

Beef, Bison and Veal Carcass Grade Requirements

Prepared by the Canadian Beef Grading Agency

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1.0 Definitions

“approved scale” means a scale that is approved under the *Weights and Measures Act*. (*balance approuvée*)

“beef” means the meat of a bovine animal that has

- (a) in the case of a carcass with the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule I, a carcass weight of more than 190 kg, and
- (b) in the case of a carcass with the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule II, any weight. (*boeuf*)

“beef carcass” means the carcass of a slaughtered bovine animal that is produced for beef and has had the following removed, namely,

- (a) the hide,
- (b) that portion of the head and neck forward of the first cervical vertebra,
- (c) that portion of the foreshank below the carpal (knee) joint and that portion of the hindshank below the tarsal (hock) joint,
- (d) the respiratory, digestive, reproductive and urinary systems and the thoracic and abdominal organs,
- (e) the membranous portion of the diaphragm and the pillar of the diaphragm,
- (f) the spinal cord,
- (g) the kidney fat, pelvic fat, heart fat and scrotal or udder fat,
- (h) the tail posterior to the first coccygeal vertebra, and
- (i) any portion of the carcass the removal of which is required for pathological reasons under the Regulations. (*carcasse de boeuf*)

“bison carcass” means the carcass of a slaughtered bison animal that is produced for bison and has had the following removed, namely,

- (a) the hide,
- (b) that portion of the head and neck forward of the first cervical vertebra,
- (c) that portion of the foreshank below the carpal (knee) joint and that portion of the hindshank below the tarsal (hock) joint,
- (d) the respiratory, digestive, reproductive and urinary systems and the thoracic and abdominal organs,
- (e) the membranous portion of the diaphragm and the pillar of the diaphragm,
- (f) the spinal cord,
- (g) the kidney fat, pelvic fat, heart fat and scrotal or udder fat,

(h) the tail posterior to the first coccygeal vertebra, and

(i) any portion of the carcass the removal of which is required for pathological reasons under the Regulations. (*carcasse de bison*)

"colour reading" means a reading of the colour reflectance of the muscle of a livestock carcass that is obtained by an accurate light-reflectance measuring instrument. (*valeur colorimétrique*)

"cutting establishment" means an establishment in which livestock carcasses are divided into primal and sub-primal cuts. (*établissement de découpe*)

"establishment" means

(a) an establishment identified in a licence issued under paragraph 20(1)(a) or (b) of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*, or

(b) an establishment that is registered under an Act of the legislature of a province that provides for the inspection of livestock carcasses. (*établissement*)

"establishment number" means the licence number assigned to an establishment identified in a licence issued under paragraph 20(1)(a) or (b) of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*, or registered under an Act of the legislature of a province that provides for the inspection of livestock carcasses. (*numéro d'établissement*)

"grader" means a person who is designated as a grader for the purposes of the Regulations under subsection 13(3) of the *Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act*. (*classificateur*)

"grade roller" means a tool that is used to apply a roller brand on each side of a livestock carcass. (*rouleau à estampiller*)

"grade stamp" means a mark that is applied to a livestock carcass and that shows the grade name of the livestock carcass and the grade stamp code. (*cachet de classification*)

"grade stamp applicator" means a tool that is used to apply a grade stamp or a yield stamp to a livestock carcass. (*applicateur de cachet de classification*)

"grade stamp code" means the number that appears on every grade stamp or yield stamp used by a grader. (*code de cachet de classification*)

"knife-rib", means to cut the left side, or the left and right sides, of a beef carcass or a bison carcass in the following locations by severing the vertebrae and cutting 15 cm or more beyond the *Longissimus* muscles in order to expose those muscles for evaluation by a grader:

(a) in the case of a beef carcass, between the twelfth and thirteenth ribs, or

(b) in the case of a bison carcass, between the eleventh and twelfth ribs. (*incision transversale*)

"livestock carcass" means a beef carcass, a bison carcass or a veal carcass. (*carcasse de bétail*)

"marbling" means the amount, size and distribution of intramuscular fat deposits in the *Longissimus* muscles of a livestock carcass that have been exposed by knife-ribbing. (*persillage*)

"meat inspection stamp" means

- (a) an inspection legend that is prescribed under section 179 of the Regulations in respect of a meat product, or
- (b) a mark that is authorized under an Act of a province, and that is applied or used for the inspection of livestock carcasses (*cachet d'inspection de viande*)

"Minister" has the same meaning as in the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*. (*ministre*)

"musculature" means the size and shape of the muscles of a livestock carcass. (*musculature*)

