

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 70

[Docket No. PY-92-003]

RIN 0581-AA61

Voluntary Poultry Grade Standards

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is adopting as a final rule the provisions of the proposed rule which updated the voluntary poultry grade standards in response to advancements within the poultry industry and changes in consumer preferences. The revisions will amend existing regulations with regard to discolorations, the definition of exposed flesh, and the procurement grades in order to simplify interpretation, improve uniformity, and strengthen effectiveness. The revisions will also establish new grading criteria for large poultry parts to fulfill industry's request for voluntary grading standards for new products.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 6, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Janice L. Lockard, Chief, Standardization Branch, (202) 720-3506.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This rule has been determined not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 and has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

This rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12778, Civil Justice Reform. It is not intended to have retroactive effect. It would not preempt any State or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule. Prior to any judicial challenges to the application of the provisions of this rule, appropriate administrative procedures as set forth in 7 CFR 70.100 through 70.106 must be exhausted.

The AMS Administrator has determined that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, as defined by the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*).

The information collection requirement that appears in section 70.210(e) of this rule has been previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget and assigned OMB Control No. 0581-0127, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980.

Background

Poultry grading is a voluntary program provided under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, and is offered on a fee-for-service basis. It is designed to assist the orderly marketing of poultry products. Quality in practical terms refers to the usability, desirability, and value of a product; as well as its marketability. Grade standards identify and measure degrees of quality, and permit important quality attributes to be evaluated uniformly and accurately. In order to continue equity among all persons affected by grade standards, from the producer to the consumer, the standards must keep abreast of changes in consumer preferences as well as advancements and trends in industry production and marketing practices.

The poultry grade standards were last amended effective June 9, 1986. Those changes included establishing a standard for quality of raw, boneless, skinless poultry products and clarifying the tolerance for exposed flesh and discoloration in ready-to-cook poultry carcasses.

Since 1986, there has been even greater consumer utilization of convenience foods and demand for low-fat, skinless products. Constant innovations and accomplishments have also occurred within the poultry industry: (1) Improved quality and uniformity (conformation and fleshing through technological advances and efficient production practices); (2) new processing techniques; (3) effective automation; (4) new products; and (5) new marketing trends.

Proposed Changes

The amendments revise the existing standard for discolorations on skin and flesh in grade A and B quality poultry products and reclassify skin bruises as a discoloration. For A quality carcasses and parts (§ 70.220), slight discolorations on skin and flesh will be allowed provided the discoloration does not detract from the appearance of the product. Clarification is further made to define discolorations and to include intensity levels allowed and the total aggregate area of permitted discolorations.

For B quality poultry products (§ 70.221), the limit for discolorations will be moderately shaded areas and the carcass or part will be free of serious defects. This revision is necessary to accurately classify discolorations considered normal for the kind and class of poultry being graded.

Out-dated terms, such as "blue back" (§ 70.220), that refer to conditions

presently not found, are removed. Technological advancements in poultry production practices have improved uniformity among poultry products. "Blue back" has become a rare finding thereby making it insignificant for present poultry marketing.

The descriptions of grade criteria for discolorations in poultry roasts (§ 70.230) is clarified. The revision allows slight discolorations or other skin discolorations which do not detract from the appearance of the roast. The aggregate area of all discolorations is defined and tolerances are based on minimum and maximum weight. In addition, the amount of skin covering poultry roasts is reduced and it is permitted to overlap without limit, provided fat has been removed from specific areas of the carcass. Current grade criteria for poultry roasts do not provide a margin for accepting product tolerances based on the weight of the product, nor do they permit the overlapping of skin on roasts.

In addition, the grade criteria for discolorations in boneless breast and thigh meat (§ 70.231) is clarified. The current regulation provides no margin for accepting product with slight discolorations even though they may not detract from the appearance of the product.

Also amended are the grade factors for exposed flesh in A quality poultry products (§ 70.220). Current grade factors were developed when the primary method for disjointing whole carcasses was by hand. They do not provide for insignificant cuts and tears on the breast and legs of whole carcasses, or on poultry parts, that may be the result of the newer processing technologies and equipment used today. Data from the Agency's 1991 Poultry Defect Survey indicates that the amendments would not significantly affect the overall acceptable quality levels of the product. These cuts and tears frequently do not detract from the appearance or acceptability of the product. The entire paragraph has been rewritten to more clearly incorporate these changes. Because newer methods for disjointing whole birds also affect the thigh portion of poultry parts, the grade criteria for A quality thighs is clarified in § 70.220(f) "Disjointed and broken bones, missing parts, and trimming."

