

Final & Approved text

Carcase Classification Scrutiny Committee
Stoneleigh,
25 September 2018

Quality Standard for the Delivery of Carcase Classification Services in Great Britain

1. Background

1.1 The purpose of this quality standard is to ensure that providers of carcase classification and dressing inspection services for cattle, sheep and pigs in Great Britain operate to a transparent and independent standard agreed by key participants in the supply chain including farmers, processors and their representatives.

1.2 The substantive provisions of this code are based in large part on the internal operating standards of MLCSL under the ownership of AHDB, and it is the intention of this code to protect and preserve those standards by opening them up to independent scrutiny.

1.3 It is recognised that a number of legal regulations apply in this area (although they do not cover all species or other important parts of this standard). The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and its devolved equivalents are explicitly recognised as government regulators whose role is to ensure that carcase classification complies with the law.

1.4. The role of this group and this standard is to ensure that classification personnel undertake training and assessment at an agreed frequency and to an agreed standard in order to achieve a high level of compliance with RPA checks, and also to prescribe best practice where the law is silent (such as the provision of documented complaints procedure).

1.5 This quality standard and the delivery of the services to which it refers, will be overseen by a committee made up of representatives from the relevant industry and statutory bodies (See Appendix I)

2. Carcase Classification Scrutiny Committee

2.1 The committee that will oversee the Quality Standard will be known as the Carcase Classification Scrutiny Committee (CCSC). Its role will be to protect and promote trust, independence, fairness & consistency in the provision of carcase classification services for beef, pork and lamb in the Great Britain through the development and promotion of this Quality Standard

2.2 The full CCSC shall comprise representatives of those organisations listed in Appendix I (the 'Members'). It may from time to time invite participation from other organisations or individuals as it sees fit. It may also delegate authority to a sub-

group where necessary. It shall meet at least twice per year, however sub-groups may meet more frequently as required.

2.3 All Members of the CCSC shall act in good faith to support and promote the objectives of the CCSC as stated in this Standard.

2.4 Individuals delivering carcass classification services shall be referred to as Classification Service Officers (CSOs)

2.5 Where a number of CSOs operate through a larger organisation or company (for example, MLCSL) this organisation shall be known as a Classification Service Provider (CSP).

2.6 The CCSC shall confirm whether a CSP has complied with this Quality Standard and shall have the right to require such evidence of compliance as is reasonable. Such evidence is likely to take the form (at the discretion of the CCSC) of a list of all CSOs operating within the CSP, and the results of their most recent assessment, provided on a monthly basis or as agreed.

2.7 In determining compliance or otherwise the CCSC shall at all times behave reasonably and have regard to due process.

2.8 For the avoidance of doubt the requirements of this Quality Standard are not intended to apply to meat processing plants or meat processing companies, but rather to the CSOs operating within them (subject to section 6.2).

3. Classification Service Officers (CSOs)

3.1 This Quality Standard is intended to apply to CSOs whether they are:

- a) Employed by an organisation or company providing classification services (a CSP).
- b) Employed by the company operating the plant in which they are delivering the service.

3.2 CSOs may be involved in the operational provision of the service on the line either directly (e.g. through the provision of visual assessment or probe services), or indirectly (e.g. through the oversight of automatic systems, such as the E+V VIA machine).

3.3 The CCSC, if provided with such evidence, as it requires, may deem all the CSOs within a particular CSP to meet this Quality Standard. In these circumstances, the CSP itself will be deemed to meet the Quality Standard.

3.4 The CCSC shall maintain a list of CSOs, and where appropriate, CSPs, who have complied with this Standard.

4. Co-Inspection Assessors (CIAs)

4.1 From the pool of qualified CSOs a number with the necessary experience will be designated as Co-Inspection Assessors (CIAs).

4.2 CIAs are required to have:

- a) A minimum of 4 years' experience as a CSO
- b) Have extensive knowledge of the regulations and experience of the delivery of carcase classification services.
- c) Undergo a bi-annual Standardisation Check to ensure consistency across Great Britain. This standardisation check should be run in conjunction with the RPA technical inspectorate (unless, exceptionally, scheduling makes this impossible). This clause applies to cattle only.
- d) Be knowledgeable about the importance of independent classification and be capable of providing training of classification *for all species*
- e) Detailed knowledge of the different dressing specification
- f) Capable of delivering CSO checks for all species
- g) Capable of auditing CSO checks, procedures and paperwork (for the purposes of fraud prevention)
- h) Share results of their Standardisation Checks with CSSC. This may be done on their behalf by the CSP where appropriate.

