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Agricultural Marketing Service

Specialty Crops Program

Specialty Crops Inspection Division

AIM Inspection Series

General Processed Procedures Manual

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General Processed Procedures Manual
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INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed for Specialty Crops Inspection Division (SCI) employees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Its purpose is to provide background information and guidelines to assist in the uniform inspection of processed fruit and vegetable commodities and in the performance of general inspection duties. The procedures contained in this manual are an integral part of Division services. If needed, contact your immediate supervisor for any situation not addressed in this manual.

This manual contains links to various internal and external sources of information. For inspection personnel without internet or intranet access, please contact your immediate supervisor to obtain hard copies of documents as needed.

GUIDE FOR ELECTRONIC USAGE

The AIM system of instructional manuals is available electronically in Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) at the following intranet address: https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMS-SCI/SitePages/Home.aspx.

When accessed electronically, AIM materials have hyperlinks and hypertext (visible as underlined blue text) available to the PDF user. Clicking on a hyperlink takes the reader to a web site with information relating to the subject. Hypertext links the reader to a different page within the current manual, or a different manual, with information relating to the subject. For example, the hypertext in the Table of Contents allows a reader to go directly to the section of interest in the manual by clicking on the section title.

PDF offers a variety of tools depending on the Adobe version the reader has. The newer the version, the more tools available. PDF documents are easily searchable for content within a document or within multiple documents. To learn about the variety of PDF search options:

- Click on the “Help” tab on the top of any page in Adobe Acrobat,
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- Type the word “Search” in the “Search” box, and click on the “Search” button,
- A series of options will become available,
- Click on the “Access Search Features” link and follow the instructions for the type of search you are interested in.

REGULATIONS

SCI provides an impartial, official inspection service for processed fruits and vegetables. Applicants may use this service to obtain inspections of any of these products in which they have a financial interest. The service is voluntary, self-supported, and is offered on a fee-for-service basis through the Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS), Specialty Crops Program (SCP).

The inspection service facilitates the orderly marketing of products in many respects. It helps the buyer or the seller to determine if the terms of contracts or purchase orders have been met. It helps establish loan values, and supplements in-plant quality control programs. Inspection helps in settling claims for damage incurred in transit or storage.

The Regulations in the publication at the following internet site contain the current rules that govern inspection and certification of processed products, including sampling, fees, sanitary requirements for approved plants, and related matters. These Regulations can be found within 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 52.

The following is to provide clarification of the regulations governing inspection and certification regarding the use of Approved Identification (7 CFR 52.53). The use of approved lot inspection id requires lot inspection be performed.

- The use of the grade shields depicted in 7 CFR 52.53(c) figures 5 & 6 and the "PACKED UNDER INSPECTION OF THE U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE" statement (with or without the shield) as depicted in figures 7 & 8, will only be used on product that is produced by a plant operating under USDA inspection service contracts when an in-plant inspector is present during processing, packaging, and packing.

- Except for product packed under the Quality Assurance Program (QAP), (See QAP Manual) any product that is produced without an in-plant inspector present during processing, packaging, and packing may only bear the marks covering lot inspection as depicted in 7 CFR 52.53(d) figures 11 through 14.

Example:

If a processing plant wants to use approved identification marks and has an inspector present during its first shift, but runs a second shift with no inspector present, the plant may use the approved marks depicted in 7 CFR 52.53(c) figures 5 through 8 for the product produced on first shift only. If the plant wishes to use approved identification marks on second shift product, the plant may only use the marks depicted in 7 CFR 52.53(d) figures 11 through 14. The use of any other approved identification mark on the second shift product is not permitted.

CORRESPONDENCE

All letterheads and memos produced locally should be reviewed by a supervisor before use. Correspondence directed to parties outside the Department must be cleared with the Officer-in-Charge before mailing.

Approved USDA/AMS/SCI letterhead for communications of any official nature should always be used, whether within the Department or to outside parties. Approved SCI letterhead may be found at the AIM Administration site/Writing Guidelines "Templates":
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMS-SCI/AIM/Lists/AdministrationProcedures/AllItems.aspx
Inspectors with USDA email can use this as an effective means of communication. In-plant inspectors may access this email through the plant's network and USDA's Virtual Private Network (VPN), if the plant agrees and the USDA activity meets USDA security requirements.

Correspondence to National Programs Mission Support (NPMS)

Group Email Inbox

Most non-sensitive messages to NPMS can be made to SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov. Be sure to encrypt messages containing Personal Identifiable Information (PII).

Envelopes and Packages

Envelopes and packages that are sent via Federal Express (FedEx) or United Parcel Service (UPS) common carrier service must be addressed as shown below:

USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program,
SCI Division,
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 1536 South Building, Stop 0240
Washington, DC 20250-0240
202-720-5870
Attention: XXXXXXX

Refer to the applicable sections in the USDA Purchases Manual or Operational Rations Inspection Manual for instructions on marking shipping cases for review samples under USDA commodity purchase programs and operational rations.

Confidential Correspondence

Envelopes containing correspondence of a confidential nature must be opened only by the addressee, and be identified as follows:

FOR THE PERSONAL ATTENTION OF
or

TO BE OPENED BY ADDRESSEE ONLY

These statements are to be used only when mailing information that calls for confidentiality, such as employee data subject to the privacy act, or material of a sensitive nature.

Courtesy Copies

Distribution of courtesy copies must be based on the originating location. Use the following guide:

A. Regional Operations Branch Offices

A copy of all electronic correspondence that concerns policy or procedure, or other subjects that may have an effect on SCI programs must be forwarded to National Programs Mission Support via SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov.

B. Field Offices

1. A copy to the Regional Operations Branch office in the sending and receiving area, if applicable.

2. When appropriate, a copy to the Associate Director of Field Operations and Regional Operations Branch office.

"When appropriate" refers to items of a sensitive nature, such as correspondence related to personnel issues, or briefs that pertain to industry representatives, trade associations, the news media, or other governmental agencies. Material of this nature must not be released unless it has been cleared by the Regional Operations Branch Chief.

C. Inspection Points and Plant Inspectors

1. A copy to the Area office.

2. When appropriate, a copy to the Associate Director of Field Operations and Regional Operations Branch office.

Correspondence or Samples Shipped by FedEx or UPS

A. Delivery by Special Carrier

When sending correspondence to National Programs Mission Support that must be delivered overnight, or when shipping packages of canned or frozen review samples that are handled by any express company such as FedEx or UPS use:

USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program,
SCI Division,
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 1536 South Building, Stop 0240
Washington, DC 20250-0240
202-720-5870

Refer to the applicable sections in the Inspections for Operational Rations Purchased by the Department of Defense Manual, or USDA Purchases Manual for instructions on marking shipping cases for review samples under Operational Rations Section and USDA inspection programs.

B. Samples Submitted for Special Review

Duplicate sample units must be drawn for the Area Office and Regional Operations Branch offices when submitting samples to NPMS for evaluation of quality factors. Inspectors must complete three score sheets/tally sheets, including the reason for submission on the inspection document. Send one copy of the applicable score/tally sheet with the sample(s) to NPMS, and similar sets to the Area Office and Regional Operations Branch offices. Product evaluation results must be returned through the Regional Operations Branch office.

When sending samples for special review, mark the shipping case SPECIAL REVIEW, and notify the appropriate individual via email of the approximate delivery date. This should prevent any delay in evaluation.

C. Samples for National Programs Mission Support

Samples submitted for NPMS purposes are usually requested by a NPMS staff member. A memo should be enclosed with the sample or email forwarded to indicate the purpose for submitting the sample, and the shipping case should be marked to the attention of requesting NPMS staff member.

GENERAL INSPECTION

Initial Grading Procedures

The order of examination for quality, analytical, and microanalyses is much the same for most products. Generally, factors that are affected by exposure to the air are evaluated first, such as color. For some products such as jams, jellies, and applesauce, consistency is the first consideration.

Another general rule is to make the physical and organoleptic examination before analytical and micro tests, cooking, or any other tests that do not require the product to be intact or that would not be affected by the results of other testing. Familiarity with the product, its grade standard, and any additional grading instructions is essential in starting grading procedures.

The color factor is more critical in some products such as mushrooms and sweet potatoes, but in all cases, there is a tendency for product to become dull and somewhat darkened on exposure to air. Color should be evaluated as soon as possible after the container is opened.

After obtaining net weights, be alert for any abnormal product or container characteristics upon opening containers such as:

A. In the case of dried fruits, look for darkening, sugaring, etc.

B. For jams and jellies, check for mold in the head space area. In low moisture fruits and fruit juice crystals (or powder), look for "caking."

C. For frozen product, look for abnormal appearance, color and/or odor. Observe amount of frost, ice crystals, layer of ice, dehydration, shattered or broken units (as in broccoli and asparagus).

D. For canned product, look for darkening in the head space area, particularly, with light colored products such as applesauce.

E. Visually check the head space of canned fruits and vegetables. Often the actual measurement is unnecessary since the can is obviously filled to more than 90 percent of its capacity. As a general rule, check the headspace of any sample units that have a low net weight, or appear to have a low content level. This is done easily with a head space gauge.

F. After emptying cans to determine fill of container and/or drained weight, check metal cans for internal defects such as severe detinning or rust.

Determining Net Weight or Net Contents

Definitions

- **Gross weight** – The weight of the packaged unit including both the contents and the primary container.

- **Tare or tare weight** – The weight of the empty, clean, dry primary container in which the food is packaged.

- **Net weight** – The difference between the gross weight and the tare weight. It is the weight of the food itself, including any packing medium.

Scales

Scale accuracy and sensitivity to one tenth of an ounce is adequate for most grading purposes. In some instances, greater sensitivity may be necessary. For example, it may be necessary to weigh

small packages in gram units rather than ounces. Individual procedures for specific products must incorporate such requirements.

Check scales frequently to verify that they are accurate and in proper working order. A standardized weight or set of calibrated weights may be used for this purpose. These weights must be kept clean and damage free, and not used for routine weighing operations.

Rules for Reading Scales

Electronic Scale Tares – Electronic scales can zero tare weights exactly.

Mechanical Scale Tares – If using a mechanical scale, read to the higher mark. For example, if the scale is graduated in tenths of an ounce and the weight of the tare can is between 1.3 and 1.4 ounces, read the weight as 1.4 ounces.

When the tare has been established, the tare bar may be adjusted accordingly, and the net weights can be read directly. If there is no predetermined tare, take gross weights first and determine the tare weight after containers are empty, clean, and dry. Record net weight by subtracting the tare weight from the gross weight.

Gross, Net, and Drained Weight – Read to the lower mark. For example, if the scale is graduated in tenths of an ounce and if a package of asparagus weights between 10.3 and 10.4 ounces, read as 10.3 ounces.

Taking Net Weights

Place containers on the scale in the center of the pan for an accurate reading. If there is any residue on the containers such as frost on the exterior surfaces of frozen food packages, remove such material before weighing.

Measuring Net Contents

When the product is fluid in nature, use one of the following methods to determine net contents or volume.

A. Convert Net Weight to Fluid Ounces

After determining net weights as indicated above, convert to a volume measurement with the following formula:

$$Fill\ or\ Net\ Contents\ (fl.oz) = \frac{Net\ Weight\ (oz.)\ x\ 0.9614}{Specific\ Gravity\ @\ 20\ degrees\ C}$$

Example: Tomato Juice No. 3 cylinder

Net Weight: 49.2 ounces.

Refractive Index (20 degrees C): 1.3415 (See Technical Procedures Manual, Sucrose Conversion Table to obtain Specific Gravity). Specific Gravity from table: 1.02289.

$$Fill\ or\ Net\ Contents\ (fl.oz) = \frac{49.2\ x\ 0.9614}{1.02289} = \frac{47.3}{1.02289} = 46.24\ fl\ oz.$$

B. Measuring Flask

Glass flasks are available that are accurately calibrated for measuring volume of liquids. The flask is calibrated for volume of a liquid at a standard temperature, usually 20 degrees C. The legend is etched on each flask. The fluid product being measured must be at this temperature for accuracy. It is also important to avoid incorporating air into the liquid when filling the flask. To do so, always pour the liquid slowly down the side of the flask. Heavier products such as tomato juice, nectars, etc., must stand after filling the flask to permit any trapped air to escape.

Determining Tare Weight

These procedures apply to all types of primary containers such as cans, glass, fiber, etc., except polyethylene or other thin plastic film when the weight of the primary container is quite uniform and is a very small percentage of the total gross weight. In such uniform lightweight polybags, a single bag from the lot may be used as the tare.

When the tare involves cartons, the liquid from frozen products (such as frozen sliced strawberries) soak into the fiber during the freezing period. Rather than using new or air-dried cartons, use soaked cartons wiped with a dry towel to determine the tare for such a lot.

Field Office Procedures, Option 1 – Average Tare

Wash, dry, and weigh 3 empty containers from the lot. Subtract the smallest weight from the largest. Using this number, determine the minimum total number of containers to be weighed for the tare according to the table below. The larger the variations between containers the more samples are needed to determine the average tare for the lot.

Range of First Three Container Weights (Ounces)	Range of First Three Container Weights (Grams)	Minimum Number of Containers Needed to Determine Tare
0 to .10	0 to 2.83	3
.11 to .20	2.84 to 5.67	6
.21 to .25	5.68 to 7.08	9
.26 to .30	7.09 to 8.50	15
.31 to .35	8.51 to 9.92	20
.36 or greater	9.93 or greater	25

Field Office Procedures, Option 2 – Two Heaviest

If it is impractical or impossible to weigh the number of containers called for in the above table, or if the applicant desires, use the average weight of the 2 heaviest of the 3 containers as the tare.

In-Plant Inspection, Option 1 – Average Tare

Select at random 15 empty containers and lids, and weigh them (collectively, if possible). Use the average weight from these 15 containers as the tare. Make this tare determination at least once per day, normally early in the shift and again at any time there is a change in the supply of containers.

In-Plant Inspection, Option 2 – Pre-weighed Tare

Weigh the tare containers and mark these containers with their respective weights; or identify the containers with the tare weight recorded on the worksheet. Pass these pre-weighed tare containers through the filler and capture them after a point where there is no further chance to alter the fill. Subtract the appropriate tare weight from the gross weight to determine the net weight of each container.

In-Plant Inspection, Option 3 – Heaviest Tare

In some instances, the plant may wish to use the heaviest of the 15 weighed cans as tare. Or if in line control is based on subgroups of, for example 5 cans, the heaviest of the 5 may be used as the tare. This option should only be used when the plant requests such restrictive control.

Determining Drained Weight

Drained Weight (DWT) Determination

1. Tare a dry, empty 8 mesh sieve (except use a 2-mesh sieve for Canned Tomatoes). Use the 8-inch diameter sieve for smaller capacity containers, and the 12-inch diameter sieve for larger containers.

2. Rest one edge of the tared sieve on the side of a grading tray approximately 2 ½ inches deep. This must produce a sieve slope angle of about 15 to 17 degrees.

3. Distribute the product evenly on the screen, except for canned spinach which is not spread on the screen.

4. Drain for two minutes without disturbing the product, except to invert halves of fruit that are obviously holding pockets of syrup.

5. At the end of two minutes, place the sieve on the scale and read the drained weight directly.

To expedite grading and examination of the product, it is ideal to have several sieves standardized to a particular weight. This can be done through careful selection of sieves, and the addition of solder or stainless-steel washers and wire to increase the lighter sieves to the weight of the heaviest. By using a single tare on the scale, standardized sieve weights will allow multiple drained weight samples to be weighed sequentially at the end of the two-minute draining period.

Do not re-tare the sieves after the first weighing. Any slight residue remaining on the mesh is considered a part of drained weight. Re-taring the sieve would offset this small increment of weight. However, the sieve should be washed if there is excessive build-up of material and syrup. This is often seen when draining Canned Apples, for example.

Washed Drained Weight (WDWT) Determination

If washed drained weight is required, then it must be performed and calculated using the same sample that was used for the drained weight determination.

1. After determining the DWT, Carefully pour the DWT contents from the sieve into a flat-bottom 2.5-inch-deep container.

2. Add a minimum of three times the original can's volume of 20 to 22°C (68 to 72°F) water into that container to cover the contents (may be accomplished one can of water at a time if can is a No.10).

3. Agitate the contents and water to remove the sauce and separate the commodity.

4. Pour the contents into a previously tared 12 or 18 inch diameter (as appropriate for can volume) U.S. Standard No. 8 sieve in a manner that will distribute product over the sieve without breaking the commodity. Sieve area will be such that the distributed product does not completely cover all the openings of the sieve.

5. Tilt the sieve to an approximately 20-degree angle and allow to drain for two minutes into an empty flat-bottomed container.

6. At the end of two minutes, place the tared sieve containing the product on the scale and read and record its tared sieve weight.

7. To calculate the WDWT, divide the tared sieve weight by the original DWT. Multiply the results of this calculation by 100 for the percentage WDWT.

8. The washed drained weight will be reported to the nearest whole percentage.

Grade or Compliance Determination

When inspection for quality is based on any U.S. grade standard with a scoring system, there is an allowance for samples that fall below the quality of the indicated grade. Lot sizes range from 3 sample units to 29 sample units, based on the type of containers and the size of the lot. Apply the following acceptance numbers (the number of sample units that may fall outside the indicated grade). If these numbers are not exceeded, the lot as a whole can meet the grade (see Sampling Manual).

Lot Inspection

Sample Size (Number of Sample Units)	**3**	**6**	**13**	**21**	**29**
Acceptance Number[1]	0	1	2	3	4

[1] Indicates the number of grade deviants allowed for the sample size of the lot.

On-Line In-Plant Inspection

Sample Size (Number of Sample Units)	**3**	**6**	**13**	**21**
Acceptance Number[2]	0	1	2	3

[2] Indicates the number of grade deviants allowed for the sample size of the lot.

However, there are other considerations before a final grade for a lot can be determined. See bulleted list below.

The Regulations, 7 CFR 52.13, states in part: "Inspection service shall be performed on the basis of the appropriate United States standards for grades of processed products, Federal, Military, Veterans Administration or other government agency specifications, written contract

specifications, or any written specification or instruction which is approved by the Administrator."

Unless otherwise approved by the Administrator, compliance with such grade standards, specifications, or instructions must be determined by evaluating the product, or sample, in accordance with the requirements of such standards, specifications or instructions: Provided, that when inspection for quality is based on any U.S. grade standard which contains a scoring system, the grade to be assigned to a lot is the grade indicated by the average of the total of the scores of the respective sample units: *Provided further*, That –

A. Such sample complies with the applicable standards of quality promulgated under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act;

B. Such sample complies with the product description;

C. Such sample meets the indicated grade with respect to factors of quality which are not rated by score points; and

D. With respect to those factors of quality which are rated by score points, each of the following requirements is met:

1. None of the sample units falls more than one grade below the indicated grade because of any quality factor to which a limiting rule applies,

2. None of the sample units falls more than 4 score points below the minimum total score for the indicated grade, and

3. The number of deviants does not exceed the applicable acceptance number indicated in the sampling plans contained in 7 CFR § 52.38 ("deviants," as used in this paragraph, means sample units that fall into the next grade below the indicated grade but do not score more than 4 points below the minimum total score for the indicated grade).

E. If any of the provisions contained in paragraphs (b) (3) and (4) of 7 CFR § 52.13 are not met, the grade is determined by considering such provisions in connection with lower grades in succession until the grade of the lot, if assignable, is established; and

F. When it is determined that a portion of a lot bearing a particular identification mark is of lower quality or deficient in other factors, the grade or compliance of the lot must be no higher than that of the portion bearing the particular identification mark.

The Regulations also state in 7 CFR § 52.38 that: Except as otherwise provided for in this section in connection with in-plant inspection and unless otherwise approved by the Administrator, samples must be selected from each lot in the exact number of sample units indicated for the lot size in the applicable sampling plans. The lot size is to correspond to a sample size with a maximum of 29 sample units: Provided, that at the discretion of the

inspection service, the number of sample units selected may be increased to the exact number of sample units indicated for any one of the larger sample sizes provided for in the appropriate plans. The samples size may be increased beyond 29 sample units in accordance with the following sampling plan:

Sample Size	38	48	60
Acceptance Number	5	6	7

Deviants/Worse than Deviants

Multiple Deviants on a Single Sample Unit

Many U.S. Standards provide allowance for several kinds of deviations within a single quality factor. Related deviations on a single unit should be counted only once. Unrelated deviations should be counted for each deviation. This procedure should be followed whether the product has a score point or an attribute standard.

Examples:

- Related defects ("off-suture" and "partially detached piece") on a single peach half: Count the unit against partially detached pieces. Don't count the unit again under off-suture.

- Unrelated defects ("off-suture" and "poor color") on a single peach half: Count the half twice, against both off-suture and poor color.

Administrative Allowances for "Worse than Deviants"

This instruction outlines SCI policy of accepting "worse than deviants" for quality. This does not apply to sample units containing foreign material Grade Not Certified. The Division Regulations do not provide any tolerance or acceptance criteria to cover sample units that are "worse than deviants". However, administrative discretion permits an infrequent occurrence of a sample unit that is "worse than a deviant" with respect to quality factors.

A. "Worse than Deviant" Allowance

An infrequent sample unit – 1 in 48 – will be permitted to be "worse than deviant."

A sample size of 48 is not typically graded during in-plant inspection, and the maximum sample size for lot inspection is 29. So, a "worse than a deviant" would not be acceptable under normal circumstances. However, the applicant may request that additional samples be drawn from the lot to make up to 48 samples. If these additional samples contain no further "worse than deviant" units, the lot is considered acceptable.

B. Application of Allowance

If a lot meets the 1 in 48 infrequent occurrence criteria, the offending factor is scored at the lower limit permitted for a deviant for the grade and included with other deviants for lot acceptance and certification.

Example:

If a sample unit in a Grade "A" lot is "Substandard" account maturity, it is considered a "worse than deviant." If a total of 48 units are graded and contain no additional "worse than deviant" samples, the offending sample unit is scored at the lower limit of the Grade B range for maturity and included with other deviants for lot acceptance and certification.

