



United States Department of Agriculture

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Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

# Fresh-Cut Produce

Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service

## Shipping Point and Market Inspection Instructions

Specialty  
Crops  
Program

September 2016

Specialty  
Crops  
Inspection  
Division

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Inspection instructions are issued by USDA after careful consideration of all data and views submitted. The Department welcomes suggestions for improving the inspection instructions in future revisions.

Comments may be submitted to:

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Specialty Crops Program  
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service  
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These instructions replace the Fresh-Cut Produce Shipping Point and Market Inspection Instructions dated November 1993, and include, but not limited to, all previous correspondence, memos, inspection instructions, or procedures.

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## GENERAL

Fresh-cut products are often referred to as “ready to use,” “pre-cut,” and “value added” products. These products are fresh fruits and/or vegetables that have been altered from their whole state after harvested from the field. Whole products, intended for fresh-cut, are washed and usually trimmed of any external leaves, roots, or peel. These products are then cut and/or cored into specified styles and sizes, either by hand or using mechanical equipment, and packaged. In some procedures the product is rinsed in a cold water bath (the water may be treated with chlorine used as a disinfectant) and dried, prior to packaging. Examples are carrot and celery sticks, salad mixes, and cubed pineapples and melons.

Fresh-cut products have not been cooked, canned, frozen or dried for long term preservation. Fruits and vegetables that have been packed in a juice or syrup are not considered fresh-cut. Fresh-cut products are fruits and vegetables which have been prepared for immediate use by the food service industry, retailer or consumer. Little or no additional preparation is needed. Fresh-cut products generally have a shelf-life of 6 to 21 days. The shelf-life depends primarily on the temperatures during storage and transit, the type of packaging, and the product itself.

## INSPECTION METHODS

Generally, fresh-cut products have no established U.S. grades. Fresh-cut produce can be inspected for quality and condition. Report “No Established U.S. Grade” in the “Grade” section of the certificate when inspecting fresh-cut commodities which have no established U.S. grade for quality and condition.

Broccoli florets are a fresh-cut product which is covered by a U.S. grade standard. When solely packaged as broccoli florets refer to the Broccoli Inspection Instructions. When broccoli florets are packaged in a mix with other fresh-cut commodities (such as cauliflower, carrots, etc.), inspect the mix as a No Established U.S. Grade using the guidance in these inspection instructions.

Inspecting fresh-cut product is uniquely different from whole product commodity inspections. It would be very time consuming and labor intensive to actually handle each piece of fresh-cut product in a sample. However, it is the duty of the Inspection Service to give as accurate a report of the load or lot as possible. Remove samples from their containers and spread them out on a clean, light or white colored tray or table. Adequate light is essential to accurately describe the colors and other factors of quality and condition of both normal and defective pieces.

Each product will have defects unique to it. For example, core pieces may not be objectionable in a package of shredded green cabbage because they are undetectable (being white to light green); but the same core pieces may be objectionable in a

package of shredded red cabbage because they are detectable (being white to light green). Pick out and set aside obvious defects. Keep separate piles for each different defect. Judge defects on the basis of “materially affecting the appearance” of the sample.

When inspecting “mixes” keep separate categories (and corresponding columns on the notesheet) for each type of defect. Also, make a notation on the notesheet, and a statement on the certificate as to what specific part of the mix is affected by particular defects. For example, in a coleslaw mix of green cabbage, red cabbage, and carrots the defects could be reported as follows: Yellow to tan discoloration of edges affecting green cabbage only; black discoloration affecting mostly carrot, some red cabbage; decay affecting carrot only. Likewise in a floret mix of broccoli and cauliflower the defects could be reported as: Yellow discoloration affecting broccoli; decay generally affecting broccoli, few cauliflower.

Some defects may not be “measurable” in terms of the number of affected pieces. These include odors and excessive free liquid in containers. Report these types of “defects” on the notesheet and certificate in general terms. See the section [Defects \(Quality and Condition\)](#) for descriptions of these and other defects.

All commodities respire (breathe), although the rates of respiration differ by commodity. Through the respiration process commodities will naturally change. This may be a change in color, texture, size, or general condition. The process of respiration causes gases to be generated. Fresh-cut products, by the nature of their state, generate gases more readily than whole products. This fact, coupled with packaging and transportation, can result in the occurrence of unique and unusual defects.

## REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING

Obtaining representative samples is essential. Accurate certification is possible only if the samples examined are truly representative of the entire lot or accessible portion. Sample all portions of a lot or load even if it is difficult to reach all layers or parts. If you cannot access the entire lot for sampling, restrict the inspection and certificate to the accessible portion.

## SIZE OF PACKAGE

Generally, fresh-cut products will be packaged in small “consumer” type packages. They may range in size from less than 4 ounces to 5 pounds. Some fresh-cut product will be packaged in large size containers for restaurants or foodservice industries. Occasionally, the product will come in “bulk;” that is the master container is lined with a film bag, or only one bag is in a master container. These generally contain more than 5 pounds of product.



## BASIS OF INSPECTION

Examine individual samples for the determination of defects and other factors. Base the inspection on weight or count, whichever is most appropriate. The weight will usually be marked on the package or master container, such as 10/4 pound bags, etc.

For products which are small and not easily handled, weight is the practical method of sampling. For example, chopped or shredded products, buds, or diced products. Counting the individual pieces in a six ounce sample of shredded lettuce would be tedious and time consuming. Inspections will also be based on weight when that item is less than ½ inch in two dimensions and the pieces in the sample are not uniform in size. Inspections may also be based on weight when the commodity prior to becoming fresh-cut is based on weight (e.g., Onions that have been peeled may be based on weight.)

Count may be more practical for sticks, balls, florets, rings and other products that are larger and more easily handled. For products which are larger than ½ inch in two dimensions (see [Table A](#)) it may be practical to base the inspection on count.

## SIZE OF SAMPLE

The unit of measurement will be ounces, grams, or count, whichever is most appropriate for the fresh-cut product being inspected (see Basis of Inspection, above). For packages that contain eight ounces or less, 225 grams or less, or 50 count or less, the sample size is the entire package. For packages that contain more than eight ounces, more than 225 grams, or more than 50 count, sample a minimum of 8 ounces, 225 grams, or 50 count respectively.

<b>Package Contains:</b>	<b>Sample Size:</b>
8 ounces or less, 225 grams or less, 50 count or less	entire contents of package
more than 8 ounces, more than 225 grams, more than 50 count	<b>minimum</b> of 8 ounces, 225 grams, or 50 count

Report the size of samples taken for each lot in the “Other” or “Remarks” section of the certificate.

## NUMBER OF SAMPLES

As a general rule, examine a minimum of 1% of the lot. For lots of fewer than 300 packages, examine a minimum of 3 samples. For lots over 2,000 packages, sample at the rate of two-thirds of 1%. To ensure an accurate description of the lot, examine

additional representative samples when the quality, condition, or size within samples is decidedly different.

### **CONSUMER SIZE PACKAGES**

As a guide, on a full load of consumer sized packages, the minimum number of samples should be equal to the number of packages in 2 master containers. Up to 2 packages may be selected from each master container sampled. Correspondingly fewer samples may be drawn from smaller sized lots. An absolute minimum of 3 master containers should be sampled, unless there are less than three in the lot, then use each master container to choose sample packages.

### **BULK PACKAGES**

For larger food service packages, such as master containers with ten pound (10 lbs.) bags, as a general rule a minimum of 1% of the lot must be examined. For lots of less than 300 packages a minimum of 3 samples must be examined.

## **DETERMINING AND REPORTING DEFECTS**

Fresh-cut products are unique in that a container or sample may consist of hundreds of individual pieces of product. Defects are best described using percentages as well as the range and average for the numbers of affected pieces.

