



MSA Standards Manual

Independent boning rooms & portion cutting operations

Section



Issue no: 4.0

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	8-04
1.1 Instructions for control of this document.....	8-04
1.2 Owner confirmation	8-04
1.3 Amendments and updates	8-04
1.4 Document control confirmation.....	8-04
8 Independent boning rooms and portion cutting operations.....	8-05
8.1 Quality Management System	8-05
8.1.1 Trained personnel	8-05
8.2 Carcase identification.....	8-05
8.3 MSA identification	8-05
8.4 MSA carton label specifications	8-06
8.5 Cutting/fabrication/preparation.....	8-07
8.5.1 Beef product packaged in Modified Atmospheric Packaging (MAP)	8-08
8.5.2 Lamb product packaged in Modified Atmospheric Packaging (MAP)	8-08
8.5.3 Freezing of MSA beef and sheepmeat	8-08
8.6 Dispatch/sale	8-09
8.7 Reference material.....	8-09
8.7.1 MSA generic insert.....	8-09
8.7.2 Example of an acceptable MSA tamper evident label.....	8-09
8.7.3 Examples of MSA descriptions on carton labels.....	8-10
8.7.4 MSA invoice examples.....	8-11

1 Introduction

The Meat Standards Australia (MSA) Standards Manual is divided into a number of sections. Each section is a standalone document that is issued and amended independently of 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	Version 2 – updated to include tamper evident label requirements as approved by taskforce (Feb 2015) and AMILSC (Mar 2015). Version details updated V2.0 Release 20.03.2015	2.0
March 2020	Updated to reflect release of MSA beef model V2.0	3.0
July 2025	Update to reflect release of MSA sheepmeat model V3.0	4.0

8 Independent boning rooms and portion cutting operations

Independent boning rooms and portion cutting operations are to be licensed with MLA within the MSA program.

8.1 Quality Management System

Each Enterprise as defined by the licence application must incorporate these Standards and maintain a Quality Management System as and where required by an Authorised Authority.

An Authorised Authority must approve all Quality Management System documentation related to MSA. The Enterprise must ensure that the documentation is reviewed in accordance with updates to the MSA Standards, to conform to any variations in these Standards or an Authorised Authority's requirements.

The MSA program requirements of the Enterprise may be integrated into existing quality system manuals and procedures of the Enterprise.

It is not a requirement to establish a separate Quality Management System Manual.

Each Enterprise will be audited annually by an Authorised Authority.

8.1.1 Trained personnel

The Enterprise is required to provide sufficient trained personnel to ensure that all requirements of the MSA program are effectively maintained.

Details of the training and staff records must be identified in the Quality Management System Manual and approved by an Authorised Authority.

Trained Operatives must have completed one or more of the following modules of MSA training.

B3. MSA product integrity (beef)

S5. MSA sheepmeat integrity

B5. MSA independent boning room training beef

S9. MSA independent boning room training sheep

The Enterprise must nominate an MSA coordinator, with the responsibility and authority to ensure that the integrity of the MSA program is maintained in the Enterprise.

The appointed MSA coordinator must have completed the applicable training modules.

8.2 Carcase identification

The Enterprise will require access to accurate and current labelling specifications related to the carcasses as identified. This includes, but not limited to, being able to produce the cut by cook report as per the Plant Boning Run supplied by the Processor.

The Enterprise will require the capability to adjust labelling systems to reflect the current specifications for carcasses purchased.

8.3 MSA identification

MSA inserts issued, tamper evident labels, or printed packaging and/or approved by an Authorised Authority may only be applied at the Enterprise to which the inserts were issued.

MSA inserts, approved tamper evident labels or other approved identification are to be placed in/on packaging of all MSA eligible primals and portion cut products.

Enterprises using approved tamper evident labels to identify MSA Certified Primals must adhere to the following requirements:

Each label must:

- be tamper evident
- have the establishment number, where the product originated, printed on it
- have a unique sequential identification code printed on it
- have minimum of 47mm x 36mm dimensions
- have removal perforations and label 'face cuts'.

For an example of an acceptable tamper evident label, refer to 8.7.2 p8-08.

The Enterprise must:

- have an effective system for recording the sequence numbers used for any production, including a minimum of, the first number used, the last number used and the production date
- have an effective system, for control of use and traceability of labels, documented within their Quality Management System Manual and approved by MSA prior to implementation.

All use of tamper evident labels must be approved by MLA prior to implementation.

An Authorised Authority may withdraw from the Enterprise, for a period determined by the Authorised Authority, all MSA inserts, approved tamper evident labels 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.

8.4 MSA carton label specifications

AUS-MEAT accredited Enterprises licensed in the MSA program are able to include the MSA grade, cooking method(s) and required days ageing or release date within the carton label or carton panel trade description information. MSA information is additional to existing mandatory and optional trade description information and will be subject to the same verification process used during routine AUS- MEAT audits.

