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# Commodity Specification for Bulk Products for Further Processing

June 2022

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## GENERAL

### U.S. Standards

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

### 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.

### Prerequisites

**All vendors and/or suppliers providing fresh fruits and vegetables shall undergo a USDA good agricultural practices (GAP) audit of their operations. The audit must be conducted by the USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program, SCI Division or licensed Federal-State auditors providing services under a cooperative agreement with USDA oversight. The audit conducted may be either the USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit (also known as the USDA GAP&GHP audit), the USDA Harmonized GAP or GAP Plus+ audit, or the Mushroom GAP (MGAP) audit.**

**The audit must cover all parts of the operation which are applicable to the commodity being purchased. A typical commodity purchase would require an audit of the fields, packing house, and storage facilities, if all activities are occurring at the location.**

**A copy of the acceptable audit standards 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. A listing of USDA and Federal-State inspection offices are also available on the same website.**

### Product Origin

**In accordance with the latest version of the AMS Master Solicitation for Commodity Procurement – Domestic Programs (MSCP-D) Sections 4A52.225-1a,b,c,d,e,f, and 4A52.225-3, contractors must meet all domestic origin requirements with further clarifications shown below.**

- 1. Contractors will make all paperwork available to USDA that confirms fruit, vegetable, and nut commodities purchased for USDA food assistance outlets are 100 percent grown in the United States. This means that products shall have originated entirely from crops 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) in accordance with responsible commercial practices, during the packing season, and from the crop year(s) specified.**

- 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 responsibility for compliance is borne by the contractor, regardless of whether the product was processed/packed in their facility or if it originated from other sources (i.e., subcontractors and suppliers). If a contractor receives crops or products originating from other sources, it is up to the contractor to obtain proof of domestic origin compliance from those sources.**
- 4. Examples of documentation submitted may include but are not limited to 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.**
- 5. An acceptable domestic origin verification traceback must include the following:**
  - Signed Exhibit 1 Domestic Origin Certification**
  - Table of Contents**
  - Narrative or flow chart explaining the documentation provided**
  - An explanation of the code (Code Breakdown) where applicable**
  - Each page should be numbered and referenced in Table of Contents**
  - All pertinent information should be highlighted on each document**
  - Documentation must be clear and concise and must relate directly to the code or load being traced**
  - Trace information submitted must include the physical location (physical address or GPS coordinates) of the originating field, farm, orchard, or vineyard. No PO Boxes are acceptable.**

**NOTE: Failure to comply with the above requirements, or any submittals consisting of mass unorganized “data dumps” will not be reviewed by SCI and final statuses will be reported to the Commodity Procurement representative as “Incomplete”.**

- 6. 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.**
- 7. Self-certifications by contractors and subcontractors will not be accepted.**

- 8. 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.**

### **Packing Season**

All products must be from the current crop year, unless otherwise specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB.

### **Containers and Packing**

1. For products loaded directly onto the conveyance (Bulk): the conveyance must be well maintained, clean, and covered.
2. All other products shall be packed in new, good, clean, quality containers (bins, totes, cartons, etc.) so constructed as to ensure acceptance by common carrier or other carrier for safe transportation for domestic shipment.
3. Vendors have the option to use commercial labeling on the containers; however, they must meet all applicable FDA requirements and contain a code which allows traceability of the product in the event of a recall. When the containers are labeled: In addition to any commercial markings, each container shall show the grower or shipper name and address. If a specific variety, color, grade, and/or size are required per the solicitation, those factors shall also be listed on the container.
4. Cartons shall be of the same dimensions as those used in normal commercial transaction. These packing requirements provide that pack shall be at least fairly well filled. The tolerances applicable under such packing requirements shall apply.
5. The containers and case markings shall meet the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42).

### **PALLETIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

#### **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; **however, broken, or damaged pallets may be repaired with No.1 hardwood or its equivalent in new softwood.** 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.

#### **Unitization**

Each delivery unit 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.

## INDIVIDUAL COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS

**All Inspections must be performed by Federal or Federal/State Inspectors. All inspections will be performed at destination unless otherwise specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. Or, if it is agreeable to both the supplier and recipient, inspection may be performed in route at any location within 24 hours of the destination. This variance does not apply to apples delivered to Stockton, CA, which requires inspection at destination only. It is the contractor’s responsibility to arrange for the inspection.**

### Bulk Apples for Further Processing (sliced apples)

Part One - General (Universal) requirements applicable to all destinations unless otherwise specified.

