



GRASS FED PROGRAM FOR SMALL AND VERY SMALL PRODUCERS

1 Purpose

This document provides the specified product requirements for the Small and Very Small Grass Fed Producer Program (SVS). The program is designed to address the needs of producers who want to market their live ruminant animals as grass fed. This program is designed to provide grass fed verification services to small and very small operations.

2 Scope

This document applies to applicants of the SVS. SVS applicants may apply and verify the requirements for grass fed live ruminant animals to their approved programs.

3 References

QAD 1000 Procedure: *Quality Systems Verification Programs, General Policies and Procedures*

QAD 1020C: Application for the USDA Grass Fed Program - Cattle

QAD 1020S: Application for the USDA Grass Fed Program - Sheep

[*Application for Service \(LP-109\)*](#)

4 Definitions

4.1 *Small or Very Small Sheep Producer:* A producer who market lambs from 99 or fewer ewes annually.¹

4.2 *Small or Very Small Cattle Producer:* A producer who market 49 or fewer cattle annually.²

Note: AMS will consider, on a case-by-case basis, approving producers who market slightly more ruminant animals than allowed by the definition to use this verification process.

5 Responsibilities

¹ AMS used the smallest group identified in the Farms, Land in Farms and Livestock Operations 2012 Summary (February 2013), National Agricultural Statistics Service chart “Number of Ewes and Lambs Operations and Percent of Inventory by Size Group – United States: 2011 and 2012” to make this determination.

² AMS used the smallest group identified in the Farms, Land in Farms and Livestock Operations 2012 Summary (February 2013), National Agricultural Statistics Service chart “Number of Cattle and Calves Operations and Percent of Inventory by Size Group – United States: 2011 and 2012”, to make this determination.



- 5.1 Applicants must meet all applicable policies and procedures referenced in Section 3.
- 5.2 Applications should be submitted via email to QAD.Auditservice@usda.gov. If email is not possible hard copy application can be submitted to:

USDA, AMS, L&P
Quality Assessment Division
1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Stop 0258
Washington, DC 20250

6 Application for Service

- 6.1 To request service, submit the following information to QAD.AuditService@usda.gov:
- a) [*Application for Service \(LP-109\)*](#). Applicants who have a LP-109 on file do not need to resubmit the document unless the information must be updated.
 - b) A cover letter (hard copy or in electronic form) requesting services for each program in which the applicant wishes to participate.
 - c) A complete copy (hard copy or in electronic form) of the applicant's program documentation as described in the individual program procedure, as applicable. Email the documentation to QAD.AuditService@usda.gov.
- 6.2 An applicant may cancel the application process at any time. Applicants are responsible for fees accrued prior to canceling their application.

7 Audit Process

- 7.1 Applications will undergo a desk audit for initial approval of the farm or ranch.
- 7.2 The approval will be for a two-year period.
- 7.3 Due to individual complexities of some operations an onsite audit may be required to ensure conformance to the Grass Fed Program.
- 7.4 The cost of the desk audit and if necessary, the onsite audit will be borne by the applicant. Cost for the normal desk audit is an approximate one (1) hour fee rate as charged by the Quality Assessment Division.

8 Program for Grass Fed Ruminant Animals

- 8.1 Grass and forage shall be the feed source consumed for the lifetime of the ruminant animal, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning.
- 8.2 The diet shall be derived solely from forage consisting of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g., legumes, Brassica), browse, or cereal grain crops in the vegetative (pre-grain) state.



- 8.3** Animals cannot be fed grain or grain byproducts and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. Hay, haylage, baleage, silage, crop residue without grain, and other roughage sources may also be included as acceptable feed sources.
- 8.4** Routine mineral and vitamin supplementation may also be included in the feeding regimen.
- 8.5** If incidental supplementation occurs due to inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs or to ensure the animal's well-being at all times during adverse environmental or physical conditions, the producer must fully document (e.g., receipts, ingredients, and tear tags) the supplementation that occurs including the amount, the frequency, and the supplements provided.

Note 1: Routine mineral and vitamin supplementation must not include any added protein to the animal's diet. Supplements that contain added proteins (e.g. grain, grain by-products, urea or molasses) are not allowed under this marketing claim.

Note 2: Back verification is not allowed under this claim. If a producer purchases cattle or sheep from an outside source, those animals must be purchased from a producer located on the *Official Listing for the Small Very Small Grass Fed Beef/Sheep Program*. The Official Listings are available on the [USDA Grass Fed Small & Very Small Producer Program website](#).

Jeff Waite, Branch Chief
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Livestock and Poultry Program

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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