

Quality Standard Mark Scheme

Executive Summary

The Quality Standard Mark Scheme specification outlined in this document includes requirements which are significantly above current commercial and legal standards applicable to beef and lamb.

The standards apply throughout the supply chain and the preparation of its meat. They minimise the impact of animal age on eating quality so that product approved under the scheme provides consumers with the potential for improved and more consistent eating quality. Where product performance is not affected by the age of cattle, such as minced product then this requirement has not been included within the specification. The scheme also includes maturation regimes and specifications during the processing of the product.

The summary research underpinning this scheme has been evaluated by the Meat Scientist of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, who is an acknowledged expert in this field.

Background

Meat eating quality is a key issue for consumers. This has been repeatedly reflected in consumer research, where concerns and disappointments have been expressed about the poor eating quality of beef, and of lamb in winter months. For beef, however, consumers have reported an improvement in the eating quality since the introduction of the Over Thirty Months Scheme.

"Eating quality" includes such factors as tenderness, flavour and succulence. It is widely accepted that around 80% of the factors affecting eating quality occur "post farm gate". There is a body of research to indicate that the age of both cattle and sheep, and season of slaughter for sheep, are key influencers on eating quality, a prime motivator for this Scheme. Further technical information is available from AHDB Beef & Lamb on request.

In addition to eating quality considerations, trade and retail customers are increasingly demanding that food is produced through a recognised and independently audited quality assured process. Only beef and lamb produced, transported and slaughtered through an AHDB Beef & Lamb approved assured supply chain will be eligible to carry the Quality Standard Mark.

Specifications for Quality Standard Mark beef

- Females under the age of 36 months are acceptable. They must not have been used for breeding or be in calf, they must not be pregnant.
- Steers under the age of 36 months are acceptable.
- Carcases must have a fat class of between 2–4H and have a conformation of E–O+.
- For qualifying cattle 30 months or under: Maturation of 7 days is required on primals used for frying, roasting and grilling (from slaughter to the final consumer).
- For qualifying cattle aged between 30–36 months: Maturation of 14 days is required on primals used for frying, roasting and grilling (from slaughter to the final consumer). Alternatively, one of the post-slaughter processes to enhance tenderness, as outlined in 'AHDB Beef & Lamb Guidance to Meat Quality', can be used, ie Hip bone suspension or electrical stimulation, plus the standard 7 day maturation as outlined for under 30 months cattle.
- Bulls must be no older than 16 months at slaughter. Primals used for frying, roasting and grilling must be subject to a minimum 14 days maturation (from slaughter to the final consumer).
- Meat from young cattle is subject to specific labelling requirements based on age at slaughter. Meat from such animals must be labelled as either veal or beef depending on age. Therefore, the Quality Standard Mark veal logo will apply to meat from animals under 8 months of age and the Quality Standard Mark beef logo for animals over 8 months at slaughter.



Specifications for Quality Standard Mark beef mince and burgers

Beef mince

- All livestock must be from farms operating in compliance with a farm assurance scheme and must be transported, slaughtered and processed in compliance with a quality assurance scheme. Each such assurance scheme must have been approved by AHDB Beef & Lamb.
- Cattle of any age or sex are acceptable.
- Beef mince must contain a maximum of 20% fat (as measured by chemical analysis using British Standard methods), approximately equivalent to beef having overall 85% visual lean prior to mincing (final mix stage).
- Beef mince must be 100% beef with no added water, additives, fillers or other ingredients.

Burgers

- No meat other than beef may be used.
- The beef may be obtained from cattle of any age or sex.
- The beef used must be of a quality such that it would, if minced, satisfy the requirements of the Quality Standard Mark for beef mince.
- The minimum beef content of the burger is 70% (as defined by The Food Labelling Regulations 1996 as amended in 2003).
- The manufacturer or processor must be a registered member of the Quality Standard Mark Scheme.
- All beef burgers must be produced and labelled in accordance with current legislative requirements.

Specifications for Quality Standard Mark lamb

- Females must have no permanent incisors and neither have been used for breeding or pregnant, ie nulliparous and not pregnant.
- Castrated and entire males must have no permanent incisors.
- Carcases must have a fat class of between 2–3H and have a conformation of between E–O. An equivalent to classification is acceptable for plants not grading lamb.
- Carcases of any acceptable animal slaughtered during the period from 1 January through to 30 April of any year, and born before 1 October of the previous year must be subjected to minimum of 7 days maturation (and ideally 10 days) from slaughter to the final consumer. Alternatively, one of the post-slaughter processes to enhance tenderness, as outlined in 'AHDB Beef & Lamb Guidance to Meat Quality', can be used, ie Aitch bone suspension or electrical stimulation.

