



Background for Tenderness Marketing Claims

August 2012

The Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program (LPS) originally proposed 13 U.S. Standards for Livestock and Meat Marketing Claims, as a Notice and request for comments, in the December 30, 2002, *Federal Register* (67 FR 79552), including the tender claim for meat and meat products. The submitted comments plus the diversity of claims led to the conclusion that this collection of standards should not be pursued. The public comments received did foster further work to the proposed tender claim standard.

LPS held a forum on March 27, 2007, in Kansas City, Missouri, to discuss the tender claim proposed in the December 30, 2002, Notice. The goal was to examine the potential development of a tender claim that would provide clear and defined parameters for tenderness classifications. The forum was attended by forty-seven scientific and technical experts representing academia, breed and species organizations, packer/purveyor/retailor organizations, instrument manufacturers, corporations and individuals throughout the supply chain. The attendees provided the foundation for a large and diverse tenderness working group. Supporting documents for this and subsequent actions have been posted at www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/TendernessMarketingClaim.

The working group focused on four areas: (1) predictive technologies; (2) methodologies, testing and verification; (3) economic implications; and (4), consumer implications and sensory. These efforts resulted in a second forum held on June 22, 2008, in Gainesville, Florida at the annual meeting of the American Meat Science Association. Findings presented in this setting allowed LPS to draft an approach to a tender marketing claim for meat and meat products.

The *National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act* of 1995 (Public Law 104-113) specifies that government agencies must consult with voluntary consensus standards bodies and must participate with them in the development of voluntary consensus standards. To meet the intent of this law, LPS followed the guidance issued under the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-119, *Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities*.

Several standards organizations were considered. American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International was chosen since other standards have been formulated regarding livestock and meat through this organization. ASTM's Committee F10 on Livestock, Meat, and Poultry Evaluation Systems created sub-committee F10.60 Livestock, Meat and Poultry Marketing Claims. It was through this committee and in consultation with the working group that a tenderness standard was established by consensus. *F2925-11 Tenderness Marketing Claims Associated with Meat Cuts Derived from Beef* was approved on September 1, 2011.

With an approved standard, LPS proceeded towards the development of a protocol for a voluntary service based on the recommendations of the working group. Those recommendations were based on the flexibility requested by industry to evaluate either every carcass or use a Total

Quality Management System. Towards that end, the LPS distributed the January 2012 *DRAFT AMS Standard Practice for ASTM Beef Tenderness Marketing Claims* for certifying or verifying products.

Comments in response to the January 2012 draft indicated that the procedures could be less prescriptive and the draft of July 2012 allowed for more flexibility that would better represent the breadth of the meat industry.

**Tenderness Working Group
(Current and Past Participating Organizations)**

Allen Brothers, Inc.	National Pork Board
American Hereford Association	National Pork Producers Council
American Meat Institute	Nolan Ryan's All-Natural Beef
American Meat Science Association	North American Meat Processors Association
American Sheep Industry Association	North Dakota State University
ASD Inc.	Ohio State University
Cargill, Inc.	Oklahoma State University
Certified Angus Beef LLC	Pfizer Inc.
Chicago Meat Authority	Premium Gold Angus Beef Inc.
Coleman Natural Foods, Inc.	Premium Standard Farms LLC
Colorado State University	Research Management Systems, USA Inc.
e+v Technology GmbH & Co.	Safeway Inc.
Farmland Foods	Seaboard Foods
Food Marketing Institute	Smithfield Packing Co, Inc.
Food Safety Net Services	Standard Meat Co.
Harris Ranch Beef Co.	Sysco Corporation
Hormel Foods, LLC.	Texas A&M University
IdentiGEN North America, Inc.	Texas Tech University
IEH Laboratories & Consulting Group	Tyson Foods, Inc.
Intervet International B.V.	U.S. Meat Export Federation
Iowa State University	University of Florida
JBS USA	University of Georgia
Kansas State University	University of Illinois
Micro Beef Technologies, Ltd.	University of Missouri
National Beef Packing Company, LLC	University of Nebraska
National Cattlemen's Beef Association	USDA Agricultural Research Service
National Grocers Association	USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service
National Meat Association	

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