



United States Department of Agriculture

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Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service

Fruit and  
Vegetable  
Program

Specialty  
Crops  
Inspection  
Division

# Commodity Specification

## Fresh Fruit

**August 2014**

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## **I. General**

### **A. U.S. Standards**

Fresh fruit (product/commodity) produced under this Commodity Specification must meet the requirements specified in the applicable United States Standards for Grades or Commercial Item Description (CID) effective on the date of the Solicitation/Invitation for Bid (IFB). The U.S. Standards are published separately and are incorporated herein and made a part of this Commodity Specification.

### **B. Exceptions to U.S. Standards**

Additional exceptions may be specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. Any exceptions contained in the applicable Solicitation/IFB shall have precedence over the requirements contained herein, for that Solicitation/IFB only.

### **C. Product Origin**

1. Commodities delivered pursuant to this Commodity Specification shall have originated from crops that have been 100 percent grown, processed, and packed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, (hereinafter referred to as the United States). See Section I., F. of the Master Solicitation.
2. If the contractor handles any commodity originating from sources other than the United States, the contractor must have a written plan to segregate the commodity. This segregation plan will include an identification and record system for all commodities to ensure they are completely segregated and cannot be used to fulfill purchase orders awarded by USDA. Such segregation plan must be made available, within 10 days of purchase order award, to representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
3. The contractor must maintain positive written documentation records evidencing 100 percent domestic origin to the grower level. Contractors must also ensure that the documentation provided by any subcontractors demonstrates the same level of traceability. The burden of proof of compliance is on the contractor.

Documentation may include load or warehouse storage receipts for raw product (i.e., bin tags), product blend (formulation) records, product coding explanations, finished product warehousing records, shipping or payment records, or other documentation or evidence that clearly establishes the product's domestic origin.

4. Contractors must provide the domestic origin certification and supporting documentation records to representatives of the AMS Fruit and Vegetable Program, Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division (USDA Grader) when requesting inspection service.

USDA graders will select and review at least one code for each purchase order to determine compliance with the Agency's domestic origin requirements.

5. Such records must be available for review by the Government in accordance with FAR 52.214-26. In the event of an audit, AMS auditors will examine as many codes as is necessary to verify compliance.
6. Self-certifications by contractors and subcontractors will not be accepted.
7. Failure to observe this requirement may lead to suspension or debarment, purchase order termination, and penalties at Title 18, Section 1001 of the U.S. Code concerning falsification of information.

#### **D. Kosher Products**

Occasionally, USDA solicits offers to sell KOSHER products. Such products are identified on the solicitation with the letter "K" incorporated into the WBSCM material descriptions. Vendors must comply with the applicable dietary (KOSHER) laws as established by the "613 COUNCIL OF KASHRUTH" in the production of these commodity products. Vendors must not bid on these purchase units unless they can be properly certified.

Vendors receiving purchase order items identified as "KOSHER" must contact the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York (BJENY) at telephone 646-472-5365 prior to manufacturing the commodity product to arrange for certification of compliance with the applicable dietary (kosher) laws.

#### **E. Packing Season**

All fresh fruit must be from the current packing season/crop year, unless otherwise specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB.

#### **F. Containers and Packing**

Primary Containers (Cartons):

All products shall be packed in new, good, clean, commercially labeled primary containers which meet all applicable FDA requirements and contain a code which allows traceability of the product in the event of a recall. The containers shall be constructed as to ensure acceptance by common carrier or other carrier for safe transportation for domestic shipment.

In addition to any commercial markings, each primary container shall show the grower of shipper name(s) and address. In the case of apples and pears: the variety, size by count, and grade (state grade may be shown if in compliance with paragraph II) shall be shown on the primary container.