C. Segregation and Re-inspection

1. In-Plant

If an item fails by having two or more sample units in 48 that are "worse than deviants," the packer may segregate the lot and offer it for re-inspection if:

a. It is consecutive production not containing any "worse than deviants" and

b. The portion is separately identified by sub-code from any portions containing "worse than deviants" or

c. It is a sub-code with only one "worse than deviant."

Example:

21 sample units were graded from a product consisting of 8 sub-codes. The item fails because it contains a "worse than deviant" in sub-code 7.

If the applicant requests, a total of 48 samples may be graded. If no additional "worse than deviants" are found, the lot is accepted.

If another "worse than deviant" is found in the additional sample units, for example in sub-code 2, the lot fails, but may be segregated and re-inspected as follows:

Assume 6 sample units have been graded from each sub-code.

- No sub-codes may be passed without further examination.
- Sub-codes 3, 4, 5, and 6 may be combined per 1.a. and b. above. Twenty-four more sample units (to total 48) from these four codes must be graded.

- Since they are not consecutive sub-codes per 1.a. above, 1 and 8 must be examined separately, with an additional 42 sample units checked from each sub-code.

- Sub-codes 2 and 7 must also be examined separately, each with an additional 42 sample units graded. No additional "worse than deviant" is permitted in either of the two codes.

2. Lot Inspection

If a lot fails by having 2 or more sample units in 48 that are "worse than deviant," the applicant may segregate the lot and offer it for re-inspection if:

a. It consists of code marks not containing any "worse than deviants," or

b. It is a code mark with only one "worse than deviant."

Example:

21 sample units were graded from a lot consisting of 6 code marks. The lot fails because one "worse than deviant" is found in code A.

If the applicant requests, a total of 48 samples may be graded. If no additional "worse than deviants" are found, the lot is accepted.

If any additional "worse than deviants" are found in the 27 additional sample units (for example, one in code A and one in code C), the lot fails, but may be segregated and re-inspected as follows:

Assume 8 sample units have been graded from each code.

- No codes may be passed without further examination.

- Codes B, D, E, and F may be combined per 2.a. above. Sixteen more sample units (to total 48) from the 4 codes must be graded.

- Code C must be examined separately with an additional 40 sample units graded. No additional "worse than deviants" are permitted.

- Code A may not be re-inspected, as it already has 2 "worse than deviants" in 48 sample units.

Scoring Individual Quality Factors

Most score point grade standards evaluate and score each quality factor independently. Some of these factors are closely related. Most attributes grade standards evaluate the quality factors collectively. However, some factors (e.g., color in frozen field peas) are set to separate sampling plans in attribute standards.

Unless otherwise cited in the standards or inspection instructions, evaluate each quality factor without consideration of other quality factors.

Alien Vegetables

The following guidelines provide for the uniform classification of small units of "alien" vegetables (e.g., diced turnips in diced carrots, corn in peas, lima beans in speckled butter beans, etc.) when accidentally included with other vegetables.

The standard sample unit size will be 10 ounces (284 grams), or multiples of 10 ounces. If multiples are used, divide the number of 10-ounce increments to obtain the average number of "alien" units per 10-ounces.

Unless the U.S. Standards for Grades provide for "dissimilar varieties" (e.g., frozen field peas and frozen black-eyed peas), classify each offending alien unit as minor, major, or severe.

Minor – Similar in size, shape, and color, such as lima beans in butter beans, chopped kale in chopped collards, diced parsnips in diced turnips.

Major – Similar in size and shape, but different in color, such as diced carrots in diced turnips, lima beans in speckled butter beans.

Severe – Different in size, shape, or color, such as corn in peas, diced carrots in cut green beans, black-eyed peas in lima beans.

Acceptance Criteria of Alien Vegetables in Products

Products that contain alien vegetables will be considered as meeting the labeled component(s) if all the allowances in the U.S. Standards for Grades (if any) are satisfied, and the tolerances in the table below are met.

Alien Vegetables Classification	Average Number per 10 Ounces
Total (Minor + Major + Severe)	6
Major	2
Severe	1

Inspection Procedures for Fruit Concentrates, Nectars, and Purees

This instruction provides general guidelines for the uniform inspection of fruit concentrates, nectars, and purees. Similar techniques may also be applied to vegetable purees, which may not be covered by a U.S. Standards for Grades. However, there are Commercial Item Descriptions (CIDs) that have established salient characteristics and product requirements related to these products. CIDs may be found on the AMS web site at the following internet address: https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cids.

Definitions

- **Fruit Concentrate** – Pulped and/or chopped fruit from which a substantial portion of the water has been removed. The Brix reading of the product is at least two times that of the juice of the fruit.

- **Fruit Nectar** – A pulpy fruit drink prepared by blending fruit juice and/or pureed fruit pulp or whole fruit equivalent with water or syrup to a specified fruit content by weight, usually in the range of one-half by weight of fruit pulp.

- **Fruit Puree** – Pulped and screened fruit which may or may not have a portion of the water removed. The Brix reading of the product is usually less than two times that of the juice of the fruit.

In-Plant Inspection of Raw Materials

Observe the quality and condition of the raw product used to prepare the finished product. Good initial product wholesomeness should lead to good, processed product wholesomeness.

Observe the effectiveness of the washing process in removing dirt and other loose material, and the effectiveness of the trimming and removal of decayed and unsound fruit. Report any deficiencies to the appropriate plant contact person.

Non-Quality Factors

A. Fill of Container

Be sure to measure the headspace of any containers with low net contents to determine if they meet the recommended headspace allowance.

B. Brix or Refractive Index

Determine the refractive index on all quality samples.

C. Total Acidity

The total acidity (ascorbic acid/anhydrous citric acid) may be important to the end user. When total acidity is determined for concentrates and purees, express the result as wt./wt.; when determined for nectars, express the result as wt./vol.

Quality Factors

A. Color

Determine the factor for color on the finished product.

1. Color Evaluation Procedure

Finished Product	Procedure
Nectars	Pour a well-mixed aliquot into a 1¼"-1½" diameter glass cylinder for color evaluation.
Concentrates and Purees	Dilute sample to same Brix used for defect determination. Pour a diluted aliquot into a 1¼"-1½" diameter glass cylinder. Consider both the diluted aliquot and the finished product when making color determination.

2. Definitions

- **Good color** – The color is bright and typical is free from any slight brown or dull color due to oxidation, scorching, or other causes.

  Color descriptions for "Good" color (also see applicable CIDs for color):

Product	Color Descriptions for "Good" Color
Apricot	A bright orange color, free from brown cast.
Peach	A bright orange color ranging from light yellow to orange-yellow, free from any material dullness or green tinge.
Pear	A color ranging from yellow white to beige white. A slight dull tinge is typical. The color will be free from any material dullness or dark cream tinge.
Apple	A color ranging from a whitish to a golden yellow or may show a slight green tinge characteristic of the variety. A good color is normally slightly translucent and shiny.

- **Fairly good color** – The color is typical and may have a slight brown color due to oxidation or may be slightly dull.

- **Poor color** – The product is off color for any reason.

B. Defects

1. Sample Size

Defects in these products usually originate in the fruit pulp. They may be caused by poor trimming of the fruit, or from faulty machinery such as broken screens, or improperly set brushes or paddles in the finishers. Other defects such as dark specks may come from burned coils or improperly cleaned tanks or machinery.

For all nectars, use a 200-gram sample of the finished product for defect determination. For all concentrates and purees, use a 100-gram sample after dilution to the following Brix level for defect determination.

Product	Brix Level Dilution
Apple	14.0 ± 0.5 degree brix
Apricot	14.5 ± 0.5 degree brix
Nectarine	11.0 ± 0.5 degree brix
Peach	11.0 ± 0.5 degree brix
Pear	13.5 ± 0.5 degree brix
Prune	19.0 ± 0.5 degree brix

2. Evaluation

Pour the sample into an approximately 12x19 inch large, shallow, white bottom tray, and spread the material evenly over the bottom surface. Use the table below as a guide to evaluating defects.

Defects	Practically Free[3]	Reasonably Free[4]
Particles of pit exceeding $^1/_{16}$ inch in greatest dimension	1	3
Dark specks exceeding $^1/_{16}$ but not $^1/_8$ inch in greatest dimension	1	4
Dark specks exceeding $^1/_8$ but not $^1/_4$ inch in greatest dimension	0	1

Defects	Practically Free[3]	Reasonably Free[4]
Total of above, plus dark specks $^{1}/_{32}$ to $^{1}/_{16}$ inch, light specks exceeding $^{1}/_{32}$ inch, and particles of pit $^{1}/_{16}$ inch or less	12	36

[3] Total of above, plus any other defects that do not materially affect appearance.
[4] Total of above, plus any other defects that do not seriously affect appearance.

C. Flavor and Odor

Good flavor and odor mean that the finished product will have a normal flavor and odor, characteristic of ripe and properly processed fruit, and will be free from any objectionable flavors and odors including traces of bitter or immature flavor.

Analysis

Prepare the sample for mold analysis in accordance with instructions in the Foreign Material Manual.

Products Packed with Sauce, Garnish, or Seasonings

The following guidance apply to U.S. Standards for commodities which have added sauce, garnish, or seasonings, whether or not specifically mentioned in the standard. The same principles apply to all methods of processing.

Examples:

- Frozen Peas with Petite Onions
- Frozen Broccoli with Cheese Sauce
- Canned Asparagus with Butter Sauce

Because the U.S. Standards do not generally include sauces and garnishes as a part of product description, misunderstandings have led to incorrect certification of such products as No Applicable Grade (NAG).

Policy

SCI considers the U.S. Standards for the principal item as applicable to those products packed "with" or "in" or "seasoned with" another ingredient. Consider the U.S. Standards for both items as applicable to those products packed "and" another ingredient.

Example 1:

For "Frozen Peas with Onions" the primary ingredient would be considered peas, and the U. S. Standards for Frozen Peas would be applicable. Onions would be considered a garnish.

Example 2:

For "Canned Peas and Onions" the product is considered a "mixture" of two principal items packed together. In this case, each component should be graded on its applicable standard. In this example, the product would be certified as:

PRODUCT: CANNED PEAS AND ONIONS

GRADE: PEAS – U. S. GRADE A or U. S. FANCY
ONIONS – U. S. GRADE B or U. S. EXTRA STANDARD

Inspection Procedure

It may be difficult to grade certain products because of the presence of a sauce, seasoning or garnish. In general, these should be removed by washing and draining from the main product prior to grading. Then the principal ingredient can be evaluated in accordance with its U.S. Standard. Observing the quality of various ingredients prior to mixing can be helpful under in-plant inspection.

Consideration should be given to the effect of the garnish or seasoning on the appearance and eating quality of the end item. For example, if lima beans are packed in butter sauce that has a rancid flavor which carries over into the end product, certify the product as substandard.

Example:

GRADE: SUBSTANDARD account off-flavor (rancid flavor in butter sauce)

Some sauces may contribute a flavor that one inspector finds distasteful, such as a pungent or sharp cheese sauce. This would be normal for the particular sauce and should not be "flagged" because of the inspector's personal likes or dislikes.

Official Marks

Grade labeling and use of official marks on products considered to be covered by the applicable U. S. Standard for the principal ingredient is permitted.

Those using official marks on such products need to furnish SCI with some indication that the ingredients used are wholesome and of good quality. Under in-plant inspection, it is frequently possible for the inspector to verify that the in-going ingredient is of acceptable quality. In some instances, it may be necessary to secure a grading certificate or other official document from

another commodity program (e.g. Dairy) indicating that the added ingredient is a wholesome product.

Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

The Emerson Act is Public Law 104 – 210. By giving the Act the full force and effect of law, it serves to encourage the donation of food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations for distribution to the needy. The full text of the Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act may be found at the following internet address: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ210/html/PLAW-104publ210.htm.

Disposition of Samples

SCI employees must exercise ethical standards and proper conduct in the disposition of samples of processed products. Failure to comply with product disposition procedures as described in these instructions may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Under no circumstance will any SCI employee be permitted to remove any product for personal use from any processing plant, grading office, inspection point, or from any other site where official grading is performed. This includes product from containers that have been opened as well as product from unopened containers.

The Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Fruits and Vegetables and Related Products found in 7 CFR 52.12 states "Any sample of a processed product that has been used for inspection may be returned to the applicant, at his request and expense; otherwise it shall be destroyed or disposed of to a charitable institution."

The Area Office Officer-in-Charge will make sure that all product is returned to the applicant or disposed of in accordance with SCI policy. A product disposition log will be established for all grading sites when product samples are returned to the applicant or donated to a charitable organization. Documentation showing the donation receiver is a nonprofit organization will be kept on file. Product disposition records will be maintained for a period of three years.

The product disposition log may consist of entries made in a spiral notebook, on sheets of paper in a 3-ring binder or in a similar electronic document. The log will name the grading site and must include the following:

- Date product returned/donated;
- Product (example: canned green beans);
- Quantity (example: 6 cases – various size containers);
- Name of organization receiving samples; and

- Signature of individual accepting the samples.

Contact your supervisor with any questions regarding the procedure for recording the disposition of samples or the method used to dispose of samples. An example guide is shown below.

Donated/Returned Product Disposition Log – EXAMPLE

Date	Product	Quantity	Organization Receiving Samples	Signature of Receiving Individual

IN-PLANT INSPECTION

In-plant inspection is the term applied to the type of inspection service in which a USDA inspector is assigned to a specific plant. The inspector will establish the grade and condition of all relevant products and performs other duties as required or by administrative approval of SCI.

Types of In-Plant Inspection

In-plant inspection is further designated as either Continuous Inspection (Type 1 or 2) or Pack Certification.

The Quality Assurance Program is a separate inspection program. See the QAP Manual for QAP specific information.

Continuous Inspection – Type I

Continuous Inspection (Type 1) is the type of in-plant inspection in which an inspector is stationed in the plant during all stages of food preparation and processing, during any re-packing operations, and during any operations which will remove or change the original code placed on containers (e.g., re-labeling frozen products when the code is perforated in the label). Aside from product grading and certification, in-plant duties include:

- Monitoring the plant's Sanitation Standard Operating Procedure (SSOP) to assure the sanitation policies are satisfactory and executed effectively;
- Case stamping, checkloading, and/or condition of container when requested by the management for certification;
- If removal of "Approved Identification" marks is required, verify their removal from container labels.

Plant-Assisted Continuous Inspection (PAC) or Continuous Inspection – Type II

The PAC program (also known as Type 2 Continuous Inspection) is a voluntary program designed to give facilities under continuous inspection an alternative means of utilizing SCI personnel. The PAC program requires that at least one SCI inspector be present in a facility whenever the facility is running. In this respect, it is the same as Type 1 Continuous Inspection. However, PAC is designed to utilize plant-supplied personnel to perform certain inspection duties while under the direction of SCI personnel.

SCI inspectors are assigned to processing facilities with continuous year-round, in-plant contracts after the plant meets the Plant Survey requirements listed in the Regulations, 7 CFR 52.81. A SCI Plant Systems Audit is acceptable in lieu of the SCI Plant Survey for the PAC program. This program will enable a processor to use SCI in-plant inspection procedures, sampling plans, instructions, and acceptance and rejection criteria. Designated grade marks and the "OFFICIALLY SAMPLED" stamp may also be used.

A. Guidelines for Development of a PAC Program

1. Letter Agreement

SCI and Plant management establish a mutual agreement on plant assigned personnel and their duties. This agreement will detail the assigned plant personnel's specific job requirements and responsibilities while under SCI direction. The details will be outlined in a signed Letter Agreement, which will be maintained on file by SCI. The original will be filed at the plant, and a copy filed at both the Area Office and the Regional Field Operations Branch.

A Letter Agreement (See Appendix II – Letter Agreement) will be prepared for the signature of the SCI OIC and plant management. This will show the name of each plant employee assigned to assist the SCI inspector, and each employee's job function(s) under PAC. An example of an acceptable Letter Agreement is shown below. The tasks contained in the Letter Agreement will indicate a brief description of the job function. The task may be unique to the operation in a specific plant and for a particular product. Tasks for a plant employee assigned to assist the SCI inspector in sampling and other routine tasks may include but are not limited to the following:

- Start of shift and during shift:
    - Sanitize equipment (food contact surfaces).
    - Draw samples from lines per SCI instructions.
    - Records time sample is drawn and container code mark.
    - Determines and records net weight of each container.
    - Records vacuum and quality score point values as directed.
    - Prepares sample for mold count as directed.
- End of shift:
    - Cleans laboratory and grading equipment.
    - Sanitize food contact surfaces.

The SCI OIC will file the original Letter Agreement with the in-plant contract and provide a copy to the Area Office and to plant management. The Letter Agreement must be updated whenever a plant employee not listed on the document is trained and assigned a task to assist the Inspector-in-Charge (IIC).

2. Training

The plant provides employees with the basic training necessary to perform their job responsibilities.

SCI will train and test plant personnel on performing specific tasks according to guidelines in SCI instructions and procedures. The results of the training and testing program will be used to evaluate the plant employee's performance and competency. We then designate which job functions the plant employee may perform.

We work alongside plant employees to assure satisfactory completion of assigned duties. We provide feedback to employees' supervisors and may provide plant employees with additional training.

We maintain records on plant personnel participating in the program and inform plant management if a plant employee demonstrates unacceptable performance.

Plant management may select another employee to perform required tasks, and we will assist with training of the new employee. The Letter Agreement will be updated with the new employee's name and his or her assigned tasks.

3. Reporting Performance

If the performance of a plant employee assigned to assist SCI under a Letter Agreement is satisfactory, the IIC can inform plant management verbally. For any occasion that plant employee performance is unacceptable, plant management should be notified in writing. A memorandum should be prepared stating the name of the employee, the task(s) that the employee is assigned to perform, and deficiencies in the employee's performance of a particular task.

Recommendations for achieving acceptable performance, such as additional training, should be included. If it is necessary to remove the employee from an area, the Letter Agreement should be revised immediately to remove the employee, and a courtesy copy of the revised Letter Agreement sent to the OIC. If plant officials refuse to remove an employee who has demonstrated repeated unacceptable performance, contact your supervisor.

4. Certification

Only SCI inspectors may sign USDA Certificates of Quality and Condition, and USDA Certificates of Loading.

Pack Certification

Pack Certification is another contracted service of inspection and grading in an approved plant. For this service, one or more inspectors may make inspections of the preparation and processing of products under contract but are not required to be present at all times when the plant is in operation.

- Under a Designated Lot contract, inspectors will sample, grade, and certify only those lots designated by the applicant.

- Under a Quality Assurance (QA) contract, inspectors use information available from the applicant's quality control records to certify lots, as requested. The inspector(s) grade lots at random as often as necessary to verify the reliability of the applicant's quality control system.

The Role of In-Plant Inspection

The primary purpose of in-plant inspection is to inspect and certify the quality of all products covered by the agreement. Formal certificates are issued on those lots specifically requested by the applicant or contractor. Other advantages of in-plant inspection include:

A. Rapid grading and certification on the applicant's premises. Since inspectors are available to certify designated lots upon request, results may be obtained quickly, which is a significant advantage.

B. Assisting the applicant in maintaining desired quality levels. Although USDA inspectors are not to function primarily as quality control personnel, their duties are often closely integrated with the plant quality control program. Their constructive suggestions may assist in achieving and maintaining good quality.

C. Assuring compliance with specifications or contract requirements for those factors that can only be readily checked by in-plant observation. Such factors include the proportion of fruit in preserves and jellies, the time and temperature of blanch, the fruit-sugar ratio in frozen fruits, the fill weights for canned fruits, and domestic origin requirements.

D. Maintaining regular checks on plant sanitation and condition of raw materials.

E. Assisting in compliance with FDA regulations and requirements of state and municipal regulatory agencies.

In addition to the above, plants operating under an in-plant inspection contract may use approved inspection and/or grade marks on their labels and in their advertising programs, as specified in the Regulations.

Services Provided by the Applicant Under In-Plant Inspection

In-plant inspection services provided by the applicant include but are not limited to the following:

A. Adequate product identity and quality segregation, maintained from the plant to warehouse by means of proper coding and warehousing.

B. Adequate office space adjacent to the laboratory facilities with suitable desks and office equipment for the proper care and security of inspection records. Equipment will include a lockable drawer, file cabinet, or locker.

C. Access to office equipment to maintain or communicate records, and clerical assistance as needed to issue certificates. If the plant has a computer network established within the premises, USDA inspectors should be permitted network access to facilitate communication between plant management and USDA.

D. Access to processing, packaging, and production reports. These are vital to sampling and preparation of daily inspection reports and certificates.

E. Janitorial service for the laboratory and office. This may include the washing of pans and other inspection equipment. The inspector should encourage this as standard practice.

Laundry service is sometimes provided by plants, which may include furnishing towels or lab smocks and coats. However, this is not considered a required service. The inspector is responsible for their own proper attire.

F. As appropriate, provide extra assistance to the inspector.

The following instructions are not applicable to the assignment of plant personnel under the Quality Assurance Program and other Division Verification (Audit) Programs.

There may be circumstances under which the inspector requires temporary help during an in-plant assignment. A request for a plant employee assigned to perform specific tasks for the SCI inspector may be made to plant management. Plant assigned employees must have a clear understanding of their job functions, be well trained, and have access to required written procedures, methods, and instructions related to job functions. Plant assigned assistance is a good management tool that can enhance SCI's efficiency.

Assigned plant employees are under the direct supervision of the SCI IIC. To verify accurate performance of duties, the inspector must observe the plant employee performing designated tasks several times daily. If a task is performed incorrectly, the IIC will document the error and the time it occurred on the reverse side of the score sheet, tally sheet, or on a separate memo. The inspector will inform the area supervisor of the problem, and counsel the plant employee and/or provide additional training to ensure the task will be performed properly in the future.

If the assigned task is performed incorrectly after the employee has been counseled and/or trained, advise plant management of the situation and request that they select another person capable of performing the required task(s).

A letter agreement will be prepared for the signature of the plant official to show the name of each plant employee assigned to assist the SCI inspector and the employee's job function(s). Please see the section on Letter Agreements for examples and descriptions.

Basic Facility Requirements

The minimum, basic facilities for adequately performing inspection duties are required for all types of in-plant inspection services. These requirements vary between plants, depending on plant size, quality and quantity of production, nature of the products packed, and length of packing operation. A plant under a seasonal contract may not be as elaborately equipped as a plant under year-round inspection, but the basic needs still must be met. The lab should be well organized and large enough and to adequately house the equipment needed to perform the required inspection procedures.

