USDA GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION OF THE SANITARY DESIGN AND FABRICATION OF MEAT AND POULTRY PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

February 2009
A. **SCOPE:**

These guidelines set forth the principles and procedures for the evaluation, acceptance, and certification of the sanitary design and fabrication features of equipment and utensils intended for use in the slaughter, processing, or packaging of livestock and poultry products.

The Dairy Grading Branch is a user fee supported service. Therefore, charges will be made for the review of drawings, utensils, or equipment, and for related travel and other expenses.

Dairy Grading Branch policy fully supports and utilizes the standards developed and published by the NSF/3-A Joint Committee on Food Processing Equipment. Copies of the ANSI/NSF/3-A Standards can be obtained from:

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Techstreet
310 Miller Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Phone: (800) 699-9277  Internet: www.techstreet.com
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NSF/3-A Standards provide criteria for materials, design and fabrication of equipment or utensils used in the slaughter, processing and packaging of livestock and poultry products. There are currently three standards available for use by the meat and poultry processing industry, and they are: *Hygiene Requirements for the Design of Meat and Poultry Processing Equipment, ANSI/NSF/3-A 14159-1-2002*.; *Hygiene Requirements for the Design of Hand Held Tools Used in Meat and Poultry Processing, ANSI/NSF/3-A 14159-2-2003*; and *Hygiene Requirements for the Design of Mechanical Belt Conveyors Used in Meat and Poultry Processing, ANSI/NSF/3-A 14159-3-2005*. Additional standards may be developed in the future as specific needs occur.

The Agricultural Marketing Service does not require that livestock and poultry equipment or utensils be presented to USDA for review. However, if upon routine inspection deficiencies with materials, design, fabrication, or workmanship are observed, which appear to violate the applicable standards, the inspection agency, the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), may request the processing plant, and subsequently the fabricator, to make appropriate modifications.

Companies may optionally request a USDA-Dairy Grading Branch review to minimize the likelihood of such complaints.

Equipment buyers are encouraged to request USDA-Dairy Grading Branch acceptance for equipment as a provision of a purchase contract. The requirement should be clearly written so as not to confuse USDA-Dairy Grading Branch acceptance with compliance with other requirements, such as those of the USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) or State inspection agencies which are not provided for within this service.

B. **REQUESTS FOR SERVICE PROCEDURES:**
To initiate a sanitary design review, the prospective applicant may contact the Dairy Grading Branch by telephone, fax, e-mail, or mail. Each request for inspection is to be accompanied by an **Equipment Review Request** form (See Exhibit 1.) If the design review will require travel to an inspection site outside of the United States, the necessary information pertaining to foreign travel must be completed on the form.

Applicants are advised that a minimum of 30 working days advance notice is required for any foreign travel and a minimum of 7 working days advance notice is required for domestic travel. Design evaluations and travel to inspection sites are based on a first-come-first-served basis and inspector availability. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Dairy Grading Branch, Washington, DC office to verify inspector availability and schedules prior to submitting a request for service.

Requests for service and drawings may be sent to the following:

**Mailing Address:**
(U.S. Postal Service deliveries) USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs
Dairy Grading Branch
Meat & Poultry Design Review Section
Stop 0230
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC  20250-0230

(Private express mail service deliveries) USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs
Dairy Grading Branch
Meat & Poultry Design Review Section
Room 2746
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250-0230

**Phone**  202-720-7473
**Fax**  202-720-2643
**Internet**  [http://www.ams.usda.gov/MPEquipment](http://www.ams.usda.gov/MPEquipment)

Engineering drawings of the entire piece of equipment or utensil with emphasis on the product contact surfaces and exposed non-product contact surfaces are generally required for evaluation of details for USDA acceptance. Engineering drawings must be of sufficient detail to clearly show:

- The dimensions of each part;
- The materials of construction of each part;
- The minimum radii dimensions of internal angles of less than 135 degrees;
- The product contact surface finish specifications;
- The specifications for welds and other permanent joints;
- The design details for flanges, or gasketed joints which are to include enlarged drawing(s) (at least 2X) of the details of O-ring retaining grooves as appropriate;
- The dimensions of O-rings, gaskets, and any other type of seals;
- Explanations about company welding symbols and metal finishes; and
- Relationship of the part to other components in a subassembly or the full assembly.
Dimensions may be shown in either English or metric measurement terms but must be clearly identified as to which method is being used. The required materials listings and terminology on the drawings should be in English or include translations into English. Concept or assembly drawings should also be provided as they are useful in showing the general configuration of the equipment and the relationship of component parts to each other.