"primal cut", means

- (a) in the case of a beef or bison carcass, the round, sirloin, short loin, rib or chuck of the carcass side, and
- (b) in the case of a veal carcass, the leg, loin or foresaddle of the carcass side. (*coupe primaire*)

"producer" means a person who sells livestock animals for the purpose of slaughter. (*producteur*)

"Regulations" means the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations*. (*Règlement*)

"rib eye area" means the area of the *Longissimus* muscles of a livestock carcass that have been exposed by knife-ribbing. (*superficie de l'oeil de longe*)

"roller brand" means the mark that is applied to a beef carcass by a grade roller and that shows the grade name and the establishment number where the carcass is graded. (*marque d'estampillage*)

"sub-primal cut" means a cut of meat that is greater than 125 cm³ and that is derived from a beef carcass or a primal cut of a beef carcass. (*coupe sous-primaire*)

"veal" means the meat of a bovine animal with the hide off that has the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule IX and a maximum carcass weight of 190 kg. (*veau*)

"veal carcass" means the carcass of a slaughtered bovine animal that is produced for veal and has had the following removed, namely,

- (a) the hide,
- (b) that portion of the head and neck forward of the first cervical vertebra,
- (c) that portion of the foreleg below the carpal (knee) joint,
- (d) that portion of the hind leg below the tarsal (hock) joint,
- (e) the respiratory, digestive, reproductive and urinary systems and the thoracic and abdominal organs, except the kidneys,
- (f) the membranous portion of the diaphragm, and

(g) any portion of the carcass the removal of which is required for pathological reasons under the Regulations. (*carcasse de veau*)

“weighmaster” means an employee of an establishment who is trained to operate an approved scale under section 3 of the *Weights and Measures Act*. (*peseur*)

“weight” means the warm weight of a livestock carcass as determined by a weighmaster using an approved scale. (*poids*)

“yield” means, in respect of a beef carcass, the estimated percentage of closely trimmed, boneless retail meat product in the carcass derived from the primal cuts. (*rendement*)

“yield class” means, in respect of a beef carcass that is graded Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA or Canada Prime, the yield class determined in accordance with subsections 3.0(5) and (6). (*catégorie de rendement*)

“yield stamp” means the mark that is made on a beef carcass by a grade stamp applicator that shows the yield class of the carcass and the grade stamp code, and is in the outline of a triangle as set out in Schedule V. (*cachet de rendement*)

2.0 Marking

2.1 Beef Carcass

- (1) A grader or an employee of an establishment under the direct supervision of a grader, when requested by a person in authority at the establishment, must mark the beef carcass with a grade stamp, illustrated in Schedule IV, in red ink, on the short loin and rib, on both sides of the carcass.
- (2) If, for any reason, the short loin or rib cannot be marked with a grade stamp, the grade stamp must be marked on another primal cut of the beef carcass.
- (3) Every beef carcass that is grade-stamped Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA or Canada Prime by a grader, or by an employee of an establishment under the direct supervision of a grader, must be evaluated for yield in accordance with the yield class determined under subsection 3.0(6) and may be marked with the yield stamp, referred to in subsection (4).
- (4) A yield stamp, illustrated in Schedule V, referred to in subsection (3), must be applied in red ink on the short loin and rib, on both sides of the carcass, by a grader or an employee of an establishment under the direct supervision of a grader.
- (5) Subject to subsection (6), every beef carcass that is grade-stamped by a grader, or by an employee of an establishment under the direct supervision of a grader, must be roller-branded by an employee of an establishment under the direct supervision of a grader.
- (6) A beef carcass that is grade-stamped Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA or Canada Prime does not need to be roller-branded if the carcass is further processed into primal or sub-primal cuts at the establishment or at a cutting establishment that is owned by the same person or persons who own the establishment.
- (7) If a beef carcass of a grade set out in Column 1 of an item of Schedule III is roller-branded, the roller brand that must be used is the one set out in column 2 of the item and the colour of ink that must be used is the one set out in column 3 of the item.
- (8) A roller brand referred to in subsection (7) must show the grade name in block capitals not less than 8 mm in height and must be applied on both sides of the beef carcass in one continuous strip, 35 mm in width, extending the full length of the beef carcass along the dorsal side, adjacent to the spinous processes and over the primal cuts.

2.2 Bison Carcass

A grader, or an employee of an establishment under the direct supervision of a grader, if requested by a person in authority at the establishment, must mark the bison carcass with a grade stamp, illustrated in Schedule VIII, with all sides of 2.5 cm, in purple ink, on the primal cuts on both sides of the carcass.

