

PACIFIC OYSTER GRADING SYSTEM

© Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre Limited 2009

SIZE SPECIFICATIONS
(top shell length)

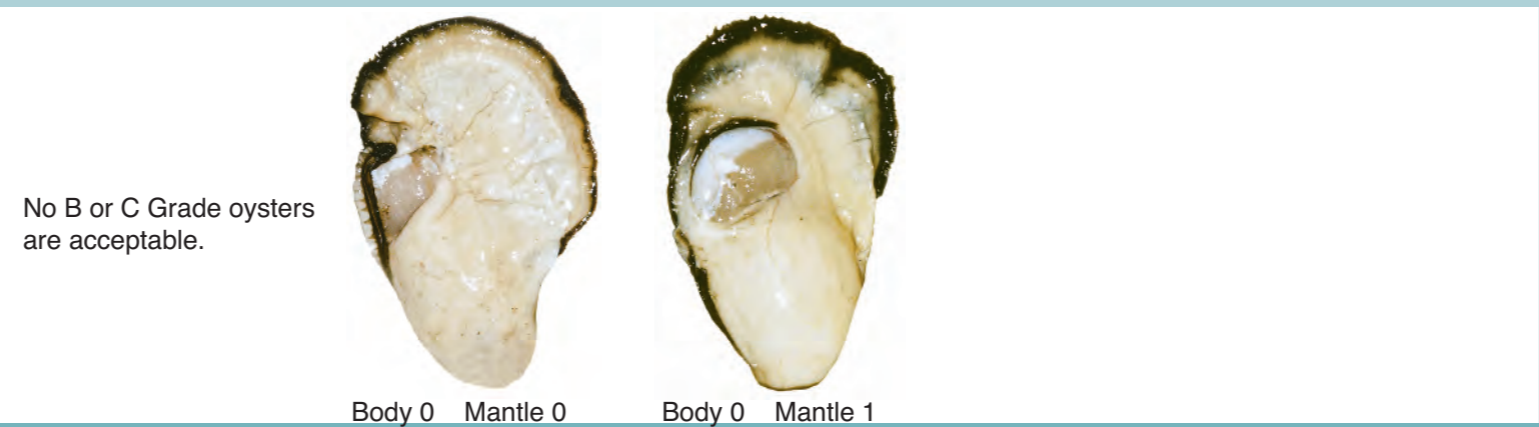
- JUMBO** 100 - 120mm
- LARGE** 85 - 100mm
- STANDARD** 70 - 85mm
- BUFFET** 60 - 70mm
- BISTRO** 50 - 60mm

BODY & MANTLE CONDITION (this grading system applies to all size ranges)

GRADE (minimum)

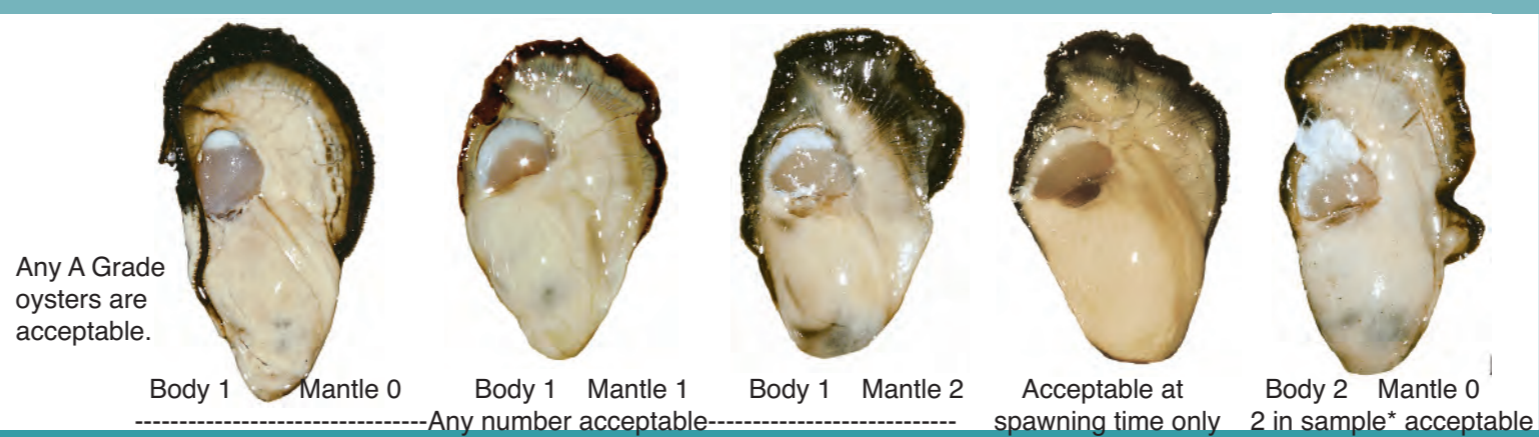
A SUPREME

Very good condition oyster with full fat cover across the body and mantle, oyster fills shell and may rise above shell perimeter, consistent across shipment.



