



Meat Grading & Certification Branch

High Quality Beef (HQB) Program

Scope

Livestock approved under the High Quality Beef (HQB) Program are eligible for certification by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) as "High Quality Beef". This instruction provides requirements for participation in the HQB Program. Verification and monitoring services for the HQB Program will be conducted by Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch, Quality Systems Verification Program (QSVP) according to MGC Instruction 700 Quality Systems Verification Program General Policies and Procedures for All Programs and MGC Instruction 701 Quality Systems Verification Program Guidelines for Process Verified Programs (PVP).

Program Requirements

1. Livestock must not be more than 30 months of age at time of slaughter. The age of cattle will be determined through either birth records or physiological evaluation of the carcasses, as described in the Official U. S. Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef. The age of buffalo will be determined through birth records, since there is no official standard method of determining buffalo age through physiological evaluation.
2. Livestock must have been fed a nutritionally balanced, high energy feed concentration ration containing no less than 70% grain and at least 20 pounds total feed per day for a minimum of 100 days. This requirement will be verified through the evaluation of feeding and ration records.
 - a. HQB must either meet the programs age and feed requirements or be graded USDA "Prime" or "Choice".
 - b. Veal and Calf must be graded USDA "Prime" or "Choice" since veal and calf are not produced according to the required feeding criteria.
 - c. Buffalo must meet the programs age and feed requirements, since USDA grade names are not applicable to Buffalo.

3. Livestock must be obtained from and traceable to, approved sources as listed on the *Official Listing of High Quality Beef Producer's* located on the USDA internet website; <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg>.

Program requirements described in this document and set forth by the LS Program's Quality Systems Verification Program are available on the USDA's Internet website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/Lsg/arc/ARC1000.pdf> or by contacting the MGC Branch office at (720) 497-2520.

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