



Agricultural Marketing Service

Commodity Specification FROZEN CONSUMER PACK CHICKENS

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I. GENERAL

A. Product Description

Frozen, whole chicken (commodity) produced from ready-to-cook broiler/fryer chickens under this Specification will be packaged and packed in the following form as specified in the contract:

Consumer Pack Whole Chicken (100880) - Frozen U.S. Grade A ready-to-cook broiler/fryer chickens, with neck and giblets or without neck and giblets. Individual chickens must weigh 3.0 to 5.5 pounds (1.36 to 2.49 kg) per carcass without neck and giblets. The commodity must be commercially labeled and packed in individual plastic-film bags with neck and giblets or without neck and giblets and packed 10-12 chickens per fiberboard shipping container (case). Each purchase unit will total 39,600 pounds (17,962 kg).

B. Food Defense Requirements

Contractors and subcontractors participating in the commodity purchase program must have a documented and operational food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of finished product after production. The plan shall address the following areas: (1) food defense plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) slaughter 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) controlled access to production and storage areas. The food defense plan shall be made available to the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Auditor immediately upon request. Verification of the Food Defense Program at the processing, storage, and distribution facility will be conducted by the USDA/AMS Auditor.

C. Commodity Complaints

The contractor/producer must immediately report all complaints received on the commodity to the Contracting Officer.

D. Humane Handling

All poultry shall be humanely handled in accordance with all applicable Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulations, directives, and notices.

II. COMMODITY SPECIFICATION

A. Basic Requirements

1. Date Processed. Frozen ready-to-cook consumer pack chickens (commodity) must not be processed and packaged more than 30 calendar days prior to the date of shipment.

2. Origin of Chickens. The commodity must be produced and processed from chickens which were produced, raised, and processed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. If the contractor processes or handles chicken products originating from sources other than the United States, its territories or possessions, Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, the contractor must have an acceptable identification and segregation plan for those chicken products to ensure they are not used in the commodities produced under this Specification. This plan must be made available to a representative of the Grading Division, Livestock, Poultry and Seed (LPS) Program, AMS/USDA (Grader), and the Contracting Officer or agent thereof upon request. The contractor must ensure that both the contractor and subcontractor(s) maintain records such as invoices, or production and inventory records evidencing product origin, and make such records available for review by the Grader or other Government official(s).

3. Inspection. Processing operations must comply with Poultry Products Inspection Regulations (9 CFR part 381) and be under the supervision of a representative of USDA/FSIS (Inspector). Inspection for contract and Specification compliance will be in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit Products (7 CFR part 70) and the U.S. Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry (AMS 70.200 *et seq.*) under the supervision of a Grader. The Grader will be responsible for certification of compliance with the requirements of this Specification for whole chickens, freezing, packaging and packing, labeling and marking, net weight, and checkloading.

4. FSIS Requirements. The commodity must be produced and processed in an establishment inspected by FSIS, be accurately marked and/or labeled, and meet all FSIS regulatory requirements, including all microbiological testing requirements, currently in place.

5. USDA Sampling Option. USDA may select additional commodity for further inspection or may draw samples for laboratory analyses.

B. Requirements

1. Organoleptic Requirements. The chilled chickens will be examined on a continuous basis for the following requirements: The chickens must be free of rancidity; fruity, sulfide-like, cardboardy, tallowy, oily, oxidized, metallic, chlorine-like, or other foreign or off-odors; free of foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, plastic, metal, wood); must show no evidence of mishandling or deterioration; and must have a bright color with no evidence of dehydration or freezing and thawing. If the chickens do not comply with the organoleptic requirements, the product the samples represent will be rejected for use under this Specification.

2. Commodity Summary Table.

	Consumer Pack Whole Chicken
Type:	Frozen
Class:	Broiler/Fryer
Style:	Ready-to-Cook, Whole Chicken
Neck and Giblets:	With or without neck and giblets
Weight Range:	Each carcass must weigh 3.0 to 5.5 pounds (1.36 to 2.49 kg), without neck and giblets
U.S. Grade:	U.S. Grade A

3. Type. The commodity must be from current production, processed, officially graded, properly identified, frozen, and packaged not more than 30 calendar days prior to the date of shipment.

4. Class and Style.

a. Class. The commodity must be produced from freshly slaughtered broilers/fryers which conform to the definition for the class in AMS 70.201.

b. Style. Individual whole chicken carcasses must conform to the definitions and standards in AMS 70.200 *et seq.* The neck must be separated from its junction with the body of the carcass. Clips, tags, or bands must not be attached to the carcasses.

