



USDA Export Verification (EV) Program Specified Product Requirements for Beef - Japan

1 Purpose

This document provides the specified product requirements for marketing U.S. beef to Japan under the USDA Export Verification (EV) Program. It also provides the additional requirements for the USDA Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program for marketing U.S. beef to Japan.

2 Scope

This document applies to U.S. companies, producers, feedlots, slaughterers, fabricators (*fabricators perform the initial separation, or cutting of carcasses into wholesale cuts*) that supply beef and beef offal that are eligible for export to Japan as listed on the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) website. Companies must meet the specified product requirements for Japan under the EV Program through an approved USDA QSA Program. The requirements for the USDA QSA Program are defined in *ARC 1002 Procedure, Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program*. The QSA Program ensures that the specified product requirements are supported by a documented quality management system.

Only companies with an approved USDA QSA Program for the EV Program for Japan may label and sell product as meeting the specified product requirements for Japan under the EV Program.

3 Reference Documents

ARC 1000 Procedure, Quality Systems Verification Program General Policies and Procedures

ARC 1002 Procedure, Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program

*MGC Instruction 709 Physiological Maturity Evaluation of Beef Carcasses for Japan Export Program
Physiological Maturity Determination Guidelines - Appendix F*

U.S. Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/stand/standards/beef-car.pdf>

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_&_policies/Index_of_Import_Requirements_by_Country/index.asp

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/arc/evjapan.htm>

4 Additions to the USDA Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program Requirements

The specified product requirements listed in Section 5 of this Procedure must be met through an approved USDA QSA Program. The QSA Program ensures that the specified product requirements are supported by a documented quality management system. In addition to the requirements listed in *ARC 1002 Procedure, Section 7, Program Requirements*, companies must also incorporate the following requirements into their USDA QSA Program:

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of color, race, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or family status, political beliefs, parental status, or protected genetic information. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication 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, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



4.1 *Internal Audit*

The company must conduct internal audits at planned intervals.

The internal audits must determine whether the QMS

- a) Conforms to the planned arrangements, to the requirements of this Procedure, and to the QMS requirements established by the company; and
- b) Is effectively implemented and maintained.

The company must have a documented procedure which defines

- a) The planning of an audit program, which must consider the status and importance of the processes and areas to be audited, as well as the results of the previous audit;
- b) The audit criteria, scope, frequency, and methods;
- c) The selection criteria of the auditors and conduct of auditors which must ensure objectivity and impartiality of the audit process (Auditors must not audit their own work.);
- d) The responsibilities for planning and conducting audits;
- e) The reporting of results;
- f) The follow-up activities (Follow-up activities must include the verification of the actions taken and the reporting of the verification results.); and
- g) The maintenance of records.

Within the area being audited, management must ensure that actions are taken without undue delay to eliminate detected non-conformances and their causes.

The company must maintain records of the internal audits.

4.2 *Company's Suppliers Listing*

The company must maintain an approved suppliers listing which must

- a) Identify the supplier's name, address, and approval date; and
- b) Be available to the USDA for review.

The company must also maintain the date that suppliers were removed from the suppliers listing.

5 **Specified Product Requirements**

5.1 Beef and beef offal that are eligible for export to Japan as listed on the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) website must be processed using the procedures as incorporated into the facility's HACCP or Sanitation SOP's, and must be produced in a manner that ensures the hygienic removal of the following materials and prevents the contamination of these tissues with meat products being produced for export to Japan:

- 5.1.1 Bovine heads (except for hygienically removed tongues and cheek meat, but including tonsils); spinal cords; distal ileum (two meters from connection to caecum); and vertebral column (excluding the transverse processes of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, the wings of the sacrum, and the vertebrae of the tail).



5.2 Eligible products must be derived from cattle that are 20 months of age or younger at the time of slaughter using either one of the following methods (5.2.1 or 5.2.2):

5.2.1 Cattle must be traceable to live animal production records. Verification activities for age requirements must be conducted at the slaughter, feedlot, and producer levels as required by the submitted QSA Program. Records used to verify this requirement must meet any one of the following criteria (5.2.1.1. to 5.2.1.3):

5.2.1.1 Individual Animal Age Verification

5.2.1.1.1 Animals must have a unique individual identification.

5.2.1.1.2 Records must be sufficient to trace the individual animal back to ranch records.

5.2.1.1.3 Records must indicate the actual date of birth of the animal and must accompany each animal through the process.

5.2.1.2 Group Age Verification

5.2.1.2.1 All animals within a group and born during the same birthing season must be individually identified.

5.2.1.2.2 Records must indicate the actual date of birth of the first calf of the birthing season.

5.2.1.2.3 The age of all calves within a group must be derived from the actual date of birth of the first calf born within the group.

5.2.1.2.4 Records indicating the date the bulls are given access to the cows may be used as a supplementary measure verifying the oldest age of animals in the group which is determined in 5.2.1.2.2.

5.2.1.3 USDA Process Verified and USDA Quality System Assessment Programs.

5.2.1.3.1 The USDA Process Verified Program must include age verification as a process verified point as defined in 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2.

5.2.1.3.2 The USDA Quality System Assessment Program for feedlots and producers must include age verification as a specified product requirement as defined in 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2.

5.2.1.3.3 All animals must be individually identified.

5.2.2 Age Verification through Carcass Evaluation.

Official USDA evaluation at the slaughter facility must be conducted as required by the submitted QSA program and meet each of the following criteria (5.2.2.1, 5.2.2.2, and 5.2.2.3):



- 5.2.2.1 Cattle must be determined to be A⁴⁰ physiological maturity or younger by an official USDA evaluation Official USDA evaluations must determine carcasses to be A⁴⁰ physiological maturity or younger using the U.S. Standards for Carcass Beef <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/stand/standards/beef-car.pdf> and the description of maturity characteristics within A maturity (Physiological Maturity Determination Guidelines Appendix F).
- 5.2.2.2 USDA Evaluators must meet or exceed accreditation performance standards for determining physiological maturity as outlined in Meat Grading and Certification Branch Instruction 709 in order to ensure the accuracy of the evaluation.
- 5.2.2.3 USDA Evaluators must keep records for each of the determining factors (skeletal, lean, and overall maturity) for each carcass which is determined to be A⁴⁰ or younger for exportation to Japan.

5.3 Identification Requirements –

- 5.3.1 All carcasses complying with 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 must be uniquely identified. Carcasses complying with the “Age Verification through Carcass Evaluation” must be marked once evaluated and approved by proficiency-tested USDA Evaluators. These identification marks must remain with the product through processing, packaging, storage, and shipping to insure the integrity of the process and the product.
- 5.3.2 Shipping documentation (bills of lading, shipping manifests, or letters of guarantee) must have the statement “Product Meets EV Program Requirements for Japan” and must clearly identify the product and product quantity.
- 5.3.3 Eligible products produced by eligible companies and identified as meeting the requirements of the EV Program for Japan shall receive a FSIS export certificate with the statement “Product Meets EV Program Requirements for Japan”.

6 Listing of Approved Programs

Only U.S. companies that have an approved USDA QSA Program which meets the specified product requirements for Japan will be listed on the *Official Listing of Eligible Companies for the Export Verification (EV) Program for Japan*.

7 Responsibilities

U.S. companies must meet all policies and procedures outlined in this Procedure, *ARC 1000 Procedure, Quality Systems Verification Program General Policies and Procedures*, and *ARC 1002 Procedure, Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program*.