References

AHDB Beef & Lamb – Meat Quality and Shelf Life

AHDB Beef & Lamb – Optimising Beef Meat Quality

AHDB Beef & Lamb – Optimising Lamb Meat Quality

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION AND RETURN TO THE ADDRESS SHOWN BELOW:

Membership Declaration Form

PLEASE READ THIS DECLARATION FORM VERY CAREFULLY. IF THERE ARE ANY POINTS YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND PLEASE CALL THE SCHEME HOTLINE ON 0845 491 8787 FOR CLARIFICATION.

Only beef and lamb produced, transported and slaughtered through a supply chain wholly covered by approved, independently audited schemes accredited to EN 45011 standards and registered with AHDB Beef & Lamb, are eligible to carry the Quality Standard Mark.

The Quality Standard Mark highlights where your beef and lamb has been born, raised and slaughtered. For example, beef or lamb indicating English origin with the St George's flag must have been born, raised and slaughtered in England.

If an animal cannot meet all the criteria, for example, if it is born in Scotland or Wales, it will be able to carry the Quality Standard Mark, but indicate British origin with the Union flag.

The Scheme is open to businesses in any EU member state and the origin rules will be amended appropriately for those outside the UK.



Declaration

I declare that I have read and understood the Scheme standards and specifications and will apply them in relation to all beef and lamb to which the Quality Standard Mark is applied by me or on my behalf or for which I am otherwise responsible, including compliance with all applicable legal requirements, including voluntary beef labelling where applicable (use of the English and British version is covered by the EU Beef Labelling Scheme).

I am aware that AHDB Beef & Lamb has a responsibility to audit, without notice, beef and lamb bearing the Quality Standard Mark to ensure it complies with scheme requirements and I hereby authorise access to all relevant premises and records at all reasonable times for those or related purposes by any person authorised to carry out such an audit by AHDB Beef & Lamb.

I understand that AHDB Beef & Lamb has the right to withdraw permission to use the Quality Standard Mark if I or any business for which I hereby accept responsibility, are found not to be complying fully with Scheme requirements, including any refusal to permit an AHDB Beef & Lamb-authorised audit to take place at a reasonable time.

If I fail to comply with the Scheme Standards, I agree to notify AHDB Beef & Lamb and return or destroy at AHDB Beef & Lamb's sole discretion all materials relating to the Quality Standard Mark or to which that Mark has been applied at my or the relevant business' sole expense. I acknowledge that AHDB Beef & Lamb will not be liable for any costs, damages or other losses or pecuniary disadvantage that may result from such withdrawal of permission.

I also understand that proper use of this Quality Standard Mark at any stage in the supply chain does not affect my liability under any legislation.

I hereby apply for permission to authorise the application of the Quality Standard Mark (the Mark) to:

Tick as appropriate

BEEF: English ☐ British ☐ Other (specify) _____ **LAMB:** English ☐ British ☐ Other (specify) _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Company Name: _____ Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone No: _____ Fax No: _____

Email: _____

INDUSTRY SECTOR

Retail Abattoir* ☐ Processor* ☐ Wholesaler* ☐ Retailer ☐ Cash & Carry ☐ Butcher ☐ Tick as appropriate

Other (please specify) _____

Foodservice Catering Wholesaler* ☐ Catering Manufacturer* ☐ Catering Butcher* ☐ Contract Caterer ☐ Foodservice Group ☐ Restaurant ☐ Pub ☐

Other (please specify) _____

*Please indicate which assurance scheme you are registered with and your registration number _____

Please give the name of your assured supplier Beef _____ Lamb _____

Please indicate how you heard about the Quality Standard Mark scheme Supplier ☐ Website ☐ Press ☐

Other (please specify) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

We would like to pass on your details to prospective customers enabling you to benefit from the Quality Standard Mark scheme, including the publishing of your business name, address and telephone number, fax number and email address on the consumer website www.simplybeefandlamb.co.uk and the trade website www.qsmbeefandlamb.co.uk

If you are willing for AHDB Beef & Lamb to provide your information to prospective customers, as indicated above, please tick this box ☐

If you require more than one Declaration Form to allow other premises to join the Scheme, please indicate the number you require _____

Please tick if you would like your name included on a mailing list to receive further information from AHDB Beef & Lamb ☐

This list will not be made available to other companies.

The scheme documentation and stockist materials will be despatched within 28 working days from receipt of signed Declaration Form.

Full scheme details are available on our website: www.qsmbeefandlamb.co.uk

Return the form to:

**The Quality Standard Mark Scheme,
PO Box 258,
Wilmslow
SK9 5YH.**

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY	Date Received:
	Approved by on behalf of AHDB Beef & Lamb

AHDB
BEEF & LAMB