5. Weight Range.

a. Whole Chicken. The whole bird commodity will be sampled and weighed for individual weight. A sample of 10 chickens will be randomly drawn and weighed before packaging. Each sample chicken must weigh 3.0 pounds (1.36 kg) to 5.5 pounds (2.49 kg) without the neck and giblets.

b. Weight determination. The frequency of sampling will be according to LPS Program's Sample Plan Level 2 (SPL-2). If any sample does not comply with the weight requirements, the product the sample represents will be rejected.

6. U.S. Grade. Grading must be in accordance with 7 CFR part 70 and AMS 70.200 *et seq.* Grading must be under the supervision of a Grader using LPS Program's Sample Plan Level 1 (SPL-1).

7. Chickens from Other Plants. The chilled chickens may be transferred or obtained from other processing plants, provided they have been processed, handled, and identified in accordance with and in compliance with this Specification as evidenced by USDA certification.

a. Type. Class, U.S. grade if applicable, date slaughtered, and USDA-assigned plant number must be shown on each shipping container.

b. Chicken. The chilled chickens must be at an internal product temperature not higher than 40 °F (4.4 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C) when shipped from the origin plant and when received at the destination plant.

C. Chilling and Freezing

The chilled commodity must be processed, packaged and packed, and placed in a freezer within 7 calendar days after slaughter. Within this 7-day timeframe, the commodity must be placed in a freezer within 48 hours of packaging and packing. If the chilled commodity is not placed in a freezer immediately after packaging or packing, the commodity must be held at a temperature not higher than 36 °F (2.2 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C). The packaged and packed commodity must be frozen (internal product temperature lowered to 0 °F (-17.8 °C) or lower) within 72 hours from the time of entering the freezer. When packaged or packed commodity is held at a temperature below 26 °F (-3.3 °C), the commodity will be considered to be in a freezer and subject to the 72-hour freezing requirement which begins at the end of the shift the commodity enters the 26 °F (3.3 °C) or lower facility.

D. Packaging and Packing

All packages and packaging materials must be clean and in new condition, must not impart objectionable odors or flavors to the commodity, must be safe (cannot adulterate product or be injurious to health) for use in contact with food products and must be tamper-evident. Tamper evident is defined as packaging or packing materials with one or more barriers of entry, which, when breached or missing, can reasonably be expected to provide visible evidence that tampering has occurred.

1. Packaging. The commodity must be packaged by using one of the following options:

a. Option 1. The commodity may be individually packaged in commercially acceptable plastic-film bags. A drip pad, or single sheet of similarly constructed material, must be placed under the commodity to absorb purge. Each bag must snugly adhere to the commodity and be sealed to enclose the commodity and prevent leaking; or

b. Option 2. The commodity may be vacuum packaged using commercial practices to prevent leaking and purge. The bag used for this method must be designed specifically to be used without a drip pad.

2. Packing materials. Containers used to pack the commodity must be: (1) good commercial fiberboard shipping containers that are acceptable by common or other carrier for safe transport to point of destination; and (2) closed by commercially accepted methods and materials.

Packing. The packaged commodity must be packed into shipping containers with 10-12 packages of commodity in each shipping container.

III. LABELING

Each package and shipping container of commodity must be commercially labeled in accordance with FSIS requirements. Labeling must be approved by FSIS prior to acceptance for use under this Specification.

A. Commercial Label Requirements

1. U.S. Grade. The USDA Grademark (U.S. Grade A) must appear on each package and shipping container of commodity.

2. Commercial Labels. Commercial labels must be the manufacturer's own commercial label. Distributors' labels are not permitted.

3. Traceable Product. The processor must establish a product identification and record system that clearly links product by place and time of manufacture to specific USDA contracts and destinations. When the company uses the same commercial label for the product certified as complying with this Specification and commercial product, the identification system must differentiate between USDA and non-USDA products. An alphanumeric code may be used for information that is in addition to FSIS labeling requirements. The required product identification and record system, including traceability and coding system, must be reviewed by USDA/AMS before production begins for the contract(s).

4. Nutrition Facts, Ingredients and Allergen statements on Shipping Containers. Nutrition Facts must be provided. The ingredient statement, even for single ingredient foods, must be included as a statement separate from the name of the product, e.g. Ingredients: _____. The allergen statement must be provided in the format which complies with the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) for any product which contains milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, soy or wheat; e.g. Allergen: This product contains _____.

B. Additional Labeling Issues

The following are not acceptable for use under this Specification:

- Commercial labels that do not have a manufacturer traceability system and code.
- Commercial labeling traceability coding and systems that have not been reviewed by a representative of Grading Division, LPS Program, AMS/USDA.

- Distributor commercial labels.
- Two or more different commercial labels in the same purchase unit.

