

**METRIC**

**A-A-20193D**

**June 16, 2016**

**SUPERSEDING**

**A-A-20193C**

**September 30, 2010**

## **COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION**

### **ONIONS, BULB, READY-TO-USE**

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorized the use of this Commercial Item Description (CID).**

**1. SCOPE.** This CID covers ready-to-use bulb onions (onions) packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by the Federal, State, local governments, and other interested parties. **Please note: This document does not guarantee purchase of this item by USDA.**<sup>1</sup>

#### **2. PURCHASER NOTES.**

##### **2.1 Purchasers *must specify* the following:**

- Type(s), color(s), style(s), and agricultural practice(s) required of onions (Sec. 3).
- When microbiological requirements are different than specified (Sec. 7.1).
- When microbiological requirements need verification (Sec. 7.4).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.4) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.5).

##### **2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following:**

- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) or Good Handling Practices (GHP) Audit (Sec. 10.1).
- Food Defense (Sec. 10.2) and Manufacturer's Quality Assurance (Sec. 10.3). Purchaser may specify 10.1 or one of the following combinations: 10.2 with 10.3.1, 10.2 with 10.3.2, 10.3 with 10.3.1, 10.3 with 10.3.2 or 10.3 with 10.3.3.
- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 11).

**3. CLASSIFICATION.** The onions must conform to the following list as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

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<sup>1</sup> USDA purchase specifications are available at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food/product-specs>.

## A-A-20193D

### **Types, colors, styles, and agricultural practices.**<sup>2</sup>

**Type I** - Fresh (Spring/Summer) *includes but not limited to: Bermuda, Granex, and Grano varieties*<sup>3</sup>

**Type II** - Fresh (Fall/Winter) *includes but not limited to Globe and Spanish varieties*<sup>3</sup>

**Type III** - Creole

**Type IV** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

**Color A** - Yellow

**Color B** - White

**Color C** - Red

**Style 1** - Whole

**Style 2** - Peeled

**Style 3** - Diced

**Style 4** - Sliced

**Style 5** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

**Agricultural practice a** - Conventional

**Agricultural practice b** - Organic

#### **4. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S NOTES. Manufacturer's/distributor's products *must meet the requirements of the:***

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 7).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's product assurance (Sec. 8).
- Regulatory requirements (Sec. 9).
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 11).

#### **5. PROCESSING GUIDELINES.**

**5.1 Processing.** The onions must be harvested and handled in accordance with the Federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) *Guidance for Industry: Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*<sup>4</sup>, GAP and GHP. The onions must be processed in accordance with current Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) (21 Code of Federal

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<sup>2</sup> Not all options are available from every manufacturer. Check with the manufacturer/distributor for availability.

<sup>3</sup> Not all onion types are available year round.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/ProducePlantProducts/default.htm>.

Regulations (CFR) Part 110) and FDA's *Guidance for Industry: Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards of Fresh-cut Fruits and Vegetables*.<sup>5</sup>

**5.2 Food defense.** The onions must be processed and transported in accordance with the FDA's *Guidance for Industry: Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*.<sup>6</sup> This guidance identifies the kinds of preventive measures food manufacturers, processors, or handlers may take to minimize the risk that food under their control will be subject to tampering or other malicious, criminal, or terrorist actions. The implementation of enhanced food defense preventive measures provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials, other ingredients, and post-production finished product.

**5.3 Organic onions.** When organic onions are specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the onions must be grown following organic agricultural practices and processed in accordance with the requirements of the National Organic Program (7 CFR Part 205). A Certificate of Organic Operation must be provided to verify that the product was processed in accordance with the USDA organic requirements. Non-synthetic and synthetic substances allowed in organic handling are listed in 7 CFR § 205.605, National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

**5.4 Temperature.** During transportation, onions must be kept under refrigeration to maintain quality. Unless otherwise recommended, the onions must be delivered at temperatures greater than 0°C (32°F) but not more than 4.4°C (40°F).

**5.5 Shelf life.** Whole onions in a controlled atmosphere must have a shelf life typically of 30 days. Peeled onions must have a shelf life typically of 10 to 14 days refrigerated. Diced and sliced onions must have a shelf life typically of 7 to 10 days refrigerated.

## 6. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.

### 6.1 Definitions.

**6.1.1 Whole.** Onions are mature, firm, single bulb, fairly well-shaped and free from splits.

**6.1.2 Peeled.** The onions outer tough thin layer of skin is removed.

**6.1.3 Diced.** Onions are cut into small cubes varying in sizes from 0.64 to 2.54 cm (1/4 to 1 in) (*unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract or purchase order*).