The plant will provide the following equipment and materials as needed:

- Grading table with adequate and approved lighting.
- Grading trays of sufficient size.

- Accurate scales.
- Potable water source.
- All necessary lab supplies, such as glassware, chemicals, and handling equipment.
- Any other miscellaneous equipment such as specifications and inspection aids.
- The lab should have adequate counter space to perform all required inspection duties and be designed to be cleanable.

Approved Lighting

When grading processed fruit and vegetable products, approved lighting sources must be used to make critical color evaluations and comparisons. These requirements apply to all locations where product is officially graded, including in-plant locations, warehouses, or within USDA offices. This approved lighting is designed to provide a color and spectral quality of illumination close to north sky daylight.

Note that T8 tubes and T12 tubes will both work in the same unit. T8 tubes are 1 inch in diameter and T12 tubes are 1 ½ inches in diameter. T8 tubes have a higher output than T12 tubes.

The following lighting fixtures in combination with the listed tube lamps are acceptable for official USDA grading applications. Other sources may be used if approved through National Programs Mission Support.

- Standard 2x4 lay in type or other currently used fluorescent fixtures utilizing one of the following lighting tube options:
    - **General Electric Chroma 75**

      Supplier: Available from various suppliers.
    - **H&H Industries Colour-Master 75**

      Supplier: H&H Industries, Inc.
      110 W Main Street
      Elmwood, IL 61529-9608
      https://www.lightsbyhh.com/products/fluorescents/colour-master/hh752
    - **Northlux 95 CRI T8 LED Tube - 6500K Color**

      Supplier: Waveform Lighting
      4400 NE 77th Avenue Suite 275

Vancouver, Washington 98662
https://www.waveformlighting.com/

- The following light fixtures are approved for use, but are no longer available:

  Macbeth Examolite Model TC-440 (click here for user manual), Macbeth Examolite SD-840B (click here for user manual), Macbeth Examolite EBA-220 Light Box, Macbeth Munsell Disk Colorimeter, Macbeth Spectralight II 75B, and Macbeth Spectralight II.

  - Light kits for the Macbeth Examolite SD-840B can be purchased through the following link: SD-840B D65 MacBeth Daylight 48" T12 Lamps (xrite.com)

  - Light kits for the Macbeth Examolite TC-440 can be purchased through the following link: TC-440B (Daylight/Incandescent Blend) 48" T12 Lamp Kit (xrite.com)

  - Light tubes for both the Macbeth Examolite SD-840B and Macbeth Examolite TC-440 may also utilize the same light tubes as listed above under the standard 2x4 lay in type fluorescent fixture. These are designed to provide color and spectral quality of lighting equal to or better than the Macbeth tubes for official grading.

  - If replacement ballasts are needed for Macbeth lighting, these can be purchased at a local electrical supply store. Ballasts must be matched to the lights being used (T8, T12, etc.) to function properly.

Lighting Installation

Ideally, two or more units are suspended from the ceiling, approximately 4 feet above the surface of the table. It is recommended that light from the fixtures overlap the table by 1 to 2 feet on all sides. If this is not feasible, inspectors should confine their color judging to the area of the table that is well illuminated by the light source.

Fixtures may only contain all approved fluorescent tubes or all approved LED tubes. A mixture of lighting within the same fixture or directly above the grading area is not permitted.

Lighting Maintenance

To maintain the standard color quality and intensity of illumination, all tubes within a unit must be operating. Any burned out tubes must be replaced before using for official grading activities.

Keep all grates and lighting free from dust.

Depending on usage, all fluorescent and LED tubes should be replaced at least every 2 years. Keep a log card or attached sticker on each unit showing when the fixture was last re-lamped/tubed so the maintenance schedule can be maintained.

The SCI Inspector

Since the SCI Division is a service organization, there are certain expectations of SCI inspectors working under in-plant assignments.

Service Versus Regulatory Authority

SCI inspectors do not have regulatory authority. Our organization does not "shut down the plant." This role is in the hands of various State agencies and the FDA. SCI inspectors will perform their duties within the scope of their authority. As a service provider, the SCI serves to assist processors and other applicants by offering third party, independent grading and certification services. An inspector may diplomatically offer suggestions and alert processors to the existence of regulatory issues. However, the inspector's primary function is to inform the applicant of the quality and condition of products inspected, and to issue various reports as needed.

Competence

Inspectors are expected to be well versed on official procedures relevant to the needs of the plant and be able to provide accurate information to plant management. They must keep up to date on instructions issued by SCI, and be completely familiar with the appropriate U.S. Standards, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, applicable state statutes and other rules, regulations, and specifications pertinent for the particular plant. The inspector must have a good knowledge of the functions of plant equipment, operations, and procedures.

Decisions

The decisions made by inspectors may affect the methods of operations and have a financial impact on the applicant. These decisions should be timely and limited to the grading and inspection service performed. Every effort should be made to ensure that an assigned grade is correct. When monitoring plant operations, inspectors should seek to identify production problems such as mislabeling, incorrect codes, and under-filling of containers as soon as possible. Many situations can be addressed by applying current instructions. However, if circumstances that are not addressed arise, contact your supervisor immediately.

Uniformity

A processor expects to receive the same service: impartial, uniform interpretation and application of U.S. Standards, specifications, and regulations - as any other applicant operating under in-plant inspection. Inspectors are to promote a "level playing field" by applying current guidelines equitably to all applicants.

Demeanor of Inspectors

Inspectors will:

- Demonstrate tact and a reasonable level of temperament;
- Maintain confidentiality of company processes, formulations, operations, and other proprietary information; and
- Present a neat, professional appearance.

Appropriate Workplace Attire Policy

See the SCI Workplace Dress and Uniform/Apparel Policy which can be found at the following intranet address: file://usda.net/ams/scsci/sci-aim/Administration/SCIUniformPolicy.pdf

Inspector's Guidelines for Acceptable Behavior

The following provides guidance and reminders to inspectors to ensure effective delivery of service:

- Above all, BE COURTEOUS.
- Keep matters on a businesslike basis.
- Be prompt in reporting to duty. It is always a safe practice to be 15 minutes early.
- Be friendly, but not overly so.
- Know the rules for ethical conduct and ensure they are followed. Refrain from inappropriate language, gestures, and actions.
- Do not visit with inspectors in other plants unless you have business to discuss.
- Avoid non-professional behavior.

As a representative of USDA, be aware of how your official activity is perceived when in plant. Avoid watching television, reading a newspaper or magazine, using cell phones for non-emergency personal calls, operating personal electronic equipment, and other activities which are not service oriented unless special circumstances exist.

If you are in a situation which could cause embarrassment to you and/or the USDA, please remove yourself from it and/or contact your immediate supervisor for assistance.

Points of Emphasis

Inspectors will do the following:

- Establish with plant management the chain of command of individuals to whom information pertaining to our inspection service is to be given and the specific information to be given each such individual.

- Report the failure of machinery or equipment to the attention of plant management immediately.

- Report to the plant management marked changes in any of the quality factors or in such things as fill, net weight, vacuum, labeling issues, and syrup densities.

- Report to the plant management any sanitation shortcomings. Follow through for prompt plant action since monitoring of sanitation for compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) is one of the principal functions of in-plant inspection service. Document all sanitation deficiencies and corrective actions. Unsatisfactory conditions at a facility are very serious matters and can result in a recommendation of withdrawal of service if not properly addressed by plant management.

- Be familiar with U.S. Grade Standards, applicable Commodity Specifications, FDA regulations, and State requirements.

- Be diplomatic when talking with plant personnel. Use an organized approach to communicate issues and problems to plant management. Use tact when making any suggestion or constructive criticism with management. Choose a time which will not interfere with plant operations and will not cause personal irritations. Tact cannot be over stressed when dealing with plant management and personnel.

- Develop communication channels, which may include established times and/or means, which facilitate efficient sharing of information with appropriate plant contacts.

- Deal with people with whom you come into contact as a result of your official duties with dignity, courtesy, and respect.

- Inform the IIC or your supervisor of any significant plant issues whether they are resolved or unresolved.

- Accompany FDA inspectors on plant tours. Avoid becoming involved in controversies between FDA and plant management. Maintain a neutral but cooperative attitude. Thoroughly familiarize yourself with current instructions pertaining to FDA plant inspections. Notify your supervisor when you become aware of an upcoming visit by FDA to the plant.

- Ask qualified plant personnel to open complicated equipment, if necessary for you to draw samples or check sanitation, rather than to open it yourself (follow company lock out-tag out procedures).

- Follow all company safety and operating procedures and policies.

- Ensure the accuracy of all official documents.

Inspectors will <u>NOT</u>:

- Make recommendations, suggestions, or criticisms of any degree or kind to the employees of the plant. These should be made only to the plant management or designated personnel as appropriate.

- Incorporate recommendations, suggestions, or criticisms in the Daily Inspection Report (DIR).

- Give instructions to the plant management on changes in the packing operations that you believe should be done. Instead, offer these as suggestions for their consideration. Their decisions will be considered as final.

- Give instructions to any plant employees except assigned plant assistants who work under your direction.

- Take it upon yourself to stop, slow down, or speed up the operations of production equipment for any reason. Explain the situation to the management and leave that decision to them.

- Assert that you have regulatory or “police” authority.

- Repair or adjust production equipment for any reason. Explain the situation to the management and leave that decision to them.

- Engage in arguments. If you disagree with someone on a particular matter, you may make your opinion known, if appropriate with regard to the circumstances, but it must be done in such a way that it does not alienate or intimidate the other party.

- Enter into discussions between the processors and growers regarding the quality of the raw product or other matters.

- Punch a plant time clock. Follow set T&A procedures established by the SCI.

- Accept gratuities or bribes. Follow SCI/Program/Agency/Department steps to report such activity.

- Give information acquired through your official duties at a plant to anyone not connected with the plant except your supervisors. Maintaining confidentiality of plant information is required under the Trade Secrets Act.

- Allow visitors to interfere with your work.

- Smoke in the plant or warehouse, only smoke in designated areas.

- Bring visitors, outside inspectors, or family members into the plant unless plant management is consulted, and approval is given. Be sure work will be carried on in your absence before taking time to show them through the plant.

- Make statements without being sure the information is correct.

- Show official documents to non-designated plant personnel or leave such documents where they might be seen by anyone other than designated plant personnel unless authorized to do so by plant management.

- Display or leave unattended information restricted to USDA personnel. Confidential guides or correspondence should not be placed on desks or in other places where they may be observed or copied by unauthorized persons.

- Allow unauthorized access to USDA computers or computer equipment. Do not share your USDA computer password(s) with others.

- Use phones, including cell phones, for personal calls, unless necessary and within Division guidelines.

- Use personal electronic devices unless their use is in the delivery of service.

- Discuss plant business such as (but not limited to) finances, plant processes, and production figures with anyone except designated plant personnel.

- Conduct personal business during duty hours.

- Abuse break privileges.

- Conduct activities related to personal hygiene (e.g., shaving, brushing your teeth, etc.), in the plant lab.

- Wear unsecured jewelry or other similar objects.

- Sleep at the plant, even during break periods.

- Enter into controversial arguments regarding procedures or discuss plant quality with outside buyers.

- Enter into contentious discussions with plant personnel concerning controversial topics (e.g., politics, religion, divisive current news events, etc.).

Current Good Manufacturing Practices

It is important to remember that while inspectors are working on an in-plant assignment, they must follow all of the GMPs for the plant. This includes, but is not limited to, such things as: the use of hair nets (and proper covering for beards/moustaches if applicable); fingernails should be clean; nail polish should not be worn; jewelry should not be worn. Pens, pencils, and other items should not be in a shirt or smock pocket. The inspector should not create any other condition or engage in any other practice that would be considered unacceptable under the GMPs.

Employee Signature of a Firm's Hygiene, Health, and Confidentiality Statements

SCI employees and Federal-State Inspection Service cooperators while performing inspection and audit activities must comply with a firm's employee and visitor hygiene/sanitation policies (i.e., use of hair, beard or head coverings, no jewelry, and wear coveralls or protective clothing and boots as required). If required, you may read, fill out, and certify a firm's visitor hygiene/sanitation/safety policy statement.

We have been informed through our general counsel that we are not to complete questionnaires or sign releases for health information. SCI policy regarding personnel is in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration, current Good Manufacturing Practices, 21 CFR 110.

Disease Control

Any person who by medical examination or supervisory observation is shown to have, or appears to have, an illness, open lesion, including boils, sores, or infected wounds, or any abnormal source of microbial contamination by which there is a reasonable possibility of food, food-contact surfaces, or food packaging material becoming contaminated will be excluded from any operations which may be expected to result in such contamination until the condition is corrected. Personnel will be instructed to report such health conditions to their supervisors.

Confidentiality

SCI employees should not sign confidentiality statements from applicants. We are not in a position to commit the government to confidentiality statements. SCI has an established history of providing inspection service and audit programs that have maintained the confidentiality of an applicant's information. Federal employees are generally prohibited from disclosing confidential information by "United States Code: Title 18 – Crimes and Criminal Procedure: Part 1 – Crimes; Chapter 93-Public Officers and Employees; Section 1905, disclosure of confidential Information

Generally. The penalties for not adhering to this regulation are imprisonment, monetary fines and removal from service."

SCI policy is that company plans, and relevant company documents reviewed during the audit will not be removed from the facility. Also documents sent to SCI for review are to be stamped as "CONFIDENTIAL" and remain the property of the company. When the stated purpose of the document has been fulfilled the company can request that the documents be returned or destroyed.

Management of Inspection Costs

Inspectors will report their time and attendance and plant billing records accurately, and take any steps needed to clarify and resolve questions that may be posed by the applicant.

Inspectors should use SCI and applicant resources efficiently. This applies to supplies and equipment as well as personnel and staffing. Avoid wasting supplies, samples from "cut-outs," and the time of plant officials and employees.

Inspectors must be prudent, but also exercise judgment concerning equipment and assistance needs. Consider plant resources and specific inspection needs before requesting plant to provide assistance.

During the course of the packing season, there may be slow shifts or periods at the plant. The effective use of compensatory time or annual leave can help prevent overstaffing with SCI personnel at these times. To help plan for such occasions, inspectors should frequently check with production managers and stay informed of any scheduling changes.

Constructive Suggestions and Advice

Inspectors may offer observations to processors on possible changes affecting product quality, sanitation, and compliance with various contract requirements. However, inspectors must maintain the confidentiality of the processor's proprietary information. All observations provided by an inspector are to be limited to the activities of the plant, with no reference to or use of information originating from another plant. Failure to do this is a breach of the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1905.

Prompt Reporting

Inspectors should minimize any delays in reporting inspection results to the plant. Sanitation issues and any other issues affecting the quality of product should be reported immediately. However, some other operational concerns should be reported to plant management within 24 hours from the time of observation.

Basic responsibilities under both Pack Certification and Continuous Inspection are the same, with an emphasis on plant sanitation and product inspection. Under a Quality Assurance type

contract, emphasis is placed on verification of the plants ability to assess product quality and sanitation.

Authority of SCI Inspection Staff

The inspector is not in a position to require the processor or plant personnel to perform any action. For example, the inspector cannot require the labeling crew to change labels or have a line operator change codes. In areas concerning sanitation, approved identification, and direction of SCI-assigned line check personnel or laboratory assistants, the inspector does exercise some authority. However, even in these areas, needs for desirable changes should be expressed diplomatically, and the facts appropriately reported to the designated contact person.

- Inspectors are not authorized to start, stop, or otherwise "operate" plant machinery.

- Inspectors must not threaten to withdraw inspection from the plant because of nonconformance with contract requirements. Situations such as these should be reported to the inspector's supervisor.

- Inspectors should not overlook unsanitary conditions or practices that are illegal or irregular. Inspectors should solicit the help of a supervisor in correcting such deficiencies as needed.

- Inspectors will not become involved with the hiring, firing, or supervision of plant personnel. If plant personnel are assigned to assist the inspector, they will be directed only to the extent necessary to ensure that proper USDA inspection procedures are being followed.

- Inspectors must not become involved in discussions or negotiations with plant personnel, labor unions, government labor relations boards, packer-growers' relations, and similar groups or organizations.

- Except for others within the USDA, inspectors will not become socially involved with people with whom they have an official relationship. Social activities with plant personnel, such as luncheons or dinner entertainment should be avoided. It is also inappropriate to date a plant employee, as this could be perceived as a loss of impartiality. If you are in a situation that could cause embarrassment to you and/or SCI, please remove yourself from it and contact your immediate supervisor for assistance.

- An inspector may observe a plant pack and subsequently ship a product which is Substandard, fails mandatory standards, or is GNC. SCI does not condone this but has no authority to restrict shipments unless approved identifications are involved. Note that SCI procedures for monitoring disposition of any product considered adulterated must be followed, including notification of FDA as applicable.

- The inspector must not attempt to grade the fresh or raw products used at the plant. However, the inspector should check the raw product for wholesomeness and presence of foreign material and may report these findings to the plant. If there is a consistent problem with the wholesomeness of the raw product, the inspector should contact their supervisor.

- The inspector must not order a plant to dump or refuse to accept unsatisfactory raw material. This decision rests with plant management. However, this does not preclude cautioning the plant that processing such material may result in an unsatisfactory product.

Despite these limitations on the inspector's authority, the inspector can exercise tremendous influence on the operation of the plant. By being aware of unsatisfactory conditions and making appropriate, timely reports and suggestions, the inspector can generally obtain prompt remedial action. Inspection certificates and DIRs may be necessary for some plants to promote sales and secure operating capital. These reports reflect the ability of the plant to meet acceptable standards and specifications. Through these functions, the inspector has considerable impact on plant operations.

Treatment of SCI Inspection Staff

As a representative of the Federal Government, and by demonstrating fairness, honesty, and initiative, the inspector can expect to be treated with respect. The inspector must not be treated disrespectfully or unprofessionally by plant personnel. If you are subject to unacceptable conduct by a service user, contact your supervisor. Information on the situation must be provided through proper SCI channels to determine the appropriate course of action to take.

SCI stands behind its position regarding discrimination, unsafe working conditions, intimidation, or manipulation by applicants during inspection procedures. SCI will not tolerate actions or language from an applicant or an applicant's agent that is intended to intimidate, threaten, interfere with, or harass an inspector, or alter the course of an inspection. The subjective nature of these situations requires each case to be considered on an individual basis to determine if an action or statement is unacceptable, and if there is cause to deny grading or inspection service.

The Regulations, 7 CFR 52.54, states in part: "The following acts or practices, or the causing thereof, may be deemed sufficient cause for the debarment, by the Administrator, of any person including any agents, officers, subsidiaries, or affiliates of such person, from any or all benefits of the act for a specified period. (3). Any interference with, obstruction of, or attempted interference with, or attempted obstruction of any inspector, inspector's aid, or licensed sampler in the performance of his duties by intimidation, threat, assault, bribery, or any other means -- real or imagined."

The Regulations, 7 CFR 50.11, states that: "The Director may withdraw grading or inspection service from a person for a correctable cause. Such service, after appropriate corrective action is taken, will be restored immediately, or as soon thereafter as a grader or inspector can be made available."

Denying Service

Service may be denied for any of the following reasons:

- Discrimination

  Derogatory remarks made to or about an inspector, or adverse actions that are clearly taken by an applicant or an applicant's agent because of the inspector's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicapped condition, or age will be considered discrimination.

- Unsafe Working Conditions

  A physical assault by an applicant or an applicant's agent toward an inspector, or other working conditions that jeopardize an inspector's health or well-being will be considered unsafe working conditions.

- Intimidation

  Any undue pressure, influence, or action, or any verbal threat made by the applicant or an applicant's agent to the inspector will be considered intimidation.

- Manipulation

  Any action by the applicant or the applicant's agent that is intended to alter the outcome of an inspection by misrepresenting the facts will be considered manipulation.

If an inspector encounters a situation where a reasonable person would assume that any of the above conditions exist, the inspector should immediately leave the work area. The inspector's immediate supervisor or someone in the Area Office or Regional Operations Branch chain of command should be contacted immediately for further instructions. All pertinent information will then be relayed by the supervisor to the Regional Operations Branch Chief and Associate Director of Field Operations to determine if service should be denied, or other action should be taken.

On all applications for inspection and in-plant assignments, the OIC, Assistant Officer-in-Charge, or Sub-Area Supervisor will base their decision on which inspector to assign solely on the inspector's qualifications and experience with the commodity or type of inspection to be performed. The decision will never be based on an applicant's stated or implied desire for or against having certain inspectors on their premises.

Automatic Samplers

The following guidelines provide for the uniform use of automatic samplers to draw representative samples of juices and similar products of a comminuted, fluid, or homogeneous

nature. The main objective of the sampling process is to get the best possible representation of product into the composite sample. Follow the guidelines below when using automatic samplers.

- The sampler will be installed at a location where no further changes to product will occur. It should be installed adjacent to either the loading or off-loading location.
- It must be maintained in sanitary condition.
- The device is confirmed to sample from the production line.
- The sample size will approximate a one-quart composite, with a minimum of twenty-four fluid ounces.
- When sampling for a truck tanker (which will hold approximately 5,000 gallons), set the sampling device to take a minimum of 13 sample units per composite sample.
- When product is moved to a tank farm, set the sampling device to take a minimum of 60 sample units per hour. This will be done for every composite sample.
- If the automatic sampler fails to operate properly, manually draw samples of the product. Follow the on-line sampling rate in the Sampling Manual.
- Manually drawn samples will not be added to a composite sample from an automatic sampler. These samples will stand on their own as official samples.
- The score sheet for product sampled by approved automatic samplers must contain the statement: "Sampled by Approved Automatic Sampler."

In-Plant Line Check Guidelines for Inspectors

Line checks for the purpose of grade determination are sample units selected from the processing line at a point where the physical characteristics and quality will not be altered by any further hand or mechanical means but may be subject to further processing such as final freezing. Line checks for grade determination are considered official samples. They provide a record of what has happened during the packing shift. They keep the inspector and the processor informed of conditions during processing, and helps the processor keep quality at the desired level. The number of line check samples examined will depend on the sampling plan in effect at a particular processing plant. See Sampling Manual for on-line sampling procedures.

