



MSA Standards Manual

MSA end users

Section

Issue no: 5.0 Date issued: July 2025

Prepared by: Meat & Livestock Australia Authorised by: Meat & Livestock Australia

Meat Standards Australia T: 1800 111 672 W: mla.com.au/msa E: msaenquiries@mla.com.au

© July 2025 Meat & Livestock Australia Limited ABN 39 081 678 364. All rights are expressly reserved. Requests for further authorisation should be directed to info@mla.com.au.

Care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However, MLA, MDC and ISC ("MLA Group") do not accept responsibility for the accuracy, currency or completeness of the information or opinions contained in this publication. This publication is intended to provide general information only. It has been prepared without taking into account your specific circumstances, objectives, or needs. Any forward-looking statements made within this publication are not guarantees of future performance or results, and performance or results may vary from those expressed in, or implied by, any forward-looking statements. No representation, warranty or other assurance is given as to the fairness, accuracy, completeness, likelihood of achievement or reasonableness of forward-looking statements or related assumptions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests. Your use of, or reliance on, any content is entirely at your own risk and the MLA Group accepts no liability for any losses or damages incurred by you as a result of that use or reliance.

'MSA' and 'Meat Standards Australia' are registered trade marks of Meat & Livestock Australia Limited. The MSA 'Graded' symbol is a trade mark of Meat & Livestock Australia Limited.

Table of contents

1 Introduction	
1.1 Instructions for control of this document	10-04
1.2 Owner confirmation	
1.3 Amendments and updates	10-04
1.4 Document control confirmation	10-04
10 End users	
10.1 MSA minimum requirements	
10.1.1 Training	
10.1.2 MSA Inserts	
10.1.3 MSA licence numbers	10-05
10.1.4 Point of sale (POS) material	
10.2 Ordering/purchasing	10-05
10.3 Receival	
10.4 Cold Storage	
10.5 Cutting/fabrication/preparation	10-06
10.5.1 Portion cutting operations	
10.5.2 Preparation for consumption	
10.5.3 Preparation for sale to consumers	10-07
10.5.4 MSA beef product packaged in Modified Atmospheric Packaging (MAP)	
10.5.5 MSA sheepmeat product packaged in Modified Atmospheric Packaging (MAP)	
10.5.6 Freezing of MSA beef and sheepmeat	
10.5.7 Preparation of MSA carcases	
10.5.8 MSA sheepmeat 2005 pathway cut by cook table	
10.6 Portion cutting	10-09
10.7 Dispatch/sale	10-09
10.8 Multi-site Enterprise	
10.9 Reference material	
10.9.1 MSA generic insert	
10.9.2 Example of an acceptable MSA tamper evident label	10-10
10.9.3 Examples of MSA descriptions on carton labels	
10.9.4 MSA invoice examples	10-11

1 Introduction

The Meat Standard Australia (MSA) Standards Manual is divided into a number of sections. Each section is a standalone document that is issued and amended independently of the other sections.

Australian Meat Industry Language and Standards Committee (AMILSC) is the custodian of the MSA Standards.

All sections of the MSA Standards Manual must be used collectively. Certain sections may not be applicable for a specific business, operation, facility or activity. It is the user's responsibility to determine which section is appropriate for their operation.

1.1 Instructions for control of this document

This Standards Manual, available online from MSA, is a controlled document.

Updates to this Standard will occur from time to time. All printed and/or saved copies are uncontrolled and may not be the latest version.

1.2 Owner confirmation

The owner or controller, as registered with the Authorised Authority, shall be informed of any updates relating to the information contained in this Standard. Attached to any updates regarding this Standard will be a form for notification of changes to the owner or controller of the Standard.

1.3 Amendments and updates

Amendments to this Standard will be issued by way of a formal amendment notification where required.

1.4 Document control confirmation

Change history

Date	Change description	lssue no.
03 May 2013	Initial draft	0.1
18 July 2013	Second draft	0.2
03 September 2013	Third draft	0.3
27 November 2013	Initial release	1.0
23 April 2014	Draft update to section 11.1.1	1.1
04 June 2014	Release of update	2.0
20 March 2015	Version 3 updated to include tamper evident label requirements as approved by taskforce (Feb 15) and AMILSC (Mar 15).	3.0
March 2020	Updated to reflect changes associated with release of MSA beef model V2.0.	4.0
July 2025	Updated to reflect the release of the MSA Sheepmeat Model V3.0, and change in audit criteria.	5.0

10 End users

End users, including wholesalers, retailers, supermarkets and foodservice operators, must be licensed with MLA for the MSA program.

