



MSA Standards Manual

Livestock supply

Section



Issue no: 6.0

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 5-04**
 - 1.1 Instructions for control of this document 5-04
 - 1.2 Owner confirmation 5-04
 - 1.3 Amendments and updates 5-04
 - 1.4 Document control confirmation..... 5-04
- 5 Livestock supply 5-05**
 - 5.1 Cattle 5-05
 - 5.1.1 MSA minimum requirements 5-05
 - 5.1.2 Reference material 5-06
 - 5.2 Sheep 5-07
 - 5.2.1 MSA minimum requirements 5-07
 - 5.2.2 Reference material..... 5-07

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	Issue 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
20 March 2015	Second release – inclusions of Led Steer Pathway Requirements as approved at Task-force (Feb 15) and AMILSC (Mar 15)	2.0
15 November 2016	Third release – Update to 5.1.21 MSA beef carcass specifications, to remove meat colour 1B-3 and update numbering	3.0
14 March 2017	Fourth release – Section 5.2.1 MSA minimum requirements updated to remove the requirement of a minimum of 5mm wool length	4.0
March 2020	Updated to reflect release of MSA beef model V2.0. Updated to livestock supply requirements for sick and injured cattle.	5.0
July 2025	Updated to reflect additions to supply recommendations, requirements for supply and changes to the MSA saleyard pathway.	6.0

5 Livestock supply

Producers/feedlots and agents are required to be registered with MSA to supply eligible livestock through the MSA system.

5.1 Cattle

5.1.1 MSA minimum requirements

5.1.1.1 On-farm responsibilities Requirements

- a. Producers are required to be registered with MSA prior to cattle leaving property of dispatch to be eligible to supply cattle for grading.
- b. MSA vendor declarations must be delivered with cattle.
- c. All cattle must reside on the property of dispatch for a minimum of 30 days prior to dispatch.
- d. No entire males or animals showing secondary sexual characteristics are eligible for MSA grading.
- e. Where cattle are transported including the use of third-party transport companies, cattle are not to be mixed during transport.

Recommendations

- a. Cattle should be managed as a single mob for a minimum of 14 days prior to dispatch for slaughter, this includes no mixing or drafting.
- b. Cattle should be on a rising plane of nutrition for at least the last 30 days prior to slaughter.
- c. Cattle are to have access to water outside of transport.
- d. Handle and muster animals quietly to reduce stress.
- e. Load cattle quietly, preferably with no use of goads and/or electric prodders.
- f. Cattle to have access to feed prior to dispatch.
- g. No cattle of poor temperament.
- h. No cattle that are severely sick or injured at point of transport.

5.1.1.2 Direct consignment

In addition to on-farm responsibilities listed above:

- Road transport
 - a. Slaughter is to occur within 48 hours from the cattle leaving the property of dispatch providing the following requirements are met for road transport:
 - i. The total truck transport time from property of dispatch to the abattoir does not exceed 36 hours
 - ii. Included in the 36 hours transport time, a rest period of up to 12 hours may occur.
 - b. This pathway allows for a lairage period at the plant of up to 12 hours prior to slaughter.
- All other modes of transport - slaughter is to occur no later than the day after dispatch.

5.1.1.3 Saleyard consignment

- In addition to the above on-farm responsibilities:
 - a. Slaughter is to occur within 48 hours of dispatch from property.

5.1.1.4 Led Steer Pathway

- In addition to the above on-farm responsibilities:
 - a. All animals are to be on full feed and water prior to dispatch from the showground.
 - b. All animals to be slaughtered within 24 hours of dispatch from the showground.
 - c. MSA vendor declaration must accompany cattle to the showground and be submitted to the organising committee.
 - d. The showground or other venue must have a MSA producer registration number and provide an MSA vendor declaration for the entire consignment to the abattoir.
 - e. Unled cattle associated with competitions are ineligible for this pathway.

5.1.2 Reference material

5.1.2.1 MSA beef carcass specifications

- Ultimate pH equal to or less than 5.70
- Rib fat – minimum 3mm
- Adequate fat coverage over the entire carcass.

5.1.2.2 MSA vendor declaration – beef

- The MSA vendor declaration needs to be the approved form from a paper pad or electronic online version
- Each declaration must have a unique identifier number
- Producers/feedlots must keep one copy.



MEAT STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

ABN 39 081 678 364

CATTLE VENDOR DECLARATION

000000

Form 3.4.1 Release date: October 2019

MSA participants must fully complete this declaration accurately for cattle to be eligible for MSA grading. This declaration must accompany the cattle and be delivered to the person responsible for livestock receipt at the processor or saleyard.