### **WEIGHT BASED SAMPLES**

For inspections based on weight, combine, weigh, and report the defects as “Total Defects” unless the individual specimens are large enough to report the defects separately. For example, carrot sticks that are not uniform in size may range from 3 to 6 inches in length. In this case, the inspection would be based on weight, and, since the defects are of adequate size, determine the percentage of defects separately. Report the defects using percentages as well as the range and average number of pieces in the certificate example as follows:

#### **Carrot Sticks (Pieces Not Uniform in Size) – Based on Weight**

AVERAGE DEFECTS	X	X	OFFSIZE /DEFECTS	OTHER
00	X	X	Quality	225 grams samples examined.
08	X	X	Discoloration (6 to 9%).	
00	X	X	Soft Rot	
08	X	X	Checksum	

Inspections for commodities traditionally performed on the basis of weight prior to being fresh-cut, may also be based on weight. For example, peeled onions are inspected on the basis of weight as follows:

### **Peeled Onions – Based on Weight**

AVERAGE DEFECTS	X	X	OFFSIZE /DEFECTS	OTHER
00	X	X	Quality	20 lb. samples
05	X	X	Bruising (3 to 7%)	examined.
02	X	X	Decay (0 to 4%) Early Stages.	
07	X	X	Checksum	

If the defects are not of adequate size to determine the percentage of defects separately, report the defects using percentages as well as the range and average number of defective pieces in the sample. Count defective pieces. Report defects and other factors of quality and condition using a narrative statement on the body of the certificate adjacent to the total percentage of all defects in the average defect column as follows:

### **Salad Mix – Based on Weight**

AVERAGE DEFECTS	X	X	OFFSIZE /DEFECTS	OTHER
14	X	X	Total Defects (13 to 15%) Including: From 12 to 50 pieces,	225 grams samples
14	X	X	Checksum	average 31 pieces per sample affected by examined.
X	X	X	Discoloration; From 2 to 8 pieces, average 5	
X	X	X	pieces per sample affected by decay.	

In the preceding example the percentages were determined based on weight, as the sample size was 225 grams. This combined method of reporting percentages and pieces is intended to provide a clear picture of the quality and condition of the lot and/or load. For example, less than 1% discoloration generally would be insignificant. However, that particular percentage may consist of several individual pieces of product affected by discoloration in the sample. In this case, reporting the range and average number of pieces affected may help provide a clearer picture of the lot.

The following “Ounce to Gram Conversion Chart” may be of use when inspecting fresh-cut commodities on the basis of weight.

## Ounce to Gram Conversion Chart

Ounces	Grams	Ounces	Grams
1	28	9	255
2	57	10	284
3	85	11	312
4	113	12	340
5	142	13	369
6	170	14	397
7	198	15	425
8	227	16	454

\*Conversions rounded to nearest gram

## COUNT BASED SAMPLES

Base inspections on count when pieces are more than ½ inch in two directions, when the pieces are uniform in size, and when it is determined by the inspector that count is the most practical basis for the inspection. For inspections based on count report the defects separately as follows:

### **Peeled Baby Carrots (Pieces Fairly Uniform in Size) – Based on Count**

AVERAGE DEFECTS	X	X	OFFSIZE /DEFECTS	OTHER
12	X	X	Discoloration (8 to 16%)	50 count samples
08	X	X	Flabby (2 to 10%)	examined.
06	X	X	Soft Rot (2 to 10%)	
26	X	X	Checksum	

See [Appendix III](#) for additional notesheet and certificate examples.

## **REPORTING SIZE OF SAMPLES**

Report the size of samples taken for each lot in the “Other” or “Remarks” section of the certificate. For example, report this information as:

- “50 count samples examined” (when packages contain more than 50 count);
- “6 ounce samples examined” (when packages contain 8 ounces or less);
- “8 ounce samples examined” (when packages contain 8 ounces),
- “300 gram samples examined” (when packages contain more than 225 grams),  
or

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- “Entire package examined” (when packages contain 8 ounces or less and count varies in packages).

## EXCESSIVE DEFECTS

Occasionally, packages will be inspected that contain an unusually large amount of defects. This is especially true when product is affected by decay. When the amount of defects present, in the lot as a whole, is excessive, it can be reported using general quantity terms. For example: “In most packages generally all product is decayed; in some packages most product shows tan to brown discoloration”; “In all packages generally all product is slimy;” or “Upon opening, all packages emit a sour odor with most product being decayed.”

## TOLERANCES AND APPLICATION OF TOLERANCES

### TOLERANCES

Fresh-cut products which are inspected as no established U.S. grades do not have tolerances for off-size, defects or defective packages. The average percent of defects will be determined and reported based on the instructions for representative sampling in this handbook.

### APPLICATION OF TOLERANCES

Since fresh-cut products do not have tolerances, they also do not have an application of tolerances.

## NOTESHEET AND CERTIFICATE

Entries on the notesheet and certificate must be legible and accurate. Support all information appearing on the certificate by information on the notesheet. All information and notations must be properly recorded so that anyone familiar with inspection procedures can understand them and write a certificate. Notesheets and certificates are prima facie evidence and must withstand legal scrutiny.

Detailed instructions about dates, inspection points, places of inspection, types of carriers, lading, and other items not covered by these instructions may be found in the [General Shipping Point Manual](#), [General Market Manual](#), Federal-State Inspection Certificate (FV-184) Handbook, or [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Certificate \(FV-300\) Manual](#). Contact your supervisor for anything not covered in these instructions.

## PRODUCT/COMMODITY

Whether packaged individually or in a mix, report the common name of the commodity(s) and the style of cut (see below) for all fresh-cut produce in the “Product” section of the certificate, such as:

- Pineapple Chunks;
- Apple Wedges;
- Sliced Mushrooms;
- Carrot Sticks;
- Diced Peppers and Onions;
- Shredded Lettuce;
- Shredded Cabbage; or,
- Salad mix containing chopped lettuce, shredded carrots and shredded red cabbage.

If more space is need for the common name and style of cut than is available in the “Product” section of the certificate, they may be reported in the “Lot ID” or “Remarks” sections on the certificate.

Do not name commodities in a mix if you are unsure or unable to properly identify them. Also, do not identify the commodity using trade names or trade terms. For example, do not use “Car-a-bites”; instead, use carrots with the term for the style of cut (e.g., “peeled baby carrots”).

The major products used by the industry are lettuce (including iceberg lettuce, romaine, endive, escarole, and leaf lettuce); cabbage; carrots; onions; celery; melons; and pineapple. However, any commodity can be cut into a fresh-cut product and may be offered for inspection. Many specialty commodities are also being offered as fresh-cut products.

The chart in [Appendix II](#) illustrates some of the various commodities and styles that are commonly prepared. The chart is not all-inclusive. Fresh-cut products are continually being developed and marketed by the industry.

## **STYLE OF CUT**

Fresh-cut produce is available in many styles. The major styles include chopped, shredded, sticks, florets, and coins, among others. The styles may be further defined by specific sizes.

The style of cut may be reported along with the commodity in the “Product” section of the certificate (see Product/Commodity, on previous page). A “Glossary of Terms for Fresh-cut Styles” is in [Appendix I](#). It lists and defines various cut styles currently being seen in the marketplace. Similar styles that are differentiated by size are grouped together in the list. The list is not all-inclusive; others may also be seen.

A particular style may be specified by the applicant, or it may be stated on the package. If either is the case, use the specified term as the style of cut. However, if a style of cut is not specified, use the “Glossary of Terms” to determine which term is most appropriate.

## **NUMBER/TYPE OF CONTAINERS**

Always report the number of containers. In the market and at shipping point locations for stationary lot certification, always verify the container count provided by the applicant for each lot and report it as the “inspector’s count.” When the number of containers available for inspection does not match the application, confirm that the amount presented for inspection constitutes the lot. If an accurate count cannot be determined, report the count at someone else’s authority, but also report the reason for doing so on the notesheet (e.g., numerous pallets with mixed product).

At shipping point locations for “days-run” certification, the manifest for count typically provided by the applicant is acceptable to use for reporting the number of containers.

Fresh-cut products are packaged in various containers. The most common containers are plastic film bags (herein referred to as “film bags”) with airtight seals, and molded plastic trays with clam-shell like lids or plastic over-wrap. Other types of packaging may also be seen. The fresh-cut industry uses a multitude of container sizes ranging from small single serving pouches to larger bags. They also use plastic containers that would serve four to eight people or that could be used in the restaurant or foodservice segment of the industry. The individual bags or other containers are usually packed in master containers, generally fiberboard cartons. Product may also be packaged in bulk (one bag per master container.)

Report the type of container on the notesheet using generic terms. Use terms such as: film bags, molded cups or baskets with hinged lids, fiberboard cartons, etc. Do not report the type of packaging using trade terms, since there may be confusion and the

possibility of misnaming a type of package may occur. Refer to the [General Market Manual](#) for more detailed instructions concerning packaging and type of container.

For defects associated with packaging see the [Condition of Pack](#) section of these instructions.

## **BRANDS/MARKINGS**

At shipping point, report the brand, variety, size, color, Positive Lot Identification (PLI), and other important information appearing on the container on the notesheet and certificate in the appropriate sections.

At market, report the brand, variety, size, color, count, grade, weight, point of origin, and other important information appearing on the container on the notesheet in the “Brands/Marks” section. On the certificate, report only the brand name and other pertinent information in the “Brand/Markings” section.

## **PACKAGE CODES**

Some processing plants print, brand or otherwise mark a code on the film bags, other containers and/or master containers. The meaning of the codes varies with the plant where the product was processed. Most codes indicate some type of a date; processed date, packing date, shipping date, best if used by date, last date of sale, sell by date or expiration date. Some codes may indicate other information. This information is similar to a lot identification mark. Therefore, if present, show it on the notesheet and on the certificate. Refer to the [General Market Manual](#) for more detailed instructions pertaining to lot identification.