10.1 MSA minimum requirements

10.1.1 Training

The Enterprise must ensure all appropriate staff understand the requirements for handling MSA product and must have a staff member trained in MSA End user training employed at all times. At least one person from the Enterprise is required to have completed MSA End user training prior to becoming MSA licensed.

10.1.2 MSA Inserts

MSA inserts issued by an Authorised Authority may only be applied at the Enterprise with which the inserts were issued.

An Authorised Authority may withdraw from the Enterprise, for a period determined by the Authorised Authority, all MSA inserts and/ or other approved identification issued by the Authorised Authority. Without limiting the circumstances in which this action may be taken, it may be taken where the Authorised Authority considers that the MSA integrity of the product is at risk.

10.1.3 MSA licence numbers

MSA licence numbers issued by an Authorised Authority may only be applied at the Enterprise with which the MSA licence number was issued.

An Authorised Authority may withdraw from the Enterprise, for a period determined by the Authorised Authority, the MSA licence number issued. Without limiting the circumstances in which this action may be taken, it may be taken where the Authorised Authority considers that the integrity of the product, MSA licence numbers are at risk or have been incorrectly applied to invoices or trademark are at risk.

10.1.4 Point of sale (POS) material

MSA point of sale (POS) material issued by an Authorised Authority may only be applied at the Enterprise to which the POS material was issued.

MSA POS material issued by an Authorised Authority may be withdrawn from the Enterprise for the period determined by the Authorised Authority. Without limiting the circumstances in which this action may be taken, it may be taken where the Authorised Authority considers that the integrity of the product, MSA POS material are at risk or have been incorrectly applied to primals, cuts or meals.

10.2 Ordering/purchasing

The Enterprise must purchase MSA product only from a licensed MSA supplier, if intending to identify as MSA product at the point of sale.

10.3 Receival

The Enterprise must ensure that all MSA product received is accompanied by authenticating documentation being:

- a. Invoice bearing the MSA supplier's MSA licence number with MSA and non-MSA product identified separately.
- b. MSA carton labels that contain the required information (MSA grade, cook method/s and required days ageing/ release date) or MSA PBR cut by cook reports stating the eating quality and days aged required by cook method for each primal.
- c. Legible carcase stamp indicating the Plant Boning Run value (beef) or MSA identification (sheep) (and accompanying MSA PBR cut by cook reports stating the eating quality and days aged required by cook method for each primal for beef and sheepmeat cut x cook models).
- d. MSA issued or approved inserts, label or pre-printed vacuum packaging.

The Enterprise must ensure that all records of MSA product are kept for three months, or as indicated in their approved Quality Management System.

10.4 Cold Storage

MSA product must at all times be stored in accordance with the MSA standards. If there is failure to do so, product must not be sold as MSA product.

MSA product must be clearly identified and where possible kept separate from other product.

It is recommended MSA product is not sold and distributed prior to the ageing date being met provided the customer receiving the MSA product has been made aware of the ageing requirements for the product purchased.

MSA product cannot be sold to the final consumer as MSA until ageing requirements have been met.

10.5 Cutting/fabrication/preparation

MSA product must at all times be cut, fabricated and prepared in accordance with the MSA Standards. If there is failure to do so, product must not be sold as MSA product.

10.5.1 Portion cutting operations

For portion cutting operations:

- a. If portions are cut and presented in the required cook method/s, the cook method/s does not have to be stated on the authenticating documentation. For example, steaks for grill, strips for stir-fry and cubes for casserole.
- b. Where portions have met the required ageing requirements to meet a MSA eating quality trade, ageing information does not have to be stated on the authenticating documentation.

10.5.2 Preparation for consumption

Where the Enterprise prepares MSA product for consumption:

- a. The Enterprise must ensure that the MSA Certified Product is cooked using a cooking method for the grade in accordance with MSA Standards.
- b. The Enterprise should use the recommended cut dimensions as listed below.

