

Livestock and Poultry Program

Remote Grading Program for Beef

The Remote Grading Program for Beef (RGP) matches simple technology with robust data management and program oversight to enable USDA to assess beef carcass characteristics and assign official quality grades from a remote location. This voluntary service option may dramatically reduce the cost of grading service for some beef industry stakeholders.

- The RGP utilizes imaging technology and digital data collection to mirror what an official USDA Grader does when physically at the beef packing facility.
- Remote grading dramatically reduces the travel expenses related to USDA grading and certification, making these services more accessible and facilitating access to new, better, and more diverse marketing opportunities for beef producers and processors.
- RGP participants receive official results from the USDA Grader within 24 hours, allowing them to process and market their high-quality beef as USDA Prime, USDA Choice, or USDA Select, and/or to participate in approved Certified Meat Programs, such as Certified Angus Beef.
- AMS oversight of RGP maintains the integrity of the Meat Grading Service and USDA grade mark. This includes metadata capture and analysis, frequent plant records reviews, periodic surveillance visits, and open and continuous communication and support for participants.

RGP Participation and Cost

- Applicants must be domestic facilities conducting beef slaughter under a Federal grant of inspection (FSIS inspection), the FSIS Commercial Interstate Shipping (CIS) Program, an FSIS Talmadge-Aikin agreement, or a State-administered Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) Program.
- After reviewing the RGP information, contact the AMS Livestock and Poultry Program (AMS-LP) to request a consultation and confirm eligibility. The Applicant must apply and be approved for USDA Meat Grading Service.
- AMS conducts an Initial Site Visit to review program requirements and complete a Grading Plant Survey before initiating service, after which the Applicant may submit product for grading.
- To maintain product and USDA grade mark integrity, AMS periodically reviews an Applicant's internal documentation and controls and conducts on-site visits to ensure program compliance.
- The cost of grading and related activities for RGP—including on-site visits—are charged at the Unscheduled Service Fee rates: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading/fees>.

For additional information regarding the RGP, visit www.ams.usda.gov/remote-beef-grading or contact AMS-LP at AskLP@usda.gov.