

Poultry Grading and Inspection

What's the Difference?



U.S. Graded Poultry

- ▶ Grading refers to the sorting of poultry by quality factors that determine its relative degree of excellence.
- ▶ Product is continuously monitored by USDA graders and assigned a grade based on the following quality factors:

Exposed flesh, defeathering, discolorations, broken bones, missing parts, freezing defects, conformation or shape, fleshing, and fat covering.
- ▶ Grading is a voluntary service paid for by poultry processors. Not all poultry is USDA graded.



U.S. Inspected Poultry

- ▶ Inspection refers to the safety of poultry and poultry products and the accuracy of their labels.
- ▶ Both the products and the plants' systems for sanitation and preparation of products are inspected to assure that they are safe.
- ▶ Inspection involves only those properties related to wholesomeness and labeling, not quality.
- ▶ Inspection is mandatory and required by law, with minor exceptions.

Quality is the Difference!



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Poultry Programs

Revised June 2007
September 1997
AMS-632

USDA Poultry Products Certification

The following USDA services are available to volume food buyers, food service operators, retailers, manufacturers, brokers, wholesalers, and exporters:

- ▶ Independent third-party certification of poultry and poultry products for quality according to U.S. standards.
- ▶ Certification that poultry products meet contract specification requirements for formulation, fabrication procedures, portion control, net weight, packing, packaging, laboratory analysis, temperature, and other product-specific attributes.
- ▶ Assurance of product quality on a continuous basis regardless of supplier.
- ▶ Establishment of a common language that enables buyers and sellers to communicate about poultry quality and other product characteristics without actually seeing the product.
- ▶ Establishment of a basis for fair, competitive bidding between suppliers.

Products examined, accepted, and certified by USDA graders are identified with the contract compliance stamp:



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