

# tips & tools

MEAT STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

MSAS8

## How to supply sheep to MSA

Consumer taste-tests have determined the factors that affect eating quality resulting in accurately established standards. The factors that affect eating quality are set as minimum requirements and recommendations for MSA. These recommendations address the critical control points along the production chain that can impact on eating quality. Producers supply lamb and sheep following the minimum requirements as outlined in *MSA Tips & Tools: MSA requirements for handling sheep*.

Sheep are consigned to an MSA licensed abattoir to be slaughtered within 48 hours of animals being off feed. MSA trained operatives check details on the Livestock Production Assurance National Vendor Declaration (LPA NVD) prior to sheep being processed at the abattoir.

The following steps can assist with supplying lambs and sheep to meet MSA requirements and improve your understanding of MSA.

### Step 1

To supply MSA sheep, through the saleyards, direct to a processor or through an MSA underpinned brand, you must be registered as a MSA producer. The easiest way to become registered is to use the online registration program at [www.mla.com.au/msa](http://www.mla.com.au/msa). Following a short training program, you will have instant access to MSA electronic vendor declarations.

### Step 2

Alternatively, a registration form can be downloaded from [www.mla.com.au/msa](http://www.mla.com.au/msa). When registering by paper-based form, allow two weeks to receive your registration number and producer pack containing information.

### Key points

- Producers wishing to supply lambs or sheep for MSA must be registered.
- A Livestock Production Assurance National Vendor Declaration (LPA NVD) must accompany the animals to the MSA licensed abattoir.
- The LPA NVD contains information about the animals that can impact on their compliance to the MSA requirements.
- Ensure your MSA producer registration number is included in Part A, question 7, on the NVD
- Ensure transporters complete Section B of the NVD with details of when transport commenced.
- Sheep to be processed no later than 48 hours off feed (including on-farm curfew, transport and lairage).

### Step 3

Check that you meet the list of requirements detailed in *Tips & Tools: MSA requirements for handling sheep*. Once you have received your MSA producer registration number and are satisfied you meet the MSA requirements, you can consign lambs and sheep through the MSA system, providing you also have access to Livestock Production Assurance National Vendor Declarations (LPA NVD).

MSA also provide free information sessions to lamb and sheep producers regarding the impacts of production systems and management techniques on eating quality. Contact MSA to find a suitable workshop.



Table 1: MSA sheep meat carcass specifications

Category	Dentition	Approximate age	HSCW (kg)**	Fat score	GR***
Sucker lamb (milk fed) or Young lamb *YL*	0	Up to 5 months	≥ 16kg	≥ 2	≥ 6mm
Lamb *L*	0	12 months	≥ 18kg	≥ 2	≥ 6mm
Hogget *H*	1–2	10–18 months	≥ 18kg	≥ 2	≥ 6mm
Mutton *M*, *W*, *E*	> 1	Over 10 months	≥ 18kg	≥ 2	≥ 6mm

\*\* HSCW – Hot Standard Carcass Weight

\*\*\* GR – Fat measurement taken at the standard site, 110mm from the midline over the 12th rib.

## Step 4

The MSA website lists all MSA licensed abattoirs. If you are supplying through a MSA underpinned brand or to a MSA licensed abattoir make sure you are familiar with the purchaser's specifications. Table 1 details the MSA carcass specifications, however MSA does not take yield parameters into account and has a wide acceptance of weight and fat ranges. Many processors will have tighter specifications. Carcasses outside their nominated specifications may be discounted regardless of their MSA compliance result.

## Step 5

You should liaise with the abattoir to ensure sheep are processed within 48 hours of being off feed. You should also consider any condition that may impact on the eating quality of the animals such as climate and pre-slaughter stress. For more information on the importance of these measures, see *MSA Tips & Tools: MSA requirements for handling sheep*.

## Step 6

Fill in the Livestock Production Assurance National Vendor declaration (LPA NVD) to accompany the consignment to the abattoir or saleyard. It is important that all the details are filled in correctly. The abattoir uses the information from the vendor declaration to determine eligibility of the livestock for MSA. If details are missing or inaccurate the animals may not be eligible for the MSA program.

The following sections of the LPA NVD need to be completed to ensure MSA eligibility:

- Address and PiC of property
- Month of shearing (included in Part A – Description)
- Time off feed
- MSA registration number (included in Part A – Question 7)
- Ensure transporters complete Section B of the NVD with details of when transport commenced.

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## Step 7

Ensure you receive your carcass feedback sheets from the abattoir. Check your compliance to MSA and/or company specifications. Note any common factors in the non-compliant carcasses. MSA producer workshops can assist in providing information on the impact of live animals and carcass attributes on eating quality.

## Step 8

Talk to other MSA producers to share the knowledge they have gained from using the system. At times of seasonal risk you may want to discuss strategies for minimising pH and stress risk (see *MSA Tips & Tools: The effect of pH on sheepmeat eating quality*). Link other sources of information into your production objectives. EDGENetwork® workshops, your state department of agriculture or Primary Industries, local or preferred consultants can all assist in improving your management system to improve your product.

## Step 9

Ensure you retain all feedback for comparison purposes. Compare each consignment with the previous one, particularly where production changes have been made in an effort to improve compliance. A small management change can significantly improve compliance without the extended generation time associated with genetic improvements.

## For more information

Visit [www.mla.com.au/msa](http://www.mla.com.au/msa) or contact MSA 1800 111 672.



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