## **INGREDIENT LABEL**

Some packages may show an ingredient label or list. It may state “ingredients” “contains,” or “may contain,” among other statements, and be followed by a list of one or more fresh-cut commodities. Pay special attention to packages that shows an ingredient list. No ingredient list is required on packages by the Inspection Service. However, if a list is present, the listed fresh-cut commodities should be in the package or lot. Throughout the lot, if one commodity is missing in a package, but appears in other packages, it may not be considered misbranding. Report possible violations of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act to the appropriate authorities.

Note the difference between the phrases “contains...” and “may contain....” The statement “may contain...” implies that the listed product may or may not be present.



## ORIGIN

Do not make a positive statement about origin on your own authority; rather, quote the container markings that list the state or country of origin in the appropriate space on the notesheet and the certificate. If origin is not marked, try to obtain this information from the applicant. This policy is necessary because some firms may use one mark on the same product packed in several states.

## CONDITION OF PACK

Although “normal” pack conditions are not generally reported, be aware that fresh-cut products may be packaged in many types of packs. Inspect different types of packs as separate lots. Various normal conditions include airtight sealed bags with or without an apparent vacuum, or pillow packs (modified atmosphere), or molded plastic containers, or combinations of these and others types.

Report on the notesheet the type of pack, and if present, any defects of the pack. Describe in detail on the notesheet and certificate any abnormal or defective condition of the pack that could affect the quality, condition or marketability of the product. The following lists a few types of packs. The list is not intended to be all encompassing, since new technologies are being developed.

## SEALED BAGS

Most film bags are sealed so that the contents do not come in contact with the outside air. Some types of film bags are “semi-permeable” – perforated bags allowing air into or out of the bag, “non-permeable” – not allowing any exchange of air, or packaged with a gas atmosphere inside the bag.

The bags are usually sealed as they come off the packaging line. They may be vacuum sealed, sealed with a partial vacuum, sealed with no vacuum, or sealed with gas atmosphere inside the bag, resulting in a “pillow pack.” Additionally, some film bags have re-sealable features, similar to a zipper-type closure.

In vacuum sealing, the excess air is removed before the bag is sealed. Some product may have a tight vacuum seal, removing as much air as possible from the bag. The result is a bag that is tightly molded to the contours of the product within the bag. Other product may have a partial vacuum, where only some of the air is removed from the bag. This type of pack will allow the bag to gently enclose the product within the bag. This type of seal may be desirable for product that would otherwise be damaged (by bruising) if a tight vacuum seal were applied.

Gas atmosphere has been used in the produce industry for many years. Its major use has been to change the atmosphere causing the product to respire slowly and arrive at

destination in a fresh condition. Bags that have been sealed to enclose the product in a gas atmosphere will appear inflated. This is normal for this type of pack. It is commonly referred to as a “pillow pack.”

A defective package that closely resembles the pillow pack is the “bloated bag.” It is not a normal condition, and is generally the result of decaying or otherwise spoiled product generating gases in the package, and causing the packaging to expand. See the section below on Defective Packaging for further descriptions and reporting of bloated bags.

## **MASTER CONTAINERS**

Film bags or other containers of fresh-cut product are generally packed in fiberboard master containers. Some master containers may have dividers separating the consumer containers. The master containers are generally sealed with tape or glue, and palletized. The pallets may be banded, or the master containers may have glue applied to the tops to keep the layers of containers together.

## **DEFECTIVE PACKAGING**

Report defective packaging using general terms and a description of the defective packages (in the “Other” or “Remarks” section). A complimentary statement is not necessary. A proportionate number of these same packages can be used for the inspection of the actual product. However, if the product in these packages is distinctly different than product in normal packages, inspect and report separately. Report normal conditions of the packages only at the specific request of the applicant. When an inspection is requested, report abnormal or unusual conditions, or defective packaging which may have a bearing on quality or condition of the product. Some of the more common defects of the packaging include product in the seal, rips, or holes in the packages, and bloated bags.

Report defective packs using general quantity terms for the number of packages in the lot. When using general quantity terms for containers, the term “occasional” (meaning 1 to 5%) can be used.

## **PRODUCT IN THE SEAL**

Check if packaging is free from product in the seal or seam. This is especially critical for sealed film bags. If found, make a general statement in the “Other” or “Remarks” section, such as “A few (some, many, etc.) film bags show lettuce (cabbage, carrot, etc.) in seal.”

Product in the seal may be a result of equipment working improperly. Processors desire this information so adjustments to equipment and “in-house” inspections can be made

accordingly. Additionally, product in the seal may cause some or all of the remainder of the product to be defective.

## **RIPS, TEARS, HOLES, OR BROKEN PACKAGES**

Check if packages are free from rips, tears, holes, or broken containers. Report the location in the master container in the “Other” or “Remarks” section, especially if a pattern can be found. If such containers are found, make a general statement such as “A few (some, many, etc.) film bags show tears from ½ to 1 inch in length in bags adjacent master container walls,” or “Many bags broken open.”

If the product is defective within packages that are ripped or torn, etc., give a thorough description of the resulting product defects. Also report abnormal or unusual conditions of master containers.

## **BLOATED BAGS**

Packages should not be expanded or bloated beyond normal packaging practices. Usually, bags that are bloated will be on the verge of rupturing or otherwise opening. Gases are generated from decaying or fermenting product, which may cause the bag to expand.

For this condition, consider the following: First, many types of packs are now being sealed with a modified atmosphere, this type of packaging is referred to as “pillow-pack.” This is normal, and may be preferred depending on the type of product. It should not be considered a defect, however, it can be reported. Any number of pack types may appear somewhat bloated. Consider the overall condition of the lot. Second, if packages are bloated, then defects affecting the product generally will be found. For example, product may be decayed, or slimy, or otherwise affected by decay producing organisms; excessive liquid may be present in the bags; or off-odors may be present upon opening the bags.

## **NET WEIGHT**

Net weight can be determined on any lot. In general, the product will not have to be removed from the packages, as the weight of the package will be negligible. In a few cases, product must be removed from the packages to accurately determine net weight. However, remove individual bags or other containers from master containers.

Note unusual circumstances, such as torn bags with contents spilled, bags with contents showing excessive aging, loss of moisture, wilting, or decay. These conditions may affect the weight of the product after it was packaged. For determining net weight follow the procedures outlined in the [General Market Manual](#).

## TEMPERATURE OF PRODUCT

Temperatures are not normally determined or reported at shipping point. However, due to the importance of the pulp temperature of fresh fruits and vegetables when in transit or at destination, it is essential that you accurately determine and report the temperature or range in temperatures on each lot. Report pulp temperature regardless of the location of the product, e.g., in the carrier, in a warehouse, or stacked on a platform.

Precool the thermometer to obtain true readings and report all temperatures to the nearest whole degree. Take a minimum of three temperatures for each lot; record the results on the notesheet. Take additional temperatures if the lot is abnormally cold or hot, or if there is a specific request for temperature. Specify the location where you took the temperature in the lot and/or load in greater detail when additional temperatures are taken.

## SIZE

Unless specifically requested by the applicant, do not determine size. Processors prepare products in a wide range of sizes based on the needs and specifications of the customer. These specifications can change from day to day. It would be impossible to keep informed of all the possible sizes of cuts of the various products since commodities can be cut into a myriad of sizes.

If specifically requested, size can be determined. Report size in inches and fractions of inches. Depending on the specified size, measuring to the nearest 1/8 of an inch will usually be sufficient. However, if products are specified in 1/8 inch or smaller increments, then measure to the nearest 1/16 of an inch. The dimensions reported will largely depend on the style of cut. [Table A](#) shows the styles of cut (for any commodity) and the corresponding dimensions reported for the style.

**Table A**

Style of cut	Measure For:			
	Diameter	Length <sup>1</sup>	Width <sup>1</sup>	Thickness
Buds	X	X		
Chopped		X	X	X
Chunks		X	X	X
Coined	X			X
Crosscut	X	X		
Crowns	X	X		
Diced		X	X	X
Florets	X	X		
Julienne		X	X	
Rings			X	X
Shredded		X	X	
Sliced	X	X	X	X
Slivered		X	X	
Spears		X	X	
Stalks		X	X	
Sticks		X	X	
Strips		X	X	
Trimmed & Cleaned	X	X		
Trimmed & Cored	X	X		
Wedges <sup>2</sup>		X	X	
Whole Peeled	X	X		
Whole Trimmed	X	X		

<sup>1</sup> When measuring for length and width on shredded or chopped products, or other similar cut products, the length should be the larger of the two dimensions.