Alternatively, the review can be performed on a finished piece of equipment on-site at either the equipment manufacturer or at a processing plant. The requirements for this type of review are:

- Safe access must be provided;
- The equipment or utensil must be clean and available for inspection;
- Arrangements shall have been made with the processing plant to allow sufficient time to conduct the evaluation;
- Competent personnel shall be available for the disassembly of the equipment to facilitate the evaluation of components of the machine.
- Certifications for all rubber and plastic materials should be available.

C. USDA REVIEW PROCEDURES:

As stated in Section B, each request for inspection is to be accompanied by an Equipment Review Request form (See Exhibit 1.) If the request for service has been made by telephone or e-mail, a completed copy of the form shall be submitted by fax or mail as soon as possible after the request.

Each request will be logged in on the date received. Service will be provided on a first-come-first-serve basis consistent with inspector availability, efficiency and cost management.

In turn, each request will be assigned to a review specialist. The assignments will be made to assure continuity of follow-up inspections with initial evaluations. When appropriate for field evaluations, the assignment will be made to a Livestock and Seed Programs or Poultry Programs employee who has been designated with a collateral duty assignment to assist with the evaluation process. The collateral duty assignment inspector will be under the direct technical supervision of a Dairy Grading Branch Review Specialist.

When assigned to a review specialist, each new project shall be assigned a unique project number. Follow-up evaluations or correspondence pertaining to existing projects shall use the previously assigned project number. The project number will be prefixed by “M” to designate it as a meat and poultry equipment project (e.g. M123456). The project number shall be maintained throughout the evaluation process in order to maintain a complete historical file of all activity performed on a specific piece of equipment or utensil. This may include, in addition to the initial evaluation, multiple follow-up reports, correspondence, possible field evaluations, and re-certification of a design.

Evaluation reports will follow a uniform format to facilitate review and use by field employees. The Reports shall consist of the following components:
Cover Letter:

- Cross reference to project number
- Cross reference to the DE Attachment number
- Inspector Name
- Location and dates of service
- Standards used as review criteria
- Name or type of equipment evaluated
- Special considerations or comments

Detailed Listing of the observations, comments, and recommendations.*

- Inspection of:  (Name of equipment or utensil)
- Model Number:  (Unique Model designation required for eventual USDA acceptance and certification)
- Serial Number:  (If applicable)
- Date:   (Dates of the inspection)
- Inspected by:  (Name of Review Specialist)
- Type of Inspection:  (Initial, Follow-up**, Validation of prior acceptance, Etc.)
- Project Number(s):  (Assigned Project Number)

DE Attachment (DA Form 160, Equipment Review Report) with the billing information.

* If the observations, comments and recommendations are 10 or less, they may be optionally incorporated into the cover letter to reduce the overall size of the report.

** Follow-up inspections shall, whenever possible, maintain the same numbering sequence for observations, comments and recommendations as the initial evaluation. Any new observations, comments and recommendations will be added at the end of the report.

Evaluation reports will be distributed to the Applicant and may be sent to the user or fabricator as designated by the Applicant. File copies are to be maintained both electronically and as hard copies by the Branch.

Upon completion of the evaluation report all pertinent data items will be entered and verified in the USDA Meat and Poultry Equipment database.

DE Attachments (DA Form 160, Equipment Review Report) will be entered into the USDA billing system as soon as possible but in no case less than weekly.

**CERTIFICATION AND DISPLAY OF THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE MARK**
An **Equipment Acceptance Certificate** (See Exhibit 2) may be requested by the Applicant upon successful completion of the review and evaluation process that has demonstrated that the designated model of equipment or utensil complies with the criteria of the appropriate standards. The certificate may include a single model of equipment, a single model of a utensil, or a model series designation of which the various units in the series are of an identical basic design, except for scaling up or down in size.