2.3 Veal Carcass

A grader who grades a veal carcass must mark the veal carcass with a grade stamp, illustrated in Schedule X, as a triangle with all sides of 5 cm, in red ink, on the primal cuts on both sides of the veal carcass.

3.0 Grade Names and Grade Requirements for Beef Carcasses

- (1) There are 13 grades of beef carcasses with the grade names Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA, Canada Prime, Canada B1, Canada B2, Canada B3, Canada B4, Canada D1, Canada D2, Canada D3, Canada D4 and Canada E.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3), a grader must determine the fat level of a beef carcass by measuring the external fat on the left side between the twelfth and thirteenth ribs over the *Longissimus* muscles and perpendicularly to the outside surface of the fat at a point three-quarters of the length of the *Longissimus* muscles from its chine bone end.
- (3) If it is impossible to take an accurate fat measurement of a beef carcass, referred to in subsection (2), the grader must determine the fat level through an assessment of the external fat on the beef carcass or by an examination of the fat on the right side of the beef carcass after it has been knife-ribbed.

Grade Requirements for Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA and Canada Prime

- (4) A beef carcass graded Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA or Canada Prime must have
 - (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule I;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from good, with some deficiencies, to excellent;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, are firm and bright red in colour;
 - (d) for the grade set out in column 1 of an item of the table to this subsection, the marbling level set out in column 2 of that item; and
 - (e) a fat covering that is
 - (i) firm and white or slightly tinged with a reddish or amber colour, and
 - (ii) not less than 2 mm in thickness at the measurement site.

Table - Marbling Levels for Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA and Canada Prime

Item	Column 1	Column 2
	Grade	Marbling Level
1.	Canada A	At the least, traces, but less than a slight amount
2.	Canada AA	At the least, a slight amount, but less than a small amount
3.	Canada AAA	At the least, a small amount
4.	Canada Prime	At the least, slightly abundant

- (5) For the purpose of subsection (6), the formula result is
 - (a) $2.9 + (2.5 \times \text{adjusted fat thickness, inches}) + (0.0039 \times \text{weight, pounds}) - (0.32 \times \text{rib eye area, square inches})$; or
 - (b) $2.9 + (0.0984 \times \text{adjusted fat thickness, mm}) + (0.0086 \times \text{weight, kg}) - (0.0496 \times \text{rib eye area, square cm})$.

- (6) A beef carcass that is graded Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA or Canada Prime has a yield class set out in column 1 of an item of the table to this subsection if the formula result is in a range that is set out in column 2 of that item.

Table - Yield Classes for Canada A, Canada AA, Canada AAA and Canada Prime

Item	Column 1	Column 2
	Yield Class	Formula Result
1.	Canada 1	1.0 to 1.9
2.	Canada 2	2.0 to 2.9
3.	Canada 3	3.0 to 3.9
4.	Canada 4	4.0 to 4.9
5.	Canada 5	5.0 to 5.9

Grade Requirements for Canada B1

- (7) A beef carcass graded Canada B1 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule I;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from good, with some deficiencies, to excellent;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, are firm and bright red in colour; and
 - (d) a fat covering that is firm and white or slightly tinged with a reddish or amber colour.

Grade Requirements for Canada B2

- (8) A beef carcass graded Canada B2 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule I;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from deficient to excellent;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, are bright red in colour; and
 - (d) a fat covering that is yellow.

Grade Requirements for Canada B3

- (9) A beef carcass graded Canada B3 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule I;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from deficient to good;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, are bright red in colour; and
 - (d) a fat covering that is white or slightly tinged with a reddish or amber colour.

Grade Requirements for Canada B4

- (10) A beef carcass graded Canada B4 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule I;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from deficient to excellent;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, are dark red in colour; and
 - (d) a fat covering that has a colour ranging from white to yellow.

Grade Requirements for Canada D1

- (11) A beef carcass graded Canada D1 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule II;
 - (b) musculature that is excellent; and
 - (c) a fat covering that
 - (i) extends well over the ribs and loins and moderately well over the hips and chucks,
 - (ii) is firm and white or slightly tinged with a reddish or amber colour, and
 - (iii) is less than 15 mm in thickness at the measurement site.

Grade Requirements for Canada D2

- (12) A beef carcass graded Canada D2 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule II;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from medium, with some deficiencies, to excellent; and
 - (c) a fat covering that
 - (i) extends moderately well over the ribs and loins and lightly over the hips and chucks,
 - (ii) ranges from firm to slightly soft,
 - (iii) has a colour ranging from white to yellow, and
 - (iv) is less than 15 mm in thickness at the measurement site.