<sup>2</sup> Length measured from tip to tip along outer edge, width measured midway between tips of wedge piece along outer edge.

Determine a size range (and any off-size based on specifications). If no size is specified, give a size range based on the smallest and largest pieces in the sample. This can be reported in the “Other” or “Remarks” section of the certificate. See [Example 2 in Appendix III](#).

### **SAMPLE SIZE FOR DETERMINING SIZE**

The sample size for determining size on fresh-cut products is the same size as for defect determination (entire contents for packages which contain 8 ounces, 225 grams, or 50 count, or less; a minimum of 8 ounces, 225 grams, or 50 count for packages which contain more than 8 ounces, 225 grams, or 50 count.) The same sample can be used for size determination and defect determination.

## DEFECTS (QUALITY AND CONDITION)

Statements pertaining to chemical contaminants, excessive water in packages, off-color, off-odor, the amount and type of defects, and the amount of decay are shown under the appropriate headings.

Factors noted with **(Q)** are considered as **QUALITY** only. Quality or “permanent” defects are those that do not change during storage or shipment (e.g., shape and scars).

Report factors noted with **(C)** as **CONDITION** on market certificates. Condition defects are factors subject to change during shipment or storage, such as bruising, discoloration, shriveling, and decay.

Factors noted with **(Q or C)** may be considered as **QUALITY** or **CONDITION**, depending on the circumstances.

Use the following attributes (relating to qualities of a product that stimulate the sense organs) to judge the overall freshness of a fresh-cut product: color, odor, texture, and defects. Some of these qualities should be measured based on the general appearance of the product or lot, while others should be measured based on individual pieces of product. Many of the defects found in fresh-cut products are similar to those found in the whole uncut commodity. However, some products may have unique characteristics, which should be specified in the descriptions of such factors. Additionally, some defects may be specific to a particular product.

When inspecting fresh-cut commodities as a no established U.S. grade, do not use the terms “grade defects,” “injury,” “damage,” “serious damage,” and “very serious damage.” Additionally, do not use descriptive terms such as “materially” or “seriously” affecting appearance as these terms are used in the general definitions of damage and serious damage. Instead, describe the objectionable factor(s) in terms of color, area affected and depth, etc.

Example certificates which show various defect and general statements can be found in [Appendix III](#).

## BRUISING OR BROKEN PIECES (Q OR C)

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from bruising or broken pieces. This will generally only be a noticeable factor in products that are larger than shredded, chopped, diced, cubed, julienne, and slivered styles. Bruising or broken pieces normally occurs in the packaging and/or transit processes. It most commonly occurs in lettuce or other leafy products if they are packaged too tightly in containers (too tight of a vacuum). It may also occur as a result of rough handling.

## CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS

The inspection service cannot determine whether a product has chemical contamination. If requested, inform the applicant that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) can evaluate this factor. You can draw sample packages for the FDA or an applicant's designated laboratory, if requested (appropriate fees will apply).

## CORE PIECES, END PIECES, ROOTS AND PEELS (Q)

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from identifiable core pieces, end pieces, roots, and peels. Core pieces, end pieces, roots, and peels are objectionable because they are generally inedible. They are usually removed on the grading line. However, it is difficult to assure that every piece is removed. Removal at a later point in the marketing channel would be very labor intensive.

“Core pieces” refers to pieces of the core of the commodity prior to it being cut into the fresh-cut product. In usual preparation for fresh-cut products, “head” type commodities are cored (the core is removed). Occasionally part of the core is not removed in the coring process. Even if present, core pieces may not be identifiable in fresh-cut product that is shredded, chopped or otherwise cut into small pieces, and therefore, would not be objectionable. “End pieces” refers to the ends of commodities that are usually cut off in normal preparation prior to being cut into the fresh-cut product—such as ends of carrots and ends of onions. “Roots” refers to the actual growing roots of commodities - such as onions and garlic. “Peels” refers to the outer peel of a commodity prior to being cut into the fresh-cut product—such as onions, garlic, melons, and potatoes (if the fresh-cut product is peeled).

## DISCOLORATION (C)

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from discoloration. Consider any color which is not the normal color of the cut product, and is not “off-color” (see section on [Off-Color](#)) as discoloration. Discoloration usually affects only a portion of a piece of fresh-cut product, but may affect the entire piece.

When reporting this defect describe the color—yellow, pink, red, brown, black, or other color; and the extent to which the pieces are affected—entire pieces, spotty, stripes, edges, etc. Keep separate columns on the notesheet for the different types of discoloration (black, tan, pink, etc.) as separate categories if more than one distinct type of discoloration is present. The description of the extent and color assists the industry to determine how and/or why the discoloration occurred.

It is too difficult to determine the actual name of the different types of discoloration. For example, once a head of lettuce with obvious tipburn has been cut into chopped lettuce the pieces affected may have discoloration on one or more edges up to the entire piece.

No positive determination can be made as to whether the original discoloration was tipburn or some other type of discoloration. For this reason describe several types of specific defects as discoloration, including tipburn and russet spotting.

Do not confuse discoloration and tipburn with decay. Pieces affected by discoloration and tipburn will not disintegrate when rubbed between the fingers, while tissue affected by decay will disintegrate.

Fresh-cut products that are particularly susceptible to discoloration include lettuces, cabbages, and other leafy greens.

### **WHITE BLUSH ON CARROT ROOTS**

“Manufactured” baby carrots, otherwise known as cut and peel carrots, are one of the most prevalent styles of fresh-cut carrots. These “manufactured” baby carrots are not “true” baby carrots (those which are harvested before reaching maturity—characterized by a shoulder and textured peel); they are fully matured carrots which are cut into two inch sections and are peeled for a uniform appearance.

The processing of fresh-cut carrot sticks, match stick carrots, carrot coins, “manufactured” baby carrots, and other styles of peeled, cut and/or chopped carrots shortens the shelf life of the carrots. The surface of the carrots where the skin has been removed, or where they have been cut and/or chopped, oxidize more readily. These oxidized areas are characterized by dryness and a white chalky appearance. This white chalky appearance has been named “white blush” by industry. White blush is a natural occurrence on fresh-cut and whole carrots.

To prolong shelf-life and delay the appearance of the white blush, fresh-cut carrots often are treated with chilled water, a chlorine bath, or a Citrox solution. The chlorine treatments are used to disinfect cut areas and postpone white coloration; they are not the cause of white blush.

Since, white blush occurs naturally on carrots, fresh-cut and whole, do not score as a defect on fresh-cut carrots. White blush may be reported at the applicant’s request in the “Other” or “Remarks” section. For example, “Most carrot sticks have white blush affecting from 30 to 50% of the surface, reported at applicant’s request.”

### **EXCESSIVE DRYING (C)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from excessive drying. Normal product is fresh and succulent. Fruits and vegetables are naturally high in water. Most fresh-cut product is dried, either in a centrifuge or with forced air, after it has been washed and cut. At times the product will lose not only the external moisture, but internal moisture also. If the product seems to contain little or no internal moisture, report as “Dry.” The product will



appear dry, papery, with veins more pronounced (for leafy products) or somewhat washed out in appearance (carrots).

Any fresh-cut product may be affected by excessive drying; however, leafy products are particularly susceptible.

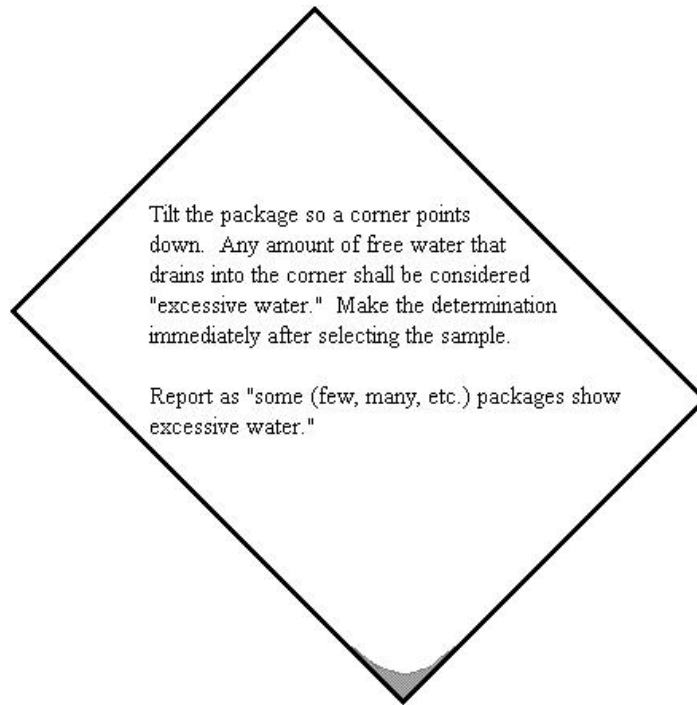
## **EXCESSIVE WATER IN PACKAGES**

Normal fresh-cut vegetable product is fresh and succulent, but not soggy. Packages must not contain an excessive amount of water. If there is any amount of water in the corner of packages of fresh-cut vegetable product that are not normally packed in water, then consider the sample package as having “excessive water.”