In B quality poultry products, trimming is removed from § 70.221(e) "Exposed flesh" and is more fully addressed in § 70.221(f) "Disjointed and broken bones, missing parts, and trimming."

Procurement Grades I and II (§§ 70.270 and 70.271) are deleted.

These grades were established in 1960, for poultry suitable for institutional adaptation and further processing. Today, the use of procurement grades and the need to provide grade standards below Grade C are virtually non-existent.

The amendments include definitions for front poultry halves and rear poultry halves (§ 70.210), products that are newer retail packs; add tenderloins to the regulations for boneless poultry breast and thigh meat (§ 70.231); and add a new standard for skinless carcasses and parts (§ 70.232). Industry had requested that the Agency broaden the types of products to which the standards apply. These changes give industry flexibility in marketing additional types of graded poultry products. Consumer preferences for a leaner, tender cut of poultry has caused the demand for tenderloin meat to grow and a standard is needed to ensure a quality product. And consumers wanting less fat in the diet will have a larger variety of skinless USDA graded poultry products from which to choose. The Agency has been working with industry, through test applications, to determine possible changes and agrees that the amendments are feasible.

The definition for "Free from protruding pinfeathers" (§ 70.1) is revised by adding the terms "diminutive feathers" and "hairs". In addition, the grade criteria for this factor in A quality (§ 70.220) and B quality (§ 70.221) is clarified.

The amendments require that all scales provided for the graders' use be graduated uniformly whether used for individual products or quantities of product (§ 70.15). This will enable a more accurate application of tolerances during test-weighing procedures, especially as the use of digital scales increases.

The amendments will update the regulations to comply with current statutory requirements regarding providing grading services and licensing graders without discrimination due to age or disabilities (§ 70.5).

Other miscellaneous changes will remove obsolete material, correct erroneous wording, and otherwise clarify, update, and simplify the regulations. These changes are editorial or housekeeping in nature and impose no new requirements.

Comments

A proposed rule to amend the poultry standards and grades in 7 CFR Part 70 to reflect these innovations was published in the **Federal Register** (59 FR 52469) on October 18, 1994. Comments on the proposed rule were

solicited from interested parties until November 17, 1994.

During the 30-day comment period, the Agency received six comments, four from poultry processors and two from national industry associations. All commentors were in basic agreement with the proposed changes. However, three processors and one association also called attention to several items that were of concern.

There were several comments about the definitions for discolorations: (1) they should apply only to discolorations on muscle tissue, not to any loose blood that may collect in the wing socket area; (2) they are too subjective and need further clarification to avoid inconsistent interpretation; (3) it is and would be cumbersome for graders to visualize circular aggregate areas of discoloration and to determine their dimensions; (4) color photographs and standard color chips would be helpful.

Discolorations on poultry skin and flesh have always been part of the grade standards. Likewise, blood on or under the skin has always been considered to be a discoloration. Blood may build up in the wing socket area during the hanging, stunning, and evisceration procedures, but it can usually be removed by further rinsing the poultry, thus upgrading the product. The proposed regulations do not change these facts, but they do define discolorations in terms of intensity levels and they include the total aggregate area of permitted discolorations.

The Agency recognizes that words alone cannot totally illustrate degrees of discoloration or that visual inspection alone cannot precisely determine the actual size of a discoloration. Therefore, the Agency is developing two grading aids that will be provided to all poultry grading personnel and will be available to others for a fee. One aid is a color photo series that will show various defects, including discolorations, on chickens, turkeys, and ducks. Each species has its own unique characteristics and requires specific criteria to classify any defects. The other aid is a plastic template with circular areas of specific dimensions that coincide with the various aggregate areas of defects that are permitted.

Other comments were related to the definition of "Free from protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, or hairs:" (1) it was too subjective or ambiguous; (2) it could lead to a wide range of interpretation or inconsistent downgrading; (3) actual numbers and sizes should be established for feathers and hairs.

Defeathering has always been part of the poultry grade standard and the Agency believes that the proposed revisions will help clarify the regulations. However, the Agency will consider undertaking further study concerning the defeathering process.

