

PORTION CONTROL CERTIFICATION

Purpose

This instruction provides guidelines for USDA graders to certify the weight, thickness, and shape of a portioned product.

Policy

Applicants shall supply graders with a copy of the contract/approved specification prior to production. The contract/approved specification shall specify the portion weight, thickness, and/or shape of the product to be certified, as applicable. Sampling frequency and tolerances for the various attributes are according to appropriate sample plan.

Procedures

I. Red Meat Products

For assistance in specifying weight, see weight ranges tables. Unless other portion weight/thickness tolerances are specified by the purchaser, the following tables shall be used. When both weight and thickness are specified, it is recommended that those requirements be limited to items that are mechanically pressed and/or sliced.

Portion Thickness Tolerances

Specified Thickness	Thickness Tolerance	Thickness Uniformity
1 inch (25mm) or less	+/- 3/16 inch (5mm)	3/16 inch (5mm)
More than 1 inch (25mm)	+/- 1/4 inch (6mm)	1/4 inch (6mm)

Thickness measurements not applicable within 1/4 inch (6 mm) of edge. Also, value listed under thickness uniformity is the maximum allowable difference between the thinnest and thickest measurement of an individual chop or steak. Unless otherwise specified, the shape of whole muscle portion cuts shall resemble the approximate shape relative to the cut of origin. Cubed and braising steaks which are mechanically pressed and sliced shall be uniform in shape. Unless otherwise specified, patties shall be round.

II. Poultry and Red Meat

Determine compliance with the weight requirements listed for each weight class in the following chart. Compliance is determined by checking 10 servings of finished product each sampling interval. Product failing to meet listed requirements as a result of one serving in the sample exceeding the + 10% weight variation requirements may be resampled on a stationary lot basis when requested by management. If no further deviations are encountered, the production representing the sampling interval may be accepted. Reject product exceeding the tolerances listed in the following chart.

PRODUCT WEIGHT SPECIFIED	UP TO 3 OZ.	OVER 3 OZ. TO 7 OZ.	OVER 7 OZ. TO 3 LBS.	OVER 3 LBS. TO 10 LBS.	OVER 10 LBS.
Lower limit For individual weight	10% below specified weight <u>1/</u>	½ oz. below specified weight	1 oz. below specified weight	1½ oz. below specified weight	1% below specified weight
Lower limit for average 10 units	Meet or exceed specified weight	1/8 oz. Below specified weight	¼ oz. below specified weight	3/8 oz. below specified weight	Meet or exceed specified or marked weight
Upper limit for unit individual weight	10% above specified weight <u>1/</u>	½ oz. above specified weight	1 oz. above specified weight	1½ oz. above specified weight	N/A
Upper limit for average 10 units	Meet or exceed specified or marked weight	¼ oz. above specified or marked weight	3/8 oz. above specified or marked weight	½ oz. above specified or marked weight	N/A

1/ Upper and lower limits do not apply on products weighing 1 ounce or less.

For products on which portion weight is specified as units per pound, determination of compliance with the individual portion weight requirement will be determined with a ± 5 percent tolerance for the number of items in a 10-pound sample. For example, franks specified as 9-per-pound must number 85 to 95 franks in the 10-pound sample. Nugget or patty weights may be checked as they exit the fryer when specifically requested by management. When the weight requirement is specified as a range, for example, "primary container weight shall be 9-11 pounds," product outside the weight range is considered a defect.

When dimension (length, diameter, and thickness) for shaped and formed products such as nuggets and patties is specified, compliance shall be determined by measuring the forming plates at the start of each production shift. When dimension is specified for products that are not shaped and formed, use the following criteria to determine compliance:

1. When an acceptable range is specified, for example, "length shall be 9 to 17 inches," product outside the range is considered a defect.
2. When dimensional requirements have a specific requirement rather than a range, use the following tolerances to determine compliance:

Length or Diameter	Tolerance per Individual Unit
Up to 6 inches	+/- 1/4 inch
6 to 12 inches	+/- 1/2 inch
Over 12 inches	+/- 3 %

To determine compliance with these requirements, check 10 units of product cooked or frozen each sampling period and apply the defect tolerance.