Agricultural Marketing Service’s
Beef Tenderness
Certification Program

United States Department of Agriculture
Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program
Special Thanks to ...

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What Defines Eating Satisfaction?

- Flavor
- Tenderness
- Juiciness
## Most Appealing Steak Message/Benefit

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*Funded by the Beef Checkoff.*
Communicating Eating Satisfaction?

Quality and Yield Grades

Tenderness, Flavor and Juiciness
Interest and requests for developing a Tenderness Marketing Claim Standard

AMS published proposed Marketing Claims rule

- December 30, 2002
- Comments received prompted the need for further discussion with stakeholders
Beef Tenderness Standard History

- AMS Tenderness forum
  - March 27, 2007, Kansas City, Missouri
- Input from
  - Academia
  - Industry
  - Trade Associations
  - Government
- Committees formed to focus on tenderness
  - Predictive Technology
  - Methodologies, Testing & Verification
  - Economic Implications
  - Consumer Implications & Sensory
Beef Tenderness Standard History

- AMS Tenderness Forum at the Reciprocal Meats Conference
  - June 22, 2008
  - University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
- Key outcomes
  - Focus on Beef Initially
  - Minimum Tenderness Threshold Value
  - Qualifying Muscles/Cuts
  - Inherent vs. Enhanced Tender
In 2009, standard was drafted

- Federal Register
- The *National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act* of 1995 (Public Law 104-113)
  - OMB Circular A-119
  - Federal agencies adopt voluntary consensus standards in lieu of creating proprietary, non-consensus standards
- Several standards organizations considered
Beef Tenderness Standard History

- ASTM International
  - Committee F10
    Livestock, Meat, and Poultry Evaluation Systems
  - Subcommittee F10.60
    Livestock, Meat and Poultry Marketing Claims

- Standard Approved 2011
  - F 2925-11 Standard Specification for Tenderness Marketing Claims Associated with Meat Cuts Derived from Beef

- Tenderness Claim (two options)
  - Tender: Sheer value ≤ 4.4 kg for WBSF or 20.0 kg for SSF
  - Very Tender: Sheer value ≤ 3.9 kg for WBSF or 15.3 kg for SSF
Implementation

Systematic, Multi-Standard Approach

Standards and Technology Division

Grading and Verification Division

USDA TENDER
Operational Requirements

- Performance Based
- Declare an ASTM tenderness standard
- Quality management approach
  - Management structure
  - Documented results
  - Actions traceable
- Statistically verified
- Sampling plan
- Tenderness measured using an approved method
  - Instrument/Laboratory Proficiency Testing
Quality Management Documentation

- Address all points of GVD 1002
  - Organizational structure
  - Use of quality control records
  - Control of documents, records and changes
  - Control and calibration of measuring and test equipment
  - Control of related purchased material, including incoming inspection
  - SOP’s
  - All other requirements of the GVD 1002
Quality Management Documentation

- Identify AMS Approved Tenderness Testing Lab or AMS Approved technology for tenderness testing
Application Process

- Send QM and attachments to ARCBranch@ams.usda.gov
- Questions/contacts:
  - Jim Riva; Deputy Director 540-288 2197
    James.Riva@ams.usda.gov
  - Steve Ross; Chief of Verification Services
    Steve.Ross@ams.usda.gov
    970-346-0567
  - David Bowden; Standards & Technology
    David.Bowden@ams.usda.gov
    202-690-3148
Approval Process

- Case-by-case Basis by LPS Program per GVD 1000
- LPS Program Desk Audit
- LPS Program Onsite Capability Assessment
- Ongoing Audit Frequency: At least 2/FY
- Changes to a QMS must be approved by the LPS Program prior to implementing
Tenderness Claims will become part of either the company’s QMS/QSA or Process Verified Program (PVP)

- QMS/QSA (GVD1002) audited two times per year
- PVP(GVD1001) will be audited once per year

Costs for either type program:
- $108/hour for time by auditor
- Travel expenses at cost recovery rate

Currently - 3 companies applied
Marketing and Promotional Materials

- Use of the “USDA Tender” or “USDA Very Tender” Shields for products certified under these requirements
- Marketing and promotional materials must be reviewed by the LPS Program prior to final use
- FSIS/OPPD/LPDD Approval too!