



BY AMERICAN MEAT SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Ground Beef Lean and Fat Ratio Verification & Validation Steps

Facilities that produce retail ready items with a fat/lean declaration on the finished ground beef product label have a legal obligation to ensure product is labeled truthfully.¹

¹Ground Beef Standard of Identity: 9 CFR 319.15-Miscellaneous beef products "...shall not contain more than 30% fat..."

1. Visual Estimation

Sort relative to the trim's visual estimated fat/lean ratio.²

²See Meat Locker "Visual Lean Estimate Guidance for Grinding Beef" for information on this step.

2. Verification

Core Samples (Combo)

- Establish a testing pattern (Figure 1)
- Collect cores into one lug (e.g. ~9 lbs of the pre-grind trim sample)
- Train personnel to reduce risk of coring through plastic combo liners & causing contamination

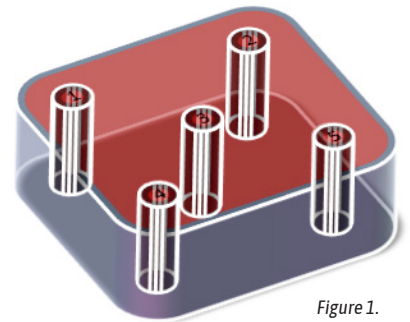


Figure 1.

Grind

- Determine grind plate size(s)
- Determine number of grinds through each grind plate
- Simpler is better
- Be sure fat/lean incorporation is as uniform as possible



Test

- Utilize a calibrated fat/lean analyzer, such as the Foss MeatScan, which employs near-infrared technology, or Hobart, which cooks the sample, to determine fat content.
- Be sure to avoid any "fat" or "lean" pockets for your machine sample.

If pathogen testing combos, avoid cross-contaminating samples during sample grinding:

- 1) Sterilize corer between each pull and
- 2) Wash the grinder between grinds
OR
- 3) Keep sample grinds separate/isolated until all combos tested between washes are cleared with negative pathogen results.

3. Validation

Upon starting the process and then at a defined interval (quarterly, semi-annually, etc.), this process should be validated via pulling retail-ready, labeled samples and sending them in for 3rd party laboratory fat analysis/confirmation.