Use approved score sheets and tally sheets for recording inspection results. The AMS Forms Catalog (which may be found at the following intranet address: https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/Forms/SC.aspx) contains a list of approved score sheets and tally sheets. See the "Score Sheet and Tally Sheet Completion" section of this manual for guidelines on the development, approval, and completion of plant specific score sheets.

Whenever possible, make samples available for examination by plant officials and supervisors after grading. This affords the inspector an opportunity to discuss any pertinent observations or changes needed during production, and encourages communication between all parties, the plant, supervisors, and subordinate inspectors.

Line Checks for Grade Determination of Finished Product

Samples of the finished product are taken after processing is complete and no further change in quality is likely to occur. Samples are selected on a random basis so that each sample unit has an equal chance of being selected. If the production rate is reasonably uniform, spaced sampling intervals during a set period of packing time will generally produce good lot representation. If the rate of production fluctuates considerably, the sampling interval should be adjusted accordingly.

Regardless of production patterns, inspectors must not be too predictable in their sampling intervals. Such predictability may allow for processor manipulation timed to temporarily improve the product at the anticipated sample selection time. This may be more of a problem if the grading site is located far away from the processing lines and in view of the production workers. Line check personnel would be seen while on their way to draw samples in time for workers to intensify their efforts to improve quality. The inspector's goal is to draw samples that accurately reflect the quality of the product, and such samples are not representative of the lot.

Samples of finished product should receive all the same processing and handling as the lot which they represent and should ideally be taken from the location of the stored lot. If this is not practical due to the size of the facility or location of storage, consult your supervisor for guidance.

Line Checks of Unprocessed Product

Line checks of samples prior to final processing give the inspector and the processor an immediate picture of the likely finished product quality. The processor can promptly implement correction procedures if needed to improve subsequent production. These line checks are generally considered official samples that are used to help determine the final grade of the product.

Since they are not processed, all unprocessed line check sample units from the canning line must be opened immediately after the sample units are drawn.

Samples drawn at this stage are limited in the extent to which they fully reflect finished product. Inspectors must examine samples of the finished product before assigning a final grade, regardless of the number of line check samples evaluated. Samples of the finished product should be taken from the same location as the stored lot to ensure that they received the same processing and handling as the lot they represent. In some cases, this will not be practical, especially in large canneries. If not, finished samples may be taken at the end of the processing line at proper intervals. If needed, consult your supervisor for guidance.

For a Quality Assurance or QAP type contract, only finished product is used for verifying reliability.

There are many important reasons for examining the finished product:

- The lot is subject to further handling and processing after line checks are examined. "Character" in many products may be adversely affected by rough handling or overcooking. Canned foods may be overcooked or undercooked. Frozen foods may not be completely frozen.

- The color of the product may deteriorate because of improper processing or may be improved by heat exchange and equalization.

- Oxidation and "pinking" will sometimes be prominent in certain products after processing even though not apparent in the raw product.

- Bruises in the raw product often diminish or disappear after heat processing.

- Frozen fruits may develop considerable oxidation between the line check and freezing operation.

- Adulteration by foreign material is possible. If various fruit products are held too long in warm weather after sugaring and packaging, higher mold counts may be found in samples after freezing than were found in line check samples. Objectionable material may be introduced where packing medium is added at a point after line checks are taken.

- Improper cooling may cause external rust on canned foods soon after processing.

- Cooker "jams" or rough handling may dent many cans in the lot. Under certain conditions, cans may "panel" or "buckle" after improper cooling.

- After freezing and the resulting expansion, frozen foods in packing media may show poor condition because of "leakers." Liquid may soak through and discolor primary containers of some frozen foods if held too long in the containers before freezing.

- Dried foods may be excessively moist in containers with faulty seals.

It may be necessary to disregard line check indications and base the final grade of the product entirely on examination of finished product samples. In this situation, the line check score sheets should include an explanation about why they were considered unreliable.

Incomplete Grade (IG)

A final grade cannot be determined without finished product inspection. If inspection results are only available from unprocessed line checks, an "incomplete grade" may be established by

supplementing line check results with any other factors affecting quality of which the inspector is aware. Experience with the product is the key to determining accurate incomplete grades.

Products bearing approved identification must be completely inspected and assigned a final grade.

Issue only "incomplete grades" on lots that have been shipped before finished product samples can be drawn, unless official inspection can be completed at the point where the lots arrive. Never issue a final grade based on a few cases left from a lot that has been shipped unless the certificate covers only those few cases remaining. If part of a lot is shipped before samples can be drawn, assign an incomplete grade to the shipped portion and a final grade to the remaining portion, noting complete details on the score sheets and DIRs involved.

If sufficient finished product sample units are later examined from a lot previously assigned an incomplete grade, and if they indicate lot quality to be higher or lower than the incomplete grade, the final grade is based on the examination of finished product samples.

Inspection of Sort-Out Fruit

SCI occasionally receives requests to make official inspections of product that has been sorted out of the regular pack. This is particularly true with Red Tart Pitted (RTP) cherries, strawberries, and other berries. Although, we do not wish to encourage this type of inspection, we also have no grounds for refusing to inspect a product according to U.S. Standards.

Quite often the question is whether the grade should be substandard or whether the product is GNC; or there may be a Buyer Specification, and we need to determine if the product meets that specification. For these situations, use the following guidelines:

- Be sure to check the product for foreign material as indicated in the Foreign Material Manual.

- Even if the product meets the Buyer's Specification, it should also be on "Hold for Re-Examination, account foreign material" where examination for filth indicates the product might exceed the guidelines. Then proceed in accordance with Foreign Material Manual.

- If the product is frozen in bulk such as barrels, certification and inspection should be restricted to that portion of the containers from which the sample is drawn.

- Do not show mold counts or rot counts or actual numerical results of any filth examination on the certificate.

- Do not restrict foreign material examination to one factor such as mold count, leaving other applicable filth analyses undetermined.

Reporting Results

Reporting Inspection Results

It is crucial to report results to the plant in a timely manner. To the processor, this is one of the main advantages of having in-plant inspection. Plant employees designated to receive reports must be identified for new inspectors.

An individual line check sample that is below desired quality should be reported immediately to the designated plant contact so he or she may take any necessary corrective action. This person is usually a Quality Assurance or Quality Control manager or technician. It's a good policy to note on the line check sheet both the name of the plant contact and the time the notification was given.

After verbal reporting, written notification is usually provided to the plant in three ways:

- Notification to the designated plant contact person immediately after results are obtained. The inspector should establish a daily routine for reporting grading results to the person responsible for placing lots into storage, for example writing the grade of each item packed on the warehouse manager's copy of the pack report or plant production report.

- Copies of the score sheets (if desired).

- Copies of the SC-416 Daily Inspection Report (intranet link).

Reporting Special Cases

Products that are Grade Not Certified, fail FDA Standards, or fail requirements pertaining to the use of "Approved Identification" on the label marks, all require special reporting procedures.

The plant will want to prevent recurrence and to make sure these items are not inadvertently shipped or mixed with like items in the warehouse.

A letter should be written to the responsible plant official according to SCI regulations. The designated plant individual responsible for HOLD disposition should sign the letter and enter the date received. Four copies of the letter should be made, with the plant retaining the original. The inspector will make the prescribed SCI distribution on the remainder of the copies. See Hold and Release instructions in this manual. In the case of "Approved Identification" label marks, these must be removed under our direct supervision within a reasonable length of time, and before leaving the plant.

Other In-Plant Inspection Duties

Sanitation and Safety

Monitoring sanitation is one of the principal functions of SCI's In-Plant Inspection service. Promptly report any sanitation shortcomings to the designated plant management representative. It is essential to follow-up on reported deficiencies to verify that corrective actions have been taken in a reasonable amount of time.

An unsatisfactory condition in the plant is considered sufficient reason for affected product to be GNC. In such instances, first contact your immediate supervisor to explain the circumstances and determine the appropriate steps to take. See the Sanitation Manual for detailed procedures.

Make sanitation tours in accordance with the Sanitation Manual. Observe the beginning of processing operations. Note any adverse conditions and notify appropriate plant personnel. Check the first few containers of finished product from all processing lines for contamination from improperly flushed pipelines or other equipment. Use GMPs as well as any plant SSOP as guidelines for determining deficiencies.

Maintain a clean laboratory throughout the day. Follow proper sanitation guidelines concerning the sanitation of workplace and equipment. Sampling must always be performed using proper GMPs.

Processing plants generally have a safety manual geared to their own processing facility. Some plants may have a plant-specific USDA safety manual. Review the contents of both (if available) to become familiar with plant personnel and the processing plant, including evacuation routes and emergency procedures. Be aware of available information which could also contain pertinent plant safety requirements and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all chemicals used in the plant. This information will increase your awareness of your surroundings, and help you handle an emergency if it should arise at the plant.

Become familiar with SCI Safety instructions. Review the Safety Manual. Ask qualified plant personnel to open complicated equipment when sampling and sanitation requirements dictate. Follow the plant's procedures for "Lock Out-Tag Out" procedures, and do not place your hands or any body part within the confines of operating equipment.

Inspection of Products Processed Elsewhere

There may be times when plant management purchases a processed fruit or vegetable for resale or further processing. The inspector should honor an occasional request by the plant to inspect and/or certify such a product, provided that the product was not officially inspected before. There should be no additional charge for this service unless the inspector's workday is lengthened in the process. However, if the plant inspector is not proficient in grading the product, or if the plant facilities lack necessary inspection equipment, plant management should be advised to request that the product be inspected under lot inspection (on a fee basis) through the area OIC.

In-Plant Tanker Inspection and Sealing

A good sanitation and sealing program are crucial to maintaining the quality level and integrity of the product. The processor/shipper is responsible for the sanitary conditions of tankers, product loading, off-loading, and sealing. SCI responsibilities are limited to grading and related inspection activities. This includes monitoring tanker sanitation, assigning product grade, assisting in proper sealing, and documentation of inspection results.

A. Plant's role

1. Notify inspector if tanker sealing is requested, and if any sealing requirements are specified.

2. Provide adequate lighting and the tools necessary to provide tanker inspection.

3. Provide a sanitary loading facility, and a clean tanker capable of being “properly” sealed.

4. Make valves accessible for inspection, properly load the tanker, ensure proper sealing, and provide acceptable seals. USDA seals may be used in lieu of company seals.

5. Determine “acceptable packer's risk” in respect to loading tanker based on tankers back-haul record.

6. Ensure that Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements are addressed.

B. SCI’s role

1. Monitor and conduct sanitation checks of equipment and tankers for proper sanitation.

2. Document and report unacceptable sanitation conditions to management.

3. Notify management of tankers that cannot be properly sealed.

C. Tanker Condition and Loading Sites

Although not required, it is recommended that the loading area be sheltered from the weather. In unsheltered locations the load may be contaminated by objects falling into the product, or insects and foreign objects intruding into uncovered loading nozzles.

Product will not be loaded unless the tanker has been inspected. The loading equipment must be clean. Verification of these conditions is a responsibility jointly shared by both processor and inspector.

D. Prior to Loading

The designated plant person should obtain a wash ticket from the transport company prior to acceptance for loading. These are usually attached to the rear port. The ticket may be examined to confirm acceptable previous back-hauls, adequate washing, and trailer identification.

If the tanker is to be sealed, it should be determined that it can be properly sealed during the pre-loading sanitation check. Properly sealed means that the openings are sealed to prevent access to the product. Sealing requires tight seals and secure fittings and should meet customer specifications.

E. Tanker Inspection

1. Safety Precautions

USDA personnel should never enter the tanker. Entry into a closed tanker requires a Confined Space Permit. See the Regulations, 29 CFR 1910.146. This is required by OSHA and is the responsibility of the industry to provide. When a tanker is presented for inspection, USDA personnel will allow plant personnel to break seals and open lids before performing inspections. At no time will USDA personnel enter a tanker.

2. Inspection of Tanker Parts

Use a flashlight to inspect the tanker. Visually inspect lids, valves fittings, vent covers, gaskets, and openings. Look inside the tank both to the front and to the rear through the dome lid. Examine for any product residue indicating an unclean surface.

Loose equipment and helmets should be secured or removed before approaching any openings.

3. Wash Water

When residual wash or rinse water is present, it should be drained from the tanker. It may be checked for metal shavings, detergent residue, and traces of product. Tankers are not expected to be completely dry and may contain some amount of clean water. In the absence of residual water, the dry surface of the rear valve may be checked for residues. A magnet may be used on the residue if the presence of metal shavings is suspected.

When unacceptable conditions exist (such as metal shavings, detergent and/or residues, product and/or residues, and/or mold residues) the tanker must be rejected until properly cleaned. If it is determined that the tanker is not clean, any product loaded would be Grade Not Certified.

4. Ability to Seal

In controlled situations it may not be necessary to remove all seals. Otherwise, remove the seals and open rear, side, or under tank assemblies (dust cover, plunger, and cap to product lines), top dome lids, and vent caps. All access areas should be inspected for the ability to seal. When the tanker cannot be properly sealed, notify the applicant.

When the applicant has requested tanker sealing and the tanker cannot be properly sealed, but the processor elects to ship without seals, the appropriate inspection documents will show "TANKER CANNOT BE PROPERLY SEALED."

F. Incoming Tankers with Product

Acceptable verification and product receiving procedures should be established between in-plant inspectors and plant personnel. Verification should include trailer identity and a review of inspection documents with seal numbers when applicable.

Acceptance or rejection of product is at the receiver's discretion. SCI inspectors will consider the product as officially graded if the USDA documents accompanying the load are consistent with the load identity regardless of whether or not applied seals are intact.

G. Sealing Loaded Tankers

When sealing is requested and proper sealing is completed, seal numbers will be recorded on the score sheet and other appropriate inspection documents.

All previous seals will be replaced with new seals, except under controlled situations when tankers are being used for continuous loading and off-loading. For example, if the tanker remains within acceptable conditions while operating back and forth between inspection sites, only the seals necessary for on and off-loading need to be changed. This decision is a joint responsibility between the shipper and the trucking company. The inspector will monitor verification of seals that remain intact throughout the operation.

1. Dome Area

The top dome should be sealed with at least two seals placed on opposite sides of the hatch/lid. If the hinge can be removed, additional seals may be necessary.

2. Lower Areas

After the processor has properly secured valves and closed the covers, the access door will be sealed on tankers that have all valves inside a locked box.
After the processor has closed the valve and installed the dust cover and retainer nut, the dust cover will be sealed on tankers with rear or lower valves with dust covers.

3. Vents

To be considered "properly sealed," all vents must be equipped so that seals may be installed.

H. Other Areas of Concern

1. Temperature

Product temperatures can be verified during the loading process as specified by standards or other applicable specifications. Results will be recorded on appropriate inspection documents.

2. Score Sheets

The score sheet and certificate confirm that the product in the tanker is the product that has been inspected.

Syrup Designations

Syrup designation is based on Brix readings determined on "equalized" product; that is, after the equalization of the natural sugars in the fruit and sugars in the in-going packing medium. For the inspection purposes of canned fruits in syrup, equalization is considered complete 15 days after packing. However rather than delay inspection for the 15-day time needed for this process, equalization may be achieved by comminuting all of the product and all of the packing medium together. This is known as "simulated equalization." See the Brix section in the Technical Procedures Manual for additional information on simulated equalization procedures.

A. Simulated Equalization

Compliance of each item with a specified syrup designation will be determined on a shift basis, on samples drawn at regular intervals. Entire individual containers must be blended for each determination.

1. Sampling

Sample units may be drawn from the processing line at any point after the seaming operation, and preferably where they emerge from the cooking and cooling operation. Samples for simulated equalization may be obtained by one of the following options:

a. The same container that is used for grade determination may be used for Brix determination if all fruit and syrup can be retrieved for comminuting after quality factors have been determined. Loss of either fruit or syrup component will lead to inaccurate results.

b. Separate containers may be drawn from the line for Brix determination only.

2. Sampling Frequency

The sampling frequency for Brix determination is based on the required number of sample units needed to meet the on-line sampling rate in the Regulations, and knowledge of previous production. At least three determinations must be made. Refer to the Sampling Manual for information regarding time sampling plans that cover non-quality factors. Sampling frequency will be as follows:

- Low Volume: One sample unit per 60 to 90 minutes.
- Medium Volume: One sample unit per 45 minutes.
- High Volume: One sample unit per 30 minutes.

No change in sampling frequency is necessary unless production for three consecutive basic production periods (production shift) indicates a change from one volume designation to another.

3. Sub-group Samples

If the plant wants more than one determination each time (for example, sub-groups of two), the number of sub-groups will be equal to or exceed one third of the number of sample units required by the Regulations on-line sampling plan. Do not average the two readings. Each container must meet the acceptance criteria as shown in Acceptance Criteria section on the following page.

4. Lateral Samples

Lateral samples may be drawn at the option of the plant. However, these samples may be used only for the plant's guidance, or to confirm rejection of a lot. They may not be used to determine compliance with the average specified as shown under Acceptance Criteria.

5. Sampling “Failed Lots”

If a lot fails because of low average Brix, or insufficient sample units (less than minimum number required), the lot may be rejected. However, the packer has the option to request that additional containers be drawn throughout the lot to make up to at least the minimum required for on-line in-plant inspection. If the inspector elects to draw more than this minimum, it will be in increments as outlined in the Regulations, i.e., 3, 6, 13, 21, 29.

6. General Procedure

Record the net weights when line samples are in the laboratory. This information may be valuable to the processor, since to some extent low or high net weights influence the final Brix readings. Cool the samples to approximately 70 degrees F before opening.

If they are available, use several blender bowls to save time in comminuting multiple samples. Designate each bowl for use on those products that are consistently close in degrees Brix. After one sample unit is comminuted, it may be poured back into its original container. The bowl should be completely drained before another sample unit is comminuted. Continue this procedure until all containers are blended, and the comminuted product(s) is ready for refractometer readings. Leave the bowls inverted after Brix measurements have been completed or wash with hot water and thoroughly dry before each use.

7. Communication

When a Brix determination is below the required value:

a. Immediately notify the proper designated plant official. Record the name of this plant employee and the time of notification on work sheet or score sheet.

b. If requested, check additional blends and record these additional values in a separate column on blend sheet or work sheet. These would be considered “lateral samples” and cannot be used to “erase” results of official samples.

B. 15-day Equalization

To bring a lot up-to-date fifteen days or more after pack, measure the Brix on all sample units, using techniques described in the Technical Procedures Manual.

Incorporate these readings with the original blend readings if they confirm the original results. If these readings fail to confirm the original results, make a full inspection for Brix at the appropriate single sampling rate and certify on this basis, disregarding the readings obtained by simulated equalization.

C. Acceptance Criteria

A code or group of codes may be considered separately from other codes in a shift if it meets the full single sampling rate. To be considered acceptable, the re-sampled portion must meet the requirements listed below. Portions that fail to meet these requirements are rejected.

1. Simulated Equalization

   a. The average Brix of the sample must be within the range of the specified syrup designation.

   b. Except as indicated in paragraph 4. below, no individual sample unit may be below the range of the next lower or above the next higher syrup designation. If no lower designation exists, none may fall more than 2 degrees Brix below the minimum of the specified syrup designation.

   c. Not more than three successive Brix readings on sample units drawn at regular intervals may be below the minimum or above the maximum for the specified designation.

   d. If an individual container fails paragraph 1.b. above, draw three additional containers representing the production of approximately the same time period. Record results on blend or work sheet adjacent to the low sample unit. Use these additional three test results to appraise the status of the sub-group period as follows:

      (1) If 2 or more of the additional three Brix readings are below the minimum or above the maximum requirement for the intended syrup designation, reject the period code.

      (2) If no more than one of these additional three Brix readings is below the minimum or above the maximum, the period is accepted or failed based on evaluation of the entire shift.

2. 15-Day Equalization

   a. The average Brix must be within the range of the specified syrup designation.

   b. No individual may be below the range of the next lower or above the next higher syrup designation. If no lower designation exists, none may fall more than 2 degrees Brix below the minimum of the specified syrup designation.

In-Plant Inspectors Filing System

A list of key management and plant personnel names should be kept on file for ready access by new inspection personnel. Since title and structure of management levels differ between plants, the lists may vary accordingly. The form and style should be based on plant management structure and “Chain of Command.” Include names of plant contact individuals on each shift.

Since many inspectors go from plant to plant, it is important that the filing systems be relatively uniform to minimize confusion for inspectors. This system consists of two basic parts:

- A Yearly File; and
- A Permanent File.

In many plants, these files may be adequately housed in a single file drawer. Larger plants requiring a greater number of records may need a three-drawer filing cabinet. Whatever type of storage is used, it must be lockable. The IIC is allowed flexibility in establishing these files. The inspector only needs to set up folders for those topics applying to the particular plant and arrange them in the given sequence. The letter and number of each folder enables the inspector to return it to the current filing location easily. Tab the folders with the approximate terminology as specified in the following:

Yearly (Y) File

Number	Title
Y-0	In-Plant Contract
Y-1	In-Plant Billing Worksheet SC-434 – Completed
Y-2	Certificate Ledger
Y-3	Unofficial Sample Requests
Y-4	Certificate Requests
Y-4a	Certificate Requests – Completed
Y-5	Certificates of Loading – Copy
Y-6, Y-6a, Y-6b	Certificates Used_____ to _____. (Insert proper serial numbers. Use 25 certificates or multiple thereof per folder. Add sub-letters to filed numbers as needed.)
Y-7, Y-7a, Y-7b, etc.	SC -66s Used_____ to _____. (File in same manner as Y-6).
Y-8, Y-8a, Y-8b	Daily Inspection Reports_____. (Insert month and year. Use one folder for each month of packing season or as desired. Staple pack report and sanitation score sheet to DIR.)
Y-9, Y-9a	Scoresheets. (Insert name of product. Use a folder for each commodity packed.)
Y-10, Y-10a	Line Checks_____. (Insert name of commodity. Folder for each commodity packed.)
Y-11	SCI Activity Report

Plants under a QAP do not keep a file for Y-8, Y-9, and Y-10, except for the records used for verification. Inspections for USDA contracts should maintain all original completed forms with the contract folder, with copies in numbered files. See the USDA Purchases Manual for coverage of USDA contracts.