4.3 The CCSC should keep an up-to-date register of designated CIAs

5. Employment, Training and Assessment of CSO's

5.1 All CSOs operating to this Quality Standard must:

- a) Be licensed to classify by the RPA or devolved body where this is required by law
- b) Be familiar with the complete service provision for the carcase inspection activities for the abattoir/s in which they operate.
- c) Ensure 100% service delivery and accuracy of the information recorded and provided to the producer.
- d) Have line management responsibility for their CSO duties entirely separate from the procurement & sales function of the plant, right up to Director Level.
- e) Be required to undergo annual training on the importance of independent classification services in the supply chain (the content of which is approved by the CCSC) and developments in classification techniques. At the conclusion of this training staff will be tested and required to achieve at least an 80% score, or they will be required to re-take the course.

- f) Undertake training culminating in a Co-Inspection Assessment on a monthly basis for those species for which they provide inspection services. CSOs being assessed will be required to demonstrate both accuracy and consistency in the delivery of the inspection service for each species, including bias assessments for classification, to the standard determined by the CCSC.
- g) The Co-Inspection Assessment must be carried out by a nominated Co-Inspection Assessor (CIA) to a documented and open standard as laid out below, or as amended by the CCSC from time to time:
- h) A Co-Inspection Assessment will require:

Cattle – the assessment of the classification of at least 40 carcasses selected at random, or if less than 40 are available, all carcasses (applicable to abattoirs slaughtering over 150 cattle per week). The permitted tolerance range will be no more than 8 conformation errors and 8 fat class errors on the standard EUROP scale. If the 15 point scale is being used no more than 24 Fat or 24 conformation errors are allowed. No category errors are allowed. All obvious errors identified during the assessment shall be corrected.

The CSO should be able to describe and recognise all carcass dressing specifications permitted by law. If any carcass presented is not dressed to specification (NDTS) this must be recorded and that information provided to producer (at all times, not just during the Assessment). No errors are permitted during the Assessment.

Sheep – the assessment of the classification of at least 40 carcasses selected at random. Prescribed ranges will be 8 conformation and 8 fat for the EUROP scale. No category errors (NSL/OSL etc) are allowed. All obvious errors identified during the assessment shall be corrected.

The CSO should be able to describe and recognise the carcass dressing specification in agreed use at the plant in question. If any carcass presented during the Assessment is not dressed to specification (NDTS) this must be brought to the attention of the CIA. No errors are permitted.

Pigs- the assessment of grades of at least 20 carcasses per classifier. Prescribed ranges will be 8 errors but only a maximum bias of plus or minus four (+/- 4) will be allowed. No category (sow/boar/gilt) errors are allowed. All errors (+/- 2mm or more) shall be corrected.

The CSO should be able to describe and recognise the carcass dressing specifications permitted by law. If any carcass presented during the Assessment is not dressed to specification (NDTS) this must be brought to the attention of the CIA. No errors are permitted.

5.2 Co-Inspection Assessment: Standard

The CSOs assessed will be required to demonstrate an “agreed competence” that mirrors the standards required by the RPA.

If during the assessment the differences are outside the prescribed ranges the CIA will alert the CSO involved and require further training. A subsequent assessment will be carried out within 7 days until this standard is reached.

Until this re testing has been completed, the CSO will be regarded as being a risk and will be subject to peer supervision until the necessary degree of competence can be demonstrated.

5.3 NDTS Records

The CSP shall maintain records of the total number of beef carcasses NDTS by plant and share these with the CCSC in an aggregated and anonymised form at regular intervals. For sheep & pigs the CSP shall maintain records of all carcasses identified as NDTS during a Co-Inspection Assessment, and share these with the CCSC in a similar format.

5.4 Special Provisions: Directly employed CSOs

The training and classification checks of CSOs that are employed by the company operating the plant in which they are delivering the service, must be carried out to an equivalent standard to that set out above, approved by the CCSC. These quality procedures need to be presented to and approved by the CCSC to ensure that the CSO can be part of this scheme.

