The Value of Independence

MEAT AND LIVESTOCK COMMERCIAL SERVICES LTD (MLCSL)

BEEF

CARCASE AUTHENTICATION AND VERIFICATION SERVICES

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PRODUCER ASSURANCE - MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMERCIAL SERVICES LTD
The Value of Independence - Industry Confidence
The benefits of the MLCSL’s Independent Service

MLCSL staff have been classifying beef carcases throughout GB since the early 1970s. The carcase information provided by the MLCSL service is widely used as the basis for trading between producers and slaughterers.

The MLCSL service incorporates the statutory requirements of the Mandatory EC Beef Carcase Classification Regulations which came into effect in GB on 1 January 1992, (as amended).

What does the MLCSL service offer?

The service offers the industry technically trained staff to independently establish all of the important carcase criteria as the basis for the transaction between buyer and seller.

The MLCSL service includes:

- **Identification**: Individual ear tags recorded for supplier reference, providing a vital link in the chain of traceability.
- **Category**: The carcase category (Sex) ie; Steer, Heifer, Cow, Young Bull, Mature Bull.
- **Dressing Specification**: Monitoring of dressing specifications, these are recorded for supplier reference (see pages 4 and 5).
- **Carcase Weighing**: Individual carcase weights (see appendix 2 for hot weight rebates).
- **Conformation**: (See below and opposite page).
- **Fatness**: (See below and opposite page).
- **Verification**: Daily audit checks on documentation to verify the recorded carcase information for supplier confidence.

Conformation

An assessment of the overall shape of the carcase referenced to the EUROP scale.

Conformation is divided into five main classes: E,U,R,O and P; classes U,O and P are sub-divided into upper (+) and lower (-) bands. Conformation class E describes carcases of outstanding shape, particularly of the type produced by double-muscled cattle, but these represent only a small proportion of the national kill. Class P describes poorly muscled carcases of inferior shape, usually produced by cattle of extreme dairy breeds and cows.

Fatness

An assessment in five classes from 1 (very lean) to 5 (very fat), with classes 4 and 5 being subdivided into leaner (L) and fatter (H) bands.
Conformation

When a carcase is described in classification terms, the conformation class is always given first. For example, the most common type of steer beef carcase would have a conformation class of R and a fat class of 4L. This would be recorded as R4L, and its position is shown in the grid.

Fatness

To further enhance the classification grid some abattoirs have adopted a ‘15 point’ grid in which each conformation and fat class is sub-divided into three, these are: low (-), medium (mid) and high (+) classes. The ‘15 point’ grid allows for a more precise description of the carcase.

The Classification Grid

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Dressing Specifications

By industry agreement abattoirs may choose from three recognised dressing specifications;

1 Standard Specification (see Appendix 1)
2 EC Reference Specification
3 UK Specification

The dressing specification adopted is confirmed on each MLCSL classification document (see appendix 3).

The table opposite illustrates the parts of the carcase which are subject to trim depending on the specification used.

<table>
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<th>STANDARD SPECIFICATION (ex Kidney Knob and Channel Fat: KKCF)</th>
<th>EC REFERENCE SPECIFICATION</th>
<th>UK SPECIFICATION</th>
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MLCSL's BEEF CARCASE AUTHENTICATION AND VERIFICATION SERVICES
As a guide by using the co-efficients in EU regulations, the average carcase weight will reduce between each of the specifications by the following:

1. Standard Specification to EC Reference Specification – Males 1.2% and Females 1.7%
2. EC Reference Specification to UK Specification – All categories, 0.8%

This indicates that the average carcase weight reduces by 2% to 2.5% between the Standard Specification and the UK Specification.

### TRIMMING REQUIREMENTS

#### TO REDUCE FROM STANDARD TO EC REFERENCE SPECIFICATION

- **Topside (Crown) Fat Trim**
  - The heavier fat deposit on the inside of the topside is removed.
  - Trimming must not expose the muscle and must be confined to the area identified on the illustration.

- **Cod/Mammary (Udder) Fat Removal**
  - The cod or udder fat is removed in its entirety.
  - Trimming must not expose the muscle at any point and must be confined to the area identified on the illustration.

- **Thin Skirt Removal**
  - The fleshy part of the thin skirt is removed back to the ribs at the division between the thorax and abdomen.
  - Trimming must be confined to the area identified on the illustration - no further tires of the abdominal membrane is permitted.
  - Any fat on the inside of the piastra, between the ribs, must be left attached.

