

**United States Standards for Livestock and Meat Marketing Claims Relating to Live Animal Production, Grass (Forage) Fed Claim for Ruminant Livestock and the Meat Products Derived from Such Livestock.**

**Background:** This claim applies to ruminant animals whose sole (99 % or higher) energy/feed source throughout their life span, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning, is derived from forage, which for the purpose of this claim, is any edible herbaceous plant material that can be grazed or harvested for feeding. Forage as the sole energy/feed source can be derived from grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g. legumes, brassicas), and/or browse. Animals cannot be fed grain or grain by-products and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. Growing season is defined as the time period extending from the average date of the last frost in spring to the average date of the first frost in the fall in the local area of production. Pasture systems shall be managed to ensure sufficient quality and quantity is available throughout the growing season, as defined for the locality. Hay, haylage, baleage, silage, and crop residue without grain may also be included as acceptable energy/feed sources. Consumption of seeds naturally attached to herbage, forage and browse is considered incidental and is acceptable. However, crops normally harvested for grain (including but not limited to corn, soybean, rice, wheat, and oats) can only meet the definition if they are foraged or harvested in the vegetative state (pre-grain).

Incidental supplementation (i.e., less than one percent of the total energy/feed source consumed during the animal's lifetime) due to inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs or to ensure the animal's well being at all times during adverse

environmental/physical conditions is permissible. Additionally, routine mineral and vitamin supplementation is permissible.

**Claim and Standard:**

**Grass (Forage) Fed** – Grass and/or forage shall be 99 percent or higher of the energy/feed source consumed for the lifetime of the ruminant animal, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. The energy/feed source shall be derived from forage consisting of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g. legumes, brassicas), browse, and/or cereal grain crops in the vegetative (pre-grain) state. Animals cannot be fed grain or grain by-products and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. Hay, haylage, baleage, silage, and crop residue without grain may also be included as acceptable energy/feed sources. Routine mineral and vitamin supplementation may also be included in the feeding regimen. Grass (forage) fed claims will be verified, as provided in 7 CFR part 62, by a feeding protocol that confirms a grass or forage-based diet that is 99 percent or higher.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.