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/ProducePlantProducts/ucm064458.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/FoodDefense/ucm083075.htm>.

**A-A-20193D**

**6.1.4 Sliced.** Onions may be sliced perpendicular to the longitudinal axis varying in thickness from 0.32 to 1.9 cm (1/8 to 3/4 in) (*unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract or purchase order*).

**6.2 Onions.** The onions (including those used for further processing) must be U.S. No. 2 or better grade of U. S. Standards for Grades of Bermuda-Granex-Grano Type Onions, U.S. Standards for Grade of Creole Onions, or U.S. Standards for Grade of Onions (Other Than Bermuda-Granex-Grano and Creole Type).

**6.3 Finished Product.**

**6.3.1 Aroma and flavor.** The onions of any style must possess characteristic aroma and flavor of its onion type.

**6.3.2 Color and appearance.** The onions must possess good exterior characteristic yellow, white, or red color. The onions must be free from green, white, and brown spots and other foreign material that affect the appearance of the products.

**6.3.3 Texture.** The onions must be crisp and fairly firm, but not tough, fibrous, or mushy. The onions must possess a practically uniform texture.

**6.3.4 Defects.** The onions must be free from defects which materially affect their appearance or edibility. Presence of any decay, off-color, off-odor, wet sunscald (soft, mushy, sticky, or wet), doubles and bottle necks and foreign material including but not limited to (metal, glass, stone, dirt, paint, or insect parts) will be cause for rejection of the lot. The onions must be free from damage caused by seedstems, which are tough or woody, or which are more than 0.635 cm (1/4 in) in diameter. Whole onions must be free from splits, stains, sprouts, moldy patches, and broken fleshy scales.

**7. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS.**

**7.1 Microbiological requirements.** Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, microbiological requirements for onions must be as follows:

<b><u>Test</u></b>	<b><u>Tolerance</u></b>
<i>Salmonella</i>	Must be negative
Generic <i>E. coli</i>	Less than 3 per gram (g) using Most Probable Number (MPN) technique or less than 10 Colony Forming Units (CFU) per g. <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Findings indicate zero colonies (CFU) per plate or zero tubes producing gas for MPN.

<u>Test</u>	<u>Tolerance</u>
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	Must be negative
Non-O157:H7 STEC <sup>8</sup>	Must be negative
Coagulase positive <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	Less than 3 per g using MPN technique or less than 10 CFU per g. <sup>7</sup>
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Must be negative

**7.2 Product verification.** When USDA verification of microbiological requirements is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the following procedures will be followed. Microbiological testing must be performed on a composite sample. The composite sample must be 227 g (8 oz) prepared from randomly selected subsamples. Subsamples must be a minimum of one bag of onions and must contain the appropriate number of onions necessary to yield a 227 g (8 oz) sample when composited.

**7.3 Test portion sizes.** The test portions must be derived from the composite sample specified in Sec. 7.2. The test portion size for testing *Salmonella* and coagulase positive *Staphylococcus aureus* will be 25 g (0.88 oz). The test portion size for testing generic *E. coli*, *E. coli* O157:H7, non-O157:H7 STEC<sup>8</sup>, and *Listeria monocytogenes* will be 50 g (1.76 oz).

**7.4 Microbiological test methods.** When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the analyses must be made in accordance with the following methods of AOAC International Official Methods of Analysis (OMA) or as specified below.

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method</u>
<i>Salmonella</i>	967.26 or Section C-7, Ch. 5
Generic <i>E. coli</i>	991.14, 966.23, 966.24 or Sections C, D, F, Ch. 4 <sup>9</sup>
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	996.09 or Sections K through R, Ch. 4a and Appendix 1
Non-O157:H7 STEC <sup>8</sup>	Ch. 4a, Section R Diarrheagenic <i>E. coli</i> or U.S. Food Emergency Response Network (FERN) SOP No: FERN-MIC.0003.00a-d <sup>10</sup>
Coagulase positive <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	2003.07, 975.55, 987.09 or Direct Plate Count, Ch. 12 <sup>9</sup>
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	997.03 or Sections C, D, E, Ch. 10

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 7 on page 4.

<sup>8</sup> Shiga-toxin *Escherichia coli* (STEC).

<sup>9</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, FDA Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) or the FDA BAM Online.

