

Q1. With respect to the bid certification question regarding Food Defense Audits, has USDA/AMS considered the feedback issued by IDFA via email?

A1. Refer to solicitation amendment 1, changes to Bid Certification Question 14.

Q2. If a vendor bids on a "multistop" item are they allowed to specify, per solicitation line, both the case configuration being offered and the plant of origin?

A2. As long as plants and case configurations are specified at the time of bid submission, the variations are acceptable. Patty Wagner, AMS WBSCM Lead Marketing Specialist, presented an additional option to create multiple vendor responses unique to each vendor plant which would specify items being offered out of said plant. A vendor would still need to provide case configuration information to USDA/AMS at the time of bid submission.

Q2a. If the vendor denotes different plants on the offer within WBSCM, will the WBSCM system reflect the plant of origin notation upon invoicing.

A2a. If a vendor creates separate bid responses for each plant, WBSCM will issue purchase orders that reflect the plant accurately. The case configuration(s) will not be automatically updated and vendors that bid in a case configuration different than the 9-unit configuration a spreadsheet, including conversions, will be provided upon award.

Q2b. To confirm, is it also acceptable to include an attachment that documents all approved plants the vendor intends to utilize in contract performance?

A2b. Yes, adding an attachment documenting plants is acceptable and should include the units per case configuration for each plant. Vendors should reference which solicitation line items will be offered from which approved at the time of bid submission.

Q3. Are separate truck seals required for each stop in a given multistop scenario?

A3. Yes.

Q4. When providing prices to USDA/AMS can two prices, one with crate return included and one without crate return included, be given?

A4. No. Separate prices dependent on crate return should not be provided. Warehouse are to work with suppliers to return crates.

Q5. Does flexibility exist regarding labeling of "best if used by" as opposed to "sell by date."

A5. Section 2.9A of the specification explains acceptable alternatives to "best if used by date."

Q6. Can we get the item detail in excel as opposed to pdf?

A6. When you create a vendor response, click the "Export" button and an excel version of the item listing can be saved.

Q7. Are the dates specified for delivery periods firm dates?

A7. That is correct. Food banks are planning around those dates for inventory purposes. Vendors are required to obtain delivery appointment and enter advance shipment notifications in WBSCM in accordance with contract requirements. Late deliveries will be subject to liquidated damages of \$0.30/cwt per day late.

Q8. Bidding is done in lbs. Has anything been done to normalize weight variations that may exist between vendors?

A8. Material code variations were considered when establishing truckload net weight. Dairy program Federal standards utilized can be found at: http://www.fmmone.com/Federal_Order_Information.htm

Q9. Why are order quantities different per delivery period to the same recipients?

A9. Order quantities are based on projected demand and “take rates” at different recipient locations.

Q10. Can we include non-food bank deliveries on our trucks, or do our delivery trucks have to be dedicated to food bank/USDA business only?

A10. Your trucks may include non-food bank deliveries as long as they meet all contractual requirements including seals on conveyance.

Q11. The master solicitation talks about the need for metal truck seals. We have our own company seals. Is it necessary to purchase metal seals to be used for these deliveries?

A11. Yes, they are required. In addition, if there are multiple drops, the truck must be sealed before arriving at each destination and the number on the seal must match the sequential seal numbers listed on the Bill of Lading/POD.

Q12. Are bids to be submitted based on per pound cost vs the typical per half gallon cost?

A12. Yes, all bids are made on a per pound basis.

Q13. Will the individual foodbanks be able to handle the quantity ordered for each specified day? Some locations will be required to receive several trailer-loads of milk for the assigned day which will require significant storage. Will the food banks re-distribute the product to their local pantry's and if so do they have the trucks to transport such large quantities at one time?

A 13. Commodity Procurement has formed our solicitation based on order from food banks. We only solicit for what the food banks ask for. Food banks will then re-distribute the milk based on their existing networks and capabilities. The Food Banks have been advised that the milk may arrive in plastic crates and have been encouraged to work with the vendor to return plastic crates.

Q14. Is the USDA expecting the solicitations to be based on corrugated (boxed) product or in returnable milk cases? IF milk cases are allowed, will the dairies be guaranteed that the cases will be returned? What about pallet returns? Will the locations have the storage capability to hold the milk cases until they are picked up?

A14. USDA will allow deliveries to be made in whichever style case (plastic or corrugated) the dairy deems appropriate. We cannot guarantee the return of plastic cases or pallets. It will be up to the individual dairy to work with the recipient food bank to organize return of cases or pallets. We encourage any prospective bidder who is concerned about losing cases to factor that risk into their bid price. The contract will not address pallet returns or exchange. Again, food banks have been advised that the milk may arrive in plastic crates and have been encouraged to work with the vendor to return plastic crates.

Q15. In the future, is it possible to offer gallons vs half-gallons?

A15. We are open to considering other sizes in the future if there are continued opportunities to purchase milk.

Q16. What are the payment terms?

A16. As outlined in the Master Solicitation (available on our website) on pages 15-17 and 24, payment will be made following receipt of a proper invoice in WBSCM. Payments will be made within 10 days of a proper invoice receipt. Invoices that are not accurate or complete will be rejected and we will ask for them to be resubmitted with the correct information. Invoices may not be submitted prior to delivery.

Q17. Is there a method to double check to make sure that our desired plants are properly registered on the site?

A17. If you are concerned about whether your plants are properly registered, please contact our WBSCM team at WBSCMAMSHelpDesk@ams.usda.gov

Q18. How frequent will USDA issue this type of ½ gallon fluid milk solicitation, every quarter? How long will this program run, one, two or five years?

A18. This purchase was authorized using section 32 funds and is an FY-2018 purchase. There are provisions in the recently announced Trade Mitigation Food Purchase and Distribution Program for additional purchases of dairy products. Notices regarding future purchases will be distributed using Gov Delivery and will be posted on the AMS website.

Q19. Can we bid part of the solicitation? For example, can we bid only certain locations and certain delivery period?

A19. Absolutely. You are not required to bid on every line item in the solicitation. You can bid on as few as one line-item if you wish. The only rule is that if someone bids on one item within a multi-stop, they must bid on all line items within that multi-stop.

Q20. In WBSCM, are we to enter each item and location as separate lines/entries, or would you prefer one set price for all delivered locations?

A20. You may enter whatever bid amount you find appropriate for each line item. Bids are a firm fixed price for each line item and will not be modified after the bidding is closed.

Q21. Can you provide a more accurate delivery location than the zip code in order for prospective bidders to determine the freight cost?

A21. No, the solicitation provides the extent of delivery information available to all prospective bidders.

Q22. Can the fluid milk be packaged packed in either ½ gallon gable top cartons or in ½ gallon plastic screw cap jugs?

A22. Both screw cap jugs and gable top cartons are acceptable. Please see Section 2.3 of the Commodity Requirements Document for further information regarding containers and materials.

Q23. In the event that the fluid milk falls below 8.25% “milk solids-not-fat”, will USDA accept the product with liquidated damage or discount?

A23. Milk that doesn’t meet the 8.25% milk solids would not meet the PMO/FDA standard of identity for milk. USDA will not accept product that doesn’t meet all the PMO requirements

Q24. Can we use 40 x 40 inch wooden pallets, as this is what we use for our standard “Reusable plastic crate pallet”?

A24. The pallet requirements referenced in DFM1, Section 2.4 B (2) are intended to meet food safety standards and normal commercial practices.