## G. Palletization Requirements

### 1. Pallets

Products must be on 48 X 40 inch, non-reversible, flush stringer, and partial four-way entry. New pallets must be good quality wood. Used pallets must be No.1 hardwood or its equivalent in new softwood. **Broken or damaged pallets are unacceptable.** If pallet exchange is desired, the contractor shall arrange for pallet exchange with consignees. USDA is in no way responsible for arrangement of pallet exchange.

### 2. Unitization

Each delivery unit of fresh citrus must be unitized. Shipping cases must be stacked and secured from top to bottom, so that each container and layer of containers becomes an integral part of the pallet. Either stretch wrapping with plastic film or “lock ‘n pop” is acceptable. The palletized product must be loaded in the conveyance in such a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product.

## H. Prerequisites

1. Vendors and /or suppliers providing fresh fruit shall participate in and pass an Agricultural Marketing Service, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) Verification Audit. Verification Audits shall be performed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Fruit and Vegetable Programs (FVP), Fresh Products Division (FPD).

All scopes of the audit applicable to the operation must be completed. For instance, if a grower has a storage facility on their farm where apples are stored prior to sending them to the sliced apple vendor, then the appropriate section of the audit must be completed.

*A copy of the GAP&GHP Audit Verification checklist is available on the USDA website at [www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp), or from your local USDA or Federal-State inspection office.*

2. Vendors supplying finished product (i.e. fresh cut apple slices) are required to undergo an annual Plant Survey and Food Defense System Survey, or Plant Systems Audit (PSA) which shall be performed by the USDA, AMS, FV, Processed Products Branch (PPB).
3. Vendors supplying finished product (i.e. fresh cut apple slices) must have a written Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) based food safety plan in place.

The HACCP plan shall include a microbiological testing program for the following: **Total Aerobic (Standard) Plate count (TPC), E. coli 0157:H7, Listeria monocytogenes, and Salmonella on the finished packaged product,** and microbiological testing for **TPC, E. coli, and Listeria on the antioxidant solution.**

Microbial testing shall be performed on each lot or days production. The following tolerances must be met.

TPC -	Less than 10,000 per Gram
E.coli 0157:H7 -	0 tolerance
Listeria monocytogenes -	0 tolerance
Salmonella -	0 tolerance

**\*\*The Fruit and Vegetable Program, Processed Products Division must verify the vendors HACCP plan by performing a HACCP Verification Survey. \*\***

## H. Shipment and Delivery

1. Contractor will be allowed a tolerance on the final delivery of plus or minus 50 cases of product from each shipping point named in the purchase order.

## II. Individual Commodity Specifications

### A. Fresh Apples

1. Grade - U.S. Fancy. (State grades will be acceptable provided the apples meet the requirements of the U.S. Fancy Grade).
2. Types of Pack and Size Requirement:
  - (a) Tray pack - minimum size 150; maximum size- 100
  - (b) Cell pack – minimum size 140; maximum size – 96
3. Apples in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall contain product of not more than three (3) adjacent sizes nor be in more than three locations at the time of inspection. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes. If shipment is by truck, the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center, and tail) shall be noted on the shipping manifest by the contractor.
4. Apples shall also meet the **United States Condition Standards for Export**.
5. Tenderness and Maturity – not more than an average of **five percent in any lot and ten percent in individual containers** may be further advanced in maturity than firm ripe.
6. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 40° F.
7. Refrigerated shipment at 34° to 40° F.