Permanent (P) File

Number	Title
P-0	Standard Operating Procedures
P-1	Key Plant Personnel List
P-2	Accountability Records
P-3	*Currently not in use.*
P-4	Plant Audit Reports
P-5	Plant Survey Reports
P-6	Plant Coding System
P-7	Label Reviews
P-8	Report of Regulatory Agency Inspections – SC -425
P-9a	Correspondence – Incoming
P-9b	Correspondence – Outgoing
P-9c	Memos from Field Office
P-10	Time and Attendance Reports
P-11	Vacant
P-12	Proposals (for material such as standards and handbooks under study)
P-13	Conference Questions (to be submitted)
P-14	Attachments - Washington Mail
P-15a	Blanks – Loading Certificates
P-15b	Blanks – Quality Certificates
P-15c	Blanks – SC -66
P-15d	Blanks – Certificate Worksheets
P-15e	Blanks – Certificate of Date of Pack
P-15f	Blanks – Certificate of Sampling
P-15g	Contract Status Forms

Number	Title
P-15h	Blanks – DIR
P-15j	Blanks – Hold and Release
P-15k	Vacant
P-15l	Blanks – Sanitation Scoresheets
P-15m	Blanks – Time and Attendance
P-15n	Blanks – Travel and Expense Vouchers
P-15p	Blanks – Scoresheets (folder for each commodity)
P-15q	Blanks – Line Checks (folder for each commodity)
P-16	Official Stationery
P-17	Official Envelopes

If for any reason forms are kept elsewhere, a note should be placed in the appropriate folder(s) in the file directing other inspectors to the location of these materials. Unused Certificates of Quality and Condition must be kept in a secure and locked location.

In-Plant Label Review and Approved Identification

This section addresses the review of labeling and advertising materials bearing official USDA grade or inspection marks. When reviewing product manufacturer labels, the inspector must check for all issues that are required under the Inspection Agreement with Industry Contract. If a State or Federal statute requires certain label information and requires that product meet certain criteria for their "Special Mark," the inspector's review should include these criteria.

- Any deviations should be reported to plant management.

- Inspectors should not enter into any discussion or controversy over label statements that are under mandatory labeling regulations, such as under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, or applicable state laws and regulations.

However, inspectors should be aware of any incidences of potentially deceptive or inaccurate labeling. If you are directly aware of such an incident through knowledge of the plants processes, report it to your supervisor. If processors, distributors, or others in private industry have questions about proper labeling, they should be tactfully referred to the agency (usually FDA) with authority on the subject. For further label information, see the "Labeling" section of this manual.

Although the Associate Director of Field Operations approves the use of official label marks by the applicant, the IIC of a plant will be responsible for reviewing and verifying all labeling

materials bearing approved identification. Questions or problems that cannot be resolved are to be directed through the normal chain of command.

When labels are completed and available at the plant, they should be reviewed as far in advance of use as possible. The ideal situation would be to review preliminary label sketches, paste-ups, or proofs of proposed labels before they are manufactured. This step could prevent significant errors and save the firm considerable expense and inconvenience. Whether materials are checked prior to manufacture or not, inspectors should be sure to verify finished labels because there may have been changes since the initial review.

Products packed or certified under contract in-plant or lot inspection may bear certain types of "Approved Identification." These products must meet the requirements stated in the Regulations, and additional qualifications set forth within in-plant contracts. Inspectors must monitor and be alert for instances when or where these qualifications and requirements may be violated by packers, distributors, advertisers, and/or other interested parties.

Packers under In-Plant Contract that use "Approved Identification" on their product containers are required to submit proofs or samples of proposed labels to the plant IIC for review prior to use. This does not apply to lot inspection and the use of labels with the prefix "U.S."

Label Control – Official Marks

A. Year-Round and Seasonal Inspection When a Resident Inspector is Assigned to the Plant

1. The IIC and the area supervisor will review and approve all labels bearing official marks prior to use. Questions or problems that cannot be resolved by the IIC should be referred to the area supervisor. If necessary, the area supervisor will contact the Regional Office or National Program Mission Support.

2. Each label will be assigned a number to distinguish it from all other labels. This number is assigned by the IIC or the area supervisor and will be used for label identity and inventory. It will contain a letter prefix of three or more characters and be numbered in consecutive order.

Example:

America Better Foods Company

"Gourmet" label Canned Peas 8 oz.
ABF1

"Gourmet" label Canned Peas #303
ABF2

3. The IIC will maintain a permanent file for all approved labels during the assignment. The file will include a copy of the label(s) and a ledger for label identity and inventory.

4. The plant should notify the inspector when labeling product with official marks.

5. The supervisor will periodically review the permanent file and the plant's label inventory control sheet.

B. Seasonal Inspection When a Resident Inspector is Not In the Plant

1. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide advance notification to the area supervisor before using labels with approved marks.

2. The inspector or area supervisor will compare the labels with those in the approved label file to determine if they have been approved. The inspector will also check the USDA ledger inventory and the plant's label inventory. If there are discrepancies in the inventory, the area supervisor will be notified.

3. The inspector will check product codes against file records for product and grade verification.

4. Inspectors and supervisors should be alert for discrepancies in inventories which could indicate misuse or mishandling of labels (see Label Control Sheet Example below).

5. Label inventory records will be made available to USDA during plant visits. Additional label inventory checks may be requested at the discretion of the area supervisor.

6. When applicable, removal of labels with "official grade marks" will be performed in accordance with the regulations. See section on SCI Action on the Misuse of Approved Identification in this manual.

Label Control Sheet Example

Product	Container Size	Label	Label No.	Previous Balance	Newly Purchased	Labels Used	Current Balance	Cases Shipped	Cert. No.
Canned Peas (SW)	8 oz.	Gourmet	ABF-1	100,000	--------	28,000	71,200	600 (48/8)	R3641
Canned Peas (SW)	#303	Gourmet	ABF-1	750,000	200,000	50,000	900,000	2075 (24/303)	R3645
Canned Peas (Early)	#10	Garden Fresh	ABF-3						
Corn	#303								
French Style Green Beans	8 oz.								
Cut Green Beans	#10								
Frozen Spinach (W.L.)	12 oz.								

Product	Container Size	Label	Label No.	Previous Balance	Newly Purchased	Labels Used	Current Balance	Cases Shipped	Cert. No.
Frozen Spinach (Ch)	2 lb.								

Labels for Products Not Under Contract

Products that are not covered by the In-Plant Inspection Agreement will not bear the official "Approved Identification" marks on their labels. If such labels are proposed or are being used inadvertently, the agreement must be amended to include inspection of those products.

Labels for Products Not Covered by U.S. Grade Standards

Products for which there are no U.S. Grade Standards must not reference a U.S. Grade on their labels. However, if the product is of acceptable commercial quality and packed under a Continuous Inspection Contract, such products may bear Inspection Marks without reference to quality.

Maintain a Permanent File

IICs will incorporate complete records of all labels reviewed into a permanent filing system. This file will be maintained in a binder categorized by the type of product, such as:

- Canned Fruits
- Canned Vegetables
- Frozen Fruits
- Frozen Vegetables
- Frozen Potatoes
- Miscellaneous
- Citrus – All
- Citrus – Florida Only
    - Concentrates (to include Institutional Pack)
    - Single Strength Juices
    - Sections
    - Fresh Unpasteurized Juices

- Beverage Bases in Excess of 20 Percent Citrus

These basic categories have been established primarily for distributor's labels; however, packer's private labels should also be included in the binders.

The appropriate binders are assigned to the custody of the IIC at each plant. Once assigned, the binders will remain with the USDA plant files regardless of the movement of the inspectors. The binders assigned to each plant will cover only the types of products the plant is capable of processing.

SCI Action on the Misuse of Approved Identification

If the Regulations have been violated, approved identification must be removed from the containers. Noncompliance should be brought to the attention of your immediate supervisor. After determining that the product is in violation of the Regulations, the inspector will conduct the following steps:

A. Inform the Processor

After verbally informing the plant supervisor and warehouse contacts, follow up with a written statement to avoid any misunderstandings.

The use of Hold and Release Forms or similar requests are acceptable for warehouse communications on this subject. More information on this may be found in the Forms and Reports section of this manual.

The follow-up statement to the processor should be in a typed letter or email if the plant inspectors have access. A copy should be sent to the area OIC, Regional Branch Chief, and Division Director. Use Appendix III – Misbranding Report as a guide.

A deadline for removal of approved identification should be specified. This date is usually left to the discretion of the IIC, who should factor in applicable conditions when setting a reasonable time frame for completion.

B. Report Incident on the DIR

Issue the DIR for Special Attention as mentioned in "Forms, Reports, and Correspondence." Insert a footnote (such as 1/ or 2/) by the final grade assigned to the item and briefly describe the violation under "Remarks" (for distribution, see Reports for Special Attention).

C. Supervise Removal of Approved Identification

Either supervise the removal operation, or closely check the lot after removal. Account for all cases or containers in the lot. Do not allow the processor to circumvent removal

by such actions as donating the product to charity or selling it to plant workers or local stores.

Removal may be achieved in a variety of ways such as:

1. Blocking out with an ink stamp. Frozen containers may be treated in this manner by wiping the spot with a dry rag and immediately stamping with a quick-drying ink such as that used for felt-tipped marking pens.

2. Blocking out with paper stickers.

3. Labeling over the offending label or overwrapping over the offending overwrap. The label underneath must not show through.

4. Completely stripping the labels.

5. Replacing friction-type lids or screw closure lids.

6. In many instances of mislabeling, it is possible to correct the label so that it complies with regulations and therefore eliminates the need for removal of Approved Identification. The processor should be encouraged to do so whenever possible. Examples of these corrections are:

    a. Blocking out the word inaccurately describing a syrup density, and ink stamping the correct word adjacent to the block.

    b. Blocking out the inaccurate net weight and inserting the correct net weight.

    c. Blocking out the word inaccurately describing style and inserting the correct word.

D. Give the Processor the Written Release Notice

Acknowledge the removal or label correction and be sure to identify the lot by cross referencing to the letter originally requesting label removal.

E. Report Removal on DIR

Under “Remarks,” report the removal or label corrections on a DIR marked for Special Attention and refer to the number of the DIR on which the violation was originally reported. If the removal or correction is accomplished in the “off-season” when DIRs are not being issued, write a brief official memorandum to the area OIC, reporting this information. Distribute copies to the Regional Branch Chief and the Division Director. The deadline for removal of Approved Identification may be postponed to a later date if requested by the processor and if the reasons for doing so are valid. If the processor has a

good reason for the request, the inspector may allow postponement and write a letter to the processor stating:

1. Acknowledgment of the processors request and reason for postponement,

2. Period of postponement, and

3. Reference to the exact lot affected and reference to the letter to the processor that originally requested removal.

This letter will be distributed in the same manner as the original letter requesting removal.

F. If the processor does not receive a postponement and fails to comply with the deadline date, the inspector will write an official memorandum to the OIC stating the facts. Copies of this memorandum will be distributed to the Regional Branch Chief and NPMS. The OIC will then contact the processor and ask for immediate compliance. Should this fail, the inspector will notify the Regional Branch Chief and NPMS. The Associate Director of Field Operations will follow-up with the statement distribution.

If the processor ships a lot which is mislabeled with respect to Approved Identification after due notification, the processor is in violation of the Regulations, 7 CFR 52.54, which can also be found in the In-Plant Inspection Contract. Penalties may range from a written warning to cancellation of the inspection contract, or in extreme cases, legal prosecution.

If a lot which is mislabeled with respect to Approved Identification is shipped, the inspector will report the facts to their immediate supervisor in writing. The inspector must be certain that the lot has been shipped.

Copies of the completed report will be submitted through the inspector's immediate supervisor and distributed as follows:

1. Reference the identity of the lot and previous correspondence,

2. If needed, include recommendations for appropriate Division action, and

3. Distribute copies of the report to the Regional Branch Chief and NPMS.

Forms and Reports

Signing and Initialing Completed Forms

Some routine forms require the signature of the inspector on an in-plant assignment, and some require only the inspector's initials.

A. Inspector's Signature Required

1. Completed sanitation score sheet or report.

2. All forms and documents that substantiate product inspection results and which the inspector personally completes. This may include such forms for official checks as fill weights, line checks, Brix blends (simulated equalization), microanalysis, enzymatic activity, fruit-sugar ratios, and others.

3. All Certificates of Quality and Condition (including Form SC-66), SC-416 Daily Inspection Report (intranet link), and product score sheets.

B. Inspector's Initials Required

In many processing plants inspectors utilize the services of qualified plant personnel who perform certain inspection duties under the inspector's technical supervision. These technicians are not allowed to fill out sanitation score sheets. They may record information on product score sheets, certificate worksheets, and Daily Inspection Report worksheets, provided the inspector carefully checks their work. They do perform and record results of many official routine duties, such as fill weights, line checks, Brix blends, microanalysis, etc.

These technicians must affix their signatures to forms on which they have entered official information. During each workday the inspector must exercise close supervision over technical personnel. The inspector's initials must be entered online check forms which the inspector personally reviewed, observed, or examined.

Daily Inspection Report (Form SC-416)

The official electronic version of the DIR Form SC-416 (intranet link) is readily available and should be used at the plant. This report summarizes the results of inspection activities and plant production for each processing day.

It also serves as:

- A semi-formal certification of the quality and condition of each inspection item;
- An aid to the plant inspector when subsequently certifying products;
- A source for compilation of data;
- A basis for the processor or the processor's sales representative to plan sales and shipments; and
- A form of communication within the Division.

The DIR is an official form and must be prepared with the same care as a Certificate of Quality and Condition. Certification rules regarding appearance, errors, and initialing of errors also apply to the DIR. See the Certification Manual for additional information.

A. Completing the Daily Inspection Report

The following instructions correspond with the numbered items shown in the SC-416 Daily Inspection Report (intranet link).

1. **Report Number** – Chronologically number each report throughout the packing year, starting with number one. Start renumbering on January 1 or at the beginning of the packing season, whichever best suits the particular plant's operations.

2. **Date** – Packing day covered by the report. Do not cover more than one day on one report.

3. **Company** – Name of the processing plant.

4. **Location** – City and State in which the plant is located.

5. **Item No.** – Number each item chronologically.

6. **Product** – "X" appropriate box. List each item by commodity, type, and style, using the same terminology as specified in instructions for Certificates of Quality and Condition.

7. **Container Size** – Number as normally packed per case/size of container. For example: "24/2½."

8. **Code or Other Marks** – Code markings of primary containers. If cases (secondary containers) are also coded, but the code differs from that on the primary containers, insert a numbered footnote (such as "1/" or "2/") by the primary code, and list the case-code under "Remarks."

9. **Number of Cases or Pounds** – For canned product, insert the number of cases packed. If the product is not cased, enter the equivalent number of cases based on the amount of primary containers normally packed per case. For frozen or dried products, insert the number of pounds packed.

10. **Packer's Grade** – State the letter-grade which the packer intended for the item.

11. **Incomplete Grade** – This column is left blank unless a final grade has not been established for the item.

12. **Final Grade** – Show the letter-grade established by inspection results for the item. Include any necessary qualification symbols.

13. **Inspectors** – List the names of the inspectors who were on duty during the day covered. The inspector who checks the DIR for errors will sign the report.

14. **Total Pack** – Enter the total number of cases or pounds packed. Repack should be entered on the DIR and included in the total pack.

15. **Remarks** – Indicate recommendations, reasons for downgraded items, and other pertinent information not listed elsewhere. It is not necessary to list upgraded items. Any listed recommendations should have been previously discussed with plant officials.

B. Reports for Special Attention

A DIR which contains information on a violation of Division Regulations (e.g. mislabeling or misuse of approved identification) should be sent to the area office, Regional office, and NPMS immediately. If mailed, it should be sent separately from other material and marked "Special Attention" to ensure that it is handled appropriately.

C. Corrected Reports

When errors, omissions, or changes require issuing a corrected DIR, the words "CORRECTED REPORT" should be typed or printed in ink in the upper right corner. It is not necessary to repeat every item on the original report, list only those that have changed. Attach the corrected report to the originally issued version.

D. Supplementary Reports

Some plant operations require supplementary DIRs; for example, to document drained weights after stabilization 30 days after packing for Canned Mushrooms. Each supplementary report will cover only one original report. It will bear the same report number and date as the original, but the words "SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT" should be typed or printed in ink in the upper right corner. It is not necessary to repeat every item on the original report, just show items requiring supplemental information. This information may be legibly handwritten in ink or typed in the body or under "Remarks" on the supplementary report. Include the date the information was determined. Attach the report to the originally issued DIR.

E. Last Day of Pack

The DIR representing the last day of pack for any single commodity should state this in the "Remarks" section; for example, "Last day of freestone peach pack." Similarly, the report for the last packing day of the entire packing season should state this in the "Remarks" section: "Last day of packing season" and also include the total cases packed.

F. Distribution

1. DIRs – Original to Processor (and additional copies, if requested)

   a. One copy to Area office

   b. One copy to inspector's files

2. Reports for Special Attention – The same distribution as indicated above for routine reports, except also send one copy to the Division Director and the Regional office.

3. Frequency of Distribution – These reports will be given to the processor daily. Those copies destined for the various offices within SCI will be mailed at least once a week.

G. Symbol Designations

The use of these symbols on the DIR promotes brief, uniform reporting of lengthy descriptions sometimes necessary to qualify final grades. These symbols are used only on the Daily Inspection Report, product score sheets, daily pack reports, and other reports that circulate within the plant. Do not use these symbols on Certificates of Quality and Condition or other forms. Inspectors using these symbols will ensure that all appropriate plant personnel (such as sales manager, manager, and warehouseman) have copies of the legend for the symbols.

Do not use symbols that are not listed. Upon request, NPMS will add symbols to this list. Although use of these symbols is not mandatory, they are recommended for large plants and plants operating on a year-round basis.

Symbol	Meaning
1a	Low average drained weight.
1b	Most containers fail drained weight.
1c	Low drained weight. Individual containers below limits for good commercial practice.[5]
2a	Fails syrup requirements. Low average syrup.[5]
2b	Fails syrup requirements. Brix on individual containers below the limits for good commercial practice.[5]
2c	Fails syrup requirements. Runs (simulated equalization).
3a	Low average solids.[5]

Symbol	Meaning
3b	Fails intended concentration account individual containers below the limits for good commercial practice.
3c	Mixed solids. Individual containers within limits for more than two concentration ranges.
3d	Average solids below processor's declaration.
3e	Fails intended concentration account individual containers exceed limits for good commercial practice.
4a	Percentage of heads below requirements.[5]
4b	Fails count and/or percentage by weight requirements.[5]
5a	Low net weight or net volume. Average below label declaration of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) recommendation.[5]
5b	Low net weight or net volume. Individual containers below the limits for good commercial practice.[5]
6a	Fails FDA Standard of Fill. Drained weight below FDA requirements.[5]
6b	Fails FDA Standard of Fill. Excessive headspace.[5]
7a	Fails FDA Standard of Identity.[5]
7b	Fails FDA Style or USDA Standard for product description.[5]
8a	Fails FDA Standards of Quality.
9a	Low average fill weight.[5]
9b	Fails fill weight control limits account low subgroup average.[5]
9c	Fails fill weight control limits account low individuals.[5]
9d	Fails fill weight control limits account all Mi or $\overline{x}$ values below $\overline{x}$ min.
10a	Lot contains any zero vacuums.
10b	Lot contains any reading 1 through 4 inches.
10c	Incomplete number of vacuum readings taken for certification.
11	Insufficient containers examined for acceptance of Condition of Container (interior or external).
12	Fails buyer's specification or specific contract requirements.[5]
13	Inaccurate, partial, or illegible coding (embossing, stamping, or ring marks).
14	Positive Catalase.

Symbol	Meaning
15	Positive Peroxidase.
16	Fails to meet declared fruit-sugar ratio.[5]
17	PACA label misrepresentation.
18	NAG – No applicable U.S. Grade for this product.[6]

[5] Not to be mixed with lots meeting requirements for unqualified certification.
[6] NAG – No applicable U.S. Grade for this product. Put equivalent grade in parenthesis if based on a U.S. Standard for a similar product (i.e. "NAG (B)").

Daily Pack Report

The processor must provide the inspector a written report of the quantity of each item packed and inspected. This information may be in the form of a penciled note, or an efficient photocopied form that also serves as a worksheet for completing the DIR.

Many processing plants produce a variety of items each day, and preparing the DIR becomes a time-consuming job, perhaps requiring over an hour of an inspector's workday. With plant cooperation and the inspector's ingenuity, pack forms can be developed that cut down DIR preparation time significantly.

If you have the pack report, it is not necessary to prepare a DIR. In large plants this is a time saver that can be used to perform other necessary duties. The sample report shown in Appendix IV – Example Daily Pack Report may serve as a guide for creating such a combination Pack Report/DIR worksheet in any plant. The report is described as follows:

- All items of each commodity normally packed by that plant are pre-entered. Some lines are left blank so that special-pack items may be entered. The static portions of the container codes are also included.

- This is a fill-in type form that is initiated by the warehouse person each day. All listed items are not necessarily packed each day. The inspector only enters figures for those items packed during that particular day.

- The inspector is given two copies of the semi-completed form. On both copies, the inspector inserts pack figures, complete code marks, item numbers, and the final grades for each item, including any necessary symbol designation.

- The names of all participating inspectors are written in, and any necessary comments are entered under "Remarks."

- One copy of the completed worksheet is returned to the warehouse person as a report of the day's grades. This allows stock records to be completed and finished product to be stacked in the proper location.

- The other copy is given to administrative staff (if available) to be filed with the inspector's file copy of the DIR.

Request for Certificate

Although not mandatory, a written request from the plant for a certificate is recommended. A request worksheet providing all necessary information for certification and distribution of certificate copies will help prevent misunderstandings between the processor and the inspector. When properly filed for later reference, copies of the request will also provide the processor and the inspector a record of past certifications.

See Appendix V – Certificate Request Worksheet. This Certificate Request Worksheet may be used as a guide in drafting an effective worksheet for any processing plant.