Cook method	Software descrip- tions	Alternate label descriptions	Recommended cut dimensions	Cook style	Beef	Sheepmeat (2005)	Sheepmeat (V3.0)
Grill	GRL	GRL, Grill Beef – minimum 21 mm Sheepmeat – minimum 15mm Dry		Dry	х	х	х
Roast	RST	RST, Roast	Whole primal	Dry	Х	Х	X
Roast Combi	RSC	RSC, Roast Combi	Whole primal	Steam	х		
Stir Fry	SFR	SFR, Stir Fry	10mm (W) x 10mm (H) x 75mm (L)	Dry	x		
Stir Fry	SFR	SFR, Stir Fry	6mm (W) x 15mm (H) x 60mm (L)	mm (W) × 15mm (H) × 60mm		x	X
Thin Slice	TSL	TSL 2mm, Thin Slice 2mm	2mm thin slice	Dry	х		
Roast thin slice cold	RC2	RC2mm	2mm thin slice	Dry	x		
Roast slice cold	RCT	RCT	10mm slice	Dry	x		
Slow Cook*	SC	SC, Slow Cook CASS, Cass, Casserole	20mm cube	Wet	X	Х	x
Slow Cook 4h	SC4	CASS4, Cass4, Casserole 4h SC4, Slow Cook 4h	20mm cube	Wet			X
Sous Vide (diced)	SVD	SVD	20mm cube	Wet	x		
Corn	CN	CRN, Corn	Whole primal	Wet	х		
Yakiniku	YAK	YAK, Yakiniku	4mm thin slice	Dry	х		
Shabu Shabu	SSB	SSB, Shabu Shabu	2mm thin slice	Wet	x		
Texas BBQ	TBQ	TBQ, Texas BBQ	Pulled	Dry			X

* Slow cook labels for Sheepmeat must also include '2h' as part of the description.

10.5.3 Preparation for sale to consumers

- a. Where uncooked MSA product is presented for sale to consumers ready for use, including in vacuum packaging, it must have at least one recommended cook method identified and corresponding eating quality grade specified.
- b. Alternatively, the cook method can be indicated by product presentation (e.g. steaks for grilling).
- c. Ageing requirements for the specified eating quality grade must have been met before selling to a consumer ready for use.

If the Enterprise is not distinguishing between eating quality outcomes, for example MSA 3, 4 or 5, the product labelling must still state MSA or MSA graded.

10.5.4 MSA beef product packaged in Modified Atmospheric Packaging (MAP)

Where the Enterprise prepares MSA product to be packaged in 80:20 oxygen:carbon dioxide MAP and intends to identify as such on product labelling, the Enterprise should prepare the MSA Certified Product as follows:

Cook method	Software descriptions	Alternate label descriptions	Recommended cut dimensions	Cook style
Grill	GRL	MAP GRL, MAP Grill	Beef – minimum 21 mm	Dry
Roast	RST	MAP RST, MAP Roast	Whole primal	Dry
Roast Combi	RSC	MAP RSC, MAP Roast Combi	Whole primal	Steam
Stir Fry	SFR	MAP SFR, MAP Stir Fry	10mm (W) x 10mm (H) x 75mm (L)	Dry
Thin Slice	TSL	MAP TSL 2mm, Thin Slice 2mm	2mm thin slice	Dry
Roast thin slice cold	RC2	MAP RC2mm	2mm thin slice	Dry
Roast slice cold	RCT	MAP RCT	10mm slice	Dry
Slow Cook	SC	MAP CASS, MAP Cass, MAP Casserole	20mm cube	Wet
Sous Vide dice	SVD	MAP SVD	20mm cube	Wet
Corn	CN	MAP CRN, MAP Corn	Whole primal	Wet
Yakiniku	YAK	MAP YAK, MAP Yakiniku	4mm thin slice	Dry
Shabu Shabu	SSB	MAP SSB, MAP Shabu Shabu	2mm thin slice	Wet

The Enterprise must ensure that the product:

- Is identified as MAP eligible for the appropriate cook method on the carton end panel
- The PBR cut by cook report is provided by the supplier
- Has been aged to the minimum days age for the relevant cut by cook and eating quality outcome prior to being packed into MAP.

10.5.5 MSA Sheepmeat product packaged in Modified Atmospheric Packaging (MAP)

Where the Enterprise prepares MSA lamb product to be packaged in 80:20 oxygen:carbon dioxide MAP and intends to identify as the MSA eating quality on product labelling, the Enterprise should prepare the MSA Certified Product as follows:

Cook method	Software descriptions	Alternate label descriptions	Recommended cut dimensions	Cook style
Grill	GRL	MAP GRL, MAP Grill	Minimum 15 mm	Dry
Roast	RST	MAP RST, MAP Roast	Whole primal	Dry
Stir Fry	SFR	MAP SFR, MAP Stir Fry	6mm (W) x 15mm (H) x 60mm (L)	Dry
Slow Cook 2h	SC2	MAP SC2, MAP Slow Cook 2h	20mm cube	Wet
Slow Cook 4h	SC4	MAP SC4, MAP Slow Cook 4h	20mm cube	Wet
Texas BBQ	TBQ	MAP TBQ, MAP Texas BBQ	Pulled	Dry

The Enterprise must ensure that the product:

- is identified as MAP eligible for the appropriate cook method on the carton end panel; or
- the PBR cut by cook report is provided by the supplier for the corresponding products
- has been aged to the minimum days age for the relevant cut by cook and eating quality outcome prior to being packed into MAP.