Inspection of Apples for Further Processing will occur at the destination point by a Federal or Federal - State inspector.

1. Grade: All apples must meet the U.S. No. 1 standards or better, as defined and graded by the United States Standards for Grades of Apples, with the following exceptions below as noted.
2. Crop Year - All Apples must be of current crop year and 100% product of the U.S.A.
3. All apples must be free of dirt or other extraneous matter.
4. Packaging (bulk containers): Standard (36” maximum height) industry bulk fruit bins in clean wood, tri-wall corrugated fiber, or plastic. All types of bins must be commercially acceptable and in good serviceable condition. The destination (receiver/processor) will make all bins available for pick-up by the vendor (supplier/conveyance) within a mutually agreeable time frame established between the destination and the supplier to not exceed 90 days from delivery to the destination. *Please see destination specific packaging requirements for further packaging conditions.*
5. Container Markings: Each bulk container will be labeled or marked with the following minimum information:
  - a. Apple Variety
  - b. Harvest, Receipt, or Pack Date

- c. Suitable code mark that allows traceability of the product
- d. Net weight of apples - When scales are not available to the shipper or when bins are delivered directly to the destination from harvest operations, commercial certified scale tickets listing empty and loaded weights of the trailer will be accepted in lieu of net weight markings on the bin ticket
- e. Apple Size declaration
- f. Grower's or shipper's name and address
- g. Country of origin

#### Noted Exceptions / Additions to U.S. No. 1 Standards

1. Size - Specified in the destination specific requirements.
2. Shape - Fairly Well.
3. Defects - Definitions and tolerances will be in accordance with the United States Standards for Grades of Apples (U.S. No. 1 or better) unless otherwise specified below.
4. Russeting - See United States Standards for Grades of Apples, U.S. No. 1 or better for definitions and tolerances.
5. Decay - 1% (*2% for destinations Shelby, MI and Richland Center, WI*)
6. Internal Browning - 0% - (*2% for destinations Shelby, MI and Richland Center, WI*)
7. Internal Water Core - 0% - (*2% for destinations Shelby, MI and Richland Center, WI*)
8. Damage Defects - 8%
9. Serious Damage Defects - 5%
10. Total Defects - Specified in the destination specific requirements.
11. Varieties - Approved varieties are specified in the destination specific requirements below.
12. Maturity/Condition - Representative samples for each lot will be collected and pressure tested at destination. Pressure per fruit will be no less than 14 pounds with a minimum average of 15 pounds in each sample.
- 13. Some destinations have alternate pressure testing requirements. See destination specifications for those variances.**



14. Taste - The taste must have no foreign taste or odors that would indicate contamination.
15. Transportation - The apples will be transported to destination in compliance with FDA's FSMA Final Rule on Sanitary Transportation of Human and Animal Food (current edition), and, the USDA, AMS Master Solicitation for Commodity Procurements – Domestic Programs (MSCP-D) (current edition). When the FSMA rule requires refrigerated shipment the Federal or Federal-State inspector will record temperatures during destination inspection and will fail any loads not meeting the temperature requirements.
16. The Federal or Federal–State inspector will fail any load that does not meet these requirements.

#### Part Two - Destination Specific Requirements

##### Destination - Dauberville, PA –

1. Varieties - Gala, Jonagold, Pink Lady, Empire.
2. Size range - 88 to 113 count.
3. Total Defects - 8%.
4. Maturity/Condition - Pressure per fruit will be no less than 13 pounds with a minimum average of 14 pounds in each sample.
5. Packaging - Standard (36" maximum height) industry bins in clean wood, cardboard or plastic in good condition. Plastic bin liners cannot be used in bins.

##### Destination - Shelby, MI –

1. Varieties - Empire, Jonagold's, Rome's (Non-Bleeding), **Pink Lady, and Cosmic Crisp**. The variety Law Rome's is 100% prohibited and not acceptable.
2. Sizing - 80% will be between 2.5 inches and 3.5 inches for Jonagold's and Rome's (Non- Bleeding) and 70% minimum will be between 2.5 inches and 3.5 inches for Empires.
3. Total Defects - 12%.
4. **Maturity/Condition - Representative samples for each lot will be collected and pressure tested. Pressure per fruit will be no less than 13 pounds with a minimum average of 14 pounds per sample.**
5. Packaging - Apple industry standard stackable (minimum 18 bushel, 36" maximum height) bins in clean wood, or plastic bins of good condition with no broken sections allowable. Corrugate tote bins are not acceptable. Plastic bin liners cannot be used.

