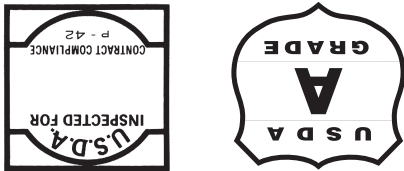


- Product Formulation
- Processing and
- Fabrication
- Transportation
- Temperature
- Portion Control
- Net Weight
- Laboratory
- Analysis
- Packaging
- Storage

USDA's contract acceptance service provides volume poultry buyers the assurance that the products they purchase meet their requirements. Poultry certified as complying with approved contract specifications is identified by the symbol shown above at the right. Contract specifications may include:



Poultry graded according to established official U.S. quality standards are identified by the grademark shown at the left below:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service, offers voluntary grading and contract acceptance services for volume poultry buyers. These services are provided on a fee basis to those who request them. They are performed by professional, well-trained USDA graders.

Services for Volume Poultry Buyers



United States Department of Agriculture
 Agricultural Marketing Service
 Poultry Programs
 AMS-628

Quality Poultry for Volume Buyers



Quality Factors for Poultry Carcasses, Parts, and Products

Quality refers to the usability, desirability, and value of a product that determine its marketability. Experience and research have identified certain properties in poultry that are desired by producers, processors, and consumers.

Standards of quality describe the factors that affect these properties in terms of meat yield, fat covering, and freedom from defects such as cuts and tears in the skin, broken bones, and discolorations on the meat and skin.

Grades apply to poultry of the same kind and class, and are determined based on the intensity, aggregate area, location, and number of defects encountered for each quality factor. The final quality rating (A, B, or C) is based on the factor with the lowest rating.

- Independent, third-party certification of poultry quality based on U.S. standards.
- Assurance of product quality on a continuous basis regardless of supplier.
- A common language that enables buyers and sellers to communicate about poultry quality and other characteristics without actually seeing the product.
- A basis for fair, competitive bidding between suppliers.
- Certification that purchases meet contract specifications for quality, grade, weight, quantity, temperature, packaging, packing, transportation, or other desired product characteristics.

USDA Poultry Grading and Certification Services Provide Many Benefits

- Food Service Operators
- Retailers
- Manufacturers
- Brokers
- Wholesalers
- Exporters

For information about:
 Poultry grading and certification services

Contact:
 USDA, AMS, Poultry Programs
 STOP 0258, Room 3938-South
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20250-0258
 Phone: (202) 720-4411
 Fax: (202) 690-3165
www.ams.usda.gov/poultry

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

USDA, AMS, Poultry Programs
STOP 0258, Room 3938-South
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0258



Quality Assurance and Contract Certification

Services provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)



USDA graders can certify the style and type of packaging and packing containers.



USDA graders check poultry for quality.



USDA graders can certify the weight range or net weight of whole carcasses, parts, or poultry products.



Grade A is the highest grade available.

Grade A whole carcasses and parts:

- ▶ are fully fleshed and meaty.
- ▶ have normal conformation and shape.
- ▶ are free of disjointed or broken bones.
- ▶ are free of feathers.
- ▶ are free of exposed flesh and discolorations.



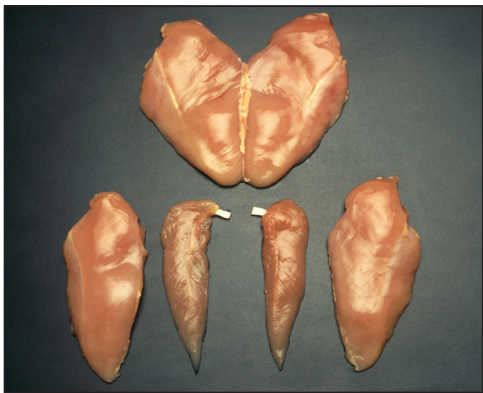
Whole carcass



8-piece cut-up



Breast and leg quarters



Boneless-skinless whole breast, breast halves, and tenderloins



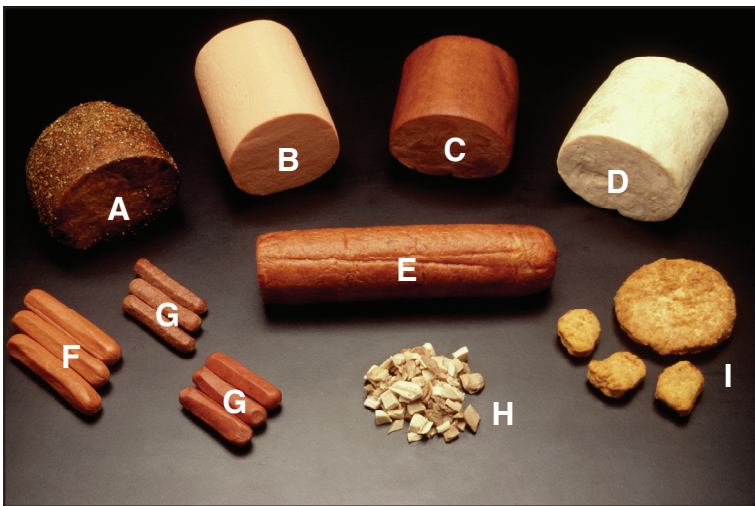
Boneless-skinless thigh and drumstick

Grade A boneless-skinless poultry products:

- ▶ are free of bone, cartilage, tendons, bruises, blood clots, and other discolorations.
- ▶ are free of cuts, tears, holes, or excess trimming around the outer edges of the product.

Further-processed products may be certified for:

- ▶ Formulation
- ▶ Temperature
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Net Weight
- ▶ Storage
- ▶ Processing and Fabrication
- ▶ Packing and Packaging
- ▶ Portion Control
- ▶ Laboratory Analysis



The further-processed poultry products pictured are:

Turkey:

- A** - pastrami
- B** - bologna
- C** - ham
- D** - breast roll
- E** - Canadian bacon
- F** - frankfurters
- G** - sausage links

Chicken:

- H** - cooked diced
- I** - batter/breaded cooked