



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT



AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

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AMS No. 208-08

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INTERNATIONAL MEAT, POULTRY PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION CODES UNDERGO MAJOR REVISION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13, 2009 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the major revision of voluntary product classification standards for electronically describing meat and poultry products in international commerce. Using these revised product classification codes, buyers can find specific products in electronic catalogs by searching for key product properties, and government agents at international borders can determine essential product characteristics to expedite cargo admission.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), a member of the non-profit Meat and Poultry Business-to-Business Data Standards Organization (mpXML), collaborated with industry members to revise the product code standards.

Maintained by GS1, a global, non-profit standards organization, the revised GS1 Global Product Classification (GPC) standards allow for edible meat and poultry products to be categorized into one of 38 classes depending on the kind of meat and level of processing. It also allows products in these classes to be further characterized by up to 10 properties. These updated classification codes have been integrated into the GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network, an industry service for synchronizing product and party data, and suppliers can now use these codes to characterize their products. A description of the new GS1 GPC codes can be downloaded from www.gs1.org/services/gsm/kc/gpc.

The new product properties defined by the standards are: Refrigeration State, Form, Shape, Primary Additive, Boneless Claim, Level of Cooking, Non-Thermal Preservation, Mechanical Processing, Quality, Source, and Meat Cut. The Meat Cut property uses the cut descriptions published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), an international standards body that includes members from all meat producing regions of the world. AMS is an active participant of this commission and has recently led the development of several new meat and poultry UNECE standards.

The ability to associate the new GS1 classification codes with unique global product trade numbers adds a new level of product transparency to the electronic supply chain. Being able to find products by their characteristics enables new business-to-business opportunities for product sourcing, new product introduction, traceability, and sales analysis. It also allows business to communicate essential product characteristics to government in order to expedite the cargo admission process at international borders.

mpXML was established in 2002 to accelerate the adoption of e-commerce standards for the international meat and poultry supply chain. It has worked to facilitate the supply chain adoption of data synchronization for product and party data and to refine electronic EDI business messages and product classification capabilities.

For more information about the organization, go to www.mpxml.org.

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