**B. Fresh Cut Apple Slices****FRUIT QUALITY ASSESSMENT:**

1. Shelf life - The sliced apples shall have a minimum shelf life of **14 days** from the date of production.
2. Style of apples - Slices means apples consisting of slices of apples cut longitudinally and radially from the core axis.
3. Quality factors - **Good Quality** is the quality of sliced apples that possess similar varietal characteristics; that possess a **good flavor**; that possess a **good color**; that are **practically uniform in size**; that are **practically free from defects**; that possess a **good character**; based on a 16 ounce sample.
4. Flavor - **Good flavor** means that the product possesses a good, characteristic normal flavor and odor, characteristic of well ripened apples of the applicable variety, and is free from objectionable flavors and objectionable odors of any kind.
5. Color - **Good color** means that the sliced apples, internally and externally, possess a reasonably uniform bright color, characteristic of apples of similar varieties.
6. Size - The factor of size refers to the degree of wholeness and to the uniformity of thickness of the units.
  - (a) Practically whole slice means that the slice may be cut or broken but at least 3/4 of the original slice remains.
  - (b) Practically uniform in size means that: At least 90 percent, by weight, of the product consists of whole or practically whole slices of 1-1/4 inches in length or longer, and at least 90 percent, by weight, of the product consists of units of the most uniform thickness, the thickness of the slices may range from 3/8 inch to 3/4 inches and does not vary more than 1/4 inch.
7. Defects - The factor of defects refers to the degree of freedom from harmless extraneous matter, from damaged or seriously damaged units, and from carpel tissue. **Practically free from defects** means that harmless extraneous matter may be present that does not materially affect the appearance or eating quality of the product; that the product is practically free from carpel tissue; and that not more than a total of 5 percent, by weight, of the units may be damaged, of which not more than 1 percent, by weight, of all the units may be seriously damaged: **Provided**, that extraneous matter, damaged and seriously damaged units, singly or in combination, do not materially affect the appearance or eating quality of the product for each 16 ounce sample.

- (a) Harmless extraneous matter (HEM) means any vegetative portion of the apple (including, but not being limited to, a leaf, stem, or portions thereof, cores and portions of cores, and seeds), that is harmless.
  - (b) Damaged unit means any unit possessing light brown bruise that exceeds the area of a circle 1/2 inch in diameter or which is more than 1/4 inch deep, and any unit in which the appearance or eating quality is materially affected by blossom end material, dark brown bruise, or other internal or external discoloration, or by any other means.
  - (c) Seriously damaged unit means any unit damaged to such an extent that the appearance or eating quality is seriously affected.
  - (d) Practically free from carpel tissue means that for each 16 ounces of the product, the carpel tissue present does not exceed in the aggregate an area equal to 3/4 square inch.
8. Character - The factor of character refers to the texture of the units and the tendency to retain their conformation without material softening or disintegration and is firm but not hard.
- (a) Mushy apples mean slices or units or portions thereof that are overripe and with flesh very mealy or soft.
  - (b) Good character means that the units possess a reasonably uniform texture, are firm but not hard, with not more than 3 percent of the weight of the product consisting of mushy apples.
9. Packing, Labels and Packaging:
- (a) The shipping cases must contain either: 64/2 ounce, 100/2 ounce, or 200/2 ounce bags.
  - (b) Labels may be the vendors own commercially acceptable “brand” unless prohibited by the Solicitation/IFB. **Distributor’s “brand” labels are not acceptable.**
  - (c) Primary Containers shall be new commercially acceptable bags which meet all applicable FDA requirements, that are heat-sealed, that afford adequate protection of the product, and are the size and type specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. The bags shall be suitably code marked so that the product can be identified and allows traceability of the product in the event of a recall. The bags shall be marked with the 14 day shelf life by using the “**date**”, “**Use by**”, “**Best Before**”, or “**Sell by**”. Other commercial markings are acceptable.
  - (d) **Secondary Containers** shall be new commercially acceptable good quality domestic corrugated fiberboard cases. Cases shall be suitably code marked so that the product can be identified and shall be marked with the 14 day shelf life



by using the “**date**”, “**Use by**”, “**Best Before**”, or “**Sell by**”. “**Keep Refrigerated**” shall be clearly printed on each case. Other commercial markings are acceptable.

10. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 38° F.
11. Refrigerated shipment at 32° to 38° F.