An Applicant may also optionally request the authority to display the Agricultural Marketing Service official identification mark (See Exhibit 3.) In such case, the Applicant shall submit a completed copy of form DA-155 (See Exhibit 4) to the National Program Coordinator for Grade Labels and Official Identification requesting authorization to display official identification. This form is generally submitted on a one-time basis by the Applicant. However, the form must be updated should the Applicant change its name or relocate its offices.

An authorized Applicant shall then submit a form DA-156 (See Exhibit 5) identifying the specific piece of equipment, utensil, or descriptive or promotional materials upon which the official identification is to be displayed. For a new Applicant, this form may be submitted concurrently with the form DA-155.

**E. Accepted Meat and Poultry Equipment Listing**

Any model of equipment or utensil which has successfully completed the review and evaluation process and has been demonstrated to comply with the criteria of the appropriate standards will be included in the Accepted Meat and Poultry Equipment Listing. The listing will be published semi-annually and available on the Dairy Grading Branch web page. Additions and deletions to the listing which occur during the period between the semi-annual publication dates will be available on the web page only.

**F. Validation of Prior Acceptance**

An Applicant who has any model of equipment or utensil which has successfully completed the review and evaluation process, and is published in the Accepted Meat and Poultry Equipment Listing is required to re-validate its acceptance every four years.

Each applicant will be sent a written notification six months prior to the pending lapse of acceptance and provided with a **REQUEST TO VALIDATE A PRIOR MEAT AND POULTRY EQUIPMENT ACCEPTANCE** form (See Exhibit 6).
G. RESOLUTION OF REPORTS OF NONCOMPLIANCE OF USDA ACCEPTED EQUIPMENT

When a question arises as to whether a piece of USDA Accepted equipment or utensil complies, a user, fabricator, or other interested party may submit a letter of complaint to the Chief of the Dairy Grading Branch via mail, facsimile, or e-mail at:

USDA, AMS, Dairy Programs
Dairy Grading Branch
Design Review Section
Room 2746 - South Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW STOP 0230
Washington, DC 20250-0230
Phone: (202) 720-3171
Fax: (202) 720-2643
E-mail: Ken.Vorgert@usda.gov

The letter should contain the following:

A. The party making the complaint
B. The address and phone number of the complainant
C. The name or type of equipment or utensil in question
D. Where the equipment or utensil is located
E. The equipment or utensil manufacturer
F. The model number and serial number (if known)
G. The specific reason(s) for suspecting noncompliance (reference the standard if known)

Examples: Improper finish on product contact surfaces, piano-style hinge on cover, tack welds on exterior surfaces, or unacceptable materials used for construction. (Noncompliance is not limited to the above examples.)

The Dairy Grading Branch, Equipment Review Staff will act in an expeditious manner to determine the validity of the complaint, and if it is determined to be valid, who is the responsible party.

Equipment Manufacturer Responsibilities

If the equipment manufacturer is determined to be the responsible party and they agree to correct the noncompliance issue, they are to submit an Equipment Review Request (See Exhibit 1) to initiate a USDA review of the corrective actions. The Dairy Grading Branch will then determine with the manufacturer a mutually agreeable time in which to correct the noncompliance of the identified piece of equipment and, if necessary, of all like items in the marketplace with the same deficiency. While the corrections are being made, the USDA Acceptance will continue uninterrupted. Additionally, the manufacturers will provide documentation on their quality control procedures to assure that the noncompliance will not recur.
If the equipment manufacturer is determined to be the responsible party and they decide not to correct the noncompliance, they will be notified that the USDA Acceptance for the equipment is withdrawn. Notification of the withdrawal of USDA Acceptance will be provided to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), State regulatory officials, and appropriate Trade Associations.

The manufacturer is responsible for all costs associated with evaluation of the resolution of the noncompliance.

**Equipment User Responsibilities**

If the equipment user is determined to be the responsible party and they agree to correct the noncompliance, they are to submit an Equipment Review Request (See Exhibit 1) to initiate a USDA review of the corrective actions. The Dairy Grading Branch will determine with the user a mutually agreeable time in which to correct the noncompliance. While the corrections are being made, the USDA Acceptance will continue uninterrupted.