Most fresh-cut products are washed, cut, dried, and packaged. At times the drying stage is not adequate, causing water to accumulate in the packages. Excessive water is objectionable because of the possibility of the water causing fermentation in the sealed packages, or causing the product to be watersoaked. This defect affects the appearance of the packages.

Some products are packed in water and some fresh-cut fruit products may yield a small amount of natural juice during transportation. When encountering normal and desirable conditions such as these, do not report as defective. Report these facts in the “Other,” or “Remarks” section.

To determine if free or excessive water is present, tilt the package so that a corner is pointing down, but keep the product from filling the corner of the package. Any amount of free or excessive water is objectionable. Do not wait too long to make the determination for excessive water in packages, since even in packs without excessive water, water may collect if they are left for a long period of time. See the following illustration.



## **FOREIGN MATERIAL, AND DIRT, SAND OR SOIL (Q)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from foreign material, dirt, sand, or soil. Foreign material may be plastic, glass, metal, off-type fruit or vegetable pieces, or other items not desired in the fresh-cut product (this does not refer to core pieces, end pieces, roots and peels, which are reported as a separate defect). These items may have been inadvertently placed into packages in the processing or packaging line. Many processors use metal detectors to detect the presence of metals in packages. Dirt, sand, or soil may have been on the whole commodity prior to processing, but was not washed off during processing. Generally, foreign material, dirt, sand, or soil will be loose in the packages. However, in some cases individual pieces may be affected by adhering foreign material, dirt, sand, or soil. Report these defects as affecting the appearance of the packages.

## **LARGE PIECES (Q)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from "large pieces." These are pieces of product that are visually considerably larger than the average pieces in the package. This does not mean a "size" inspection must take place. Large pieces, although they may be blemish free, are objectionable in the package presentation. For example, chopped or shredded lettuce may contain pieces that are obviously larger than the average size piece in the package. The pieces are not cut into the proper size mainly because of the way the whole commodity was fed into the cutting machines.

Fresh-cut products that may be affected by large pieces include, but are not limited to: lettuces, cabbages, and onions.

### **MECHANICAL DAMAGE (Q OR C)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from mechanical damage. Mechanical damage will appear as jagged, torn, or roughly cut edges on individual pieces of product. The cutting knives must be razor sharp to give a smooth, straight cut. However, at times they may not be as sharp as necessary and may tear product instead of cutting it with smooth edges. It can also occur if product is processed at a rate too fast for the machinery to cut properly.

### **MOLD (C)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from mold. Mold may appear as white, gray, black, or other colors. The mold may appear as tiny spots or as larger areas affecting individual pieces of product.

If the pieces affected by mold have advanced to decay, score as decay.

### **MUSHINESS (C)**

Ensure pieces of fresh-cut product are fresh, crisp, and/or firm. Pieces that are partially or completely mushy are considered defects. If the mushiness has advanced to decay, score as decay.

Mushiness appears as a mushy or soft condition affecting pieces of the product. The pieces are soft, and may collapse when handled. If the tissue breaks down and disintegrates it should be considered decay. However, if the tissue does not breakdown or disintegrate, but only collapses without the tissue actually sloughing away, but is otherwise soft or mushy it should be described as mushy.

### **OFF-COLOR**

Ensure fresh-cut products have normal color for the product. The normal color of the product is not necessarily the same as the color of the product desired by the applicant. A normal color that is not desired by the applicant is considered an off-color. If present, always make a statement to describe off-colors. A general statement may be made on the certificate to indicate the normal color of the product if requested.

Base the description of “off-color” on the overall appearance of the color for the pieces in the lot and report using general terms. For example, in a lot of chopped romaine that shows off-color: “Product is generally whitish-green to green, few pieces yellow.” In this example the yellow is the off-color, yellow is a normal color for the inner leaves of

romaine, however, it may be undesirable for an applicant who is purchasing chopped romaine. A complimentary statement to indicate normal colors does not need to be made unless specifically requested. If reported, normal color may be described by using the actual colors of the product or by using a more general statement. For example, in shredded green cabbage: “Product is of normal color characteristic for the fresh-cut product,” or “Product is generally whitish-green to green color.”

Do not include reference to discoloration defects (discolored spots, reddish-brown discolored edges, etc.) when stating off-color, but rather the inherent coloration of the product (see section on [Discoloration](#)). Fresh-cut products show areas that may not be visible during inspection of the commodity when it is whole and uncut. These areas may be lighter or darker in color than the external areas. For example, normal color for the external leaves of whole iceberg lettuce is at least light green (on 3/4 of the crown), but the internal leaves may be yellowish to white. Normal color for fresh-cut lettuce includes white, whitish-green, yellowish-green, light green, and green; normal color for whole red cabbage is reddish-purple to dark purple; normal color for fresh-cut red cabbage includes white, whitish-red, reddish-purple to purple.

## OFF-ODORS

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from off-odors. These include, but are not limited to: chlorine smell, ammonia smell, musty/moldy smell, sour smell, fermented smell, and other odors not typical of fresh vegetables or fruits in the package (e.g., a chopped lettuce product should not smell like an onion product).

Make a general statement on the certificate to indicate if off-odors are present. Determine off-odors immediately after packages have been opened. The statement on the certificate would be similar to: “Upon opening, product in some (most, many, etc.) packages emits a sour (chlorine, musty, etc.) odor.” A complimentary statement may be made, such as: “Most (some, etc.) packages have a fresh, characteristic smell.” Determine other factors and defects regardless of the presence or absence of off-odors.

Fresh-cut products are processed using a number of different steps and procedures. One step that may be used is a chlorine rinse of the product. The actual amount of chlorine is generally very small. In most processing operations, the product is handled in such a way that no odor is detectable in the finished product. However, this is not always the case and upon opening packages a chlorine smell may be evident. Sour or fermented odors may be an indication of spoilage. Decay, slimy or mushy product may be present. Musty or moldy odors may be an indication of old product or mold in the product.

## **SHRIVELING (C)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from shriveling (except very slight shriveling). Shriveling appears as wrinkling of the outer layers of a product and generally affects the appearance of the individual pieces of product. Ignore very slight shriveling.

Fresh-cut products that may be affected by shriveling include, but are not limited to: sweet peppers and tomatoes.

## **SLIMINESS (C)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from sliminess. In some products this is the stage immediately prior to decay. Individual pieces of the product feel oily and/or slimy. Do not confuse this with product that is only wet. The product that is slimy will have a definite slimy feel.

## **STRINGINESS OR RIBBINESS (Q)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from stringiness or ribbiness. These defects, if found in the fresh-cut product, will have been present in the whole commodity prior to processing. They are usually associated with an overmature, overgrown, or tough condition of the whole commodity. Individual pieces may be crisp, but will not break cleanly and easily.

Fresh-cut products that may be affected by stringiness or ribbiness include, but are not limited to: cabbages, lettuces, celery, and other leafy commodities.

## **WILTED OR FLABBINESS (C)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is fresh, crisp, and/or firm. Pieces that are soft, limp, and drooping are considered defects and reported as “wilted” or “flabby.” The pieces lack firmness or turgidity, and generally bend easily without breaking.

## **DECAY OR SOFT ROT (C)**

Ensure fresh-cut product is free from decay or soft rot. Decay or soft rot may be of any color and is characterized by a deterioration of tissue. It is serious and progressive in nature. Tissue breakdown and disintegration will occur. Score decay or soft rot based on the individual pieces of product. For example, use “decay” for cauliflower, broccoli, melons, onions, etc.; use “soft rot” for potatoes, carrots, cabbage, etc.

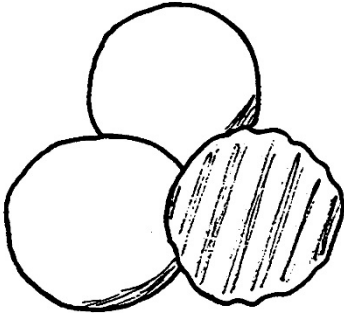

Always make a statement about decay or soft rot on the certificate, either as the range and average number of affected pieces, or as “no decay” if none is present.