#### TO REDUCE FROM EC REFERENCE TO UK SPECIFICATION

- **Flank (Bed) Fat Trim**
  - The fat deposit within the flank fat area is removed.
  - Trimming must not expose the muscle and must be confined to the area identified on the illustration.
  - There must be no ‘dropping’ at the flank muscle.
  - There must be no perforation, damage or cutting through of the outer carcase/muscle.

- **Brisket Fat Trim**
  - The brisket must be trimmed to leave a covering of fat, the muscle tissue must not be exposed.
  - Trimming must be confined to the area identified on the illustration.

#### APPLICABLE TO ALL SPECIFICATIONS

- **Neck Trim**
  - The sticking must be done in such a manner that the neck muscles are not damaged.
  - The jugular vein and adjacent fat must be removed.
  - Fat removal must not extend horizontally below the joint of the third and fourth cervical vertebrae or above or behind the first rib.
  - There must be no removal or trimming of the neck muscle.

- **Hide Removal/Subcutaneous Fat**
  - The hide must be removed in such a way as to leave the subcutaneous fat intact.

- **Flank Edge**
  - There must be no trimming of the flank edge.
  - The soft cartilage at the end of the sternum may be removed in a line with the flank edge.

- **Channel Fat Trim**
  - All channel fat to be removed.
  - There must be no removal or trimming of any associated muscle in the channel.
  - On male carcases, the retractor muscle must be retained and must not be heavily trimmed.

- **Kidney Knob Fat Removal**
  - The kidney and kidney knob must be removed for the UK specification in price reporting abattoirs, but removal is optional in all other abattoirs.
  - There must be no trimming of the abdominal membrane beyond the point where the kidney knob is naturally attached.

*Photographs in agreement with RPM UK*
Appendix 1 – Standard Specification Dressing Specification

The following parts shall be removed from the carcase before weighing:

(a) **Head**, including tongue. The head will be removed by a cut at right angles to the line of the back, between the skull and the spinal column, thereby leaving the entire spinal column on the carcase. The ears will be naturally attached to the carcase until inspected but may then be removed from the carcase before weighing. Where the ears are left attached at the time of weighing, a deduction of 1kg will be made (i.e. 0.5kg for each ear).

(b) The **hind feet** will be removed at the hock joint between the tarsal and metatarsal (hind cannon) bones, or not more than 25mm (1 inch) from the joint towards the hoof, and the forefeet removed at knee joint between the carpal and metacarpal (fore cannon) bones.

(c) **Hide**.

(d) The **tail** will be removed at the junction between the fifth sacral vertebra and the first tail (coccygeal) vertebra. Where it is trade practice to leave the tail on the carcase, the carcase weight will be reduced by 1kg. (Note: there are five sacral vertebrae which are fused in cattle and the first tail vertebra articulates with the last sacral vertebra). (5/86)

(e) **Alimentary canal** (i.e. stomachs and enclosing caul fat, guts and gut fat).

(f) **Genito-urinary organs** (excluding kidneys). In cows the mammary tissue will be removed.

(g) **Spleen, liver, pancreas**.

(h) **Pillar of diaphragm** (i.e. thick skirt). Where it is trade practice to leave the pillar of the diaphragm on the carcase, the carcase weight will be reduced by 1kg.

(i) **Diaphragm** (i.e. thin or rib skirt) trimmed to leave a margin of 12mm (0.5 inch) of membrane attached to the diaphragm intact.

(j) Lungs, trachea, oesophagus, larynx (i.e. lights) and heart, and the thoracic fat which is loosely attached along the length of the breast bone.

(k) **Thymus glands** (i.e. heart bread and neck bread).

(l) Jugular vein and adjacent fat, but without undue trimming or cutting of the neck muscles (severed in removing the head, oesophagus and trachea) and associated fat.

(m) The large blood vessel attached to the vertebrae.

(n) **Spinal cord**.

    The removal of kidneys, kidney knobs and channel fats (KKCF) is optional except in price reporting abattoirs.

Appendix 2 – Hot weight rebate

Carcases are “**Hot**” if weighed within one hour of slaughter. When carcases are weighed “**Hot**”, the “**Cold**” weight is ascertained by reducing the hot weight by 2.0%

**Rounding**

Carcase hot weights must be recorded to the same calibration as indicated on the scale with no rounding applied.
A copy of the MLCSL carcase classification document is made available for passing directly back to the producer, so insist on receiving this important document whether selling direct to abattoirs, through marketing groups or the electronic auction companies.

**ENSURE YOUR CARCASES ARE HANDLED BY THE MLCSL’s BEEF CARCASE AUTHENTICATION AND VERIFICATION SERVICES**
BEEF

CARCASE AUTHENTICATION AND VERIFICATION SERVICES

MLCSL
Stoneleigh Park
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV8 2TL

www.mlcsl.co.uk