If the equipment user is determined to be the responsible party and they decide not to correct the nonconformance, they will be notified that the USDA Acceptance for their specific piece of equipment is withdrawn. Notification of the withdrawal of USDA Acceptance will be provided to the FSIS, State regulatory officials, appropriate Trade Associations, and the equipment manufacturer.

The user is responsible for all costs associated with evaluation of the resolution of the noncompliance.
### Equipment Review Request

**Applicant (Name and Address)**

**Party Responsible for Payment if other than Applicant (Name and Address)**

**Confirmation Required (Letter or Fax) Received**

**Equipment Located at (Name and Address)**

**Website**

**Tax Identification No. (TIN) (new applicant only)**

**Contact**

**Telephone**

**Fax**

**Type of Equipment:**

- [ ] Dairy
- [ ] Livestock and Poultry
- [ ] 3-A Third Party Verification
- [ ] Appeal

**Signature of Applicant**

**Date**

**Email**

**Domestic Inspection:**

A minimum of seven (7) working days notification is required to insure specialists have ample time to make arrangements for the trip. If specialists are unavailable, the next available date acceptable to all parties will be assigned.

**Foreign Inspection:**

A minimum of thirty (30) working days advance notice is required for any foreign travel. The 30 days will start from the date this request form is received by the Dairy Grading Branch. If specialists are unavailable, the next available date acceptable to all parties will be assigned.

**Hotel accommodations (USDA Dairy must pay):**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

**Best mode of transportation from airport (train, taxi, company pickup...):**

**Mail or Fax this form to the address below:**

**Dairy Equipment Review**, and **Livestock and Poultry Equipment Review Address:**

USDA/AMS/DAIRY PROGRAMS
Dairy Grading Branch
Design Review Section
Room 2746 – South Building
1400 Independence Ave. SW STOP 0230
Washington, DC 20250-0230
Tel: 202 720-3171
Fax: 202 720-2643

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0126. The time required to complete this collection of information is estimated to average 5 minutes per person including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communications of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) – 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

**Date Received:**

**Specialist Assigned:**

**Date Assigned:**

**Project Number (s):**

DA-162 (01-09) Destroy previous edition dated 10-03
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

EQUIPMENT ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

Firm:

Model Designation:

Date of Issuance

Date of Expiration

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Agricultural Marketing Service
Dairy Grading Branch
1400 Independence Ave SW Mail Stop 0230
Washington, DC 20250-0230

The issuance of this form is based on U.S. Department of Agriculture, Dairy Grading Branch, Equipment Design Review Section, evaluation of the equipment listed above for compliance with:

This form does not limit USDA’s responsibility to take appropriate action in cases in which evidence of non-compliance, improper maintenance, or non-sanitary conditions have been observed.

United States Department of Agriculture

APPLICATION TO USE OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION OR GRADE LABELS

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid control number for this information is 0581-0126. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 minute per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply for all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communications of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call (800) 245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

USDA official identification or grade labels may not be used unless a completed application has been received and approved.

Application is hereby made, in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate sections of the Regulations Governing the Inspection and Grading of Manufactured or Processed Dairy Products (7 CFR, Ch. I, Part 58, Subpart A), or the Regulations Governing the Certification of Sanitary Design and Fabrication of Equipment Used in the Slaughter, Processing, and Packaging of Livestock and Poultry Products (7 CFR, Ch. I, Part 54, Subpart C), for the privilege of using official identification or grade labels on product packaging materials, equipment, utensils, or descriptive or promotional materials.

In requesting this privilege, the applicant (listed below) agrees to conform to the aforesaid regulations and such instructions as may be issued by the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service covering inspection, grading and evaluation of products, packaging materials, equipment, utensils, or descriptive or promotional materials. The applicant further agrees to furnish copies of the official identification or grade labels at no cost to the Government.

The applicant further agrees not to offer for sale or publicly display any inspected, graded or evaluated product in packaging materials, equipment, utensils, descriptive or promotional materials bearing official identification or grade label under a trade name other than that of the applicant unless such trade name is submitted, together with the proper address, to the Administrator at the time approval is requested of the official identification or grade label to be used.

