



Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

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New Standards for Poultry Products in International Commerce

Wouldn't it be great if we can facilitate the movement of poultry products across borders? Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA is revising the voluntary product classification standards for electronic description of meat and poultry products in international commerce. Product standards are a set of rules (and codes) in the market agreed upon and voluntarily adhered to by the supply-chain. When broadly adopted, these product classification codes will not only facilitate global-trade, but also the movement of products at borders.

Currently there are no globally agreed upon standards that include all sectors and describe all essential product characteristics; but there are three systems in use extensively: United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC; www.unspsc.org), Global Systems One Global Product Codes (GS1 GPC; www.gs1.org), and European Union based eCl@ss (www.eclass-online.com). The Meat and Poultry B2B Data Standards Organization (mpXML; www.mpxml.org) is revising the GS1 GPC standards to integrate standards by categorizing meat and poultry products into 38 classes depending on meat type and level of processing. The new product attributes defined by the GS1 standards are: Boneless claim, Type of Cut, Meat Shape, Meat Form, State of Refrigeration, Primary Additive, Level of Cooking, Mechanical Processing, Non-thermal Processing, Source, and Quality (www.gs1.org/services/gsmc/kc/gpc/300608.html). Many of the cuts have been defined by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) for high-volume meat and poultry (www.unece.org).

The ability to associate the new GS1 classification codes with unique global product trade numbers adds product transparency to the electronic supply chain. Identification of products by their characteristics enables new business opportunities for product sourcing, new product introduction, traceability, and sales analysis. It also allows businesses to communicate product characteristics to governments to expedite official inspections of incoming and outgoing cargo at international borders.

Contact: **S. F. Bilgili, PhD.**

Phone : (334) 844-2612

E-mail : bilgifs@auburn.edu



Poultry Science Department
Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849-5416
www.ag.auburn.edu/dept/ph/