Non AUS-MEAT accredited operations are required to apply appropriate product labelling that includes the MSA grade, cooking method(s) and required days ageing or release date.

MSA Grade and Cooking Method can be included within the carton label or carton panel trade description, these are described below.

1. MSA Identification

- Appears on the end of the cut description line (not mandatory).

2. Eating Quality Information – Must include:

- Grade
 - MSA3, MSA4 or MSA5
- Cook Method
 - minimum of 1 cook method as recommended.
- Ageing requirements
 - Required ageing period to meet quality grade
- To be reformatted as:
 - [Cook method]: MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] @ [days age value] days.
 - [Cook method]: MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] at [days age value] days.
 - [Cook method]: MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] @ 5 days, MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] @ [days age value] days.
 - [Cook method]: MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] at 5 days, MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] at [days age value] days.

3. Additional information (optional)

- MQ4 outcome calculated at 5 days ageing only may be included after the initial MSA Grade.
- MQ4 value to be displayed as a whole number.
- To be formatted as:
 - [Cook method]: MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] (MQ4 over [MQ4 value]) @ 5 days or
 - [Cook method]: MSA Grade [3, 4 or 5] (MQ4 over [MQ4 value]) at 5 days

Refer to section 8.7.3 Examples of MSA descriptions on carton labels for examples.

8.5 Cutting/fabrication/preparation

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

For portion cutting operations:

- If portions are cut and presented in the required cooking method/s, the cooking method/s does not have to be stated on the authenticating documentation (e.g. steaks for grill, strips for stir-fry and cubes for casserole).
- Where portions have met the required ageing requirements to meet a MSA eating quality grade, ageing information does not have to be stated on the authenticating documentation.
- Where the Enterprise prepares MSA product for consumption, the Enterprise should use the recommended cut dimensions below.

Cook method	Software descriptions	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	X	X	X
Roast	RST	RST, Roast	Whole primal	Dry	X	X	X
Roast Combi	RSC	RSC, Roast Combi	Whole primal	Steam	X		
Stir Fry	SFR	SFR, Stir Fry	10mm (W) x 10mm (H) x 75mm (L)	Dry	X		
Thin Slice 2mm	TSL	TSL 2mm, Thin Slice 2mm	2mm thin slice	Dry	X		
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	X	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	X		
Yakiniku	YAK	YAK, Yakiniku	4mm thin slice	Dry	X		
Shabu Shabu	SSB	SSB, Shabu Shabu	2mm thin slice	Wet	X		
Low and Slow BBQ	LSB	LSB, Low and Slow BBQ	Pulled	Dry			X

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

8.5.1 Beef product packaged in Modified Atmospheric Packaging (MAP)

Where MSA beef product is to be packaged in 80:20 oxygen:carbon dioxide MAP, 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; or
- the 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, beef products in MAP are not permitted to carry the MSA Trade Mark

8.5.2 Lamb 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 15mm	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
Low and Slow BBQ	LSB	MAP LSB, MAP Low and Slow 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 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.

8.5.3 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. This includes the mandatory five-day ageing period required to be MSA eligible.

8.6 Dispatch/sale

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

If the Enterprise does not distinguish between eating quality outcomes, for example MSA 3, 4 or 5 star, the authenticating documentation must still state MSA or MSA graded 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 labels or approved printing.

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 appropriate cook method for the grade and ageing requirements.

Where MSA product is on-sold to an Enterprise, which is not an MSA licensee, it must not be sold as MSA product.

Where branded products are underpinned by MSA and the MSA trademark is used, these products must contain only MSA product.

8.7 Reference material

8.7.1 MSA generic insert



8.7.2 Example of an acceptable MSA tamper evident label



8.7.3 Examples of MSA descriptions on carton labels

BONE-IN BEEF
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
YG SHORTLOIN MSA

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

6557

IW/VAC 2 PC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 932711104557 6 (3102) 001856 (13) 250619 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 19-JUN-2025 GRL: MSA 3 @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days
BEST BEFORE 19-JUL-2025 RST: MSA 3 @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days
SFR: MSA 4 @ 5 days

18.56kg 40.94lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 477 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

EST. NO. 9999

BONE-IN LAMB
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
L - LEG CHUMP ON

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

6557

IW/VAC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 932711106557 6 (3102) 001790 (13) 250619 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 19-JUN-2025 RST: MSA @ 5 days

BEST BEFORE 19-JUL-2025

17.90kg 39.46lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 224 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

EST. NO. 9999

BONE-IN BEEF
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
EQG SHORTLOIN

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

32307

IW/VAC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 931671012345 3 (3101) 000262 (13) 250619 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 19-JUN-2025 GRL: MSA 3 @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days
BEST BEFORE 19-JUL-2025 RST: MSA 3 @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days
TSL: MSA 4 @ 5 days

26.20kg 57.76lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 448 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