5.5 Extenuating Circumstances

If for whatever reason an individual CSO is not checked at the prescribed monthly interval the CCSC must be informed of the reason. If this continues for three intervals (one quarter) this will normally be regarded as a breach of the requirements of the Quality standard and the CCSC may withdraw its approval from that CSO until the required standard is attained.

5.6 All CSO's must sign a Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest Declaration, of the type set out in Appendix II.

6. Complaints Procedure

6.1 This Quality Standard requires that all CSPs maintain policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints, appeals or disputes received from processors, producer marketing co-operatives, farmers or any other parties, concerning the operation of carcass classification and inspection services by CSPs, at any given site.

Such policies must be represented by a formal, documented Complaints Procedure, and is to be used solely for complaints relating to the classification and inspection of carcasses by CSPs at the plant in question and for no other purpose.

6.2 The existence of the Complaints Procedure, and where to find further details, must be made clear by all CSPs in their communications with third parties and be referenced

on the websites of CSPs, individual processors and industry organisations participating as members of the CCSC.

The Complaints Procedure must also be referenced on every kill sheet supplied by plants participating in the Standard.

6.3. A template of a complaints pro-forma is attached in Appendix III. It is envisaged that this should be made available via the websites of individual meat processors (see 6.2 above) and industry organisations represented on the CCSC.

6.4 In every case the Complaints Procedure should contain the following guidance:

“If a producer has a complaint they should, in the first instant, contact the food business operator (FBO); the FBO may request the CSO to reappraise specific carcasses. If the CSO agrees to make a change the issue will be considered closed & no report is necessary.

If the CSO believes that the original classification was correct the FBO/processor will report this back to the producer.

If the processor or producer disagrees with the decision of the CSO, then the FBO should contact the CSP and request a second opinion. At this point the CSP will raise the necessary paperwork and this shall be considered an official complaint under this Quality Standard. The CSP is now responsible for handling the complaint in accordance with its published Complaints Procedure, with the objective of reaching a satisfactory outcome.”

A satisfactory outcome may only be recorded as being reached once there is agreement between the processor, CSP and the complainant.

Where no satisfactory outcome can be reached, any dissenting party will retain the right to escalate the complaint directly to the CCSC for consideration by a sub-group of its members. Details of how to escalate a complaint for consideration directly by the CCSC must be included in the published Complaints Procedures of the CSP.

Where the decision is taken to escalate the complaint directly to the CCSC, the CSP will immediately inform the Chairman of the CCSC, or deputy, of the position and the CCSC sub-group will convene as soon as possible (if necessary by conference call) to consider the matter.

The Chairman of the sub-group will decide, on a case-by-case basis, the most appropriate composition of CCSC membership with which to form the sub-group, to hear the appeal and decide on the outcome and communicate the decisions to all parties. All CCSC decisions in relation to this code are final.

The CCSC may require sight of complaints at any time, but otherwise CSPs must prepare a summary of all complaints received for submission to the next regular meeting of the CCSC. The CSP must attach to its summary copies of the completed pro-forma for each complaint received.

6.5 The record of any complaint and actions taken will be kept on file for a period to be specified by the CCSC, but no less than 24 months.

6.6 Exceptionally, the CCSC may require such classification data (excluding pricing data) from CSPs/plants adhering to the quality standard as may reasonably be required from time to time in the pursuit of its role.

6.7 The schedule of future CCSC meeting will be published on the websites of the AHDB and all compliant CSPs.

7. Evolution of the Carcase Classification Systems

7.1 The CCSC will consider whether modifications to the current carcase classification systems proposed by a processor and/or CSP are consistent with its role in helping to protect the integrity, independence, fairness & consistency of carcase classification of beef, pork and lamb in the Great Britain.

7.2 The CCSC shall not act in such a way as inhibits innovation or new commercial practices, but will seek to ensure that the operation of both the existing and any new or improved system of carcase classification is operated fairly.

7.3 It may from time to time amend this Quality Standard for the Delivery of Classification Services to reflect proposed changes in working practices, legislation & technology (including automated carcase classification).