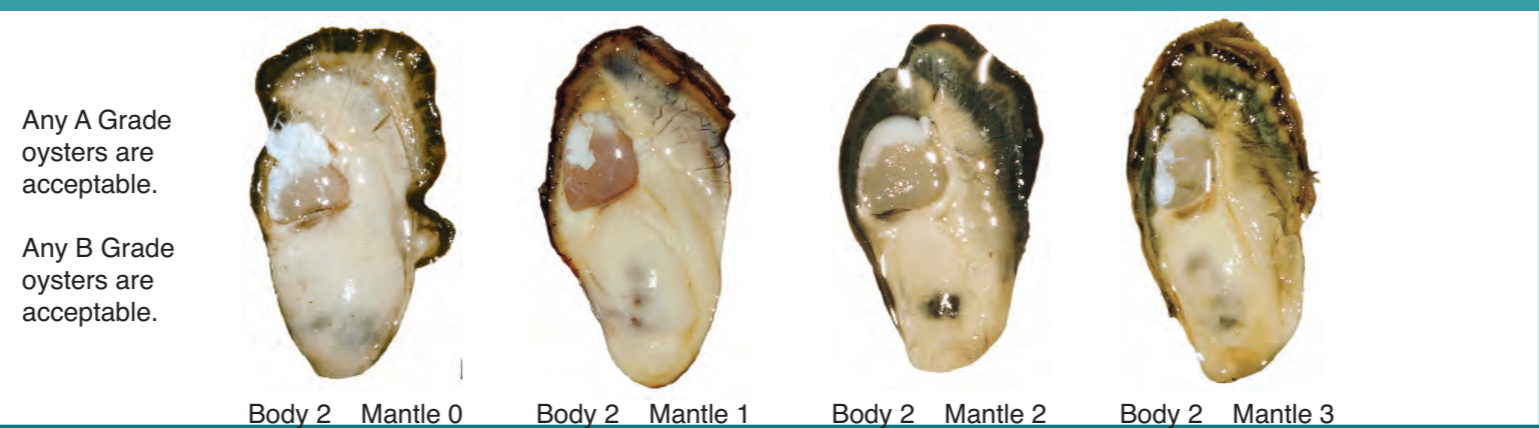
B PREMIUM

Noticeably plump, the condition cover extends across the oyster and preferably extending out into the mantle. Some stomach may be visible, limited variability across shipment.

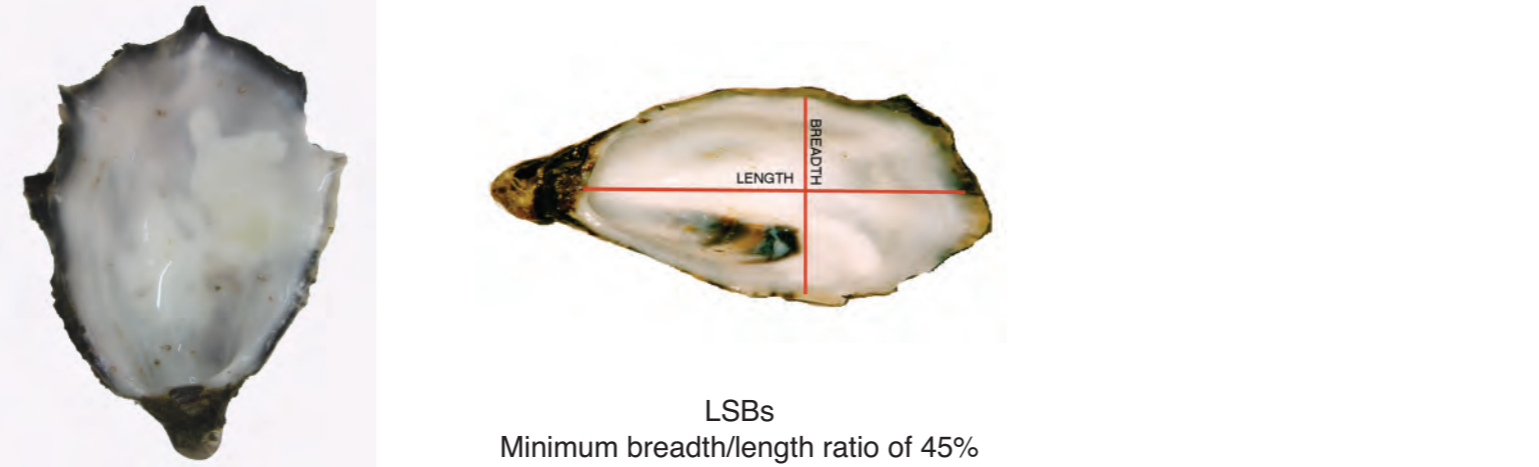


C THRIFTY

Generally a poorer condition oyster with less coverage over the body and mantle resulting in greater visibility of the stomach, poor shell fullness and greater variability in shipment.



