



## GRADING EXEMPTIONS

### 1.0 Purpose

1.1 This Instruction sets forth Quality Assessment Division (QAD) procedures for requesting exemptions to the regulations governing the grading of meat.

### 2.0 Grading Exemptions

2.1 The Deputy Administrator of the Livestock and Poultry (LP) Program grants exemptions. These exemptions are nontransferable between applicants or among an applicant's facilities. The length of exemptions may range from a "one-time-only" to an "indefinite" request.

2.2 Reasons for Requesting an Exemption may include:

2.2.1 The QAD cannot provide grading services in a timely manner.

2.2.2 Religious requirements for slaughter and/or meat preparation conflict with QAD regulations.

2.2.3 Grading occurs at a location other than slaughter or initial chill facility.

2.2.4 Grading of imported meat. ([QAD 504 Procedure: Import Grading](#))

2.2.5 Grading carcasses for export only; this requires ribbing other than what is prescribed in the official grade standards. (Example: 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> rib in lieu of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> rib ([QAD 505 Procedure: Grading Beef Carcasses for Export](#))).

2.3 The *Exemption List* ([QAD 106A Exhibit](#)) is updated as exemptions are granted. The QAD will conduct reviews of all approved exemptions by May 15 of each year to determine which exemptions will remain in effect. Supervisors shall monitor approved grading exemptions and notify the QAD Director of any changes in a plant's status that affect the conditions under which the exemption was granted.

### 3.0 Exemption Request Procedures

3.1 When applying for a grading exemption, applicants are encouraged to work closely with the supervisor responsible for their plant. Applicants must provide the following information when requesting a grading exemption.

3.1.1 The name and address of establishment.

3.1.2 The establishment number.



- 3.1.3 The species and/or class of product.
- 3.1.4 The location of product (if other than establishments of slaughter or initial chill).
- 3.1.5 The form that the product is to be graded in, if other than carcass.
- 3.1.6 The date and time the applicant needs grading services.
- 3.1.7 The length of time, the applicant requests the exemption apply to his/her establishment.
- 3.1.8 The reason(s) that prevent the product to be graded under the regulations.
- 3.1.9 Any additional information, which would be of benefit in determining exemption request.
- 3.2 Applicants are encouraged to submit exemption requests by electronic mail to the QAD Director, Jennifer Porter at [jennifer.porter@ams.usda.gov](mailto:jennifer.porter@ams.usda.gov).

Jennifer G. Porter, Director  
Quality Assessment Division  
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