EST. NO. 9999

BONE-IN BEEF
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
SHORTLOIN MSA

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

32307

IW/VAC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 931671012345 3 (3101) 000262 (13) 250619 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 19-JUN-2025 GRL: MSA 3 @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days
BEST BEFORE 19-JUL-2025 RST: MSA 3 @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days
TSL: MSA 4 @ 5 days

26.20kg 57.76lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 448 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

EST. NO. 9999

BONELESS BEEF
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
EQG STRIPLOIN MSA

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

32307

IW/VAC 6 PC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 931671012345 3 (3101) 000262 (13) 240922 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 22-SEP-2024 GRL: MSA 4 @ 5 days
BEST BEFORE 30-NOV-2024 RST: MSA 3 (MQ4 over 62) @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days

26.20kg 57.76lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 448 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

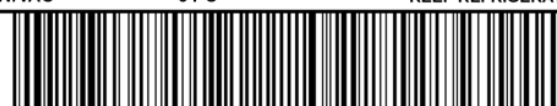
EST. NO. 9999

BONELESS BEEF
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
EQG SHORTLOIN MSA

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

32307

IW/VAC 6 PC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 931671012345 3 (3101) 000262 (13) 240922 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 22-SEP-2024 GRL: MSA 4 (MQ4 over 64) @ 5 days
BEST BEFORE 30-NOV-2024 RST: MSA 3 (MQ4 over 61) @ 5 days

26.20kg 57.76lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 448 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

EST. NO. 9999

BONE-IN LAMB
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
L LOIN MSA

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

32307

IW/VAC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 931671012345 3 (3101) 000262 (13) 240919 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 19-SEP-2024 GRL: MSA 3 (MQ4 over 62) @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 14 days
BEST BEFORE 19-OCT-2024 RST: MSA 3 @ 5 days, MSA 4 @ 21 days

26.20kg 57.76lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 448 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

EST. NO. 9999

BONE-IN LAMB
PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA
L - LEG CHUMP ON

REALLY GOOD MEATS CO.
1 SLAUGHTER ROAD
SLAUGHTERVILLE QLD 4999 AU

32307

IW/VAC 6 PC KEEP REFRIGERATED



(01) 9 931671012345 3 (3101) 000179 (13) 240919 (21) 41457354

PACKED ON 19-SEP-2024 RST: MSA 3 (MQ4 over 60) @ 5 days

BEST BEFORE 19-OCT-2024

17.90kg 39.46lb NET WEIGHT
BATCH: 448 CARTON ID: 41457354

AUSTRALIAN
DOMESTIC
INSPECTED

EST. NO. 9999

8.7.4 MSA invoice examples

Aussie Meat Trading Company					
ABN: 11 222 333 444					
Level 1, 40 Mount Street North Sydney NSW 2059 Email: meatsales@meat.com.au			Meat Standards Australia Licensed supplier A123		
			Invoice number 287795		
Johnny's Quality Meats PO Box 3 Sydney NSW 2000			Ship To: 64 Smith Road Sydney NSW 2000		

Salesperson: ST		Transport: MAC		
Customer code	Date	Order number	Terms	Delivery
JQM	28/06/2018	119819	21 days	

Code	Description	No.	Weight (kg)	Unit price	Amount
EQGBC	EQG beef carcase	2	480	\$7.50	\$3600
YGBBC	YG beef carcase	1	185	\$6.30	\$1165.5
LCMSA	L lamb carcasses-MSA	5	110	\$6.00	\$660
HC012	H hogget carcasses	3	75	\$5.00	\$750.00
Total		11	Total weight	850	Amount Ex. GST \$6175.50
Terms: Strictly as above				GST	0.00
				Freight	\$50.00
				Total	\$6225.50

Aussie Meat Trading Company

ABN: 11 222 333 444

Level 1, 40 Mount Street
North Sydney NSW 2059
Email: meatsales@meat.com.au

Meat Standards Australia
Licensed supplier A123

Invoice number	287795
----------------	--------

Johnny's Quality Meats
PO Box 3
Sydney NSW 2000

Ship To:
64 Smith Road
Sydney NSW 2000

Salesperson: ST		Transport: MAC
Customer code	Date	Order number
JQM	28/06/2018	119819
		Terms
		21 days
		Delivery

Code	Description	No.cartons	Weight (kg)	Unit price	Amount
CUR610	YG MSA Cube roll 2.2kg+	5	122.5	\$20.50	\$2511.25
RMP513	PR Rump	4	102.4	\$6.50	\$665.60
OYST300	PR MSA Oyster blade	2	34.6	\$17.00	\$588.20
LEG100	L Lamb leg chump on-MSA	3	48	\$10.00	\$480.00
Total cartons		14	Total weight	307.5	Amount Ex. GST
				GST	0.00
				Freight	\$50.00
				Total	\$4295.05

Terms: Strictly as above