In the meantime, in consideration of preliminary discussions with industry resulting in the proposed regulatory changes and overall acceptance thereof, the regulatory text contained in the proposed rule is hereby adopted.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 70

Food grades and standards, Food labeling, Poultry and poultry products, Rabbits, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

For reasons set forth in the preamble, 7 CFR Part 70 is amended as follows:

PART 70—VOLUNTARY GRADING OF POULTRY PRODUCTS AND RABBIT PRODUCTS AND U.S. CLASSES, STANDARDS, AND GRADES

1. The authority citation for Part 70 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

2. In section 70.1, the definition for "Free from protruding pinfeathers" is revised and new definitions for "Lightly shaded discolorations," "Moderately shaded discolorations," and "Slight discolorations" are added to read as follows:

§ 70.1 Definitions.

* * * * *

Free from protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, or hairs means that a poultry carcass, part, or poultry product with the skin on is free from protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, or hairs which are visible to a grader during an examination at normal grading speeds. However, a poultry carcass, part, or poultry product may be considered as being free from protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, or hairs if it has a generally clean appearance and if not more than an occasional protruding pinfeather, diminutive feather, or hair is evidenced during a more careful examination.

* * * * *

Lightly shaded discolorations on poultry are generally reddish in color and are usually confined to areas of the skin or the surface of the flesh.

Moderately shaded discolorations on poultry skin or flesh are areas that are generally dark red or bluish, or are areas of flesh bruising. Moderately shaded discolorations are free from blood clots that are visible to a grader during an examination of the carcass, part, or

poultry product at normal grading speeds.

* * * * *

Slight discolorations on poultry skin or flesh are areas of discoloration that are generally pinkish in color and do not detract from the appearance of the carcass, part, or poultry product.

* * * * *

3. Section 70.5 is revised to read as follows:

§ 70.5 Nondiscrimination.

The conduct of all services and the licensing of graders and inspectors under these regulations shall be accomplished without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, or disability.

4. In section 70.15, paragraph (c) is revised to read as follows:

§ 70.15 Equipment and facilities to be furnished for use of graders in performing service on a resident basis.

* * * * *

(c) Scales graduated in tenths of a pound or less for weighing carcasses, parts, or products individually or in containers up to 100 pounds, and test weights for such scales.

* * * * *

5. In section 70.210, paragraphs (a), (b), and (e) introductory text are revised; paragraphs (e)(10) through (e)(16) are redesignated as paragraphs (e)(12) through (e)(18) respectively; and new paragraphs (e)(10) and (e)(11) are added to read as follows:

§ 70.210 General.

(a) The United States standards for quality contained in this subpart are applicable to individual carcasses of ready-to-cook poultry, to parts of ready-to-cook poultry as described in paragraph (e) of this section, and to individual units of specified poultry food products.

(b) Carcasses, parts, or poultry food products found to be unsound, unwholesome, or otherwise unfit for human food in whole or in part, shall not be given any of the quality designations specified in the United States standards for quality contained in this subpart.

* * * * *

(e) The standards of quality are applicable to poultry parts cut in the manner described in this section. Similar parts cut in a manner other than described in this section may be grade identified only when approved by the Administrator upon a determination that the labeling for such parts accurately describes the product.

Requests for such approval shall be made to the national supervisor.

* * * * *

(10) "Front poultry halves" shall include the full breast with corresponding back portion, and may or may not include wings, wing meat, or portions of wing.

(11) "Rear poultry halves" shall include both legs and adjoining portion of the back attached.

* * * * *

6. In section 70.220, paragraphs (d), (e), (f), (g), and (h)(3) are revised and a new paragraph (h)(4) is added to read as follows:

§ 70.220 A Quality.

* * * * *

(d) *Defeathering.* The carcass or part has a clean appearance, especially on the breast. The carcass or part is free of protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, and hairs.

(e) *Exposed flesh.* The requirements contained in this section are applicable to exposed flesh resulting from cuts, tears, and missing skin.

(1) The carcass may have exposed flesh due to cuts, tears, and missing skin, provided the aggregate area of all exposed flesh does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in	1 1/2 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in	3 in.

(2) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have exposed flesh due to cuts, tears, and missing skin, provided the aggregate area of all exposed flesh does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1/2 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in	3/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in	1 1/2 in.

(3) Other parts may have exposed flesh due to cuts, tears, and missing skin, provided the aggregate area of all

exposed flesh does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	
None	2 lb	1/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in.

(4) For all parts, trimming of the skin along the edge is allowed, provided that at least 75 percent of the normal skin cover associated with the part remains attached, and further provided that the remaining skin uniformly covers the outer surface in a manner that does not detract from the appearance of the part.