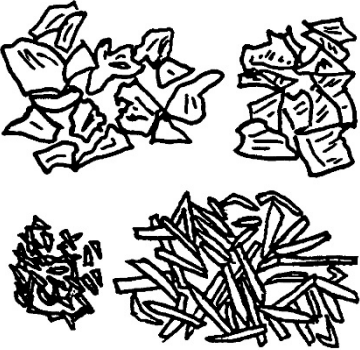

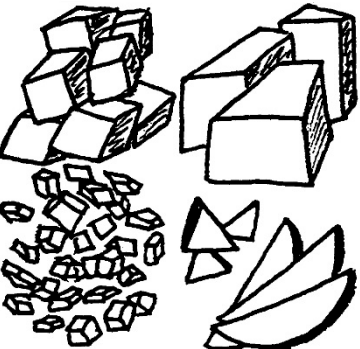
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## APPENDIX I – GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR FRESH-CUT STYLES

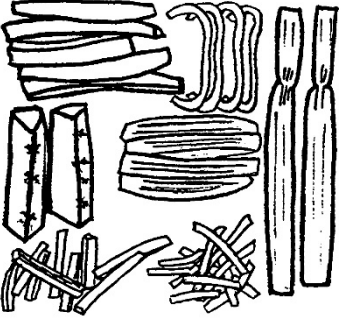


This glossary is intended to be used as a reference for describing the style of cut for fresh-cut products. If the style of cut is not specified (by applicant, on package, on manifest documents, etc.), use this glossary to determine which term is most appropriate based on the style of cut. However, if the style of cut is specified, use the term specified.

The “Common Commodities” listed for each definition are not intended to be a complete list. Other commodities, not listed, may be used when making a particular fresh-cut product. Illustrations are not drawn to scale.

<b>Balls</b>	
	<p>Pieces of a commodity cut into spheres, either smooth or corrugated; usually “bite size.”</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - cantaloup, honeydew, watermelon.</p>
<b>Buds, Florets, Crowns</b>	
	<p>Lateral or terminal flowers or clusters of flowers from the head or stem of a flowering or curd type commodity; may be joined by a portion of the main or lateral stem.</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - broccoli, cauliflower.</p>

<b>Chopped, Shredded</b>	
	<p>Pieces of a commodity cut with square, rectangular or irregular sides; may be long and narrow or short and stocky.</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - cabbage, carrots, lettuce, romaine, other leafy greens.</p>
<b>Coined, Crosscut, Rings, Slices</b>	
	<p>Pieces of a commodity cut at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the commodity; pieces are usually of uniform thickness with parallel surfaces and which otherwise conform to the shape of the commodity; may be smooth or corrugated; may be bias cut (approximate 45° angle cut instead of right angle cut).</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - broccoli stem pieces, carrots, celery, onions, sweet peppers, potatoes, tomatoes.</p>
<b>Diced, Cubed, Chunks, Wedges</b>	
	<p>Pieces of a commodity cut into squares, rectangles, or triangles; sides may be somewhat equal (diced, cubed, wedges) or irregular (chunks).</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - broccoli stem pieces, celery, melons, pineapples, potatoes, onions, tomatoes.</p>



<b>Julienne, Slivered, Strips, Spears, Stalks, Sticks</b>	
	<p>Pieces of commodity cut parallel to the longitudinal axis of the commodity usually with somewhat parallel surfaces; may have ends intact, squared off, or tapered to a point; may be fairly uniform throughout the length of the piece.</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - broccoli stem pieces, carrots, celery, onions, sweet peppers, pineapples, potatoes.</p>
<b>Trimmed &amp; Cleaned, Trimmed &amp; Cored, Whole Peeled, Whole Trimmed</b>	
	<p>A product which retains the approximate original shape of the commodity (or leaves in the case of spinach leaves), usually washed; may have peel removed; may have core removed; may have excess roots, tops, stems, and/or outer leaves removed.</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, garlic, grapes, lettuce, romaine, other leafy greens, onions, potatoes, spinach leaves, strawberries.</p>
<b>Random Cut</b>	
	<p>Pieces of a commodity cut into random shapes (and sizes).</p> <p><b>Common commodities</b> - any commodity.</p>

## APPENDIX II – CHART FOR STYLE OF CUT

		Commodity															
		Broccoli	Cabbage	Carrots	Cauliflower	Celery	Garlic	Grapes	Lettuce	Melons	Onions	Peppers	Pineapples	Potatoes	Romaine	Strawberries	Tomatoes
Style of Cut	Balls									X							
	Buds	X			X												
	Crowns	X			X												
	Florets	X			X												
	Chopped		X						X						X		
	Shredded		X	X					X					X			
	Coined	X		X													
	Crosscut					X											
	Rings										X						
	Sliced				X	X	X				X			X			X
	Cubed									X			X				
	Diced	X	X	X		X					X	X		X			X
	Chunks									X				X			
	Wedges									X			X	X			X
	Julienne	X		X													
	Slivered										X						
	Strips											X					
	Spears	X															
	Stalks					X											
	Sticks	X		X		X								X			
	Trim & Cln		X						X	X						X	
	Trim & Core		X						X							X	
	Whole Peel			X			X				X			X			
	Whole Trim				X			X									




**EXAMPLE 1: FV-300 NOTESHEET (BACK)**

A		B		C		D		
Pack: WF in Film Bags		Pack: WF in Film Bags		Pack: _____		Pack: _____		
Size: _____		Size: _____		Size: _____		Size: _____		
SCORESHEET								
PLI Number	Other I.D.	TEMP.	Sample	Qual.	DK/SR	Yellow to Brown Disc.	Gram Weight of Defects	
Lot A	SELL BY)		GRAMS					
None	060516	36	225	0	0	7	16	
None	060516	35	225	0	0	2	5 (2)	
None	060516	37	225	0	0	3	7	
None	060516	_____	225	0	0	5	13	
None	060516	36	225	0	0	8	19 (8)	
				X	X	25/5 (2 to 8 Pieces Avg 5 Pieces)	60/1125 (5)	
			Lot A:				(2-8%)	
			Samples Include: Iceberg Lettuce, Romaine, Carrots, Red Cabbage					
			Yellow to brown discoloration affecting iceberg lettuce					
			No established U.S. grade.					
Lot A & B: 225 Gram Samples Examined								
				DK	Yellow to Brown Disc.	WILT	Gram Weight of Defects	
Lot B								
NONE	060216	36	225	6 E	6	2	10	
NONE	060216	35	225	4 E	8	2	13	
NONE	060216	_____	225	14 (E)M	10	2	20	
NONE	060216	37	225	4 E	9	3	12	
NONE	060216	_____	225	10 (E)M	12	3	25 (1)	
NONE	060216	39	225	6 E	8	2	8 (4)	
NONE	060216	_____	225	10 E	6	2	9	
				54/7	59/7	16/7	97/1575 (6)	
			(4 to 14 Pieces Avg 8 Pieces)	(6 to 12 Pieces Avg 8 Pieces)	(2 to 3 Pieces Avg 2 Pieces)		(4-11%)	
			Lot B:					
			Stages of DK: (E)M					
			Most bags show excessive water, emit sour odor upon opening. Some bags are bloated beyond normal packaging.					
REMARKS / RESTRICTIONS / SPI Lot B: Inspection restricted to condition only at applicant's request.								
CARLOT Basis: _____		REPORTED TO: Skip			INSPECTED BY:			
HOURLY Basis: <b>HOURLY BASIS</b>		DATE: 5/25/16		TIME: 10:10 AM		I.M. Inspector		
TRAVEL Expenses: _____		REQUESTED BY: Skip			ASSISTED BY: _____			
EXPENSES: _____		DATE: 5/25/16		TIME: 6:30 AM				
EST. TOTAL: _____								

\*U.S. Government Printing Office: 1993 --339-136

# EXAMPLE 1: FV-300 CERTIFICATE



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

**INSPECTION CERTIFICATE**  
**EXAMPLE 1**

**CARRIER OR LOT IDENTIFICATION**

Carrier / Lot ID Stated by: Applicant

Carrier Type / Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant: The Salad Works

Address: Anywhere, U.S.A.

Shipper: Salad Makers Inc.

Address: Seaside, CA

Lot ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Origin: C | A

Brand / Markings: "Leafy Green", 3 lbs net wt.

"Chef's Delight", 3 Lbs Net Wt.