<sup>10</sup> SOP No: FERN-MIC.0003.00a-d, "Procedures for the Detection of Shiga-toxin *Escherichia coli* (STEC), serotype O157 and non-O157 in Food" is available for FERN Laboratories online through <http://fernlab.org/>

## A-A-20193D

**7.5 Test results.** The test results for *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157:H7, Non-O157:H7 STEC<sup>8</sup> and *Listeria monocytogenes* must be reported as positive or negative. The test results for generic *E. coli* and coagulase positive *Staphylococcus aureus* must be reported to the nearest MPN or to the nearest CFU per g. Any results not conforming to the microbiological requirements will be cause for rejection of the lot.

**8. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S PRODUCT ASSURANCE.** The manufacturer/distributor must certify that the onions provided must meet the salient characteristics of this CID, conform to their own specifications, standards, and quality assurance practices, and be the same onions offered for sale in the commercial market. The purchaser reserves the right to require proof of conformance.

**9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.** The delivered onions must comply with all applicable Federal and State mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of the onions in the commercial marketplace. Delivered onions must comply with all applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FD&C) Act; the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act; and regulations promulgated thereunder. When a known allergen is included in the onions, the onions must comply with the allergen labeling requirements of the FD&C Act.

**10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS.** *Purchaser must specify 10.4 or 10.5. In addition, purchaser may specify 10.1 or one of the following combinations: 10.2 with 10.3.1, 10.2 with 10.3.2, 10.3 with 10.3.1, 10.3 with 10.3.2, or 10.3 with 10.3.3.*

**10.1 GAP and/or GHP audit verification program.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a GAP or GHP audit must be conducted by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). A GAP audit must be performed at the site where the onions are grown and a GHP audit must be performed at the packing house where the onions are packed. The audit program consists of one initial audit, and at least one unannounced audit depending on how long the facility is in operation during a growing season. The purpose of the GAP and GHP Audit Program is to demonstrate that the participating company is adhering to generally recognized GAP or GHP principles. This is a voluntary program established to verify a participant's adherence to the FDA's *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*<sup>4</sup> and does not guarantee a safe product.

**10.2 Food defense.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a Food Defense System Survey (FDSS) must be conducted by USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program (SCP), Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division. Food defense requirements include a documented and operational food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant's

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 4 on page 2.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 8 on page 5.

production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials, other ingredients and post-production finished product. The plan must address the following areas: (1) food security plan management, (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities, (3) slaughter, when applicable, and processing, including all raw material sources, (4) shipping and receiving, (5) storage, (6) water and ice supply, (7) mail handling, (8) personnel security, and (9) transportation, shipping, and receiving.

**10.2.1 FDSS.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a FDSS must be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division. The FDSS verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. An AMS FDSS verifies the participating company's adherence to the FDA's *Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*.<sup>6</sup>

**10.2.2 Food defense section of the Plant Systems Audit (PSA).** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a food defense audit will be conducted as part of the PSA. The audit will be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division auditors. This verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. The food defense section of the PSA verifies the participating company's adherence to the FDA's *Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance*.<sup>6</sup>

**10.3 Manufacturer's quality assurance.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer will be required to provide evidence, by certificate that the manufacturing plant has undertaken one of the following quality assurance measures within 12 months prior to providing a bid, or no later than 10 business days from the date of awarding of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated for cause.

**10.3.1 Plant survey.** A plant survey conducted by USDA, AMS, or other survey performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. An AMS plant survey audit verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food* (21 CFR Part 110).

**10.3.2 PSA.** A PSA conducted by USDA, AMS, or other audit performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. An AMS PSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce products in a clean sanitary

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote 6 on page 3.

## **A-A-20193D**

environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food* (21 CFR Part 110), and verifies that the manufacturer has in place an internal quality assurance program.

**10.3.3 Qualified Through Verification (QTV) Audit.** A QTV audit conducted by USDA, AMS, or other Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan verification audit performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of awarding of the contract. An AMS QTV audit verifies that at the time of the audit, the manufacturer produces products in a clean sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food* (21 CFR Part 110).

**10.4 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor must certify that the onions distributed meet or exceed the requirements of this CID. The manufacturer/distributor must certify via a Certificate of Conformance or other adequate documentation (*as specified by the purchaser*) that the onions meet the analytical requirements specified in Sec. 7 of this CID.

