approved area of carcass.

Major Defect 101 applies to cattle that are not genotypically qualified.

Normal Program Monitoring

Normal program monitoring is performed using the designated frequencies for defect detections, known as “normal monitoring level.” If no defects are observed under normal program monitoring levels, the designated frequency of monitoring will continue per plant shift.

Accelerated Program Monitoring

However, if observation is made by USDA, QAD personnel of any major defect, two minor defects within a week, or three minor defects within four weeks, will immediately result in accelerated monitoring during the next shift. Accelerated monitoring results in the shift that had the defect observation will have monitoring doubled for two weeks. If no defects are observed within that two-week span, the plant shift will revert to the normal monitoring level.

Full QAD Supervision

If any major defect or two minor defects are observed during accelerated program monitoring, the identification program will be placed under 100% USDA QAD Supervision for a period of two weeks. After two weeks of 100% supervision with no defects observed, the program will revert to accelerated monitoring and meet those requirements before going to normal program monitoring levels as described in Table I.

Each shift is monitored independently, meaning the defect recorded on the day shift will not affect the level of inspection for the night shift. Therefore, a plant could be on accelerated monitoring for the day shift but normal monitoring on the night shift.



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