Number of Containers: 473 Cartons

672 Cartons

Inspection Date: 01/05/16

Time: 09:00 A/P

Refrigeration Unit:  On  Off  Open  Closed

Lot Temperatures: 35 to 37 F Salad Mix

35 to 39 F Salad Mix

  to    F   to    F

  to    F   to    F

**OFFSIZE / DEFECTS**

LOT	AVERAGE DEFECTS	including SER. DALL	including SER. DALL	including V-G Damage	OTHER
A	05	%	%	%	Total Defects (2 to 8%), including: No Quality Defects. From 2 to 8, average 5 pieces per sample affected by yellow to brown discoloration (affecting Iceburg Lettuce). No Decay or Soft Rot.
B	06	%	%	%	Total Defects (4 to 11%), including: From 6 to 12, average 8 pieces per sample affected by yellow to brown discoloration. From 2 to 3, average 2 pieces per sample affected by wilting. From 4 to 14, average 8 pieces per sample affected by decay.
C					
D					
E					
F					
G					
H					
I					
J					
K					
L					
M					
N					
O					
P					
Q					
R					
S					
T					
U					
V					
W					
X					
Y					
Z					

GRADE: Lot A: No Established U.S. Grade

REMARKS: Lot B: Inspection restricted to condition only at applicant's request.

**WARNING:** Any person who knowingly shall falsely make, issue, alter, forge, or counterfeit this certificate, or participate in any such actions, is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.

FORM FV-300 (10-98) Replaces FV-303 (4-86) and FV-306 (1-90) which are obsolete

Inspector's Signature: I.M. Inspector

Market Office: Agribusiness, U.S.A.

ESTIMATED TOTAL

Hourly Basis



**EXAMPLE 2: FV-300 NOTESHEET (BACK)**

A	B	C	D								
Pack: WF	Pack: WF	Pack: /	Pack: /								
Size: See below	Size: /	Size: /	Size: /								
SCORESHEET											
PLI Number	Other I.D.	TEMP.	Sample	DK	Overripe	Size					
						Length Min	Length Max	Width Min	Width Max	Thickness Min	Thickness Max
(A) None	062316	39	25	0	1	3/4	1-1/2	3/8	5/8	1/2	7/8
None	062316	40	24	0	0	(1)	1-1/4	(1/2)	3/4	3/8	(3/4)
None	062316	39	26	0	2 (8)	3/4	1-1/4	3/8	1/2	5/8	1
				(X)	(4)						
					(0 to 8%)		Brown Surface				Grams Weight of Defects
			(GM)				1 GR GRAPE				8
(B) None	062116	39	198	0	0						16
None	062116	41	198	0	2 CANT		0				16
None	062116	40	198	0	1 CANT		1 GR GRAPE				16
				(X)	(0 to 2 Pieces Avg. 1 Piece)		(0 to 1 Piece Avg. 1 Piece)				40/594 (7)
Lot A:						Lot B:					
Length: 3/4 to 1-1/2" mostly 1"						Brown Surface Discoloration affecting from 10 to 25% of surface.					
Width: 3/8 to 3/4" mostly 1/2"											
Thickness: 3/8 to 1" mostly 3/4"											
Generally Ripe and Firm						Samples include chunks of Cantaloup, Honeydew, Green Grapes, and Red Grapes.					
REMARKS / RESTRICTIONS / SPI Inspection restricted to condition only at applicant's request											
Lot A: Size determined and reported at applicant's request.											
CARLOT Basis:	REPORTED TO: John					INSPECTED BY:					
HOURLY Basis:	DATE: 6/16/16 TIME: 11:30					I.M. Inspector					
TRAVEL Expenses:	REQUESTED BY: John										
EXPENSES:	DATE: 6/16/16 TIME: 9:30					ASSISTED BY:					
EST. TOTAL:											

\*U.S. Government Printing Office: 1993--339-136





### EXAMPLE 3: FV-300 NOTESHEET (FRONT)

R. EVENSEN / S. EVENSEN / CORRECTS: _____ CONTINUES: <input type="checkbox"/>	ACTION: _____ P. 300 CERTIFICATE NUMBER: _____	REC: _____ PRODUCT TYPE: _____ CWT: _____	A: NUMBER: _____ SIZE: _____ UNIT: _____ GRADE: _____ ACCOUNT: _____ B: NUMBER: _____ SIZE: _____ UNIT: _____ GRADE: _____ ACCOUNT: _____ C: NUMBER: _____ SIZE: _____ UNIT: _____ GRADE: _____ ACCOUNT: _____ D: NUMBER: _____ SIZE: _____ UNIT: _____ GRADE: _____ ACCOUNT: _____	APPLICANT NUMBER: 21	QUALITY & COND: FULL <input type="checkbox"/> HALF <input type="checkbox"/> COND: FULL <input type="checkbox"/> HALF <input type="checkbox"/> LOT BROK: _____ INSP BY: _____ Ass'd by: _____
<b>CARRIER or LOT IDENTIFICATION:</b> PREFIX: _____ NUMBER: _____ STATE: _____		<b>LOADING:</b> Loaded- LO _____ Ppty Unlded- PU _____ UNLOADED- UL _____ Lot Inspn.- LI <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>INSPECTION NOTESHEET</b> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE FRUIT & VEGETABLE DIVISION CERTIFICATE NUMBER: <b>EXAMPLE 3</b>	
Carrier or LOT IDENTIFICATION: _____ Additional Lot ID: _____ Carrier Type/ Name: _____		Inspection STARTED: m m d d y y Hour Min. A/P 0 6 1 3 1 6   0 8 : 3 0   A M		Inspection Completed: m m d d y y Hour Min. A/P 0 6 1 3 1 6   0 9 : 3 0   A M	
Refrigeration Unit: <input type="checkbox"/> ON <input type="checkbox"/> OFF Doors: <input type="checkbox"/> ON <input type="checkbox"/> OFF		APPLICANT: Luv Those Veggies		Address: Anywhere, U.S.A.	
Condition of Carrier: _____		SHIPPER: Fresh-Cut Produce		Address: Salinas, CA	
INSPECTION SITE: Applicant's Warehouse		BRANDS/MARKS:			
<b>A : PRODUCT:</b> Carrot Sticks NUMBER OF CONTAINERS: 100 Cartons INSP. COUNT: Y TEMPERATURES: 36-37°F		"Bunny Stix", 6x1 lb bags, marked Carrot Sticks			
<b>B : PRODUCT:</b> Mixed Vegetable Tray NUMBER OF CONTAINERS: 50 Cartons INSP. COUNT: Y TEMPERATURES: 38-40°F		"Party Veg"; Tray includes: Grape Tomatoes, Peeled Baby Carrots, Celery Sticks, Broccoli Florets; In Cartons: 2-5 lb Trays with 16 oz Veggie Dip.			
<b>C : PRODUCT:</b> _____ NUMBER OF CONTAINERS: _____ INSP. COUNT: _____ TEMPERATURES: _____		_____			
<b>D : PRODUCT:</b> _____ NUMBER OF CONTAINERS: _____ INSP. COUNT: _____ TEMPERATURES: _____		_____			
Condition of Load & Containers: ( X ) STACKED ON PALLETS AT ABOVE LOCATION ( ) INTACT THROUGH LOAD ( ) PARTLY UNLOADED					

FORM FV- 300-N (3-93)


**EXAMPLE 3: FV-300 NOTESHEET (BACK)**

A	B	C	D									
Pack: Sealed Bags	Pack: WF Trays	Pack: _____	Pack: _____									
Size: _____	Size: _____	Size: _____	Size: _____									
SCORESHEET												
PLI Number	Other I.D.	TEMP.	Sample	DK	Q	Brown Disc						
(A) None	062216	36	50	1	0	0						
None	062216	37	50	0	0	2						
None	062216	36	50	0	0	0						
				1/150	X	2/150	(affecting from 10 to 15% of the surface)					
				(-1)		(1)						
				Early Stages (0-2%)								
(B) None	062016	38	64	4 tom-bro.	0	5 tom						5
None	062116	40	64	3 Car, 2 tom	2	3 tom						4
None	062016	39	64	0	1 tom	4 tom						3
				0 to 4 pieces	0 to 2 pieces	3 to 5 pieces						12/192
				Avg 2 pieces	Avg 1 piece	Avg 4 pieces						(6)
				(Tom, Broc, Car)								
REMARKS / RESTRICTIONS / SPI												
Each lot:				Lot B:								
No Established U.S. Grade.				Tray Includes: Grape Tomatoes, Peeled Baby Carrots, Celery Sticks, Broccoli Florets								
				Sample Size: Contents of Vegetable Tray (not including dip)								
REMARKS / RESTRICTIONS / SPI												
CARLOT Basis:				REPORTED TO: Joe				INSPECTED BY:				
HOURLY Basis:				DATE: 6/13/16		TIME: 9:30 AM		I.M. Inspector				
TRAVEL Expenses:				REQUESTED BY: Joe		ASSISTED BY:						
EXPENSES:				DATE: 6/13/16		TIME: 8:00 AM						
EST. TOTAL:												

\*U.S. Government Printing Office: 1993 --339-136

Shipping Point and Market Inspection Instructions for Fresh-Cut Produce (September 2016)

# EXAMPLE 3: FV-300 CERTIFICATE



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

## INSPECTION CERTIFICATE

### EXAMPLE 3

Applicant: Luv Those Veggies  
Address: Anywhere, USA  
Shipper: Fresh-Cut Produce  
Address: Salinas, CA

CARRIER OR LOT IDENTIFICATION

Prefix: N O I D | State: L I | Additional Lot ID: |

Carrier/Lot ID Stated by: |

Carrier Type / Name: |

Refrigeration Unit: On Off | Doors: Open Closed |

Lot ID: 061316 | Number of Containers: 100 Cartons

Stickered: Use By 062216 | 50 Cartons

or Use By 062116 | with 16 oz veggie dip

LOT	TEMPERATURES	Product	Brand / Markings	Origin	Lot A:	Lot B:	Insp count
A.	36 to 37	Carrot Sticks	"Bunny Stix", 6-1 lb bags	C   A	Sample Size: 50 count		Y
B.	38 to 40	Mixed Vegetable Trays	"Party Veg", 2-5lb trays	O   T			Y
C.							
D.							