**10.5 USDA certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division, must be the certifying program. SCI Division inspectors must certify the quality and acceptability of the onions in accordance with SCI Division procedures, which include selecting random samples of the onions, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official SCI Division score sheets and/or certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, SCI Division inspectors will examine the onions for conformance to the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) in effect on the date of the solicitation.

**11. PACKAGING.** Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking must be commercial unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

**12. USDA INSPECTION NOTES.** When Section 10.5 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification must include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of onions, and compliance with requirements in the following areas:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 7). When USDA analytical testing is specified, SCI Division inspection personnel must select samples and submit them to the USDA, Science and Technology Program (S&TP) laboratory for analysis.



- Packaging requirements (Sec. 11 or *as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order*).

### 13. REFERENCE NOTES.

#### 13.1 USDA services.

**13.1.1 USDA certification and plant survey.** For a USDA certification and plant survey contact the **Associate Director, Inspection Operations, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1536 South Building, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-2482, fax (202) 720-0393, or via E-mail: [Nathaniel.Taylor@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Nathaniel.Taylor@ams.usda.gov).**

**13.1.2 USDA FDSS and PSA.** For a USDA FDSS and PSA contact the **Chief, Auditing Services Branch, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-5021, fax (202) 260-8927, or via E-mail: [fvaudits@ams.usda.gov](mailto:fvaudits@ams.usda.gov).**

**13.1.3 Analytical testing and technical information contact.** For USDA technical information on analytical testing, contact **a member of the Laboratory Approval and Testing Division, S&TP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0272, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0272, telephone (202) 690-0621 or via E-mail: [KerryR.Smith@ams.usda.gov](mailto:KerryR.Smith@ams.usda.gov).**

#### 13.2 Sources of documents.

##### 13.2.1 Source of information for nongovernmental document is as follows:

Copies of the AOAC International OMA may be obtained from: **AOAC International, 2275 Research Boulevard, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20850-3250, telephone (301) 924-7077. Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org> for nonmembers and <http://www.eoma.aoac.org> for members and AOAC OMA subscribers.**

##### 13.2.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:

Applicable provisions of the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers are contained in 7 CFR Part 42, the National Organic Program is contained in 7 CFR Part 205, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act is contained in 16 CFR Parts 500 to 503, and the Federal FD&C Act is contained in 21 CFR Parts 1 to 199. These documents may be purchased from: **Superintendent of Documents, New Orders, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000. Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover/ NOVUS, and American Express) purchases may be made by calling the Superintendent of Documents on (866) 512-1800, (202) 512-1800.**

A-A-20193D

These documents may also be obtained free of charge on the Internet at:  
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR>.

Copies of Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance is available online from: **FDA, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) on the Internet at:**  
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/FoodDefense/ucm083075.htm>.

Copies of the Standard Operating Procedure No: FERN-MIC.0003.00a-d, "Procedures for the Detection of Shiga-toxin *Escherichia coli* (STEC), serotype O157 and non-O157 in Food" is available for FERN Laboratories online from **U.S. Food Emergency Response Network Elexnet website at:**  
<https://www.elexnet.com/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=201&PageID=0&cached=true&mode=2&userID=615>.

Questions and comments on the U.S. Standards and Inspection Instructions for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and Other Specialty Products may be directed to: **USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division, Riverside Business Park, 100 Riverside Parkway, Suite 101, Fredericksburg, VA 22406-1016, telephone (540) 361-1120, fax (540) 361-1199, or on the Internet at:**  
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/standards>.

Copies of U.S. Standards and Inspection Instructions for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and Other Specialty Products may be obtained from: **USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division, 831 Mitten Road, Room 200, Burlingame, CA 94010, telephone (650) 552-9073, fax (650) 552-9147, or via E-mail: [depot@ams.usda.gov](mailto:depot@ams.usda.gov) or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/how-purchase-equipment-and-visual-aids>.**

Copies of the FDA Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) are available online from: **FDA, CFSCAN on the Internet at:**  
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodScienceResearch/LaboratoryMethods/ucm2006949.htm>.

Copies of this CID and the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) are available from: **Director, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0240, Washington, D.C. 20250-0240, via E-mail: [CIDS@ams.usda.gov](mailto:CIDS@ams.usda.gov) or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cids> and <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2015-title7-vol2/pdf/CFR-2015-title7-vol2-part42.pdf>.**

**CIVIL AGENCY COORDINATING ACTIVITIES:**

DOJ - BOP  
HHS - FDA  
USDA - SCP  
VA - OSS

**PREPARING ACTIVITY:**

USDA - SCP

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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