



Import Grading

1. Purpose

This Procedure defines Quality Assessment Division (QAD) procedures for grading imported meat.

2. Policy

Exemptions to the regulations are reviewed by the QAD Director and approved when it is determined that providing service would facilitate the marketing, distribution, processing, or utilization of agricultural products through commercial channels.

3. References

The following documents are used for the application of this Procedure. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

[*7 CFR 54: Meats, Prepared Meats, and Meat Products \(Grading, Certification and Standards\)*](#)

[*U.S. Standards for Grade of Carcass Beef*](#)

[*U.S. Standards for Grades of Veal and Calf Carcasses*](#)

[*U.S. Standards for Grades of Lamb, Yearling Mutton, and Mutton Carcasses*](#)

[*QAD 106 Procedure: Grading Exemptions*](#)

[*QAD 500 Procedure: Beef, Bullock, and Bull Grading Methods and Procedures*](#)

[*QAD 501 Procedure: Lamb, Yearling Mutton, and Mutton Grading Methods and Procedures*](#)

[*QAD 502 Procedure: Veal and Calf Grading Methods and Procedures*](#)

4. Request an Exemption

- 4.1 Applicants must request and obtain an exemption to the applicable section(s) within 7 CFR part 54 regulation. For example, [Section 54.13\(b\)](#) of the AMS regulations, which states: "Meat of all eligible species shall be graded only in the establishments where the animal was slaughtered or initially chilled..."

NOTE: Canada, which has a "blanket exemption" to grade imported beef carcasses, sides, or quarters. ([See QAD 106 Procedure: Grading Exemptions](#)).

- 4.2 The QAD Director approves exemption requests.
- 4.3 Identify quarters so that hindquarters can be matched to forequarters and presented as carcasses or sides.
- 4.4 Applicants must notify the USDA grader that imported products are being presented for grading.



5. Required Marks on Meat of Foreign Origin

- 5.1 To be eligible for grading, imported meat must be marked as prescribed in [Section 54.5](#) of the AMS regulations. Additionally, when imported meat is presented for grading, applicants must apply for and obtain an exemption to the imprinting requirements [Section 54.13\(b\)](#) of the AMS regulations, which states: "Meat of all eligible species shall be graded only in the establishment where the animal was slaughtered or initially chilled..."
- 5.2 Imported product(s) must bear the appropriate inspection stamps or legends, or other approved method for identifying country of origin prior to performing any grading or certification service.
- 5.3 Certified meat previously exported to a foreign country which is reentering the United States, as well as uncertified imported meat, is eligible for meat grading and/or certification services only when admitted and accepted into the United States by inspectors employed by FSIS.
- 5.4 The QAD Director is authorized to approve marks of foreign origin which meet the criteria set forth in [Section 54.5](#) of the AMS regulations. Files of these marks are to be retained on AGNIS in the Meat Plant Data files.
- 5.5 Meat graders who have questions regarding the grading of imported meat or suspect that carcasses offered for grading may be of foreign origin, although not represented as such by the applicant, will contact their supervisor before applying any grade marks.

6. Change of Record

- 6.1 Revised Section 4.2 to QAD Director approving exemptions.
- 6.2 Removed Section 6 **Requirements for Grading Imported Ribs and Loins.**

7. Supersedes

- 7.1 QAD 504 Procedure: *Import Grading*; August 31, 2018.

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