



*United States Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
Livestock and Seed Division  
Meat Grading and Certification Branch*

Public Law 272 - 84 Congress  
Chapter 632 - 1st Session  
S. 1757

AN ACT

All 69 Stat. 553. To amend  
the Act known as the "Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946,"  
approved August 14, 1946

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of  
Representatives of the United States of America in  
Congress assembled, That subsection (h) of section  
203 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946  
(7 U.S.C. 1622 (h)) is hereby amended by adding at  
the end thereof the following new sentence: "Whoever  
knowingly shall falsely make, issue, alter, forge, or  
counterfeit any official certificate, memorandum, mark,  
or other identification, or device for making such mark  
or identification, with respect to inspection, class,  
grade, quality, size, quantity, or condition, issued or  
authorized under this section or knowingly cause or pro-  
cure, or aid, assist in, or be a party to, such false making,  
issuing, altering, forging, or counterfeiting, or whoever  
knowingly shall possess, without promptly notifying the  
Secretary of Agriculture or his representative, utter,  
publish, or use as true, or cause to be uttered, published,  
or used as true, any such falsely made, altered, forged,  
or counterfeited official certificate, memorandum, mark,  
identification, or device, or whoever knowingly represents  
that an agricultural product has been officially inspected  
or graded (by an authorized inspector or grader) under the  
authority of this section when such commodity has in fact  
not been so graded or inspected shall be fined not more  
than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or  
both."

(60  
Stat.  
1088.)

Sec. 2. The farm produce inspection clause con-  
tained in various appropriation Acts (7 U.S.C. 414)  
and the second, third, and fourth sentences of  
section 1 of the Produce Agency Act of March 3,  
1927 (7 U.S.C. 492) are hereby repealed.

Repeals

(44  
Stat.  
1355.)

Approved August 9, 1955.

Official USDA Grade Terminology

- Beef:**            **Quality Grades**        - Prime, Choice, Select, Standard, Commercial, Utility, Cutter, Canner.  
                  **Yield Grades**            - Yield Grade 1, Yield Grade 2, Yield Grade 3, Yield Grade 4, Yield Grade 5.
- Lamb:**           **Quality Grades**        - Prime, Choice, Good, Utility, Cull.  
                  **Yield Grades**            - Yield Grade 1, Yield Grade 2, Yield Grade 3, Yield Grade 4, Yield Grade 5.
- Veal/Calf:**    **Quality Grades Only** - Prime, Choice, Good, Standard, Utility.
- Pork:**            U.S. No. 1, U.S. No.2, U.S. No. 3, U.S. No. 4, U.S. Utility.

**NOTE:** Currently pork is not officially graded by USDA and, therefore, may not be labeled or advertised by grade.

Examples of Public Law 272 Noncompliance

- Representing, verbally or written, red meat as being graded when it has not been graded.
- Misuse of official USDA shields or facsimiles thereof.
- Advertising "USDA" with unofficial grade terminology (e.g., "USDA" Heavy Western Beef).
- Labeling red meat by-products (oxtails, liver, hearts, etc.) with official USDA grade terminology.
- Advertising or labeling of ground or diced products with official USDA grade terminology, unless the establishment exclusively sells that specific grade or has a written quality control program in place to ensure correct grade usage.
- Labeling any graded red meat with a different grade (e.g., graded Prime, labeled as Choice)
- Using improper grade terminology on other species (e.g., Choice pork, Select lamb).
- Advertising a particular grade and not having that grade available (e.g., restaurant menu states Choice T-Bone steak and Choice is not available).
- Linking of official USDA grade terminology with private name on ungraded red meat (e.g., Frank's Choice).
- When advertising one grade exclusively and having additional grades and/or ungraded available (e.g., "We sell only USDA Choice").
- Use of "USDA Certified" when the red meat has not been officially certified by an AMS agent.

Examples of Official USDA Shields

