

December 16, 2010

## **NOTICE TO THE TRADE**

### **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION TO DEVELOP A VOLUNTARY GRADE STANDARD FOR MEAT GOAT CARCASSES AND CUTS**

The Livestock and Seed (LS) Program of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) invites goat producers, suppliers, processors, retailers, and other interested parties to provide background information, comments, and data to assist in the development of voluntary USDA standards for meat goat carcasses and cuts. Information, comments, and data should be submitted to the address indicated below by February 1, 2011.

The LS Program's Standards, Analysis and Technology (SAT) Branch develops and maintains product and carcass standards for many different meat commodities. Recent interaction with members of the meat goat industry, through various university research projects and industry meetings, has highlighted the need for meat goat carcass and cut standards. Currently, there is a voluntary standard for live meat goats. Additionally, USDA published selection descriptions for goats in 2001 after the development of the Institutional Meat Purchasing Specifications for Fresh Goat.

The purpose of this notice is to identify recent research, industry data, and background information that could assist in the development of meat goat product standards. Specific information is needed about meat goat products. Carcass and cut standards would promote value differentiation, and create more objective market signals up and down the product and processing chain. Product standards can also assist producers, processors, and retail segments in making informed management and marketing decisions.

To assist USDA in developing voluntary meat goat product standards, background information, comments, and data are requested concerning the following:

1. Should USDA develop voluntary meat goat carcass and cut standards?
2. What key components should be included in voluntary USDA meat goat carcass and cut standards?
3. What meat goat live and carcass factors are currently being used by meat goat producers, processors, and marketers to determine value?
4. Based on quality determining characteristics in the live meat goat, should the same or similar attributes be considered for evaluation of meat goat carcasses and cuts?

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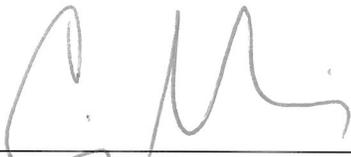
### Page 2

5. Should the carcass and cut standards include both quality and cutability (yield) determinations?
6. Are there currently any established meat goat carcass and/or cut standards being used by producers, processors, or marketers that could be useful in developing a new USDA standard?
7. Depending upon how goat meat is consumed (whole muscle cuts, ground or chopped, processed), what type of standards would best reflect value based on end-user quality preferences?
8. What are consumer's expectations of goat meat quality and how should a standard reflect those expectations?
9. How many tiers or levels of quality and/or yield should a meat goat standard set forth?

We request your input regarding any background information, technical data, or research that you have, with regards to meat goat products. Additionally, we realize there may be challenges or issues along the way in the development of a standard, and would like to have your input on that as well.

Please send written information, comments, and data to: Meat Goat Grade Standards, Room 2607-S, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250--0254, or by facsimile to (202) 720-1112; or email: [Martin.OConnor@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Martin.OConnor@ams.usda.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Martin E. O'Connor, Chief, Standards, Analysis, and Technology Branch, Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA, Room 2607-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0254; facsimile: (202) 720-1112; telephone: (202) 720-4486; or email: [Martin.OConnor@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Martin.OConnor@ams.usda.gov).



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