Hold and Release Forms

Occasionally, it's necessary to request that the processor hold a particular lot or code, for example when it needs additional inspection performed to establish the final grade, or because it requires removal of approved identification.

Inspectors should immediately inform plant management of such situations verbally, and then follow up promptly with written notification. A Notice of Hold SC-10 form can be used for this purpose. Proper use of the form can prevent costly errors due to misunderstandings and poor communication. Completed copies are distributed to the warehouse manager and plant superintendent. The inspector retains a copy after it has been signed by the plant offical.

The IIC of the processing plant has the ultimate responsibility to make sure offending product is identified and designated "ON HOLD." The inspector must verify that the product is not shipped, which can happen quickly with modern electronic inventory and billing procedures.

Refer to the Foreign Material Manual for "Hold" procedures and forms concerning the presence of "foreign material."

SCORE SHEET/TALLY SHEET COMPLETION

It is extremely important for score sheets and tally sheets to be complete, accurate, and legible. Often a score sheet is the primary means by which SCI inspection results are communicated. Copies of score sheets and tally sheets are often requested by applicants and other financially interested parties and are frequently requested through the Freedom of Information Act. SCI score sheets and tally sheets are official documents and may be introduced and accepted as evidence in litigation. Score sheets and tally sheets must be prepared so that the information shown is clear, complete, and accurate. Entries on score sheets and tally sheets must be based on facts observed and test results. To preserve authenticity, only officially approved versions of Specialty Crops (SC) forms are to be used. Approved SC score sheets and tally sheets may not be manipulated manually or electronically. Do not alter original format or data. Approved

versions of SC score sheets and tally sheets may be found in the AMS Forms Catalog at the following intranet address:
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/Forms/SC.aspx

Each grader participating in the grading of a product is responsible for assuring that score/tally sheets have all the necessary data entered correctly, including accurate computations; and assuring that all tests have been completed. Each grader will print and sign their name on the score sheet(s) or tally sheet(s).

The utmost care and diligence must be observed in the preparation of these official documents. In the case of legal action, inspectors may be subpoenaed by the court to testify to the accuracy of the score sheet, tally sheet, or resulting inspection certificate on which their signatures appear. Everyone – from those who collect the data during inspection to those who are responsible for reviewing the work – shares the responsibility for the accuracy and adequacy of these documents.

Completing Standardized Score Sheets and Tally Sheets

SCI policy is to record in the appropriate blocks on the score sheet or tally sheet, the results of quantitative examinations, analytical tests, and actual quality level(s) observed during the grading of the product. In variable grade point standards, score sheets are used to assess product. The overall quality factors are assigned a number, and the final grade is determined. In attribute standards, a tally sheet is used to assess product. Prerequisite quality factors are examined, quality factors are counted, and the final grade is determined.

When information that is common to both types of documents is described in this instruction, the documents will be referred to as score/tally sheets.

A thoroughly completed score/tally sheet is one that has all the data required to support the grade of the product. Report each value in the appropriate sample unit box. Do not use symbols, such as ditto marks, check marks, or arrows to repeat a value, except arrows may be used to show repeating codes.

Example:

CONTAINER MARK OR IDENTIFICATION	PRIMARY	A157900 L2	→	B157900 L2
	CASE	A157900	→	B157900

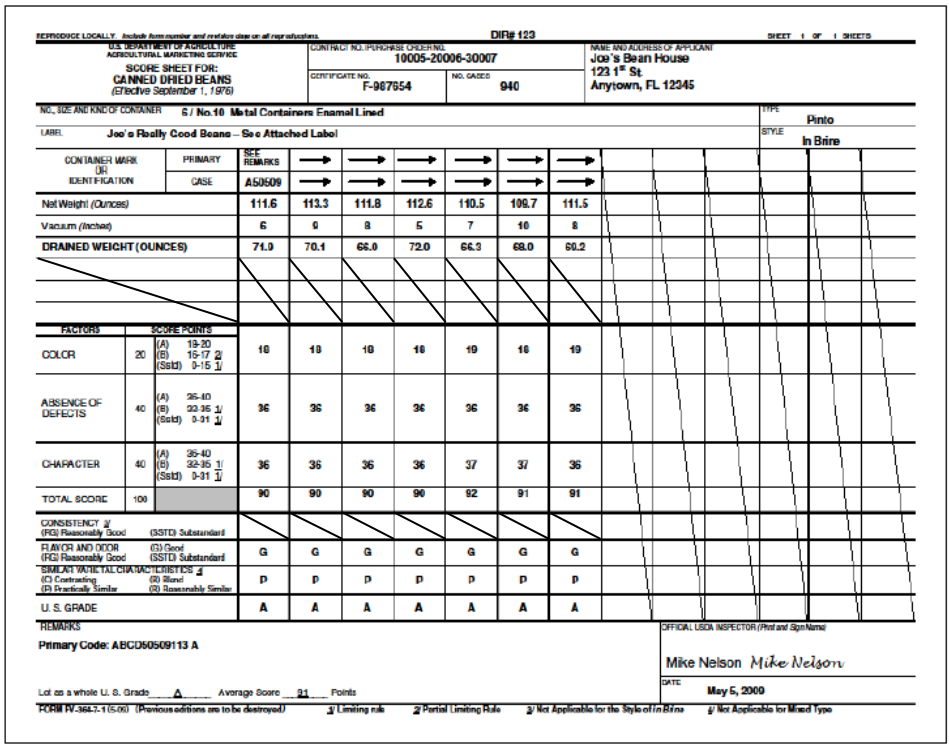
Do not leave empty boxes on the score/tally sheet unless the row is marked N/A. A long dash such as (—) will be used to indicate “No Data” when a test was not performed on a sample unit. It is not necessary to put dashes in boxes that are marked Type, Style, etc., when no values are required to be entered for each sample unit.

Example:

STYLE	Sliced				
COUNT	23	—	24	—	23

To reduce the likelihood of being altered, draw diagonal lines through remaining empty columns/rows on the score/tally sheet after the final sample unit.

Example:



REPRODUCE LOCALLY. Include form number and revision date on all reproductions. DIF# 123 SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEETS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

SCORE SHEET FOR:
CANNED DRIED BEANS
(Effective September 1, 1976)

CONTRACT NO./PURCHASE ORDER NO.: 10005-20006-30007
CERTIFICATE NO.: F-987654
NO. CASES: 940

NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT:
Joe's Bean House
123 1st St.
Anytown, FL 12345

NO., SIZE AND KIND OF CONTAINER: 6 / No.10 Metal Containers Enamel Lined
TYPE: Pinto
LABEL: Joe's Really Good Beans -- See Attached Label
STYLE: In Brine

CONTAINER MARK OR IDENTIFICATION								
PRIMARY	SEE REMARKS	→	→	→	→	→	→	
CASE	A50509	→	→	→	→	→	→	
Net Weight (Ounces)	111.6	113.3	111.8	112.6	110.5	109.7	111.5	
Vacuum (Inches)	6	9	8	5	7	10	8	
DRAINED WEIGHT (OUNCES)	71.0	70.1	66.0	72.0	66.3	68.0	69.2	

FACTORS	SCORE POINTS								
COLOR	20	(A) 18-20 (B) 15-17 2/ (Sstd) 0-15 1/	18	18	18	18	19	18	19
ABSENCE OF DEFECTS	40	(A) 36-40 (B) 33-35 1/ (Sstd) 0-31 1/	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
CHARACTER	40	(A) 36-40 (B) 33-35 1/ (Sstd) 0-31 1/	36	36	36	36	37	37	36
TOTAL SCORE	100		90	90	90	90	92	91	91
CONSISTENCY 3/ (RG) Reasonably Good (SSTD) Substandard									
FLAVOR AND ODOR (G) Good (RG) Reasonably Good (SSTD) Substandard			G	G	G	G	G	G	G
SIMILAR VARIETAL CHARACTERISTICS 4/ (C) Contrasting (P) Practically Similar (R) Blend (S) Reasonably Similar			P	P	P	P	P	P	P
U. S. GRADE			A	A	A	A	A	A	A

REMARKS
Primary Code: ABCD50509113 A

OFFICIAL USDA INSPECTOR (Print and Sign Name)
Mike Nelson Mike Nelson

DATE
May 5, 2009

Lot as a whole U. S. Grade A Average Score 91 Points

FORM FV-364-7-1 (5-00) (Previous editions are to be destroyed) 1/ Limiting rule 2/ Partial Limiting Rule 3/ Not Applicable for the Style of In Brine 4/ Not Applicable for Mixed Type

Date score/tally sheets with the date the grading is performed. If more than one date is required to complete the grading, more than one date must appear on the score/tally sheet.

Example:

	OFFICIAL USDA INSPECTOR (*Print and Sign Name*) John Doe John Doe
	DATE 6/05/09, 6/06/09

All entries on the score/tally sheet must be in permanent blue ink. Record factual information; do not include any personal opinions or assumptions on the score/tally sheet. Score/tally sheets must be complete, accurate, and legible.

The first step in completing a score/tally sheet is locating the most up-to-date version available. These forms are located in printable pdf format in the AMS Forms Catalog. The AMS Forms Catalog is available at the following intranet address:
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/Forms/SC.aspx

Inspectors without intranet access may contact their immediate supervisor for assistance as needed.

Do not use the Universal Score Sheet, Form SC-364E (intranet link) when a product has a current standardized score/tally sheet. Only use this form for products that do not have an applicable grade standard, or for which a standardized score/tally sheet is not currently available.

After selecting the appropriate score/tally sheet, enter the pre-grading information. This information is located on the "Application for Inspection and Certificate of Sampling" Form SC-356 or from in-plant sources under in-plant inspection. The pre-grading information may include but is not limited to:

- Complete name and address of applicant,
- Contract or purchase order number,
- Case count,
- Size and kind of container,
- Pertinent label information, and
- Type, style, or variety.

It is helpful to the grader and anyone reviewing the score/tally sheet to note the target values concerning quantitative examinations and/or analytical tests for such parameters as net weight, vacuum, drained weight, Brix, etc.

Example:

Net Weight (Ounces)	(min 16.0)	16.2	16.1	16.2

Principal Label Marks

Record only essential label information on the score/tally sheet. Essential label information includes:

- Brand name,

- Commodity name (including type, style, count, size, syrup designation),
- Quality statement (if any),
- All references to net weight or drained weight or net contents,
- Country of origin, and
- Packers and/or distributor's name and address.

Additional printed data may be added to score/tally sheets, as long as the original score/tally sheet data and format has not been altered. It may be helpful to prepare a sort of "template" score/tally sheet with added information for frequent applicants, labels, or other information. Verify this with your supervisor before preparing. Photocopying and using these "templates" with their pre-printed information can be a time-saver. However, if the score/tally sheet has pre-printed information added, this information must be verified before continuing. You must check to make sure that none of the information has changed since the score/tally sheet template was prepared.

Label information should be recorded exactly as found on the label. If a container has extensive label markings and it is not possible to attach a label, label markings may be shown on the reverse of the score/tally sheet. A notation must be made in the "label" section of the score/tally sheet stating that label marks are listed on the reverse side. It is permissible to write in the "label" section of the score/tally sheet the "brand name" as shown on the label, followed by the statement "See Attached Label" and attach a label in lieu of copying the label information onto the score/tally sheet.

Example:

NO., SIZE AND KIND OF CONTAINER	*12/46 ounce, beaded body, enamel lined metal cans*			
LABEL	*Valley Brand Grape Juice – See Attached Label*			
CONTAINER MARK OR IDENTIFICATION	PRIMARY	*A157900 L2*	→	*B157900 L2*
	CASE	*A157900*	→	*B157900*

Sample Codes

When grading lot inspection samples containing numerous mixed codes, it is helpful to sort and arrange the sample units logically – alphabetically, numerically, and/or chronologically. This ensures that like codes are grouped together and codes are easier to track when transferred to the

score/tally sheet. Record code markings in the row titled "Container Mark or Identification." Within this row there are two separate rows identified as "Primary" and "Case." See the example above.

The U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers defines the "primary" container as: "The immediate container in which the product is packaged and which serves to protect, preserve, and maintain the condition of the product. It may be metal, glass, fiber, wood, textile, plastic, paper, or any other suitable type of material, and may be supplemented by liners, overwraps, or other protective materials." The "case" would then be considered the container in which the "primary" container is packaged.

In the case of bulk packed products, the case may be the primary container, as for example, processed raisins in 50-pound cases. The case code marks for such products would be recorded in the area designated for "Primary" codes; there would be no entry for "Case" codes. Accurately record the code markings on the score/tally sheet. Code markings are to be recorded exactly as they are written on the container. Refer to the Sampling Manual and Certification Manual for examples of how to record code marks and allowable exceptions. All marks and spaces have a significant meaning in the code and should be accurately recorded on the score/tally sheet. If a code includes a time designation or marking, it must be recorded. If the color of the ink used is part of the code marks, record the color of the ink.

When repeating identical code marks, use arrows to show sample units in the lot that have the identical primary or case code markings. This is the only area on the score/tally sheet that arrows may be used.

When codes contain excessive numbers, letters, or symbols and are too long to be legibly written within the space provided on the score/tally sheet, the codes may be shown on the reverse side. Codes will be identified by sample number, and listed left to right just as they would appear on the front of the score/tally sheet in the row entitled "Container Mark or Identification."
If there is only one code in the lot that exceeds the space provided on the score/tally sheet, the code may be written in the remarks section. Whenever a code mark is written anywhere other than in the "Container Mark or Identification" section of the score/tally sheet, a notation must be made in that section indicating where the code(s) is listed.

Example:

CONTAINER MARK OR IDENTIFICATION	PRIMARY	*Code marks on reverse side of score sheet*	→	→
	CASE	*A157900*	→	*B157900*

Corrections

When an entry on a score/tally sheet requires correction, the only approved method is to draw a single line through the error, write the correct entry next to the error, and initial the correction.

White-out is not allowed. If the date of the correction is different from the date of the score/tally sheet, show the date of the correction.

Example:

COLOR	~~27~~ 28 TB 4/01/10	27	27	28	27

Recording Data

Follow the directions as shown in Technical Procedures Manual which references procedures for recording weights, vacuum readings, and headspace.

When recording analytical data on the score/tally sheet, use the correct units of measure. For example, if a U.S. grade standard states that drained weight is recorded in ounces, then record the data onto the score/tally sheet in ounces, rather than pounds or grams.

When rounding numbers, it is important to observe the significance of the numbers being recorded. Score points on a score sheet are recorded in whole numbers only. Score point averages are rounded to the nearest whole number:

- Record 92.4 as 92
- Record 92.5 as 93

For specified defects, record only to the point of significant accuracy as determined by the method and equipment used for the analysis. See the Certification Manual for additional information on recording analytical data. Unless otherwise specified, net contents, net weights, drained weights, Brix readings, and other similar factors will be recorded to the first decimal place.

Example 1:

Net Weight (*Ounces*)	(min 16.0)	16.2	16.1	16.2

For analytical determinations in which the value is relatively low (usually less than 1 percent), record to the second decimal place.

Example 2:

Total Acidity *(As Malic) (g/100 ml)*	0.47	——	0.41

Recoverable oil is recorded to the third decimal place.

Example 3:

Recoverable Oil *(Percent by Volume)*	0.017	——	0.018

Flagging and Optional Limiting Rule Symbols

Unless an applicant requests not to have non-conformances flagged, values that are outside the required range specified in the U.S. Standards, Commercial Item Description, or other specification will be flagged to bring attention to the nonconformance.

Example:

Net Weight *(Ounces)*	*(min 16.0)*	16.2	16.1	16.2
Vacuum *(Inches)*	*(min. 5)*	7	(2)	10

Quality factors subject to limiting rules are shown as part of the score sheet for the product. As an option, during grading the inspector may use symbols to identify or "flag" any score points causing a limiting rule to affect the sample grade.
The following list of optional limiting rule symbols may be used to identify score point results that cause a limiting rule to affect the sample unit grade.

Grade B Quality factor – a circle around a score point value is used to identify a quality factor that requires the sample unit to be assigned Grade B, even though the total score point value indicates Grade A.

Grade C Quality factor – a triangle around a score point value is used to identify a quality factor that requires the sample unit to be assigned Grade C, even though the total score point value indicates a higher grade.

Substandard Quality Factor – a square around a score point value is used to identify a quality factor that requires the sample unit to be assigned Substandard, even though the total score point value indicates a higher grade.

When any abbreviations or symbols are used to flag information on the score/tally sheet, a key defining the abbreviations or symbols must be shown in the Remarks section.

Example:

TOTAL SCORE 100							
	93*	92	93*	91	93*	94
U.S. GRADE	A	A	A	(B)	A	A
REMARKS				Notified MB		
Key: ◯ = Grade B limiting rule applies.						
* = Cooked sample						

Remarks Section

The "Remarks" section of the score/tally sheet is used to show information that is needed to summarize the inspection. Essential information to be shown in this section (including a key for any abbreviations or symbols):

- The lot grade, average score points, applicable ranges, averages.
- Compliance or non-compliance with specifications. A copy of the specifications may be attached to the completed score/tally sheet.
- If grading frozen product, notation of which samples were cooked.
- Observations and other factual information that further explain the grading of the lot.

When the average score for a lot is in a higher score point range than the grade it is given (e.g., Grade A range score points, but Grade B because of a limiting rule), show the reason (quality factor) that limited the lot grade.

Example:

COLOR	20	(A) 18-20 (B) 16-17 1/ (C) 14-15 1/ (SSTD) 0-13 1/	18	19	18	19	19	18
ABSENCE OF DEFECTS	40	(A) 36-40 (B) 32-35 1/ (C) 28-31 1/ (SSTD)0-27 1/	37	BL (35)	38	BL (35)	36	36
CHARACTER	40	(A) 36-40 (B) 32-35 1/ (C) 28-31 1/ (SSTD)0-27 1/	36	37	36	36	37	37
TOTAL SCORE	100		91	91	92	90	92	91
U.S. GRADE			A	(B)	A	(B)	A	A

REMARKS Key: BL = Blemish Lot as a Whole U.S. Grade B or U.S. EXTRA STANDARD (account defects)
( ) = Grade B limiting rule applies Average Score 91Points
Meets requirements for State of Ohio, Bid No. X9654123, Item No.3

Always write out the grade on a score/tally sheet and its corresponding certificate exactly the way it is written in the U.S. standards for grades. When a U.S. grade standard describes the grade with dual nomenclature such as "U.S. Grade A or U.S. FANCY," show both terms. If the standard does not use dual nomenclature, show only the letter grade.

Some score/tally sheets may not have a "Remarks" section. When there is not enough space, or no designated space for information such as sampling plan used, final grade, case count, or other information that applies to the entire lot, the top margin area of the score/tally sheet may be used.

Example:

SAMPLING PLAN: Time Sampling FINAL GRADE: U.S. GRADE B (account defects)
Medium Volume Average Score 90 Points

REPRODUCE LOCALLY. Include form number and revision date on all reproductions. COLD STORAGE TEMPERATURE (°F) -10

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE SCORE SHEET FOR: **FROZEN WHOLE KERNEL CORN** (Effective August 1, 1952)	CONTRACT NO. / P.O. NO. 12O2XXX5551212	
	CERTIFICATE NO. X-123456	NO. CASES 1,008

NO., SIZE AND KIND OF CONTAINER 1/30 Pound Corrugated Fiber Case with Blue Poly Liners

Sometimes a lot will have a mixture of sample unit grades. For grade or compliance determination in such cases, refer to the Regulations, 7 CFR 52.13.

Unfrozen Sample Units

Inspection results from unfrozen sample units drawn during production are reported on score/tally sheets with the following additions, deletions, or qualifications.

The score sheet or tally sheet will clearly indicate the extent of grading performed on the lot. These procedures are intended to coincide with those outlined in Technical Procedures Manual.

A. When products are intended to be frozen and frozen verification sample units **will be** examined at a later date:

1. Show name of product as "FROZEN ----------."

2. In the "Remarks" section show the following:

"Grade (line or lot grade) Incomplete, Frozen Samples Not Examined."

B. When products are intended to be frozen, and frozen verification sample units **will not be** examined at request of the applicant:

1. Delete the word "FROZEN" in the title of the score sheet and add the words "PREPARED FOR FREEZING."

2. In the "Remarks" section show the following:

"NO APPLICABLE U.S. STANDARDS OF GRADES FOR THIS PRODUCT."

The Completed Score/Tally Sheet

A properly completed score/tally sheet contains all data required to support the grade of the product. If foreign material examination or outside analytical results are required, the completed analytical forms will be attached to the score/tally sheet.

Before signing and submitting the score/tally sheet, verify that it is complete. If you have any questions, compare against the Optional Checklist for Completion of Score Sheets and Tally Sheets.

Completing the Universal Score Sheet, Form SC-364E

Form SC-364E (intranet link), commonly referred to as the Universal Score Sheet, is used for products that are not covered by a U.S. grade standard and do not have a standardized score/tally sheet. It is also used for products that require only an organoleptic examination. Such products may be for export certification and/or condition inspections (see the Certification Manual). Before completing the Form SC-364E, the inspector must determine each of the qualitative and quantitative inspection factors for the product. The quality factors used to evaluate products that have NAG may be based on a standardized product with similar characteristics, a buyer's

specification, or a CIDs. After determining the quality factors for a NAG product, list all of them on the Form SC-364E. The quality level descriptions for NAG items are listed on the following page. Do not use the quality level descriptions from standardized products.

Exception:

If the applicant requests grading of a NAG product based on a similar standardized product, score points and/or quality level descriptions from the standardized product may be used. However, the final grade for the product must be NAG. In this case include the following statement in the remarks section of the SC-364E: "Product has no applicable grade. Score points based on the U.S. Standards for Grades of (fill in name of product)."

The following items describe the content blocks on a typical scoresheet.