Grade Requirements for Canada D3

- (13) A beef carcass graded Canada D3 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule II;
 - (b) musculature that is deficient to a degree of emaciation; and
 - (c) a fat covering that is less than 15 mm in thickness at the measurement site.

Grade Requirements for Canada D4

- (14) A beef carcass graded Canada D4 must have
- (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule II;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from deficient to excellent; and
 - (c) a fat covering that is 15 mm or more in thickness at the measurement site.

Grade Requirements for Canada E

- (15) A beef carcass graded Canada E is the carcass of a male bovine animal that has pronounced masculinity.

Schedule I

Maturity characteristics for youthful beef carcasses

1. Cartilaginous caps on the thoracic vertebrae that are no more than half-ossified.
2. Lumbar vertebrae that have evidence of cartilage or at least a red line present on the tips of the spinous processes.
3. Spinous processes that are generally porous and red when split.
4. Ribs that are narrow, round and red.
5. A sternum that shows distinct divisions.

Schedule II

Maturity characteristics for mature beef carcasses

1. Cartilaginous caps on the thoracic vertebrae that are more than half-ossified.
2. Lumbar vertebrae that have no evidence of cartilage or of a red line present on the tips of the spinous processes.
3. Spinous processes that are generally hard, white and flinty when split.
4. Ribs that are wide, flat and white.
5. A sternum that shows advanced ossification.

Schedule III

Roller brand for beef carcasses

Item	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
	Grade	Roller Brand	Colour of Ink
1.	Canada A	Canada A	Red
2.	Canada AA	Canada AA	Red
3.	Canada AAA	Canada AAA	Red
4.	Canada Prime	Canada Prime	Red
5.	Canada B1	Canada B1	Blue
6.	Canada B2	Canada B	Blue
7.	Canada B3	Canada B	Blue
8.	Canada B4	Canada B	Blue
9.	Canada D1	Canada D1	Brown
10.	Canada D2	Canada D	Brown
11.	Canada D3	Canada D	Brown
12.	Canada D4	Canada D	Brown
13.	Canada E	Canada E	Brown

Schedule IV

Beef grade stamp



Schedule V

Beef yield stamp



4.0 Grade Names and Grade Requirements for Bison Carcasses

- (1) There are 10 grades of bison carcasses with the grade names Canada A1, Canada A2, Canada A3, Canada A4, Canada B1, Canada B2, Canada B3, Canada D1, Canada D2 and Canada D3.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3), a grader must determine the fat level of a bison carcass by measuring the fat on the left side between the eleventh and twelfth ribs at the minimum point of thickness in the fourth quarter from the vertebrae along the longitudinal axis of the *Longissimus* muscles and perpendicularly to the outside surface of the fat.
- (3) If it is impossible to take an accurate fat measurement of a bison carcass in the manner set out in subsection (2), the grader must determine the fat level through an assessment of the external fat on the bison carcass or by an examination of the fat on the right side of the bison carcass after it has been knife-ribbed.

Grade Requirements for Canada A1, Canada A2, Canada A3 and Canada A4

- (4) A bison carcass graded Canada A1, Canada A2, Canada A3 or Canada A4 must have
 - (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule VI ;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from good to excellent;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, are firm and bright red in colour;
 - (d) a fat covering that is firm and white or slightly tinged with a reddish or amber colour; and
 - (e) a fat thickness at the measurement site that
 - (i) ranges from 2 mm to 6 mm, in the case of the grade Canada A1,
 - (ii) ranges from 7 mm to 12 mm, in the case of the grade Canada A2,
 - (iii) ranges from 13 mm to 18 mm, in the case of the grade Canada A3, or
 - (iv) is greater than 18 mm, in the case of the grade Canada A4.

Grade Requirements for Canada B1

- (5) A bison carcass graded Canada B1 must have
 - (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule VI ;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from good to excellent;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, are firm and bright red in colour; and
 - (d) a fat covering that
 - (i) is firm and white or slightly tinged with a reddish or amber colour, and
 - (ii) is less than 2 mm in thickness at the measurement site.

Grade Requirements for Canada B2

- (6) A bison carcass graded Canada B2 must have
 - (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule VI ;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from medium to excellent;
 - (c) *Longissimus* muscles that, 10 minutes after being exposed by knife-ribbing, have a colour ranging from dark red to bright red; and
 - (d) a fat covering that has a colour ranging from white to yellow.

Grade Requirements for Canada B3

- (7) A bison carcass graded Canada B3 must have
 - (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule VI; and
 - (b) musculature that ranges from deficient to medium.