## Destination - Richland Center, WI -

1. Varieties - Empire, Jonagold, Gala, **Cortland, and Pink Lady.**
2. Sizing - 80% will be between 2.5 inches and 3.5 inches.
3. Total Defects - 12%.
4. Packaging - Standard (36" maximum height) industry bins in clean wood or plastic. Plastic bin liners can be used but must be left open, they cannot be closed or sealed at the top.

## Destination - Hartford, MI -

1. Varieties - Empire, Jonagold, Rome's (Non-Law, Non-Bleeding), Ida Red, Golden Delicious, Gala, and Jonathan.
2. Sizing - Minimum size = 2.5 inches, no more than 10% undersize for Golden Delicious, Gala and Jonathon. 80% between 2.5 inches and 3.5 inches for Jonagold's, Rome's, and Ida Reds.
3. Total Defects - 8%.
4. Maturity/Condition - Representative samples for each lot will be collected and pressure tested at destination. Pressure per fruit will be no less than 12 pounds with a minimum average of 13 pounds in each sample.
5. Packaging - Standard (36" maximum height) industry bins in clean wood or plastic. Plastic bin liners cannot be used. Plywood bins will not be accepted. Acceptable bins will be available for return pickup within 180 days of delivery to destination.

## Destination - Stockton, CA –

1. Varieties - Gala, Pink Lady, Lady Alice, Pacific Rose, **Honey Crisp, Granny Smith, Jonagold, Rome, and Empire.**
2. Size range - 88 to **138** count - **No more than 2 adjacent sizes per bin (i.e., – 88/100, 100/113, 113/125, 125/138).**
3. Total Defects - 8%.
4. **Maturity/Pressure – Pressure per fruit will be no less than 13 pounds with a minimum average of 13.5 pounds in each sample.**
5. **Packaging - Standard (36" maximum height) industry bins. Must be clean and in good repair. Plastic bins, corrugated bins, and wood bins are acceptable. Corrugated bins must have a corrugated top. Approximately 800 lbs. of fruit per bin.**

**Destination – Gardena, CA -**

- 1. 1. Varieties - Gala, Fuji, and Pink Lady.**
- 2. 2. Size range - 88 to 113 count.**
- 3. 3. Total Defects - 8%.**
- 4. Packaging - Standard (36" maximum height) industry bins Corrugated bins in good condition (new or used but in good condition only). Approximately 800 lbs. of fruit per bin. No plastic bins.**

Fresh Potatoes for Dehydration

1. Grade- U.S. No. 2 or better.
2. Pack – Bulk
3. Crop Year - The potatoes shall be from the current packing season/crop year.
4. Size – Whole potatoes shall be specified not less than 1 ½ inches in diameter in accordance with the U.S Standards for Grades of Potatoes for Processing (usable pieces not less than 4 ounces in weight).
5. Varieties - Shepody, Ranger, Umatilla, Alturas, Norkotah, Atlantic, Goldrush, Snowden, Pike, Reba, Marcy, Millenium, Superior, Freedom, and Russet Burbank. Varieties cannot be mixed.
6. Specific Gravity Specification - All varieties 1.0723 (19.1% solids) or higher.
7. Defects, Serious Damage, and Foreign Material:
  - a. No lot should be less than 40% bruise-free.
  - b. The method of calculating the term “bruise-free” shall be evaluated for bruising by the Federal or Federal-State Inspector.
    - i. The 'Steam Rolling/Bruise' testing is not a requirement for deliveries into Lewisville, ID.
  - c. Any load of potatoes found to contain broken glass or foreign substance, which may be harmful to health or adulterates the finished product, will be rejected.
  - d. Any load of potatoes will be rejected if potatoes have more than 10% dry rot.