SHELL SHAPE (preferred)



SHELL FULLNESS (minimum)

0

A Grade:
0 only
1 not acceptable
2 not acceptable

1

B Grade:
0 acceptable
1 acceptable
2 max 2 in sample* acceptable

2

C Grade:
0 acceptable
1 acceptable
2 max 4 in sample* acceptable

* sample size 12 oysters

PACIFIC OYSTER GRADING SYSTEM

Size	Top shell length	Number of dozen per bag	Quality Index	Meat Weight (grams)	Meat to Shell Ratio % (meat weight divided by shell length)		
Bistro	50 - 60mm Target Ave: 55mm	TBA	A	Ave ≥ 9	Min 7	Ave ≥ 15.9	Min 14
			B	to be negotiated between farm and customer		1-2 meats < 9	1-2 under 15.9
Buffet	60 - 70mm Target Ave: 65mm	TBA	A	Ave ≥ 11	Min 9	Ave ≥ 16.5	Min 15
			B	to be negotiated between farm and customer		1-2 meats under 11	1-2 under 16.5
			C			3-5 meats under 11	3-5 under 16.5
Standard	70 - 85mm Target Ave: 77mm	TBA	A	Ave ≥ 14	Min 12	Ave ≥ 17.7	Min 17.1
			B	to be negotiated between farm and customer		1-2 meats under 14	1-2 under 17.7
			C			3-5 meats under 14	3-5 under 17.7
Large	85 - 100mm Target Ave: 92mm	TBA	A	Ave ≥ 20	Min 17	Ave ≥ 20.6	Min 20
			B	to be negotiated between farm and customer		1-2 meats under 20	1-2 under 20.6
Jumbo	100 - 120mm Target Ave: 110mm	TBA	A	Ave ≥ 24	Min 21	Ave ≥ 21.4	Min 21
			B	to be negotiated between farm and customer		1-2 meats under 24	1-2 under 21.4

OTHER FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

- Shell shape – oyster shell shape should be as uniform as possible. The preferred shape is an oyster meeting a ratio of:
1 (cup depth) : 2 (width) : 3 (length).

- As a minimum the width of the oyster divided by the length should not be less than 0.45 (45%).
- Consistency of quality and size across the consignment – it is preferable to not have major variation through a consignment.

- The importance of communicating to the customer, prior to dispatch, of any variation of quality that may impact. For example, lower than expected meat quality, shell fullness or oysters suffering from things such as mud worm, discolouration and water blister.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Prior to harvest, a representative sample of oysters must be randomly generated from differed locations along the rack/long-line to be harvested. The sample should represent the size of the stock to be harvested.

The required sampling rate is for one sample to be submitted for each size and grade of oyster to be harvested from each lease. It is assumed additional informal sampling will be done to validate stock quality.

An assessment form is required and it is essential that the data recorded on each line of the form represents information for a single oyster. Therefore, care must be taken in relation to the sequence followed in the quality assessment procedure.

Assessment process: sample size = 12 oysters

- 1 Prepare the necessary equipment – drying rack (if available), scales, splitting knife, gloves, assessment form. Use check weight to confirm scale accuracy .
- 2 Remove top shells placing them in a line, cut and turn the oyster, place the oyster in the shell next to its top shell.
- 3 Whilst splitting and if applicable, note the presence of blistering, spawning condition, re-absorption, gut exposure, discolouration on the form as indicated.
- 4 If there is any uncharacteristic discolouration or shape to the oyster meat/shell, note it on the form.
- 5 Undertake the body and mantle condition inspection and record the results on the form for each oyster. Refer to the photo chart if required.
- 6 Remove the oyster from the shell and place the oyster on a plastic mesh drying rack. Align the top shell with each oyster on the rack.
- 7 Measure the top shell length (mm) for each oyster and record the measurement.
- 8 Weigh the meats taking care to ensure it is in a sheltered area, as fluctuations in air circulation can give inaccurate weight readings. Record the results. Be sure to re-zero the digital scales and ensure there is minimal water on the oyster, as failure to recalibrate the scales and excess water will also give inaccurate readings.
NB: The top shell, body and mantle cover measurements for each oyster must be noted before weighing starts.
- 9 Review the results and assess which size and grade specifications it meets.

This grading system applies to all size ranges and is one part of the criteria to be assessed when packing oysters.

The other considerations are:

- consistency of shipments to the same customer in different weeks,
- size - top shell length,
- meat weights,
- level of overcatch to industry standards,
- shell cleanliness to meet customer expectations