7.4 To this end the CCSC will maintain links with in the research and knowledge transfer sections of AHDB in particular and invite periodic updates to be given of developments this area.

Appendix I

Make Up of the Carcase Classification Scrutiny Committee

Representative bodies	Number of members	Status
Independent	1	Full member, may be Chair
NFU, NFUS and NFU Cymru	3 (one from each)	Full member
NSA	1	Full member
NPA	1	Full member
BMPA (CEO, plus sector representatives)	3	Full member
SAMW	1	Full member
AIMS	1	Full member
AHDB	2	In attendance, observer
Carcase Service Provider (e.g. MLCSL)	2 (1 Exec, 1 RM)	In attendance, observer
Rural Payments Agency	1	In attendance, observer

The chairperson for this committee to be elected annually from among its members.

The secretariat will be provided by AHDB.

The primary representative for each body is also permitted to nominate a deputy when unable to attend meetings.

Appendix II

Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest Declaration

All CSOs providing a carcass classification service, whether employed by company /agency providing these services, or self-employed as an independent classifier, or working for the company operating the plant in which they are delivering the service, are required to sign two copies of this Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest Declaration which will verify understanding and acceptance of the contents below. One copy to be retained by the CSP one copy by the CCSC.

Failure to comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest Declaration will be judged by the CCSC to be a serious breach of the requirements of the Quality Standard, which may result in the CCSC's approval for the CSP being withdrawn.

1. I will comply at all times with the administrative, operational, technical and ethical requirements of the CCSC Quality Standard for the Provision of Classification Services
2. I will treat as strictly confidential all information including documents received or obtained during the course of my employment.
3. I will not discuss the results of the inspections with any third party unless authorised to do so by an individual line manager and or the customer.
4. I will store all documentation in a safe and secure manner at all times as required.
5. I will comply and participate in any training that is provided to ensure I am compliant within my role.
6. I will co-operate with the customers and visitors but any requests to deviate from protocol need to be reported to my Line Manager.
7. I will declare, at any time during my employment any activity or relationships that may conflict with the independence of my judgment, integrity or impartiality. Conflicts might include:
 - Personally, family members or friends keeping livestock.
 - Personally, family members or friends trading in livestock for themselves or others.
 - Helping in any meat trade or farming business where I may encounter people who may be involved in my duties.
 - Financial or business links with companies operating in the meat and livestock supply business.

- Any other conflicts that I or any other independent person may believe may affect my independence of judgement, integrity or impartiality.

Any conflicts or potential conflicts must be declared in writing to your line manager. Conflicts will not necessarily exclude you from carrying out normal duties, but will allow the conflicts to be monitored and managed.

8. I will not accept any inducement, gift or commission or any other profit from the abattoir or farmer or their representatives whose products are being inspected. I will inform my line manager in the first instance if I am offered any benefit of any kind or approached by anyone in this way.
9. I will not bring the CCSC Quality Standard into disrepute by my behaviour and I will not post on any social media forums or discuss with anyone any activities conducted within my employment, which will include any discussions with or about any other employee that I may have or may become aware of.
10. I will not be under the influence or be in possession of any drug or alcohol whilst at work
11. In the event of any breach or alleged breach of this Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Agreement, I will co-operate fully in any formal or informal process that may be related to my colleagues or me.
12. I understand and acknowledge that any breach of the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest Declaration may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action being taken against me.
13. I understand that I also have the right to complain to the CCSC and that my employment will not be affected.

I agree to comply with, observe and be bound by the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest Declaration.

Name: _____
(BLOCK CAPITALS):

Signature: _____

CSP: _____

Date: _____

(For Reference Only)

Appendix III

COMPLAINT, APPEAL AND FEEDBACK

This form to be used solely for complaints relating to the classification of carcasses by CSPs at the plant in question

To:	cc:
From:	
Date of initial complaint:	Plant:
Name of Complainant:	CSP:

Complaint/Problem:

Potential Causes

Investigation

Investigated by:

Date of investigation:

Action

Action implemented by:

Date implemented:

Control

Overseen by:

Date undertaken:

Current Position

Date:

Follow Up

Undertaken by:

Date undertaken:

Final Outcome

Final sign off and closure comment:

Signature:

Date :