To the producers, buyers & sellers of New Zealand Meat

The New Zealand Meat Classification Authority, a joint body of the New Zealand Meat Board and the Meat Industry Association of New Zealand, provides the classification system, described in this guide, on a voluntary basis.

The classifications have been developed by the New Zealand Meat Board, in consultation with the Meat Industry Association of New Zealand.

New Zealand export meat is sold on a cold weight basis. For ease of understanding the term “export weight” is used in this brochure to describe cold weight. New Zealand farmers are paid on a hot weight basis. Both weights are shown in this guide.

The system, which is available only to licensed users, is protected by a registered trademark i.e. Use of the system is audited by a Meat Classification Authority appointed body.

Lamb

Definition: Young sheep under 12 months of age or which do not have any permanent incisor teeth in wear.

Classification is based on Fat Classes and Weight Classes (see table), for example YL has a low fat content (GR: up to and including 6mm), hot weight of 9.1kg and over up to but not including 13.3kg and export weight of 9.0kg to 12.5kg.

Muscling Class: Effective from 1 October 1992, a voluntary muscling class was introduced in the heavier Y and P grades. This recognises well muscled animals that have well rounded legs with a good depth of muscle and full loin.

The identifying letter is E, for example, YME.

Standard carcass trim is detailed below.

Ovine Standard Carcass Trim

The standard description of a carcass prior to weighing is the entire body of the slaughtered animal dressed through the removal of the following:

1. Pelt.
2. Head, (including tongue) either manually knifed through the atlas-axis joint, or if mechanically severed, removed by a severing cut which replicates the manual removal. A minimal variation of one vertebra either side of the atlas joint can be tolerated.
3. Feet. The forefeet at the carpus-metacarpus joint and the hindfeet at the tarsus-metatarsus joint.
4. Internal organs, including all digestive, respiratory, excretory and reproductive organs.
5. Mammary systems and cuds, leaving surrounding tissue intact and ensuring glands remain as required for inspection.
6. Skirts, both thick and thin.
7. Internal Fats. All kidney, and channel fat including that over the tenderloin and up into the suet pocket.
8. Tail. At the first coccygeal vertebrae.
9. Aorta. All tissue.
10. Neck. Trim as removed clearly with the pluck, and any extraneous material i.e. that which is contaminated by blood clots, ingesta etc.
Lamb and mutton are classified according to the maturity of the carcass (lamb, hogget or mutton), sex, fat content (GR measure), weight and in some cases muscling.

### Export Carcass Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fat Classes</th>
<th>Weight Classes</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>L¹</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light weight and almost devoid of external fat</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low fat content</td>
<td></td>
<td>YL</td>
<td>Up to and including 6mm</td>
<td>9.1kg and up to but not including 13.3kg</td>
<td>13.3kg and up to but not including 17.3kg</td>
<td>Up to and including 16.5kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium fat content</td>
<td></td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Over 6mm and up to 12mm</td>
<td>9.1kg and up to 12.5kg</td>
<td>12.5kg and up to 16kg</td>
<td>Up to and including 15mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High fat content</td>
<td></td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Over 12mm</td>
<td>9.1kg and up to but not including 13.3kg</td>
<td>13.3kg and up to but not including 17.3kg</td>
<td>Up to and including 15mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive fat content</td>
<td></td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Over 15mm</td>
<td>9.1kg and up to but not including 13.3kg</td>
<td>13.3kg and up to but not including 17.3kg</td>
<td>17.1kg and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eligible for export due to trimming or mutilation. Intact cuts may be exported if at least three of the four hind primal cuts acceptable as export cuts.</td>
<td></td>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Up to and including 12mm</td>
<td>9.1kg and up to but not including 13.3kg</td>
<td>13.3kg and up to but not including 17.3kg</td>
<td>17.1kg and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
1. Devoid of fat A type carcasses that are in the L weight range are classified as restricted YL.
2. "leggy" carcasses from the PL and PM classes are classified as restricted PM. Producers receive the same payment for "leggy" carcasses and no separate identification appears on the killing sheets.
3. Primal cuts refer to legs, short loins and long loins. NZMPB Circular Number 1250.
4. See muscling class.
Mutton

**Definition:** Female (ewe) and castrated male (wether) sheep having more than two permanent incisors in wear. A wether must not show any ram characteristics.

Some hogget carcasses are given mutton classifications (see "Hogget").

**Classification** is based on five Fat Classes which apply to all weights, for example, MM is almost devoid of fat (GR: up to and including 2mm), all weights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAT CLASSES - all weights</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Almost devoid of fat</td>
<td>Up to and including 2mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MX</td>
<td>Low fat content</td>
<td>Over 2mm, up to and including 9mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Medium fat content</td>
<td>Over 9mm, up to and including 17mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>High fat content</td>
<td>Over 17mm, up to and including 25mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Excessive fat content</td>
<td>Over 25mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GR** - A fat content assessment based on measurement of total tissue depth over the 12th rib at a point 11cm from the midline of the carcass.

1. Manufacturing-type carcasses (almost devoid of external fat) are classified as mutton, MM.
2. Carcasses that are generally not eligible for export due to trimming are classified MP and are cut and/or trimmed.
3. Carcasses with a fat content of 17.0mm to 25mm GR inclusive are classified as MH mutton and over 25mm GR are classified as MF mutton.

Hogget

**Definition:** A young male sheep or maiden ewe having no more than two permanent incisors in wear.

**Classification** is based on two Fat Classes which apply to all weights, for example, HX has low fat content (GR: up to and including 9.0mm).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAT CLASSES - all weights</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HX</td>
<td>Low fat content</td>
<td>Over 2mm up to and including 9mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>Medium fat content</td>
<td>Over 9mm up to and including 17mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GR** - A fat content assessment based on measurement of total tissue depth over the 12th rib at a point 11cm from the midline of the carcass.

1. Manufacturing-type carcasses (almost devoid of external fat) are classified as mutton, MM.
2. Carcasses that are generally not eligible for export due to trimming are classified MP and are cut and/or trimmed.
3. Carcasses with a fat content of 17.0mm to 25mm GR inclusive are classified as MH mutton and over 25mm GR are classified as MF mutton.

Ram

**Definition:** Adult uncastrated male sheep having more than two permanent incisors in wear.

**Classification system:** One classification, R, is given for all weights and fat contents.