1. Product inspected,

2. Certificate number, if applicable,

3. Contract number, or purchase order number, if applicable;

4. Number of cases in lot,

5. Name and address of applicant, including zip code;

6. Number, size, and kind of container;

7. Label nomenclature, and label may be attached;

8. Container codes exactly as they appear on the container,

9. Non-quality factors, quantitative, and analytical data;

10. Quality factors,

11. Quality level descriptions, and their abbreviations;

12. Remarks,

13. Lot as a Whole: U.S. Grade, or Meets or Fails contract requirements;

14. Inspector's printed name, signature, and Date(s) of inspection.

No Applicable Grade Products

NAG products do not have U.S. standards for grades, so score points cannot be used to indicate the quality level of the quality factors evaluated (see exception above). Instead, descriptive

terms such as “practically free” from defects, “reasonably good” color, etc., are used to record the quality level of each factor. Abbreviations for these descriptive terms are used for recording the results of the evaluation, as shown in the Quality Level Descriptions and Abbreviations section below. In addition, the descriptive terms contained in the most relevant grade standard, grading manual or instruction for each applicable factor may be used. In this case include the following statement in the remarks section of the SC-364E: “Product has no applicable grade. Descriptive factors and terms based on (fill in the name of the relevant instruction used).” Inspectors will use the appropriate abbreviation to record the quality level for each grade factor characteristic of the NAG products. Inspectors will include a key for the abbreviations used on the score sheet.

Quality Level Descriptions and Abbreviations

- Color or Appearance
    - G = Good
    - RG = Reasonably Good
    - FG = Fairly Good
    - P = Poor
- Clarity
    - PC = Practically Clear
    - RC = Reasonably Clear
    - FC = Fairly Clear
    - P = Poor
- Absence of Defects
    - PF = Practically Free
    - RF = Reasonably Free
    - FF = Fairly Free
    - P = Poor
- Flavor and Odor (or Aroma)
    - G = Good (Normal or Typical)
    - RG = Reasonably Good
    - P = Poor (Not Typical for the Product)
- Uniformity of Size
    - PU = Practically Uniform in Size
    - RU = Reasonably Uniform in Size
    - FU = Fairly Uniform in Size

- P = Poor

- Overall Quality Level
  - M = Meets
  - F = Fails

- Character or Consistency or Texture
  - G = Good
  - RG = Reasonably Good
  - FG = Fairly Good
  - P = Poor

Updating Previously Inspected Product

When an applicant requests an up-to-date certificate, refer to the Certification Manual for the correct procedures. Start a new score/tally sheet and write "Updated Inspection" in the upper left margin. Attach a copy of the previously completed score/tally sheet to this new score/tally sheet. Write the previous inspection certificate number on the new sheet and identify as "previous certificate number".

The lot may not have to be entirely re-graded, but ALWAYS evaluate flavor and odor on re-inspected lots. If the lot is determined to be in good condition and there is no apparent change in the product, a limited "verification" type of inspection is appropriate. Write on the new score/tally sheet "No apparent change in grade" in the sample unit boxes of the quality factors that have not changed since the previous inspection. If quality factors have changed, re-grade the lot, assigning score points for all factors. Consult your supervisor on how to recertify product that is no longer of the same quality.

Guidelines for the Development of Plant Score Sheets

It is essential that "company" or "applicant" documents used by the applicant to record their results do not reference the Department of Agriculture or any official marks. This will differentiate between official score/tally sheets and applicant score/tally sheets. Unless other authorization is given, only approved SC forms will be used when providing inspection/grading services to applicants.

Applicants who contract for in-plant inspection may request using a score/tally sheet developed for their facility. Requests for approval of automated (computerized) score sheets will be submitted through the Regional Office to National Programs Mission Support.

Guidelines for Approval of Applicant Score/Tally Sheets

The plant's own score/tally sheets may be approved for SCI use by the area supervisor if they comply with the following guidelines:

- All score/tally sheets will allow for recording all information applicable to the standardized or non-standardized product,
- The term "Official Inspector" may appear on the score/tally sheet; USDA inspection personnel will print and sign their names in the designated space and write "USDA" adjacent to their signatures,
- "Lot Grade" (and average score, when applicable) will appear in the "Remarks" section of the score/tally sheet,
- Plant score/tally sheet form numbers are acceptable,
- The original score/tally sheet may be white in color,
- The term "Official USDA Inspector" will not appear on the score/tally sheet,
- References to the United States Department of Agriculture, official or approved identification marks will not appear on the score/tally sheet,
- There will be no certification statement,
- There will be no reference to plant sanitation, and
- When information is recorded on the score/tally sheet by trained plant personnel, it will be initialed by that individual.

Optional Check List for Completion of Score Sheets and Tally Sheets

- Is the correct version of the score/tally sheet for the product being used?
- Is the applicant information correct?
- Is product, container size, and type complete and correct?
- If applicable, is contract or purchase order number documented?
- Is the case count shown?
- Are codes recorded properly?
- Are principal label marks recorded, or is the label attached and noted?
- Are any errors properly corrected (single line through, corrected and initialed)?

- Are repeated values (except codes) written out, without the use of ditto marks, arrows, or check marks?
- Do non-quality factors meet?
- If applicable, are limiting/partial limiting rules correctly applied?
- Are all samples within the deviant range of indicated grade (i.e., no "worse than deviants" present in lot, or within ranges established in Grade Compliance)?
- Are score points for each sample totaled correctly?
- Is the grade for each sample unit shown?
- Does the lot meet quality requirements by code (i.e., no "lower quality codes" present in lot, as established in Regulations?
- Is the grade of the lot shown? Is it correct?
- Is there a key to explain abbreviations or symbols?
- Is the average score of the lot shown? Is it correct?
- If applicable, is compliance with specification noted?
- If product is frozen, are cooked samples noted?
- Is inspector's name both printed and signed?
- Is the score/tally sheet properly dated?

BULK CONTAINERS

Frozen Products Packed in Used Containers

Used 30-pound metal and/or plastic containers with friction-type lids are refilled by some processors of frozen foods. Reused containers must be clean at time of refilling. Obtain a letter of conformance from the processor stating that the containers were not previously used for non-food products. Products filled into unsanitary containers are to be classed as GNC.

It may be difficult to accurately describe reused containers. Some of these may have been used several times and appear to be old, abused, or otherwise damaged. They may bear an assortment of code marks and label statements. Certification statements regarding used containers may be found in the Certification Manual.

Reused containers are not acceptable for government purchases (State, Federal, and Department of Defense) unless specified in the contract or solicitation. Do not certify without a written waiver unless specified in the contract.

Tote Bins

Many packers use large bulk containers called "tote bins" for frozen vegetables. These bins are used during the packing season to store frozen vegetables for repack at a later date. The bins vary in size and construction but can hold as much as a ton of product.

For financial reasons, users of tote bins need to know whether or not the product is free flowing or frozen in a solid mass. The type of pack should always be shown in the body of the inspection certificate.

Free Flowing

Free flowing describes a pack in which the individual units of the pack are not frozen together in a solid mass but may be easily separated into individual units. There may be some crusting on the interior surface of the tote bin, or a few clumps of units frozen together within the container, but these can be separated with moderate pressure.

Solid Mass

Solid mass describes a pack in which the individual units of the product in the container are predominantly or entirely frozen together in a solid mass. Such product will require additional cost in repacking the product due a special "break-up" step in the process.

Coding System

For the purpose of inspection and certification, a lot can be a group of tote bins or a single tote bin. Tote bins must be properly identified for future re-inspection, segregation, etc. Codes should be at least ½ inch in height and stamped on the tote bins or on tags placed in upper right or left-hand corner of the side normally facing the forklift driver. The area for applying the codes may be painted to facilitate application and legibility.

The coding system may include the following:

- Plant (when more than 1 plant is operated by the same company)
- Quality designation
- Date of Pack (day, month, and year)
- Product, type style, size, etc. (when not readily apparent, such as covered bins or numerous product styles)

- Period, shift, or lot number
- Bin numbers
- Special notation of abnormal quality variations (i.e., Grade B for color only, etc.)
- Different colored tape, tags, or marking ink for different quality levels, or other special notations.

Sampling

To determine the sampling rate for an item packed in tote bins or bulk storage, the poundage is converted to institutional size (2 ½ pound) containers. Using the number of 2 ½ pound containers the lot would represent, refer to the Regulations or the Sampling Manual.

When sampling tote bins, use a sample scoop and dig into the product as far as possible in at least 3 locations. The sample drawn from each of the three locations may be considered as a sample unit for inspection and certification if each tote bin is a separate lot. It may be composited as one sample unit if the lot consists of a group of tote bins. Sampling may be more representative with the use of a trier, or thief, which will penetrate deeply into each bin. This implement should be constructed to permit sampling of the product from all levels in the bin. If the product is a solid mass, or if representative portions of the bin cannot be sampled, the certificate should be flagged to indicate the extent of restricted sampling. For restricted certification of tote bins, see the Certification Manual.

Certificate Ledgers

Certificates are accountable documents and a ledger with the following information will allow an office to account for certificates that have been issued. The basic information required for each certificate is the certificate number, name of the applicant, the inspector's name, and date used. Regional Operations Branch Chiefs or Officers-in-Charge (OIC) may require additional information. A certificate ledger is required for each location that issues certificates (office, in-plant, etc.), and each field office is required to perform quarterly certificate accountability reviews.

LABELING

The labeling of processed food products is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. The current FDA labeling guidelines may be found at the following internet address: http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/default.htm.
Under the Continuous Inspection program, labels bearing official marks are formally reviewed by National Programs Mission Support. Possible violations of the Food and Drug Act on labels using official marks will be brought to the processor's attention, as will questionable labels observed in the course of inspection. Depending upon the nature of the deviation, corrective action may be recommended or required.

Various additives are sometimes used in the preparation of non-standardized processed foods. These additives, such as acids, salt, sugar, approved colorings, calcium lactate, etc., are usually used during the manufacturing process. For example, some frozen vegetables may pass through brine separators during processing and accumulate trace amounts of salt in the finished product. Similarly, citric acid may be used in the manufacture of canned apple sauce. Other examples include additives such as sugar, coloring, and calcium lactate sometimes used during the processing of French-fried potatoes. The use of these substances can pose a labeling problem. Because of the method of application, the additive(s) may carry over to the finished product in negligible quantities. This may seem to be inconsequential. However, since many of these products are not standardized, under Food and Drug labeling requirements it is necessary to declare each ingredient, including additives when used.

It is the responsibility of the packer to conform to FDA requirements. SCI approval of labels with official marks does not relieve the company of this responsibility. We will not permit the use of labels with official marks when we have knowledge that undeclared additives are being used in violation of Food and Drug labeling requirements. Contact your supervisor if you believe this to be an issue at your in-plant assignment.

Definition of Labels

For purposes of this instruction, the term “labeling” refers to statements that describe the product(s) involved, and which may appear on a variety of materials. Labeling materials may include, but is not limited to:

- Paper labels.
- Spot labels or stickers (as affixed to metal or glass containers, e.g., Jams, Olives, etc.).
- Stickers in the shape of USDA shields separate from other kinds of labeling.
- Lids, caps, and tops of containers bearing official identification.
- Printed overwraps (such as wax wraps in frozen foods).
- Metal and fiber combination containers, as for frozen fruit and juices.
- Insert packages (such as those containing separate sweetening ingredients inside of another product).
- Wax paper cartons, e.g., primary packages, such as fiber containers for chilled juices.
- Lithographed or otherwise coated or marked containers.
- Transparent film packages.

- Paper inserts which show through transparent overwraps.
- Metal containers.
- Shipping containers.
- Stenciling or stamping.
- Any form of label not mentioned that is used in conjunction with official marks.

Classification of Labels

1. Packers Private Label

   Labels show that the product was packed or manufactured by the processor. These labels are for use only at the plants operated by the firm named, whether or not the plants are located at the main headquarters. The location of plants need not be shown on the label.

   Example:

   PACKED BY
   X-Y-Z PROCESSING CO.

2. Packer's Distributor Label

   These labels show that the product was packed or manufactured for or distributed by the firm named at their own plants or at plant locations of other processors.

   Example:

   PACKED FOR
   X-Y-Z PROCESSING CO.
   (OR)
   DISTRIBUTED BY X-Y-Z
   PROCESSING CO.

3. Distributor's Label

   These labels show that the product was packed or manufactured for or distributed by a firm other than a processor engaged in actual processing. These firms are usually wholesale food concerns; or may be a brokerage firm, cooperative sales agency, or other marketing service group.

   Example:

   DISTRIBUTED BY

GOOD FOODS CO., INC.

(OR)

PACKED FOR GOOD
FOOD CO., INC.

(OR)

MANUFACTURED FOR
AND SOLD BY GOOD
FOOD CO., INC.

Approved Identification

The Regulations describes the use of approved identification in 7 CFR 52.3 and 52.53. Penalties for misuse of approved identification are in 52.54. All inspectors will read and become familiar with this information.

Official Grade and Inspection Marks

This grouping includes:

- "Grade Marks" that include the prefix "U.S." regardless of the presence or absence of a USDA shield on the container. Exceptions to this are quality statements for honey and maple syrup. The "U.S." prefix used in conjunction with these products is exempt from approval and control by SCI.

- "Inspection Marks" include the USDA shield or statements that the product(s) is "Packed Under Continuous Inspection (or the QAP) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

- "Grade Marks" and "Inspection Marks" combined.

Certain grade quality designations for some frozen products are in violation of the Perishable Agricultural Commodity Act regulations if they do not meet the labeled grade (such as Grade A or Grade B). See the Misrepresentation by Unfair Labeling Practices section of this manual for more details on PACA misrepresentations and contact your immediate supervisor as needed.

Marks Not Considered Official

- Quality marks or statements which do not include the prefix "U.S." (see Official Grade and Inspection Marks section above).

- Quality marks or statements that do not include the prefix "U.S." and which are not enclosed within the official shield.

- Quality marks or statements that do not include the prefix "U.S." and which are not accompanied by an adjacent official shield either on the primary container or on the cases.

- Quality marks or statements that do not include the prefix "U.S." and which are not accompanied by a statement indicating USDA inspection on the primary container or on the cases.

- Quality marks or statements enclosed in designs that do not simulate the USDA shield, such as triangles, circles, and rectangles.

- Plain outline of shields embossed on metal container lids.

Questionable Marks

Certain marks similar to the design or statements of official marks are often used.

Example:

Marks showing inspection or certification, such as:

"Inspected: This carton is one of a lot from which samples have been inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.," or

"USDA certificate covers contents," or

"Grade A, certificated quality"

Labels displaying similar marks or statements will be submitted to NPMS for review through the normal chain of command.

SCI Policy on Use of Approved Identification

<u>In-Plant or Approved Plant-Lot Inspection</u>

Products packed under in-plant or approved plant-lot inspection may bear "Official Marks" as defined in the Regulations.
This means if any processing or repackaging operations (other than re-labeling) take place on the product in a plant under in-plant inspection, the product may bear approved identification. However, all component products must either have been previously inspected, or must be examined for wholesomeness prior to being used as the product or part of the product.

All previously inspected items must be suitably identified and accompanied by inspection reports. The receiving inspector will examine the lot and verify its identification and condition.

All items not previously inspected must be examined for wholesomeness according to the Foreign Material Manual. The Foreign Material manual also includes the sampling rate for these analyses and visual and sensory examinations, which will be in accordance with the applicable table for lot inspection.

The following official marks may be used:

A. Continuous Inspection

Official marks shown as figures 1 through 10 of 7 CFR 52.53 of the Regulations, provided marks 8 and 9 are limited to plants operating under QAP.

B. In-Plant Inspection (other than continuous)

Official marks shown as figures 5 through 14 of 7 CFR 52.53 of the Regulations, provided marks 9 and 10 are limited to plants operating under QAP.

C. Plant Lot Inspection

Official marks shown as figures 11 through 14 of 7 CFR 52.53 of the Regulations may be used when the requirements in the regulations are met.

Quality Limitations

Products bearing approved grade marks in conjunction with any statement of quality must equal or exceed the stated quality.

Approved inspection marks (see 7 CFR 52.53 figures 3 and 4 of the Regulations) may be applied to products labeled under continuous inspection for which there are no applicable U.S. standards for grades. To do so, they must be of acceptable commercial quality and include no implication of quality grade on the label. Approved grade marks, see 7 CFR 52.53b, figures 1 and 2; 7 CFR 52.53c figures 5 and 6; and 7 CFR 52.53d, figures 11 and 12 of the Regulations may not be applied to products for which there are no applicable U.S. standards for grades.

Fill Weight Criteria

Products failing USDA recommended fill weight criteria may not bear approved identification, EXCEPT if the product fails the fill weight criteria but subsequently meets the drained weight criteria.

Drained Weights

Products failing USDA recommended drained weight criteria may not bear approved identification.

"Grade Not Certified," Grade D, or Substandard

Products which are "Grade Not Certified," Grade D, or Substandard for any reason will not bear approved identification.

Mislabeling and FDA Regulations

Products failing an FDA standard of identity, quality, or fill may not be associated with approved identification.

Products that have false or misleading information on their labels may not bear approved identification. Variations during packing can result in mislabeled products.

Examples of common types of mislabeling:

- Product solids lower than stated or required by an FDA standard of identity;
- Net weight lower than stated;
- Type or style different from stated or inferred by label graphic or description;
- Packing media densities different from stated;
- Proportion of main ingredients different from that indicated by label statements, graphics, or description;
- Improper wording concerning the packer or distributor, such as: "Packed by XYZ Distributors" when the statement should have been "Packed for XYZ Distributors."

Products Normally Inspected by Another Department

SCI Inspectors may be required to inspect products not normally covered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Inspection of fish or fish products through an agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce is one example. The processor must coordinate with the other Department concerning the proper use of their approved identification, if any.

Misrepresentation by Unfair Labeling Practices

The following instructions are for identifying and reporting potential and fraudulent violations through unfair labeling practices. The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act was enacted at the request of the fruit and vegetable industry to promote fair trade in the industry. The PACA protects businesses dealing in frozen fruits and vegetables by establishing and enforcing a code of fair business practices and by helping companies resolve business disputes. The PACA Division, of the USDA, AMS Fair Trade Practices Program administers services under the Act.

The PACA Division home page may be found at the following internet address: https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/paca.

PACA Division is assigned the responsibility for administering PACA misrepresentation regulations covering certain frozen fruits and vegetables. To ensure compliance, PACA Division representatives will conduct on-site inspections at both shipping and receiving points. Depending on the results of these inspections and the seriousness of the violation, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.

Misrepresentation – Definition

The PACA defines a misrepresentation as an unfair trade practice that may occur by word, act, mark, stencil, label, statement or deed of the character, kind, grade, quality, quantity, size, pack, weight, condition, degree of maturity, or State, country, or region of origin of a particular frozen fruit or vegetable received, shipped, sold, or offered to be sold in interstate or foreign commerce.

A. Products Covered

PACA Division regulations cover most labeled frozen fruits and vegetables grown and processed in or outside the United States that are transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

Some exceptions are products such as frozen fruit juices, frozen fruit drinks, frozen fruit juice concentrates, and frozen French-fried potatoes and potato products.

B. SCI Responsibilities

SCI is responsible for providing the PACA Division Misbranding Officer the necessary documents pertaining to all alleged and fraudulent misrepresentation violations. The Misbranding Officer contact information can be found in the SCI Division Directory & Mobile Device List (intranet link). The Misbranding Officer will examine the documents and may conduct an investigation prior to initiating regulatory action.

SCI employees are cautioned not to place a “HOLD” on the item(s) in question or to refuse inspection service. Our function is only to document the label misrepresentation, and to report the violation if the lot containing the alleged violation is shipped.

The applicant has the option to rework a lot to resolve a label misrepresentation. If a lot is reworked and the alleged violation is corrected, do not submit any documents to the Misbranding Officer. A PACA violation occurs only when the lot that contains the alleged violation is shipped or transferred to another location.

C. In-Plant Inspection Service

Under in-plant situations, misrepresentations (whether intentional or unintentional) are not considered potential or alleged violations as long as the lot is still in the applicant's

warehouse. As indicated above, when the lot enters interstate or foreign commerce, the packer, shipper, or broker may be in violation of PACA regulations. When the DIR annotates an alleged label misrepresentation, it's the applicant's responsibility to inform the Inspector-in-Charge when the particular lot will be reworked or relabeled. The SCI inspector will sample the new lot to confirm the alleged violation has been corrected.

1. Verbal Reports

It may be necessary to telephone the PACA Division Misbranding Officer to provide a verbal description of the information shown on the Misbranding Report. If this is necessary, contact the PACA Division Misbranding Officer. The current phone number can be found in the SCI Division Directory & Mobile Device List (intranet link). Conditions that will require a call to PACA Division are as follows:

a. A lot that contains an alleged violation has been transferred to another location; or

b. A lot that contains an alleged violation continues to remain in the applicant's warehouse, and in-plant inspection service is no longer in effect.

2. Documentation

Quality and non-quality results that differ from what is declared on the label will be documented as follows:

a. SC-416 Daily Inspection Report (intranet link) or a plant's Daily Pack Report. Use the number 17 as a symbol to designate a particular line item that does not comply with PACA regulations (see section on in-plant inspection, Daily Inspection Report in this Manual);

b. Certificate of Quality and Condition – Flag the grade statement of the certificate in accordance with Division instructions (commercial, state, Department of Defense, or Federal procurement); and

c. Complete the Appendix III – Misbranding Report.

3. Distribution of Documents

a. To PACA Division

To take appropriate action, the PACA Division Misbranding Officer must receive one copy of the applicable certificate of quality and condition and the misbranding report. These documents will be promptly furnished to the Misbranding Officer, via email. The current contact information can

be found in the SCI Division Directory & Mobile Device List (intranet link).

b. To SCI Division

The inspector-in-charge will provide the field office with three copies each of the Certificate of Quality and Condition, and the Misbranding Report. The Officer-in-Charge will retain one copy of each document and distribute the balance as follows:

- Regional Operations Branch Office: one copy of each document.
- National Programs Mission Support via SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov: one copy of each document.

Use subject line "PACA Label Misrepresentation."

D. Lot Inspection Service, Product Not Previously Graded

The following procedures regarding verbal reports, documentation, and distribution of documents are applicable when the applicant indicates the inspection lot has not been previously graded, and the Inspector-in-Charge is able to verify this.

1. Verbal Reports

Contact the PACA Division Misbranding Officer by phone. The current phone number can be found in the SCI Division Directory & Mobile Device List (intranet link).

Provide the PACA Division official with a verbal description of the information on the Misbranding Report. The telephone call should be made on the same day that the SCI inspector determines that the alleged PACA Division label violation has occurred.