Vendor:		MSA registration no. of vendor:	
Address:		Property Identification Code (PIC) of vendor:	
		MSA registration no. of cattle owner (if different):	
Phone no.:		Property Identification Code (PIC) of owner (if different):	
Date of dispatch:		Time of dispatch:	

No. of cattle eligible for MSA grading Males: Females: Total:

Do any of these cattle contain tropical breed (Bos indicus) content? (please tick the relevant box) e.g. Brahman, YES ☐ e.g. Angus, NO ☐
Santa Gertrudis Hereford

Have any of the cattle ever been treated with a Hormonal Growth Promotant? (If unsure tick Yes) Yes ☐ No ☐

Are all animals in this lot milk fed vealers? (To qualify as milk fed vealers, calves must still be suckling and must be sent direct to slaughter) Yes ☐ No ☐

Has this lot of cattle been sold through an MSA licensed saleyard? Yes ☐ No ☐

Additional information (optional): You can record any individual animals here that differ from the tropical breed content declaration above.

I hereby declare that the information stated in this declaration is true, and that I have read, understood and abide by the MSA requirements for livestock supply.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Please sign (where applicable)		
Saleyard verification	Processor verification	Grader verification
Sign:	Sign:	Sign:
Date:	Date:	Date:
MSA licence no:		Grader code:

5.2 Sheep

5.2.1 MSA minimum requirements

5.2.1.1 On-farm responsibilities

Requirements

- Producers are required to be registered with MSA prior to sheep leaving property of origin to be MSA eligible.
- Minimum two weeks off shears.
- Fat score ≥ 2 (GR ≥ 6 mm).
- HSCW ≥ 16 kg for young lamb, HSCW ≥ 18 kg for all weaned lambs, hogget and mutton.
- Total time off feed not greater than 48 hours before slaughter.
- Animals to have access to water prior to dispatch other than the time required for preparation for transport. Total time off water not to exceed 20hrs including transit time. to have access to water at all times while not in transit.
- Minimum of two weeks at consignment property before dispatch.
- Maximum time in transit 24 hours.
- National Vendor Declaration (sheep and lambs) and waybill to be correctly filled out prior to consignment and accompany consignment to saleyards or processor.
- Entire males or animals showing secondary sexual characteristics are not eligible for MSA grading.

5.2.1.2 Growth rates recommendations

- 1st and 2nd cross – a minimum of 100 grams/day for two weeks prior to consignment
- Merinos – a minimum of 150 grams/day for two weeks prior to consignment.

5.2.1.3 Direct consignment

- Refer to tables 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2 for eligibility.

5.2.1.4 Saleyard consignment

In addition to the above on-farm responsibilities:

- Sheep shall be slaughtered within 48 hours after dispatch from the farm or property
- Animals through this pathway must meet pH/temperature window requirements and pHu requirements as outlined in MSA Standards Manual (Section 7 Processors MSA Standards).

5.2.1.5 Processor specifications

- The use of the MSA Sheepmeat program may vary by processor. Please contact your processor for their specifications.

5.2.2 Reference material

5.2.2.1 MSA sheepmeat carcass specifications for 2005 Lamb and Sheepmeat Pathway

Carcass specifications				
Category/cipher	Dentition	HSCW	Fat score	GR
Young lamb *YL*	Carcass derived from a young female or castrate sheep that has 0 permanent incisor teeth; has no eruption of permanent upper molar teeth.	≥ 16 kg	≥ 2	≥ 6 mm
Lamb *L*	Young sheep under 12 months of age or does not have any permanent incisor teeth in wear.	≥ 18 kg	≥ 2	≥ 6 mm
Hogget *H*	Carcass derived from female or castrate male sheep that: has 1 but no more than 2 permanent incisor teeth in wear; in male has no evidence of secondary sexual characteristics	≥ 18 kg	≥ 2	≥ 6 mm
Mutton *M*, *W*, *E*	Carcass derived from female sheep that has 1 or more permanent incisor teeth in wear; or a castrated male sheep that has at least one permanent incisor tooth in wear and shows no evidence of secondary sexual characteristics.	≥ 18 kg	≥ 2	≥ 6 mm
Ram *R*	Ineligible			

Carcase specifications				
Category/cipher	Dentition	HSCW	Fat score	GR
Young lamb *YL*	Carcase derived from a young female or castrate sheep that has 0 permanent incisor teeth; has no eruption of permanent upper molar teeth.	≥ 16kg	≥ 2	≥6mm
Lamb *L*	Young sheep under 12 months of age or does not have any permanent incisor teeth in wear.	≥ 18kg	≥ 2	≥6mm
Hogget *H*	Carcase derived from female or castrate male sheep that: has 1 but no more than 2 permanent incisor teeth in wear; in male has no evidence of secondary sexual characteristics	≥ 18kg	≥ 2	≥6mm
Mutton *M*, *W*, *E*	Ineligible			
Ram *R*	Ineligible			

The following will be extracted from the National Vendor Declaration (Sheep and Lambs) for the purposes of MSA:

- Time from dispatch to slaughter
- The breed content of animals
- Hours off feed to slaughter
- Month of shearing
- Producer MSA registration number to be identified in Section 7.

MSA Standards Manual: Section 5-08