**OFFSIZE / DEFECTS**

A. 00 % No Quality Defects

01 % Brown Discoloration (Affecting from 10 to 15% of the surface)

-1 % Soft Rot

02 % Checksum

B. 06 % Total Defects Including: From 0 to 2 pieces average 1 piece per sample Quality (Scars) (affecting tomatoes only). From 3 to 5 Pieces average 4 pieces per sample Soft (affecting only tomatoes), from 0 to 4 pieces average 2 pieces per sample Decay/Soft Rot (mostly affecting tomatoes, many affecting broccoli, some affecting carrots) (Early Stages).

06 % Checksum

**OTHER**

Tray Includes: Grape Tomatoes, Peeled Baby Carrots, Celery Sticks, Broccoli Florets

Sample Size: Contents of Vegetable Tray (64 oz.)

GRADE: Lot A & B: No Established U.S. Grade

REMARKS:

Inspector's Signature: **I.M. Inspector**

Market Office: *Agribases, USA*

**ESTIMATED TOTAL**

Hourly Basis

WARNING: Any person who knowingly shall falsely make, issue, alter, forge, or counterfeit this certificate, or participate in any such actions, is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.

FORM FV-300 (10-90) Replaces FV-303 (4-89) and FV-306 (1-80) which are obsolete


Shipping Point and Market Inspection Instructions for Fresh-Cut Produce  
(September 2016)

## EXAMPLE 4: FV-300 FEIRS CERTIFICATE

USDA U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE http://FPBInspections.ams.usda.gov		INSPECTION CERTIFICATE EXAMPLE 4		
PAGE 1 of 1				
CARRIER or LOT ID: PO 233744	APPLICANT: (00000001)YUM YUM PRODUCE, ANYWHERE, US	REQUESTED: 8/8/2016 9:50 AM		
LOADING STATUS: UNLOAD	SHIPPER: EAT HEALTHY SOMewhere, US	STARTED: 8/8/2016 12:20 PM		
STATED BY: APPLICANT	MARKET OFFICE: ANYWHERE, US	COMPLETED: 8/8/2016 1:01 PM		
ADDITIONAL ID: NA	INSP SITE: APPLICANT'S STORE	PASSWORD FOR ONLINE ACCESS		
CARRIER TYPE: NA		A1BCD23EFGHI4JKL		
REFRIG UNIT: NA	DOORS: NA	ESTIMATED FEE:	\$ HOURLY	
REMARKS: 100 COUNT SAMPLES EXAMINED				
LOT A (QAC) - PEELED GARLIC				
TEMP: 42° to 45°F	INSP CT: YES	NUMBER OF CONTAINERS: 216 MASTER CARTON(S)	ORIGIN: CH	
MARKINGS:	BRAND: SO YUMMY MARKINGS: PRODUCT OF CHINA NET WT. 16 OZ. EAT HEALTHY INTERNATIONAL EVERYWHERE, US MASTER CARTON: FRESH PEELED GARLIC CONTAINS: 20 X 1 LB. GGN: 4050373713621			
PLI: NONE	OTHER ID:			
INJURY	DAM	SER DAM	V.S. DAM	OFFSIZE/DEFECTS
NA	0	NA	NA	QUALITY DEFECTS
NA	5	NA	NA	SUNKEN PITTED AREAS (2 to 10%)
NA	5	NA	NA	SURFACE MOLD (4 to 8%)
NA	7	NA	NA	DECAY (2 to 14%)
NA	17	NA	NA	CHECKSUM
GRADE:	NO ESTABLISHED U.S. GRADE.			
LOT DESC:	STAGES OF DECAY: MOSTLY MODERATE, MANY EARLY SUNKEN PITTED AREAS: AREA AFFECTED: 10 TO 25% OF SURFACE. SURFACE MOLD: AREA AFFECTED: 10 TO 25% OF SURFACE. TEMPERATURES(3): 45°F, 44°F, 42°F			
I, the undersigned, a duly authorized inspector of the United States Department of Agriculture, do hereby certify that at the request of the applicant and on the date indicated, samples of the herein described product were inspected and the quality and/or condition as shown by said samples were as herein stated.				
Warning: Any person who knowingly shall falsely make, issue, alter, forge, or counterfeit this certificate or participate in any such actions, is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. FORM FV-E300 (1.0.14.3)		Signature: 0000 - GREAT-INSPECTOR, IMA <i>Ima Great-Inspector</i>	Date: 8/8/2016	

Shipping Point and Market Inspection Instructions for Fresh-Cut Produce  
(September 2016)

## EXAMPLE 5: FV-300 FEIRS CERTIFICATE

		<b>U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE</b> <small>http://FPBInspections.ams.usda.gov</small>		<b>INSPECTION CERTIFICATE</b>		<b>EXAMPLE 5</b>	
				PAGE 1 of 1			
CARRIER or LOT ID: PO 663247		APPLICANT: (00000000)THE SALAD PALACE		REQUESTED: 1/4/2016		6:00 AM	
LOADING STATUS: UNLOADED		SOMEWHERE, VA		STARTED: 1/4/2016		7:41 AM	
STATED BY: APPLICANT		SHIPPER: THE SALAD KING		COMPLETED: 1/4/2016		9:02 AM	
ADDITIONAL ID: NA		ANYWHERE, CA		PASSWORD FOR ONLINE ACCESS			
CARRIER TYPE: NA		MARKET OFFICE: SOMEWHERE, VA		ABCDEFGHI1JKL2MN			
REFRIG UNIT: NA	DOORS: NA	INSP SITE: APPLICANT'S WAREHOUSE		ESTIMATED FEE:		<b>\$HOURLY</b>	
REMARKS: 225 GRAM SAMPLES EXAMINED							
<b>LOT A (CON) - SALAD MIX</b>							
TEMP: 31° to 44°F	INSP CT: YES	NUMBER OF CONTAINERS: 800 CARTON(S)				ORIGIN: CA	
MARKINGS: BRAND: KING'S FAVORITE MARKINGS: KING'S BEST GREENS, ELSEWHERE, CA, PRODUCE OF USA, NET WT 3 LBS							
PLI: NONE				OTHER ID: STICKERED: 011116			
INJURY	DAM	SER DAM	V.S. DAM	OFFSIZE/DEFECTS			
NA	14	NA	NA	TOTAL DEFECTS (0 to 21%)			
NA	14	NA	NA	CHECKSUM			
GRADE:							
LOT DESC: INSPECTION: RESTRICTED TO CONDITION ONLY AT APPLICANT'S REQUEST STAGES OF DECAY: MOSTLY ADVANCED, SOME EARLY, SOME MODERATE PACK: WELL FILLED IN BAGS PIECES AFFECTED BY DECAY: 8 TO 36 AVG 21 PIECES AFFECTED BY WILTED: 4 TO 10 AVG 6 PIECES AFFECTED BY YELLOW: 2 TO 16 AVG 6 TEMPERATURES(7): 37°F, 38°F, 44°F, 31°F, 31°F, 35°F, 32°F							
<small>I, the undersigned, a duly authorized inspector of the United States Department of Agriculture, do hereby certify that at the request of the applicant and on the date indicated, samples of the herein described product were inspected and the quality and/or condition as shown by said samples were as herein stated.</small>							
Warning: Any person who knowingly shall falsely make, issue, alter, forge, or counterfeit this certificate or participate in any such actions, is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. FORM FV-E300 (1.0.14.3)				Signature: 0000 - GADGET, INSPECTOR <i>I. Gadget</i>		Date: 1/4/2016	

Shipping Point and Market Inspection Instructions for Fresh-Cut Produce  
(September 2016)