



# TIPS & TOOLS

MEAT STANDARDS  
AUSTRALIA

## How to supply beef in the MSA system

Consumer taste-tests have determined the factors that affect eating quality, which determine the MSA grading standards and eating quality outcomes. Producers supply cattle following the minimum requirements as outlined in *MSA Tips & Tools: MSA requirements for handling cattle*.

Cattle are consigned to an MSA licensed processor to be slaughtered within the required time frames. MSA accredited graders check MSA vendor declaration and NVD details prior to grading at the processor.

Producers can receive detailed feedback on the eating quality outcome of their cattle by consigning through MSA licensed participants.

MSA is a 'paddock to plate' pathway approach that rewards best practice operations to assure acceptable eating quality for the consumer.

Replacing variable quality with accurate eating quality grades can provide a basis for improved demand with an associated shift in price and volume.

The following steps can assist with supplying cattle to meet MSA requirements and improve your understanding of MSA.

### Step 1

To supply MSA Beef directly or through the MSA Saleyard pathway you must be registered as an MSA producer.

The easiest way to become registered is to use the online registration program at [mla.com.au/msa](https://mla.com.au/msa). When registering, producers will be required to complete a short training program and quiz.

Create a MyMLA account for single sign on via [mymla.com.au](https://mymla.com.au). Once this is created then proceed to [mla.com.au/msa](https://mla.com.au/msa) and on the 'Become a MSA accredited Producer' button click on the 'Sign up now, Meat Standards Australia' then follow the prompts.

When this is completed producers will then be issued with a unique, four-digit MSA number that is associated with their property identification code (PIC) and Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) UserID. Once registered and issued with an MSA number, producers are able to access myMSA. The MSA Vendor Declaration forms can be obtained through the completion of an eNVD by the producer.

### Key points

- Producers wishing to supply cattle for MSA must be registered.
- An MSA vendor declaration and a Livestock Production Assurance National Vendor Declaration (LPA NVD) must accompany cattle to the MSA licensed processor.
- The MSA vendor declaration confirms that MSA guidelines for cattle handling and trucking have been followed and that any tropical breed content is observed.
- MSA feedback is available on cattle consigned and graded for MSA via [myMSA.com.au](https://myMSA.com.au).

Alternatively, a registration form can be downloaded from [mla.com.au/msa](https://mla.com.au/msa).

### Step 2

Check that you meet all the requirements as outlined in *MSA Tips & Tools: MSA requirements for handling cattle*.

### Step 3

If you are supplying through an MSA underpinned brand or to an MSA licensed processor make sure you are familiar with the purchaser's specifications. The processor or brand owner may have company specifications in addition to MSA minimum requirements. While these may not impact on eating quality, they are commercially important to your purchaser and should be taken into consideration before consigning MSA cattle. Carcasses outside the nominated specifications may be discounted regardless of their MSA grading result.

### Step 4

You should liaise with the processor to ensure cattle are slaughtered within the required time frames. When consigning cattle to a processor consider trucking distances and seasonal considerations. In extreme heat it may be necessary to truck cattle at night. Likewise in very cold conditions avoid trucking cattle at dawn. If



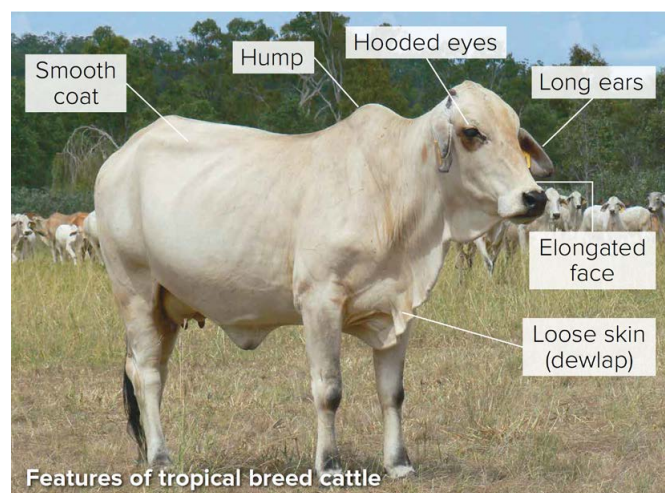
A butcher showing MSA quality meat.

possible avoid trucking through wind and rain. During high risk periods use trucks that have relatively closed in sides to minimise wind chill. For further information on the importance of these measures (see *MSA Tips & Tools: The effect of pH on beef eating quality*).

## Step 5

Complete both the Livestock Production Assurance National Vendor Declaration (LPA NVD) and the MSA vendor declaration by hard copy or electronically through the eNVD process. Both completed documents are required to accompany the consignment to the processor or saleyard. It is important that all details provided on both forms are correct. MSA accredited graders use the information from the MSA vendor declaration in the grading process.

Declare any tropical breed content (TBC) in your consignment by ticking the appropriate box as to whether the cattle contain any TBC (Yes or No). Livestock personnel at the processor are trained to determine and verify if cattle



Features of tropical breed cattle

have any tropical breed content. MSA graders also measure hump height on the carcass as a direct predictor of eating quality relative to the proportion of TBC exhibited by the animal. For more information on hump height measurement (see *MSA Tips & Tools: The effect of tropical breeds and hump height on beef eating quality*).

## Step 6

Ensure you receive your carcass feedback sheets from the processor or alternatively download them from the MSA feedback program, myMSA. Go to **mymsa.com.au** and use your MSA registration number and password to access your feedback.

## Step 7

Check your compliance rates and eating quality performance. It is important to note any common factors in non-compliant carcasses. For example if most of the carcasses failed to meet the rib fat requirements, the cattle require improved nutrition and/or more days on feed. If ossification levels are high but the carcass weights and rib-fat measurements are ample, the cattle may be better turned off earlier.

Compare each consignment with the one previous, particularly where production changes have been made in an effort to improve compliance.

A small management change can significantly improve compliance.

## Step 8

Talk to other MSA producers to share the knowledge they have gained from using the system. At times of seasonal risk you may want to discuss strategies for minimising pH and stress risk (see *MSA Tips & Tools: The effect of pH on beef eating quality*).

MSA feedback will enable you to gauge the performance of the cattle you produce.

Link other sources of information into your production objectives. EDGENetwork® workshops, your state Department of Agriculture, consultants, MSA training, workshops and staff can all assist in improving your management system to improve your product. Contact MSA to organise producer training and workshops.

### Further information

Visit [mla.com.au/msa](http://mla.com.au/msa) or contact MSA 1800 111 672



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