Grade Requirements for Canada D1 and Canada D2

- (8) A bison carcass graded Canada D1 or Canada D2 must have
 - (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule VII;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from medium to excellent; and
 - (c) a fat thickness at the measurement site that
 - (i) ranges from 2 to 6 mm, in the case of the grade Canada D1, or
 - (ii) is greater than 6 mm, in the case of the grade Canada D2.

Grade Requirements for Canada D3

- (9) A bison carcass graded Canada D3 must have
 - (a) the maturity characteristics set out in Schedule VII; and
 - (b) a fat thickness at the measurement site that
 - (i) is less than 2 mm, in the case of a carcass with medium to excellent musculature, or
 - (ii) is 0 mm or more, in the case of a carcass with less than medium musculature.

Schedule VI

Maturity characteristics for youthful bison carcasses

Cartilaginous caps on the 9th, 10th and 11th thoracic vertebrae immediately anterior to the knife rib site that are no more than 80 per cent ossified.

Schedule VII

Maturity characteristics for mature bison carcasses

Cartilaginous caps on the 9th, 10th and 11th thoracic vertebrae immediately anterior to the knife rib site that are more than 80 per cent ossified.

Schedule VIII

Bison grade stamp

GRADE NAME IN BLOCK CAPITALS
Grade Stamp Code

5.0 Grade Names and Grade Requirements for Veal Carcasses

- (1) There are 10 grades of veal carcasses with the grade names Canada A1, Canada A2, Canada A3, Canada A4, Canada B1, Canada B2, Canada B3, Canada B4, Canada C1 and Canada C2.

Grade Requirements for Canada A1, Canada A2, Canada A3 and Canada A4

- (2) A veal carcass graded Canada A1, Canada A2, Canada A3 or Canada A4 must have
 - (a) a carcass weight of no less than 80 kg and no greater than 190 kg;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from good to excellent, is free of depressions and has at least two of the following characteristics, namely,
 - (i) a profile, ranging from straight to convex, of the upper portion of the leg from the tail head to the tarsal joint,
 - (ii) loins that are wide and thick, and
 - (iii) racks that have spinous processes that are well covered by flesh;
 - (c) flesh of the required colour set out for the grade in the table to this section; and
 - (d) fat deposits that are creamy white or tinged with pink and that
 - (i) cover the kidneys but not excessively, or
 - (ii) cover the flanks well and are evident on the brisket.

Grade Requirements for Canada B1, Canada B2, Canada B3 and Canada B4

- (3) A veal carcass graded Canada B1, Canada B2, Canada B3 or Canada B4 must have
 - (a) a carcass weight of no less than 80 kg and no greater than 190 kg;
 - (b) musculature that ranges from low-medium to excellent, has some or no depressions but does not have more than two of the following characteristics, namely,
 - (i) hip points that are noticeable but not prominent,
 - (ii) loins that have depressions on both sides of the dorsal processes, and
 - (iii) spinous processes of the rack that are sparsely covered by flesh;
 - (c) flesh of the required colour and colour reading set out for the grade in the table to this section ; and
 - (d) fat deposits ranging from light to excessive on the kidneys or flanks.

Grade Requirements for Canada C1 and Canada C2

- (4) A veal carcass graded Canada C1 or Canada C2 must have
 - (a) a carcass weight of no less than 80 kg and no greater than 190 kg;

- (b) musculature that ranges from deficient to excellent or that does not meet the requirements for the Canada B grades;
- (c) flesh of the required colour and colour reading set out for the grade in the table to this section; and
- (d) fat deposits ranging from light to nil on the kidneys or flanks.

Table - Colour Criteria for Canada A Grades, Canada B Grades, and Canada C Grades

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Item	Grade	Colour of Flesh	Colour Reading
1.	Canada A1	Bright pink or lighter in colour	50 or more
2.	Canada A2	Pink in colour	40 to 49
3.	Canada A3	Pale red in colour	30 to 39
4.	Canada A4	Red in colour	0 to 29
5.	Canada B1	Bright pink or lighter in colour	50 or more
6.	Canada B2	Pink in colour	40 to 49
7.	Canada B3	Pale red in colour	30 to 39
8.	Canada B4	Red in colour	0 to 29
9.	Canada C1	Pink or lighter in colour	40 or more
10.	Canada C2	Pale red or dark red in colour	39 or less

Schedule IX

Maturity characteristics for veal carcasses

1. Bones that are soft and reddish in colour.
2. Ribs that are narrow and slightly rounded.
3. A sternum that shows distinct divisions.
4. An aitchbone that is covered by cartilage.

Schedule X

Veal grade stamp