(5) In addition, the carcass or part may have cuts or tears that do not expand or significantly expose flesh, provided the aggregate length of all such cuts and tears does not exceed a length tolerance using the dimensions listed in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate length permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs, and parts	Elsewhere on carcass
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in	1 1/2 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in	3 in.

(f) *Disjointed and broken bones and missing parts.* (1) Parts are free of broken bones. Parts are free of disjointed bones except that thighs with back portions, legs, or leg quarters may have the femur disjointed from the hip joint. The carcass is free of broken bones and has not more than one disjointed bone.

(2) The wing tips may be removed at the joint, and in the case of ducks and geese, the parts of the wing beyond the second joint may be removed, if removed at the joint and both wings are so treated. The tail may be removed at the base.

(3) Cartilage separated from the breastbone is not considered as a disjointed or broken bone.

(g) *Discoloration.* The requirements contained in this section are applicable to discolorations of the skin and flesh of poultry, and the flesh of skinless poultry, as defined in the definitions in § 70.1.

(1) The carcass, parts derived from the carcass, or large carcass parts may have slight discolorations, provided the discolorations do not detract from the appearance of the product.

(2) The carcass may have lightly shaded areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table. Evidence of incomplete bleeding, such as more than an occasional slightly reddened feather follicle, is not permitted.

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere on carcass
None	2 lb	3/4 in	1 1/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1 in	2 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 1/2 in	2 1/2 in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	2 in	3 in.

(3) The carcass may have moderately shaded areas of discoloration and discolorations due to flesh bruising, provided:

(i) They are not on the breast or legs, except for the area adjacent to the hock joint;

(ii) They are free of clots; and

(iii) They may not exceed an aggregate area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Hock area of legs	Elsewhere on carcass
None	2 lb	1/4 in	5/8 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	3/4 in	1 1/4 in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	1 in	1 1/2 in.

(4) Parts, other than large carcass parts, may have lightly shaded areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table. Evidence of incomplete bleeding, such as more than an occasional slightly reddened feather follicle, is not permitted.

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	
None	2 lb	1/2 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	1 1/4 in.

(5) Parts, other than large carcass parts, may have moderately shaded areas of discoloration and discolorations due to flesh bruising, provided:

(i) They are not on the breast or legs, except for the area adjacent to the hock joint;

(ii) They are free of clots; and

(iii) They may not exceed an aggregate area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	
None	2 lb	1/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/8 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	5/8 in.

(6) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have lightly shaded areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/4 in	1 1/2 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 in	2 in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	1 1/4 in	2 1/2 in.

(7) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have moderately shaded areas of discoloration and discolorations due to flesh bruising, provided:

(i) They are not on the breast or legs, except for the area adjacent to the hock joint;

(ii) They are free of clots; and

(iii) They may not exceed an aggregate area equivalent to the area of a circle of

the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Hock area of legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1/2 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/8 in	3/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	5/8 in	1 1/4 in.

(h) * * *

(3) Occasional small areas of clear, pinkish, or reddish colored ice.

(4) Occasional small areas of dehydration, white to light grey in color, on the flesh of skinless carcasses, parts, or specified poultry food products not to exceed the permitted aggregate area for discolorations as provided in § 70.220(g).

* * * * *

7. In section 70.221, paragraphs (d), (e), (f), and (g) are revised to read as follows:

§ 70.221 B Quality.

* * * * *

(d) *Defeathering.* The carcass or part may have a few protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, or hairs which are scattered sufficiently so as not to appear numerous.

(e) *Exposed flesh.* A carcass may have exposed flesh provided that no part on the carcass has more than one-third of the flesh exposed. A part may have no more than one-third of the flesh normally covered by skin exposed.

(f) *Disjointed and broken bones, missing parts, and trimming.* (1) Parts may be disjointed, but are free of broken bones. The carcass may have two disjointed bones, or one disjointed bone and one nonprotruding broken bone.

(2) Parts of the wing beyond the second joint may be removed at a joint. The tail may be removed at the base.

(3) Slight trimming of the carcass is permitted provided the meat yield of any part on the carcass is not appreciably affected. A moderate amount of meat may be trimmed around the edge of a part to remove defects. The back may be trimmed in an area not wider than the base of the tail to the area halfway between the base of the tail and the hip joints.

(g) *Discolorations of the skin and flesh.* (1) Discolorations are limited to moderately shaded areas and the carcass or part is free of serious defects.

Evidence of incomplete bleeding shall be no more than slight. Discolorations due to flesh bruising shall be free of clots and may not exceed one-half the

total aggregate area of permitted discoloration.