If the cut by cook report, or MAP-eligible information is not available, sheepmeat products in MAP are not permitted to carry the MSA Trade Mark.

10.5.6 Freezing of MSA beef and sheepmeat

Where MSA beef and/or sheepmeat is to be delivered and/or sold as frozen, the minimum ageing requirements for the cut to become MSA eligible must be met prior to freezing.

10.5.7 Preparation of MSA carcases

Where the Enterprise purchases MSA carcases, the Enterprise will require access to accurate and current labelling specifications related to the carcases as identified.

MSA eligible cuts from MSA carcases should be prepared in accordance with the current labelling specifications for the Plant Boning Run Value identified (beef and sheepmeat carcase) and/or the cut by cook table for MSA sheepmeat.

10.5.8 MSA sheepmeat 2005 pathway cut by cook table

The below table outlines the cut by cook table for the MSA sheepmeat 2005 pathway program. This table is not to be used in relation to the MSA sheepmeat cut by cook model V3.0.

Cuts and cooking methods									
	• Lamb ((L) 🛛 Hogget (H) 🌑	Mutton (M)						
Cut	НАМ	Grill	Roast	Stir Fry	Casserole				
Leg Chump / On	4800		••						
Leg 'Easy Carve'	4821		• •						
Leg Chump / Off	4820		• •						
Chump	4790		• •						
Chop		•••							
Hind Shank	5031				• •				
Leg Chump / On (Boneless)	5060		• •						
Rolled / Tied			• •						
Topside	5073			• •					
Silverside	5071			• • •					
Thick Flank (Round)	5076	••	••	• •					
Chump (Rump)	5130	• •	••	• •	••				
Topside (Den)	5077			• •					
Outside (Den)	5075			• • •					
Knuckle (Round)	5072	• •	• •	•••					
Rump (Den)	5074	• • •	• • •	• •	••				
Loin	4860		•••						
Shortloin	4880		• • •						
Rolled			• • •						
Noisettes		• • •	•••						
Chop		•••							
Eye of Shortloin	5150	•••		•••					
Rack	4932		•••						
Rack Cap / Off (Frenched)	4756		•••						
Cutlet		•••							
Rack Cap / Off (Frenched)	4764		•••						
Cutlet		•••							

		Cuts and cooking m	ethods cont.		
	● Lamb (L) • Hogget (H) •	Mutton (M)		
Cut	НАМ	Grill †††††	Roast	Stir Fry	Casserole
Backstrap	5109	•••		• • •	
Eye of Rack	5153	•••		•••	
Forequarter	4972		• •		
Square Cut Shoulder	4990		• •		
Chop		••			
Shoulder Rack (Frenched)	4739		• •		
Cutlet		• •			
Fore Shank	5030				•
Oyster Cut Shoulder	4980		• •		
Shoulder (Easy Carve)	4994		• •		
Forequarter (Boneless)	5047		• •		
Shoulder Rolled/Netted	5050		• •		
Neck Fillet Roast	5059		• •		
Eye of Shoulder	5151		• •		
Tenderloin	5080	•••			
Butt Tenderloin	5081	•••			
Tenderloin / Butt Off	5082	•••			
Breast and Flap	5010				
Neck	5020		No reco	mmended cooking	methods
Spare Ribs	5015				

10.6 Portion cutting

All MSA product wholesaled as portions or primals must include MSA trademark inserts in the packaging or printing on the packaging. For example, heat printed vacuum bags as approved by an Authorised Authority.

10.7 Dispatch/sale

Where MSA products are delivered and sold as MSA product, authenticating documentation identifying the eating quality outcome must accompany the product.

If the Enterprise is not distinguishing between eating quality outcomes, for example MSA 3, 4 or 5 star, the authenticating documentation must still state MSA and product description.

Without limiting this, MSA carton labels or MSA plant carton labels must be attached to the cartons and all primals and portions must include MSA inserts, approved tamper evident label or approved printing on the packaging.