C. Free Along Side (FAS) Vessel Deliveries

FAS vessel deliveries that are not source loaded in a refrigerated seavan are required to show the final destination’s overseas address as provided in the Sales Order/Item Number. The address must be clearly printed on at least two sides of each pallet.

IV. FINAL EXAMINATION OF PACKAGED AND PACKED COMMODITY

A. Material, Net Weight and Quantity Compliance

1. Packaging and Packing Material Examination.

a. Verification of packaging and packing materials. The contractor must verify compliance with packaging, packing, and marking material requirements by furnishing the Grader the following certification on company stationery signed by a person authorized to do so by the contractor:

“(I)(We) certify that the packaging, packing, and marking materials used for any commodity presented for acceptance under the terms of the Commodity Specification for Frozen Consumer Pack Chickens dated April 2013, comply or will comply with the terms of this Commodity Specification.

Name _____
 Title _____”

One certification is adequate for all production under this Specification.

b. Packaging defects. Packages in a delivery unit will be examined for defects that affect protection, expose product, or permit dehydration or freezer burn or quality deterioration during storage, such as tears, holes, or improperly sealed or closed packaging.

c. Packing defects. Shipping containers in a delivery unit will be examined for condition, labeling, and marking defects according to the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers.

d. Tolerance for defects. If samples of packaged commodity or shipping containers in a delivery unit have more defects than the maximum tolerance for the applicable LPS Program’s sample plan, the delivery unit will be rejected.

2. Net Weight. Net weight of each delivery unit will be determined at time of shipment by the test-weighing procedures of LPS Program.

a. Weight Requirements. A purchase or delivery unit of commodity must total 39,600 pounds (17,962 kg). A weight variation of minus 1 percent (39,204 pounds (17,782 kg)) is permitted on each delivery unit. USDA will pay only for the amount of commodity delivered within the required weight range.

b. Alternate net weight verification. As an alternative to test weighing at time of checkloading, the contractor may request on-line verification of net weights. Upon receiving the request, a Federal-State Supervisor, Grading Division, LPS Program will determine that the facilities and procedures are in accordance with the applicable LPS Program's instructions for this Specification.

B. Prerequisites for Loading and Shipping Frozen Commodity

1. Visual Inspection. The frozen commodity must have a uniform light and bright color. Moisture (ice) present in a package must not exceed occasional small areas showing a thin layer of clear or pinkish-colored ice. Frozen commodity showing any evidence of defrosting, refreezing, or freezer deterioration will be rejected for use under this Specification.

2. Internal Product Temperature.

a. Requirements. Internal product temperature of frozen commodity must be 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower at time of loading. Delivery units with internal product temperatures exceeding 2 °F (-16.7 °C) and up to 5 °F (-15 °C) will be tentatively rejected. Tentatively rejected delivery units may be returned to the freezer and the temperature reduced to 2 °F (-16.7 °C) or lower and reoffered one time only. Delivery units exceeding 5 °F (-15 °C) or delivery units that have been tentatively rejected and exceed 2 °F (-16.7 °C) when reoffered will be rejected for use under this Specification.

b. Optional temperature verification. As an option to verifying internal temperature of frozen commodities at time of shipment, the contractor may request an alternate method utilizing commodity temperature-sensing devices. If this option is selected, a Federal-State supervisor, Grading Division, will determine that the facilities, equipment, procedures, and the contractors current level of freezing compliance are in accordance with the established guidelines outlined in the applicable LPS Program's instructions for this Specification.

C. Inspection and Checkloading

1. Requirements. Inspection for contract compliance will be made by a representative of USDA, in accordance with 7 CFR part 70, FSIS regulations, and this Specification, at the site of processing, both during and after processing and packaging. A representative of USDA may select samples for laboratory analyses or inspect the commodity at any point in transit and after delivery to point of destination. Inspection records must be complete and made available upon request to USDA, to assure contract compliance.

2. Procedures. The inspection and checkloading must be performed by a Grader. Procedures to be followed and a schedule of fees for these services may be obtained by contacting the nearest Grading Division field office or the Director, Grading Division, LPS Program, AMS, USDA, Room 3932-S, STOP 0258, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0258, telephone (202) 720-3271. The quality, quantity, weight, packaging, packing, and checkloading of the commodity must be evidenced by certificates issued by the Grader. Contractor must not ship the commodity unless informed by the Grader that the designated commodity to be shipped meets contract specifications.

V. UNITIZATION

Each delivery unit of commodity must be unitized (palletized and stretch-wrapped) and comply with the following:

A. Pallets

Pallets must be good quality, 48 inches x 40 inches, nonreversible, flush stringer, and partial four-way entry. Each pallet of shipping containers must be stretch-wrapped with plastic film in a manner that will secure each container and layer of containers on the pallet. Palletized product must be loaded in a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product. Pallet loads shall be stacked in a manner that minimizes the overhang of the shipping containers over the edges of the pallets and exposes the principle shipping container display panels to facilitate certification examinations.