In the event the privilege to use official identification or grade labels on product packaging materials, equipment, utensils, or descriptive or promotional materials is withdrawn in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the aforesaid regulations, the applicant agrees to promptly place under the jurisdiction and control of a USDA licensed grader or design review specialist all packaging materials, descriptive or promotional materials, and other supplies bearing printed reference to the inspected, graded or evaluated character of the products, equipment, or utensils for such subsequent use by the applicant as may be approved by the Administrator.

Name, Address and Plant No. (if applicable) of Applicant:

Send this form and attached materials to:

Grade Label Coordinator
USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs
Dairy Grading Branch
Room 2746-S
1400 Independence Ave. SW - STOP 0230
Washington, DC 20250-0230
Tel: 202-720-3171
Fax: 202-720-2643

Name and Title of Applicant Representative (Print or Type):

Applicant Representative Signature:  Date:

Approval By Chief Dairy Grading Branch:  Date:  Control Number:

Form DA-155 (07-03) Destroy all previous editions.
REQUEST TO DISPLAY OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION OR GRADE LABELS

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid control number for this information is 0581-0126. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 minute per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply for all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communications of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s Target Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call (800) 245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

USDA official identification or grade labels may not be used unless a completed application has been received and approved.

Application is hereby made, in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate sections of the Regulations Governing the Inspection and Grading of Manufactured or Processed Dairy Products (7 CFR, Ch. I, Part 58, Subpart A), or the Regulations Governing the Certification of Sanitary Design and Fabrication of Equipment Used in the Slaughter, Processing, and Packaging of Livestock and Poultry Products (7 CFR, Ch. I, Part 54, Subpart C), for the privilege of displaying official identification or grade labels on the following product packaging materials, equipment, utensils, or descriptive or promotional materials. The applicant (listed below) affirms compliance to the aforesaid regulations and such instructions as may be issued by the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service covering inspection, grading and evaluation of products, packaging materials, equipment, utensils, or descriptive or promotional materials, and attests that an approved Application To Use Official Identification or Grade Labels, Form DA-155 is on file with Dairy Programs.

Three copies of the product packaging materials or descriptive or promotional materials displaying the official identification or grade label are attached or, if this request has been faxed for review, are being mailed under separate cover.

Product packaging materials, equipment, utensils, or descriptive or promotional materials to display official identification or grade label (Brand name, item description, etc.):

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Name, Address and Plant No. (if applicable) of Applicant: 

Distributor if different from Applicant: 

Send this form and attached materials to:

Grade Label Coordinator
USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs
Dairy Grading Branch
Room 2746-S
1400 Independence Ave. SW - STOP 0230
Washington, DC 20250-0230
Tel: 202-720-3171
Fax: 202-720-2643

Name and Title of Applicant Representative (Print or Type): Telephone: Fax: 

Applicant Representative Signature: Date: 

Form DA-156 (07-03) Destroy all previous editions.
REQUEST TO VALIDATE A PRIOR MEAT AND POULTRY EQUIPMENT ACCEPTANCE

Application is hereby made, in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate sections of the Regulations Governing the Inspection and Grading of Manufactured or Processed Dairy Products (7 CFR, Ch. I, Part 58, Subpart A), or the Regulations Governing the Certification of Sanitary Design and Fabrication of Equipment Used in the Slaughter, Processing, and Packaging of Livestock and Poultry Products (7 CFR, Ch. I, Part 54, Subpart C), for validation of a prior meat and poultry equipment acceptance. The applicant (listed below) certifies to the statements made below and affirms compliance to the aforesaid regulations and such instructions as may be issued by the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service covering evaluation and certification of equipment or utensils by the Dairy Programs.

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I certify that the design, materials of construction, and fabrication of the above referenced equipment or utensil has not been modified, changed, or revised and remains the same as previously reviewed and accepted by the Dairy Grading Branch.

I certify that the design, materials of construction, or fabrication of the above referenced equipment or utensil has been modified and that all modifications, changes, or revisions to the design, materials of construction, or fabrication are submitted for evaluation in the attached engineering drawings or listing of materials. I further acknowledge that if the submitted information is not evaluated before the expiration date of my equipment or utensil that the accepted listing will be deleted until completion of the evaluation.

I request that our listing for acceptance of the above referenced equipment or utensil be deleted.

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<th>Signature of Applicant President/CEO:</th>
<th>Signature of Applicant Director of Engineering:</th>
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