(2) For a carcass, the aggregate area of all discolorations shall not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1¼ in ...	2¼ in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	2 in.	3 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	2½ in ...	4 in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	3 in	5 in.

(3) For a part, the aggregate area of all discolorations for a part shall not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle having a diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	
None	2 lb	¾ in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1½ in.
Over 16 lb	None	1¾ in.

(4) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1 in	1¼ in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1½ in ...	1¾ in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	2 in	2½ in.
Over 16 lb ..	None	2½ in ...	3 in.

* * * * *

8. In section 70.230, paragraph (c) is removed; paragraphs (d) through (j) are redesignated as paragraphs (f) through (l) respectively; new paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) are added; and paragraph (b) and newly designated paragraphs (f), and (l) are revised to read as follows:

§ 70.230 Poultry roast—A Quality.

* * * * *

(b) Bones, tendons, cartilage, bruises, and blood clots shall be removed from the meat.

(c) The roast has a clean appearance and is free of protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, and hair.

(d) Skin for covering a roast may include the skin covering the crop area and the neck skin up to the whisker if the fatty blubber, spongy fat, and membranes have been removed from these areas.

(e)(1) Slight discolorations are permitted on the skin or flesh provided the discoloration does not detract from the appearance of the product. Other discolorations are limited to lightly shaded areas of discolorations that do not exceed the total aggregate area of permitted discoloration as described in this section.

(2) The aggregate area of all lightly shaded discolorations for a poultry roast shall not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Roast weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	
None	2 lb	¾ inch.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1 inch.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1½ inches.
Over 16 lb	None	2 inches.

(f) Fifty percent or more of the outer surface of the product shall be covered with skin, whether attached to the meat or used as a wrap. Skin covering may overlap without limit in all areas provided the fatty tissue has been removed from the sternal and pectoral feather tracts. The combined weight of the skin and fat used to cover the outer surface and used as a binder shall not exceed 15 percent of the total net weight of the product.

* * * * *

(l) Product packaged in an oven-ready container shall meet all the requirements of the paragraphs in this section, except that with respect to skin covering, the exposed surface of the roast need not be covered with skin. If skin is used to cover the exposed surface, it may be whole or emulsified. Additionally, for roasts packaged in oven-ready containers, comminuted (mechanically deboned) meat may be substituted in part for skin, but may not exceed 8 percent of the total weight of the product.

9. In section 70.231, the section heading, the introductory text, and paragraphs (d) and (e) are revised to read as follows:

§ 70.231 Boneless poultry breast, thigh, and tenderloin—A Quality.

The standards of quality contained in this section are applicable to raw poultry products labeled as ready-to-cook boneless poultry breasts, thighs, or tenderloins, or as ready-to-cook boneless poultry breast fillets or thigh fillets, or with words of similar import.

* * * * *

(d) Skinless breasts, thighs, or tenderloins shall be free of cartilage, blood clots, bruises, tendons (except for tenderloins), and discolorations other than slight discolorations, provided they do not detract from the appearance of the product. Minor flesh abrasions due to preparation techniques are permitted.

(e) Trimming is permitted around the outer edges of whole breasts, half breasts, and thighs provided the trimming results in at least one-fourth of the breast or one-half of the thigh remaining intact and further, must result in a portion that approximates the same symmetrical appearance of the original part. Trimming must result in a smooth outer surface with no angular cuts, tears, or holes in the meat portion of the product. Trimming of the inner muscle surface is permitted provided it results in a relatively smooth appearance.

10. In subpart B, a new section 70.232 is added to read as follows:

§ 70.232 Skinless carcasses and parts—A Quality

The standards of quality contained in this section are applicable to raw ready-to-cook whole poultry carcasses and parts.

(a) The parts shall be cut as specified in § 70.210.

(b) The skin shall be removed in a manner without undue mutilation of adjacent muscle. Minor flesh abrasions due to preparation techniques are permitted.

(c) Skinless carcasses or parts shall meet A quality ready-to-cook requirements as outlined in § 70.220(a), (b), (f), and (g).

11. In section 70.240, paragraph (a) is revised and paragraph (d) is removed to read as follows:

§ 70.240 General

(a) All terms in the United States standards for quality set forth in §§ 70.210 through 70.232 shall, when used in §§ 70.240 through 70.252, have the same meaning as when used in said standards.

* * * * *

12. Sections 70.270 and 70.271 are removed, as well as the undesignated center heading preceding § 70.270.

Dated: January 27, 1995.

Lon Hatamiya,

Administrator.

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