B. Pallet Exchange

Contractors may arrange for pallet exchange with consignees; however, USDA is not responsible for such arrangements.

VI. SHIPMENT AND DELIVERY

Shipment and delivery must be made in accordance with the AMS Master Solicitation, the Solicitation, and this Specification. In addition, the contractor must adhere to the following provisions:

A. Contract Compliance Stamp

Each container must be identified with a USDA Contract Compliance stamp with the applicable certificate number. A Grader, or other authorized personnel under the supervision of the Grader, will stamp one end of each container prior to shipment. If there is inadequate space available on either end of the shipping container, the stamp may be applied to a side of the container.

B. Grading Certificate

A copy of the original USDA Poultry Grading Certificate issued at time of checkloading must accompany each shipment.

1. Railcar or Piggyback. If shipment is by rail or piggyback, the certificate must be placed in the railcar or trailer for easy access to the Grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

2. Trucks. If shipment is by truck, the driver must, upon delivery, give the certificate to the Grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

C. Loading and Sealing of Vehicles

Loading must be in accordance with good commercial practices and the initial sealing must be done at origin under the supervision of a Grader. Thereafter, all delivery units - truck lot and less-than-truck lot (LTL) quantities - must be secured at all times prior to unloading with tamper proof, tamper resistant, serially numbered, high security seals. Suppliers of commodities, products and/or services shall be responsible for placing a seal(s) on all doors of each transportation conveyance upon completion of loading or servicing. Seals shall be serially numbered, barrier-type and meet the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standards (F-1157-04). Seals shall be 1/8th inch diameter cable, high security bolt, or equivalent. The contractor must maintain a record of each seal number used for truck lot and LTL delivery units. Additionally, the contractor must ensure that the applicable seal identification number is on each bill of lading, shipment manifest, or other delivery documents for each delivery destination.

When LTL delivery units are transported on the same trailer or railcar and destined for multiple recipients, the trailer or railcar must be sealed after each delivery. The seal number must be recorded on the appropriate delivery documents and correspond with the applied seal at the time of arrival at the next destination. It will be the responsibility of the contractor to provide a sufficient number of seals and ensure that the carrier service (truck or rail) secures the trailer or railcar after each delivery destination. Failure to seal the trailer or railcar after each stop will result in rejection of the shipment by the recipient agency at the next scheduled stop and rejection of any subsequent deliveries on the trailer or railcar.

1. Railcar. Each railcar must be sealed. The contractor is responsible for arranging for railcar deliveries of more than one delivery unit so that each delivery unit contained in the same railcar can be completely separated and sealed.

2. Truck or Piggyback. Truck or piggyback shipments must be sealed at origin. A delivery unit shipped by truck or piggyback which includes split deliveries to multiple destinations will require sealing after each drop in accordance with Section VI.C. of this Specification.

D. Delivery Notification

The contractor must comply with the AMS Master Solicitation regarding Advance Shipping Notices (ASNs) and unloading appointments.

1. In-Plant Deliveries. When in-plant delivery is made, the contractor must notify the appropriate USDA resident Grader and furnish applicable information.

2. Delivery In Storage. Delivery may be made in store provided the destination in the Sales Order/Item Number and the place the contractor has the commodity in storage are the same. Inspection and certification by a Grader are also required for transfers in store.

E. Split Deliveries

The contractor is responsible to deliver the quantity stated on the Sales Order/Item Number to each destination. Contractors must provide to the Grader, at time of shipment, the number of cases, and pounds for each destination. At the option of the contractor, a purchase unit for multiple destinations (split deliveries) may be delivered on separate trucks provided each truck ships the total quantity stated on the Sales Order/Item Number. Any additional costs will accrue to the contractor's account.

VII. DESTINATION EXAMINATION

A. Commodity Requirements

Before acceptance by consignee, the commodity may be examined by a Grader on a spot-check basis for temperature, condition, identity, and, when applicable, count. The commodity may be examined for conformance to contract provisions at any time as required by the Contracting Officer.

B. Temperature

The commodity must arrive at destination at an average internal product temperature not to exceed 10 °F (-12.2 °C), with no individual temperature exceeding 15 °F (-9.4 °C). Commodity not meeting these requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

C. Cost for Frozen Commodity Destination Examination

The cost of a destination examination for frozen commodity, before or after delivery, by a Grader on acceptable commodity will be for the account of USDA. Costs for destination examinations of rejected delivery units will be for the account of the contractor. The USDA origin grader will make arrangements for destination examinations prior to delivery.



Director, Food Safety and Commodity Specification Division
Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program