

Poultry Handbook

Judging Ready-To-Cook Chickens

1. Carcasses are graded as A, B, or C based on USDA standards.
2. There are four weight categories for determining the size of exposed flesh on the different parts.
3. There are no weight ranges for missing parts and disjointed & broken bones.
4. The carcasses are suspended from shackles.
5. They can be hung from the front or back and with one leg or two.
6. The final grade for the carcass is the lowest grade of these factors. For example, if it is a Grade B based on exposed flesh, but Grade C on disjointed/broken bones, than the entire carcass is a Grade C.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN GRADING A CARCASS:

- T** Exposed flesh
- T** Disjointed and broken bones
- T** Missing parts

In this contest you will ignore: Conformation, Fleshing, Fat covering, Discolorations, and Presence of feathers
 Because of the length of most judging contests, carcasses will dry out somewhat. You should not place carcasses based on off-color areas such as bruises, dried out or brown-burn areas.

Specifications of Quality For Individual Ready-To-Cook Carcasses

Factor		A Quality		B Quality		C Quality
Minimum	Maximum	Breast & Leg	Elsewhere	Breast & Leg	Elsewhere	
Exposed Flesh & Carcass Weight						
Over 1 ½ lbs	6 lbs	None	1 ½"	1 ½"	3"	No Limit
Disjointed bones		1		2 disjointed and no broken OR		No Limit
Broken bones		None		1 disjointed and 1 non-protruding broken		No Limit
Missing parts		Wing tips and/or tail removed at the base.		Wing(s) to 2nd joint. Back area not wider than base of tail and extending halfway between base of tail and hip joints.		Entire wing(s) Back area not wider than base of tail extending to area between hip joints.

EXPOSED FLESH

Carcasses are downgraded for cuts, tears and trims based on:

- The amount of exposed flesh
- Weight of the carcass
- Part affected

Each part is graded separately. Parts of the carcass are:
 Each wing, Each leg, Entire breast, Entire back

Sometimes there may be more than one cut on the same carcass or part. Add the amount of exposed flesh to determine the grade of that part.

Processing cuts near the vent and/or breast opening less than 1" beyond the opening are acceptable and should not be considered in grading the carcass.

DISJOINTED AND BROKEN BONES

Disjointed bone: The joint is out of the socket.

The part that is disjointed is still whole and not broken.

Broken bone: Occurs between the ends of the bone.

The bone is broken so that they are protruding (coming through the skin) or non-protruding.

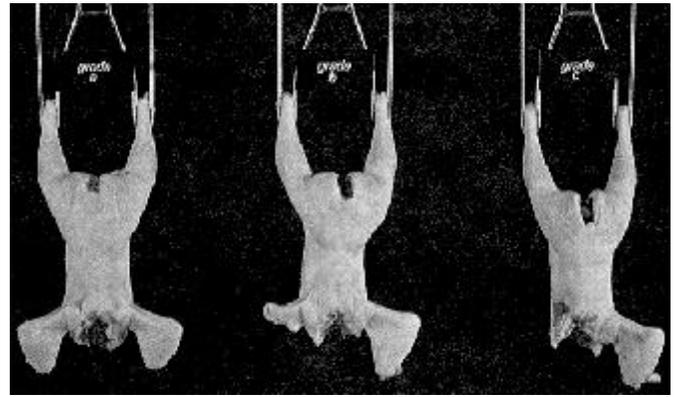
Cuts, Tears and Trims

- Cut, tear, or trim must be completely through the skin so that the meat, called flesh, can be seen, in order to put the carcass in a lower grade.
- Cuts, tears and trims are a result of a miscut with a knife or tearing of the skin during a processing operation. When ready-to-cook poultry is downgraded for cuts, tears and trims it is based on the weight and part of the carcass and the length of the area of exposed flesh.
- The grade is determined primarily by the length in inches of the cut, tear or trim. Sometimes you may have more than one cut, tear or trim on a ready-to-cook carcass. Add the lengths together to determine the grade.
- Exposed flesh from the continuation of evisceration cuts at the front and back of the breast should not be considered in determining carcass grade.
- The Grade A ready-to-cook carcass cannot have any cuts showing exposed flesh on the breast and legs.
- The Grade B bird can have up to a 1½-inch cut on the breast.
- The Grade C bird can have unlimited inches in cuts to the breast.
- The same measurements would apply to the legs.

Missing Parts

- Missing parts to be considered in judging are the wings, tail, and part of the back area if it is no wider than the base of the tail. It is important to remember that weight of the carcass does not count in judging for missing parts.
- For missing parts, use the lowest grade that you see for wings, tail, and back.
- The Grade A carcass may have the wing tips and tail missing where the tail joins the back.
- The Grade B carcass may be missing the wing up to the second joint, as well as the tail and back less than halfway to the hips.
- In a Grade C ready-to-cook carcass the wing may be cut off at the third joint at the juncture of the body. In addition, the tail and back, more than halfway to the hip, may be missing.

- Examples are:



The Grade A carcass has the tail at the base of the body and the wing tips removed.

For the Grade B ready-to-cook carcass, the back area, not wider than the base of the tail and halfway to the hip joint is removed. Part of the wing to the second joint has also been cut off.

The Grade C carcass has the back area removed not wider than the base of the tail and extending to the hip joints, as well as one wing to the third joint where it joins the body.

Disjointed and Broken Bones

- A disjointed bone is where the joint is out of the socket. In other words, the part that is disjointed is still whole and not broken. You will be able to see the end, or knobby part of the joint through the skin.
- Broken bones occur between the ends of the bone.
- They can be broken so that the bone either does or does not come through the skin. When the broken bone does not come through the skin it is called non- protruding. When the bone penetrates the skin, it is called protruding.

Guide For Estimating Size Of Area(s) Having Exposed Flesh