### C. Cantaloupes

1. Grade – U.S. No.1 or better (en route or at destination tolerances apply).
2. Types of pack and size requirements – Cartons – 9, 12, or 15 count only.
3. Cantaloupes in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall not originate from more than three locations. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes. If shipment is by truck, the contractor shall note the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center and tail) on the shipping manifest.
4. Shall be no further advanced in firmness than ripe and firm.
5. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 40° F.
6. Refrigerated shipment at 34° to 40° F.

### D. Pears

1. Grade - U.S. No. 2. Provided that the pears do not contain more than **five percent** condition defects, including not more than a total of **two percent** decay and/or internal breakdown. State Grades will be acceptable provided that the pears meet the minimum requirements of U.S. No. 2 Grade (i.e. Oregon/Washington Fancy).
2. Tenderness and Maturity - not more than an average of **10 percent** of the pears in any lot or more than **15 percent** in any container, may be further advanced in stages of ripeness than firm.
3. Pack and Size Requirement:
  - (a) Tray pack - minimum size 165; maximum size- 90.
  - (b) Wrapped pack – minimum size 165; maximum size - 90.
4. Pears in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall contain product of not more than three (3) adjacent sizes nor originate from more than three locations. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes.

If shipment is by truck, the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center, and tail) shall be noted on the shipping manifest by the contractor.

5. The grade, quality, condition, count, size pack, and the stage of firmness requirements referred to herein are defined in **United States Standards for Grades of Summer and Fall Pears**, and the **United States Standards for Grades of Winter Pears**.
6. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 40° F.
7. Refrigerated shipment at 34° to 40° F.

### III. Inspection

#### A. Requirements (Apples)

Representatives of the AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Program, SCI Division (USDA Grader) must perform the inspection. See section X of the Master Solicitation.

Inspection of **fresh apples must be performed at shipping point within 48 hours prior to shipment**. Whether each lot offered meets the product and container requirements of the purchase order must be determined on the basis of representative sample units. Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Fresh Fruit and Related Products (7 C.F.R. part 51), and United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 C.F.R. part 42.140), effective on the date of the Solicitation/IFB.

The fresh apples shall be inspected, certified, count (number) of packages verified, and Positive Lot Identified by the Federal or Federal-State Inspection Service in accordance with the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (see section X of the Master Solicitation). The acceptability of the quality and packaging of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Grader.

No product shall be shipped unless the USDA Grader informs the Contractor that a designated lot is acceptable. Notice by the USDA Grader that a designated lot scheduled for shipment does not meet requirements of the purchase order shall constitute rejection of such lot.

#### B. Requirements (Cantaloupes and Pears)

Inspection of **fresh cantaloupes, and pears must be performed at destination** in accordance with the same requirements stated in paragraph "A" of this section with the exception of Positive Lot Identification. USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Program, Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division (USDA Grader) must perform the inspection required see section X of the Master Solicitation. The count (number) of packages shall be certified by Federal or Federal-State Inspection Service (see section X of the Master Solicitation). The acceptability of the quality and packaging of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Grader. Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Fresh

Fruit and Related Products (7 C.F.R. part 51), and United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 C.F.R. part 42.140), effective on the date of the Solicitation/IFB.

### **C. Procedures**

The Contractor must give the USDA Inspector at least 72 hours advance notice when scheduling inspection service.

Contractors are encouraged to submit requests for inspection in writing via form FV-237 (Record of Request for Inspection or Re-inspection of Food Products) with verifiable receipt notice, such as fax log, to alleviate possible miscommunication.

Requests can also be made electronically using the following link:

<http://eforms.ams.usda.gov/#CustomersFV>

### **IV. Failure to Meet Specifications**

Any lot which fails applicable specifications prescribed herein will be rejected as not acceptable for delivery. If any lot of fresh fruit fails to meet the product or packaging requirement, the Contractor may request in writing that USDA accept delivery of the lot. USDA may, at its option, accept delivery, provided that the purchase price is the purchase order price less a discount, to be determined by the Contracting Officer.