Potatoes for Processing

**Potatoes delivered to Easton, Maine, are not subject to the ‘Fry Color’ evaluation or ‘Bruise Free’ evaluation if they are being brought directly from the field.**

1. Grade- U.S. No. 2 or better.
2. Pack – Bulk
3. Crop Year - The potatoes shall be from the current packing season/crop year.
4. Size - Whole potatoes shall be specified not less than 1 1/2 inches in diameter (usable pieces not less than 4 ounces in weight). There will be a 3% tolerance for potatoes less than 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Lots shall not contain less than 42% over 6 ounces.
5. Varieties - Shepody, Ranger, Umatilla, Alturas and Russet Burbank, Prospect, and Caribou. Varieties cannot be mixed.
6. Sugar or sugar end content Criteria - No more than 15 % of the potatoes (plugs or slices taken from the sample) are Color or darker in the USDA Color Chart or comparable scale when fried in 375 degree (Fahrenheit) oil for 2 minutes 30 seconds or in 350 degree (Fahrenheit) oil for 3 minutes. The sample for frying to determine color may be prepared by one of the following methods:
  - a. 3/8” X 3/8” center cut strip
  - b. 3/4 inch diameter area in the center of the cut face of a 1/4 inch slice made by a transverse cut through the tuber at 1/2 inch from the stem
  - c. 2 1/2 inch disc cut from a 5/16-inch slice taken from the middle of 10 potatoes.

Lots delivered directly from the field may have the color testing requirements waived at the discretion of the receiver.
7. Specific Gravity Specification: - All varieties 1.075 or higher
8. Defects, Serious Damage and Foreign Material:
  - a. No lot should be less than 40% bruise-free. The method of calculating the term “bruise-free” shall be evaluated for bruising by the Federal or Federal-State Inspector.
  - b. Any load of potatoes found to contain broken glass or foreign substance, which may be harmful to health or adulterates the finish product, will be rejected.
  - c. Any load of potatoes showing evidence of field frost or freeze will be rejected.

- d. Any load, lot, or portion of a lot of potatoes delivered may be rejected if potatoes have any combination of insects and nematode cullage that exceeds 10%.

### Sweet Potatoes for Processing

1. Grade - U.S. No. 2 or better (Sweet Potatoes for Dicing or Pulping.)
2. Cured – Applicant warrants sweet potatoes are cured according to standard curing procedures.
3. Pack – Bulk.
4. Crop Year – The sweet potatoes shall be from the current packing season/crop year.
5. Size – Whole sweet potatoes shall be specified not less than 1 ¾ (1.75) inches to 6 inches in diameter. Maximum diameter tuber must pass freely through a 6-inch diameter tube.
6. Varieties – Beauregard or Covington. Varieties cannot be mixed.
7. Defects, Serious Damage, and Foreign Material:
  - a. Sweet potatoes should be run on sizing and dirt removal belt prior to loading.
  - b. Any load of sweet potatoes found to contain broken glass or foreign substance, which may be harmful to health or adulterates the finished product, will be rejected.

### Tomato Paste for Processing

1. Grade – U.S. Grade A.
2. Type of Pack – Totes/Bins.
3. Net Weight – The totes/bins shall be filled to a net weight of 2,850 pounds, plus or minus 2%. Maximum shipping unit (truckload) net weight shall equal 39,900 pounds, within a tolerance of minus one percent (1%). Vendors will not be credited for shipments weighing over 39,900 pounds. Shipping weights of over 39,900 will be considered as “donated” product.
4. No added sodium.
5. Each lot of tomato paste in totes/bins shall average 31 percent natural total soluble solids (TSS) plus or minus 1% TSS.
  - a. Exception for Destinations Fremont, OH or Los Banos, CA

Each lot of tomato paste in totes/bins shall not be lower than 26 percent natural total soluble solids (TSS).

6. Finish – Screen size shall be .045 or .060.

## **INSPECTION and CERTIFICATION**

### **Requirements**

1. Representatives of the AMS, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Division (USDA Inspector) must perform the inspection (see the Master Solicitation). The cost of inspection, samples taken for inspection, mailing of review samples submitted for evaluation, and any chemical analysis required for testing shall be for the account of the Contractor.
2. USDA inspection of fresh fruit and vegetables must be performed at destination unless otherwise specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. The count (number) of packages shall be certified by Federal or Federal-State Inspection Service (see the Master Solicitation). The acceptability of the quality and packing of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Inspector.
3. Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Fresh Fruits, Vegetables and Other 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.

### **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 e-mail, to alleviate possible miscommunication. Requests can also be made electronically using the following link: <http://eforms.ams.usda.gov/#CustomersFV>

## **FAILURE TO MEET SPECIFICATIONS**

Any lot which fails applicable specifications prescribed herein will be rejected as not acceptable for delivery. If any lot 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.