Where authenticating documentation is lost or damaged, product must not be sold as MSA product.

Where MSA primals are sold to an MSA supplier, authenticating documentation must be supplied with the product together with details of the Enterprise MSA license number and appropriate cook method/s for the grade and ageing requirements.

Where MSA product is sold to a wholesaler, processor or retailer, which is not an MSA supplier, it must not be sold as MSA product.

10.8 Multi-site Enterprise

In addition to the requirements set out in these Standards, a Multi-site Enterprise must comply with the following:

- A quality manual must be submitted to and approved by the approved authority prior to licensing.
- A licence to use the MSA trademark will be issued by the Authorised Authority to the central site. Individual sub-sites must not supply MSA product outside their system.
- Documented procedures as set out in the approved Quality Management System are to be followed by the central site and all member sub-sites.
- · A comprehensive internal audit system is to be implemented by the central site of all sub-sites (minimum annual).
- Internal audits are to be conducted by qualified internal auditors and the internal audit reports be made available during audits of the central site.
- · Comprehensive corrective action and sanction systems applying to how the central site deals with the individual sub-sites.
- A failure found at a sub-site which has not been effectively prevented, detected or dealt with by the central site may be deemed to indicate a failure of the central site's system and can risk loss of licence or other sanctions for the entire group in the system.
- · The central site and its management system will be audited, at a minimum, annually.
- All sub-sites must be available for external Audit by the Authorsed Authority at any time.

10.9 Reference material

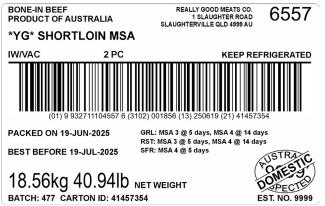
10.9.1 MSA generic insert



10.9.2 Example of an acceptable MSA tamper evident label



10.9.3 Examples of MSA descriptions on carton labels







10.9.4 MSA invoice examples

		AF	N· 1	1 222 333 44	14				
wel 1 40 M	ount Street			L 222 333 4	.4	Meat	Stan	lards /	ustralia
	NSW 2059							upplier	
	ales@meat.							-ppilot	
						Invoice	number	287795	
Johnny's C	uality Meat	s				Ship To:			
PO Box 3						64 Smith	Road		
Sydney NS	W 2000					Sydney N	SW 200	0	
Salesper	on: ST							Transp	ort: MAC
	er code	Date	0	der number	nber Terms				
JC	M	28/06/2018	+	119819 21 days					
			_		-				
Code	Descrip	tion		No.	We	eight (kg)	Unit	price	Amount
EQGBC	EQG be	ef carcase		2		480	\$	7.50	\$3600
YGBC	YG beef	carcase		1		185	\$6.30		\$1165.
LCMSA	Llamb	carcases-MSA		5		110	\$6.00		\$660
HC012	Hbogg	et carcases		3	-	75	50	5.00	\$750.0
HCUIZ	HINOBE	et carcases		5		,5			\$750.0
Total			11	Total	-	050	Amo		\$6175.5
lotal			11	weight		850	Ex. G		201/2.50
					-		GST		0.0
							Freig	ht	\$50.00

	A	ussie	Mea	t]	Frading	C	ompa	ny		
			ABN	: 11	1 222 333 44	4				
vel 1, 40 Mo	ount Street						Meat	Standa	rds A	Australia
orth Sydney	NSW 2059						Licen	sed sup	plier	A123
nail: meatsa	les@meat.	com.au					Invoice r	number 2	87795	
Johnny's Qu PO Box 3 Sydney NSV		S					Ship To: 64 Smith F Sydney NS			
Salespers	on: ST					_		Tr	ansp	ort: MAC
Custom	er code	Date	e	Or	der number	Terms		Delivery		
JQM 28/06/2018			2018		119819 21					
Code	Descript	tion		_	No.cartons	We	eight (kg)	Unit pr	rice	Amount
CUR610	YG MSA	Cube roll 2	2.2kg+		5		122.5	\$2	0.50	\$2511.25
RMP513	PR Rum	р			4		102.4	\$6.50		\$665.60
OYST300	PR MSA	Oyster bla	de		2		34.6	\$17.00		\$588.20
LEG100	G100 L Lamb leg chump on-MSA				3		48	48 \$10.00		\$480.00
Total cartons			ł	14	Total weight		307.5	Amour Ex. GST		\$4245.05
								GST		0.00
								Freight	:	\$50.00
	Terms: St	rictly as abo	ve					Total		\$4295.05