

**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. Choice and Select steer and heifer beef carcasses which: (a) meet the American Hereford Association's live animal specification (December 2003), (b) are practically free (not detracting from visual quality) of capillary rupture in the ribeye muscle, (c) are free of "dark cutting" characteristics, and (d) meet the following set of requirements:

1. A yield grade of 4.9 or numerically lower;
2. Lean color, texture, firmness, and overall skeletal characteristics, each of which must meet the requirements for A maturity in the U.S. Choice and Select grade;
3. A marbling score of Slight 00 to Moderate 99;
4. Medium or fine marbling texture;
5. Hot carcass weight of 600 to 1,000 pounds;
6. Moderately thick or thicker muscling and tend to be at least moderately wide and at least thick in relation to their length; and
7. Rhomboideus muscle shall not exceed 2 inches in height.

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

Item 4 shall be evaluated using the USDA-AMS-LS-SB-02 Marbling Texture card.

Item 6, muscle thickness, is evaluated by averaging the thickness of the various parts, considering not only the proportion (%) each part is the carcass but also the general value of each part. Superior muscle thickness implies a high proportion of meat to bone and a high proportion of the weight of the carcass in the more valuable parts.

Item 7 shall be measured from a line formed by the extension of the top line (including the fat) and measuring the lean muscle (excluding the fat) perpendicular to that line in the center of the hump.

CERTIFICATION

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 Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch procedures. The AMS agent shall certify acceptable carcasses and complete the Live Animal/Carcass Certification Worksheet (Form LS-5-6).

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 Certified Hereford Beef products or Nuestro Rancho products shall be in compliance with Food Safety and Inspection Service regulations and policy guidelines, MGC Branch instructions and Livestock and Seed Program Policy Standardization Procedure 2 (LS Policy SP2; issued July 25, 2002).