2. Documentation

a. Certificate of Quality and Condition – flag the grade statement of the certificate in accordance with Division instructions (commercial, state, Department of Defense, or Federal procurement); and

b. Complete the Appendix III – Misbranding Report,

3. Distribution of documents

a. To PACA Division

One copy of each of the applicable Certificate of Quality and Condition, and the Misbranding Report will be promptly furnished to the PACA Division Misbranding Officer, via email. Their contact information can be found in the SCI Division Directory & Mobile Device List (intranet link).

b. To SCI Division

The OIC will make sure that the Certificate of Quality and Condition, and the Misbranding Report are distributed as follows:

- Regional Operations Branch Office: one copy of each document.
- National Programs Mission Support via SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov: one copy of each document.

Use subject line "PACA Label Misrepresentation."

c. To U.S. Customs Service

When imported product is graded and a labeling misrepresentation is found, provide the local U.S. Customs Service agent with a copy of the Misbranding Report.

E. Lot Inspection Service, Product Previously Graded

When the applicant indicates the lot was previously graded, or another office verifies that the lot was previously graded, proceed as follows:

1. Obtain a copy of the original score sheet(s) or certificate, if applicable, with the code mark(s) represented by the lot.

2. When a portion of a lot that was previously graded is resubmitted (commercial, state, Department of Defense, or Federal procurement), a labeling misrepresentation will be decided by the results of the original inspection.

3. When inspection records indicate the origin inspection lot was unlabeled at time of sampling, a labeling misrepresentation will be decided by the results of the resubmitted lot.

4. Verbal reports, documentation, and distribution of documents will be in accordance with the information shown in the Lot Inspection Service, Product Not Previously Graded section above.

F. Alleged or Suspected Label Misrepresentation

PACA Division will coordinate with National Programs Mission Support to establish a program to sample product that is suspected of having an alleged label misrepresentation violation. When a PACA label misrepresentation is found, it will be at the discretion of the PACA Division Misbranding Officer to contact the shipper, broker, or distributor to initiate appropriate corrective or disciplinary action.

The PACA Division Misbranding Officer will make the request for official lot inspection service through NPMS. Information concerning the request will be transmitted to the applicable Regional and field offices by NPMS.

Details concerning the lot(s) to sample will be coordinated between the Misbranding Officer and the Officer-in-Charge. The Misbranding Officer will contact the shipper, broker, or distributor to schedule an agreeable date and time for product sampling.

1. When Applicant Is PACA Division

When PACA Division is the applicant, the responsibilities of the area field office are as follows:

a. Select a Division representative to accompany the PACA Division Misbranding Officer to the processor's warehouse, commercial cold storage facility, or distribution center;

b. Officially sample the appropriate number of sample units for each lot in accordance with the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Fruits and Vegetables and Related Products;

c. Inspect and grade all sample units for the appropriate quality and non-quality factors, and examine product for the presence of foreign material (see the Foreign Material Manual);

d. Forward a completed Appendix III – Misbranding Report to the PACA Misbranding Officer, the Regional office, and NPMS;

e. Distribute the grading and inspection documents as indicated below. Show the applicant as the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act Division, and the applicant's address as, Washington, D.C. 20250;

- PACA Division:

  Original and two copies of the Certificate of Quality and Condition (contact PACA Division Misbranding Officer for current mailing address).

- Regional Office:

One copy of the Certificate of Quality and Condition, and a one copy of the applicable score sheet(s) or tally sheet(s).

- NPMS:

  One copy of the Certificate of Quality and Condition, and a one copy of the applicable score sheet(s) or tally sheet(s) via SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov.

f. Follow the guidance within the SCI Billing Divisions of the Specialty Crops Program for Inspection Services policy for proper billing of this service.

FUTURES

The following instructions are for sampling orange juice products packed in tanker trucks for futures contracts when facilities have not contracted with SCI for in-plant continuous inspection services but are contracted under an alternate Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) approved SCI inspection program. ICE has changed the requirements for delivery and warehousing of futures. Continuous Inspection is no longer required for Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice (FCOJ). In addition, Not from Concentrate (NFC) orange juice has been added to futures contracts and does not require Continuous Inspection. Lot inspection as described below is acceptable for futures contracts (NFC Orange Juice was delisted by ICE December 18, 2007).

When applicants request lot inspection of FCOJ or NFC loaded into tanker trucks for futures contracts, follow these procedures:

A. Schedule inspection personnel to perform sanitation inspection of the processing facility and the bulk container(s) prior to loading. Complete and retain the SC (Specialty Crops) 416-3 Sanitation Score Sheet for Citrus Food Processing Plants (intranet link) which can be found on the AMS Forms Catalog at the following intranet address: https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/Forms/SC.aspx

   Follow instructions in the Sanitation Manual for recording, following up, and reporting deficiencies.

B. Draw samples of the product during loading into the tanker truck(s). Sampling of pre-loaded tankers is not authorized.

C. Draw samples using one of the following procedures:

   - **Automatic Sampler** – Use automatic samplers to obtain representative samples. Follow Division Instructions for set up and use of automatic samplers (see the Automatic Samplers section in this manual).

- **Manually Drawn Samples** – Draw representative, individual sub-samples randomly during the filling process. The frequency will be determined by the time it takes to fill the container. Draw the number of samples as specified in the Regulations, 7 CFR 52.38 Table III, Group IV.

  The "on-line" rate is authorized.

D. Analyze and record the results for each individual sample at the facility.

E. Bill applicants in accordance with guidance in this manual, under Fee Computation.

Review Program for Concentrated Orange Juice for Manufacturing (OM) and Pasteurized Orange Juice (POJ) for Futures Contracts

To ensure uniform grading of Futures deliveries, these instructions provide procedures for the review of product samples of OM that represent deliveries of FCOJ Futures, and POJ that represent deliveries of NFC Futures (POJ NFC Orange Juice was delisted by ICE December 18, 2007).

In January 2007, ICE, Inc. acquired the New York Board of Trade (NYBOT), which was previously known as Citrus Associates of the New York Cotton Exchange, Inc. NYBOT is now known as ICE Futures US. ICE Futures US is regulated by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and has been designated as a marketer for contracts in FCOJ and NFC Futures buying and options on Futures. OM is produced to meet the requirements of an FCOJ Futures contract. POJ is produced to meet the requirements of an NFC Futures contract. ICE Rules Chapters 7, 13, and 25 are the source of most of the requirements for these commodities. The U.S. Standards for Grades of Orange Juice effective January 10, 1983 are used as the standards to determine the grade and quality delivered on contracts, per ICE rules 13.02 and 25.02. A USDA certificate is issued at the time of grading. In addition, ICE Futures US procedures require USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program, SCI to perform a "grade review" for each lot SCI grades for ICE Futures US. Any delivery of FCOJ or NFC futures which fails the grade review is subject to penalties or remedies per ICE Rule 7.70. ICE Rules 13.02, 13.03, and 7.64 of the FCOJ rules state:

"For FCOJ-A and FCOJ-B: "U.S. Grade A" with a Brix value of not less than 62.5 degrees, having a Brix value to acid ratio of not less than 14.0 to 1 nor more than 19.0 to 1 and a minimum score of 94 points, with the minimums for the component factors fixed at 37 points for color, 37 points for flavor, and 19 points for defects.

The maximum amount of bottom (sinking) pulp shall be twelve percent, and the percentage of recoverable oil must not be less than 0.005 percent nor more than 0.020 percent. The maximum temperature allowed at tanker shipment is plus 20 degrees Fahrenheit."

Effective with the July 2009 delivery month, the country of origin requirements stipulate that the OM be produced from product of the United States, Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica, or any blend thereof.

For NFC, the following is in accordance with Rules 25.02, 25.03, and 7.64 of the ICE Futures US (Chater 25 no longer the "NFC Rules"):

"U.S. Grade A" Pasteurized Orange Juice conforming to Food and Drug Administration, 21 CFR 146.140, but without the addition of any of the optional concentrated orange juice ingredients referenced in CFR 146.140(b) and without the addition of optional sweetening ingredients referenced in CFR 146.140(c), with a Brix value of 11.5 to 12.5 degrees having a Brix value to acid ratio of not less than 14.0 to 1 nor more than 20.5 to 1 and a minimum score of 92 points, with the minimums for the component factors fixed at 36 for color, 36 points for flavor, and 18 points for defects; product shall be 100 percent Florida origin. The maximum amount of bottom (sinking) pulp shall be fifteen percent and the percentage of recoverable oil shall not be greater than 0.035 percent. The maximum temperature allowed at tanker shipment is plus 35 degrees Fahrenheit".

ICE Futures US rules require USDA inspection for grade at the time of Futures delivery, as well as specifying a review program to monitor the quality requirements. The following reviews were put in place to meet these requirements:

A. Effective January 1992, all deliveries for FCOJ Futures will be reviewed by the Winter Haven Area Office (WHAO), Winter Haven, Florida.

B. Effective January 2007, all deliveries for NFC Futures will be reviewed by the WHAO, Winter Haven, Florida.

Product declared by applicants as "Futures Quality" is not considered Futures product.

C. SCI Responsibilities

1. Inform the applicant(s) about sampling, grading, billing, and review procedures;

2. Select and draw official sample units of product as it is being loaded for delivery;

3. Inspect and grade OM/POJ, issue score sheets, distribute certificates, and retain a portion of the sample for review; and

4. Conduct product reviews to assure uniformity of grading and inspection at all facilities.

D. Grade Reviews

Unless otherwise specified, all grade reviews will be conducted by the WHAO, on behalf of the ICE Futures US Inc. The origin and facility identity will be unknown to the SCI reviewers.

SCI will conduct grade reviews as follows:

1. Sampling Procedure for Review Samples

All sample units for review must be officially drawn. Unofficial sample units submitted by the applicant will not be accepted.

a. Retain a minimum of 2 six ounce samples for each OM/FCOJ delivery (each mobile tanker) and retain a minimum of two 24 to 32 ounce samples for each POJ/NFC delivery. Of the two samples drawn, retain one sample.

b. Submit the other sample to the WHAO for review.

- The sample MUST be delivered or sent into the WHAO for next day delivery, and should arrive at the WHAO Monday thru Friday, 0800 to 1630, not including holidays. Do not ship on Friday.

- Samples must be adequately packed in insulated containers with sufficient cool packs to preserve product quality. Samples can be shipped in plastic bottles, or any other container that can be safely shipped without breakage or leakage. Taped screw cap lids or sealed cans are preferred.

- Each sample must be identified as indicated in the section titled "Identification of Review Samples for Submittal to the WHAO" below, and must be accompanied by a score sheet, certificate (SC-149 or SC-146 as applicable), and the bill of lading.

- Associated submittal numbers must be recorded on all paper works submitted with the samples.

Futures Sampling Reminder:

The sample must be representative of the lot. This will be the actual juice sample taken from the tanker. The sample must not be pulled from a blend tank or from a blend of storage tanks. It must also be the same sample which was graded and recorded on the score sheet.

2. Identification of Review Samples for Submittal to the WHAO

Mark all review samples with labels taped to each sample container. Submittal numbers are to be assigned to each review sample based on the fiscal year beginning with the number 1 and continuing with consecutive numbers throughout the fiscal year.

An example of a label for marking the first submitted review sample of the fiscal year is as follows:

Futures Review Sample

Plant Name:	John Doe and Company
Facility No:	6000
Date Inspected:	04/01/2010
BL/Manifest No:	B58505
Submittal No:	001

3. Notification of WHAO

The field office providing the inspection service will notify the WHAO of futures deliveries via email on a weekly basis. The message must include the following information for each delivery:

- Facility No.
- BL/Manifest No.
- Submittal No.
- Certificate No.
- Date Inspected

4. Sample Control Procedure

The WHAO OIC will designate a control official for handling samples during the receipt and review process. When a Futures FCOJ/NFC sample arrives in the WHAO, the designated control official will record the sample identification in a review log and assign a control number. The identification label will be removed to ensure that the origin and production facility are not disclosed during the review process. Only the control official will know the sample origin and production facility – he or she will not participate as a member of the review panel to determine compliance with ICE Futures US.

5. Review Procedure

The grade review will evaluate the product in accordance with quality requirements of the U.S. Standards for Grades of Orange Juice and the ICE Futures US Rules as follows:

a. FCOJ Futures (Graded as OM)

- Reconstitution

  The review sample will be reconstituted to a corrected Brix of 11.8 degrees.

- Color

The quality factor of color will be determined using a USDA approved colorimeter. The minimum color score for FCOJ Futures is 37 points.

- Defects

  The quality factor for defects will be determined by visual examination. The minimum defect score for FCOJ Futures is 19 points.

- Flavor

  The quality factor for flavor will be determined organoleptically. The minimum flavor score for FCOJ Futures is 37 points.

- Documentation

  The reviewers will report the score points for each quality factor for each assigned control number to the control official. The control official will record the results of the flavor panel scores and other results in the review log as final documentation.

- Notification of Review Results

  Results of the review in relationship to the production facility and origin are confidential and will be available only to authorized ICE Futures US representatives. A summary will be provided quarterly to the Division Director.

b. NFC Futures (Graded as POJ)

- Color

  The quality factor of color will be determined using a USDA approved colorimeter. The minimum color score for NFC Futures is 36 points.

- Defects

  The quality factor for defects will be determined by visual examination. The minimum defect score for NFC Futures is 18 points.

- Flavor

The quality factor for flavor will be determined organoleptically. The minimum flavor score for NFC Futures is 36 points.

- Documentation

  The reviewers will report the score points for each quality factor for each assigned control number to the control official. The control official will record the results of the flavor panel scores and other results in the review log as final documentation.

- Notification of Review Results

  Results of the review in relationship to the production facility and origin are confidential and will be available only to authorized ICE Futures representatives. A summary will be provided quarterly to the Division Director.

6. Billing for Review Samples

   WHAO will bill the applicant one hour for each review sample at the current hourly rate shown in the Regulations, 7 CFR 52.42.

METRICATION

To provide uniformity and simplify application and use of the metric system of measurements (Systems International or SI), all SCI personnel will utilize the following rules when requested or when it is appropriate to apply the metric system to inspection and/or certification.

Symbols

For purposes of uniformity, the following symbols should be used in metric statements where appropriate:

Metric Statement	Symbol
liter	l
milliliter	ml
kilogram	kg
gram	g
milligram	mg
degree Celsius	degree C
meter	m

Metric Statement	Symbol
millimeter	mm
centimeter	cm
square meter	m^2
square centimeter	cm^2
kilopascal	kpa

- Symbols are not capitalized unless the unit is derived from a proper name, e.g., degree C, for degree Celsius.
- Periods are not to be used after the symbol.
- Symbols are always written in the singular form. Do not add "s" to express the plural when the symbol is used.
- Square centimeter (cm^2) refers to individual squares of 1 cm on an edge, e.g., 8 square centimeters (8 cm^2) means an area in the shape of a rectangle 1 cm by 8 cm.
- On the other hand, a square 8 cm on an edge is an area in the shape of a square 8 cm by 8 cm for a total area of 64 cm^2. When it is possible for the symbol to be misread, it is recommended that the measurement be written out (8 cm^2 = 8 square centimeters, or an area of 1 cm by 8 cm).

Numerical Values (Conversions)

For accurate of equivalency, multiply the specified quantity by the conversion factor given in the following table:

To Convert From:	To:	Multiply By:
Ounce *(avoirdupois)*	kilograms (kg)	0.02835
Pound *(avoirdupois)*	kilograms (kg)	0.453592
Fluid ounce *(U.S.)*	liter (1)	0.029574
Pint *(U.S. liquid)*	liter (1)	0.473176
Quart *(U.S. liquid)*	liter (1)	0.946353
Gallon *(U.S. liquid)*	liter (1)	3.785412
Inch	meter (m)	0.0254
Foot	meter (m)	0.3048
Yard	meter (m)	0.9144

To Convert From:	To:	Multiply By:
Square inch	centimeter^2 (cm^2)	6.4516
Square foot	meter^2 (m^2)	0.092903
Cubic inch	centimeter^3 (cm^3)	16.387064
Cubic foot	liter (l)	28.316847
Inch of mercury (vacuum)	kilopascal	3.39

Note that most of the above conversions result in kilograms, liters, and meters. Changing these results to submultiples requires only moving the decimal two places to the right for centi-submultiples, and three places right for milli-submultiples.

Rounding

In all conversions, the number of significant digits retained should be such that accuracy is neither sacrificed nor exaggerated. As a general rule, retain only the first three digits. When converting minimum (not less than) tolerances, round down to obtain the converted value, e.g., 196.4 g becomes 196 g or 1.759 m becomes 1.75 m. Conversely, round up in the case of maximum (not more than) tolerances, e.g., 196.4 g becomes 197 g, or 1.759 m becomes 1.76 m. When converting values that are not limits, round in the normal manner, e.g., 196.4 g becomes 196 g, or 1.759 m becomes 1.76 m.

- Rule of 1000: Selected multiple and sub-multiple prefixes for units should result in numerical values greater than 1 and less than 1000, e.g., 1.96 kg, not 1960 g, or 750 mm (75 cm), not 0.75 m.
- Use only decimal fractions. Common fractions (½, ¼, etc.), are not permitted.

Systems

- **English System** – Use of the English system without reference to Systems International system.
- **Full Metric** – Use Systems International units without reference to English units.
- **Soft Metric Conversion** – Where the measurement is in English terms so that it appears as a whole number, e.g., 1-lb (453.6 g).
- **Hard Metric Conversion** – Where the measurement is made in SI terms so that it appears as a round number, e.g., 450 g (0.99 lb.).

Domestic and Metric Measures

- Domestic Weights

- 1 grain = 0.0001428 pounds
- 7,000 grains = 1 pound
- 16 ounces = 1 pound
- 2,000 pounds = 1 short ton
- 2,240 pounds = l long ton
- 0.892857 long tons = 1 short ton
- 1.12 short tons = 1 long ton

- Metric Weights

  - 1,000 micrograms (F) = 1 milligram (mg)
  - 1,000 milligrams = 1 gram (g)
  - 1,000 grams = 1 kilogram (kg)
  - 1,000 kilograms = 1 metric ton

- Domestic Equivalents of Metric Measures

  - 1 gram = 0.035274 ounces
  - 1 kilogram = 2.204622 pounds
  - 1 metric ton = 2,204.622 pounds
  - 1 metric ton = 1.1023 short tons
  - 1 metric ton = 0.9842 long tons
  - 1 liter, liquid measure = 2.1134 pints,
  - 1 liter, liquid measure = 1.05671 quarts,
  - 1 liter, liquid measure = 0.26418 gallons,

- Metric Equivalents of Domestic Measures

  - 1 grain = 64.799 mg
  - 1 ounce = 28.3495 grams
  - 1 pound, = 453.5924 grams
  - 1 short ton = 907.185 kg
  - 1 short ton = 0.9072 metric tons
  - 1 long ton = 1,016.047kg
  - 1 long ton = 1.016 metric tons
  - 1 pint, liquid measure = 0.47317 liters
  - 1 quart, liquid measure = 0.9463 liters
  - 1 gallon, liquid measure = 3.785 liters

- Liquid Measure: British-U.S. Equivalents

  - 1 British quart, liquid measure = 1.2009 U.S. quarts
  - 1 British gallon, liquid measure = 1.20094 U.S. gallons

RE-INSPECTION

Classification of Inspection

When contacted by an applicant for inspection, the field office should inquire if the product has been inspected before. If it has been inspected before and can be identified, contact the original inspection office to obtain pertinent information regarding the lot such as grade, condition, lot size, any deviations, etc.

A. If the re-inspection results agree with the original results, proceed with certification, making no reference to the original certificate.

B. If the re-inspection results do not agree with the original results and it is apparent that changes in quality are the results of condition factors, proceed with certification using the word NOW preceding the grade statement (see Certification Manual).

C. If the re-inspection results do not agree with the original results and it is apparent that changes are not the results of condition factors, an appeal inspection is in order. However, before issuing the appeal certificate, do the following:

1. Increase sample size, particularly when the first sampling is less than 13.

2. Before certification, contact your immediate supervisor for further instructions regarding the disposition of the inspection.

3. If possible, draw supplemental sample units for possible review by the Regional Office or NPMS.

D. Fees

If the inspection is a re-inspection to bring the lot up to date, the usual fee rate will apply.

APPEAL INSPECTIONS

Processed products are re-inspected in order to issue either an up-to-date certificate or an appeal certificate. Frequently, the applicant doesn't question the quality and condition of the lot but needs a current certificate in order to satisfy a buyer-seller contract. Occasionally, the quality of previously inspected merchandise is questioned by a financially interested party, and they request an appeal inspection.

Inspection certificates are accepted as prima facie evidence of the facts contained within. Although, it is SCI policy to assign only one grade representing a specific lot as a whole, there have been cases involving the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) in which both the plaintiff and defendant produced USDA certificates, each with a different grade. It is very difficult to settle such claims unless the grade on one certificate can be reversed.

There should be no conflicting certificates on the lot unless the quality of the lot has changed due to age, storage, handling, or other condition factors. If such a change has taken place, the original certificate is valid for the date of original inspection, and the later certificate is also valid for the date of the later inspection. These instructions will address such situations. Offices should maintain a separate file to track appeals on an annual basis.

Formal Appeal Inspections

If possible, formal appeal inspections should be discouraged. An appeal may often be avoided by having the inspector or supervisor review a few samples of the product with the applicant. The inspector or supervisor can explain why the sample units were assigned a certain grade, or why certain factors were evaluated as they were.

If the applicant requests a formal appeal, the inspection should be handled as outlined in the Regulations for appeal inspections. These instructions supplement the Regulations.

Filing for Appeal

An appeal inspection may be requested by any financially interested party who is not satisfied with the results of the inspection as represented by a certificate on the lot in question. They may file for an appeal, provided:

A. The lot of processed products can be identified as the same lot previously inspected;

B. The request is within 30 days of the previous inspection (this period may be extended by the Regional Operations Branch or National Programs Mission Support; and

C. The complaint concerns a factor(s) which would not be a result of a change in a condition factor(s) since the previous inspection. See section on Denying Request for Appeal below.

SCI will issue an appeal certificate when it has been established that the previous inspection is in error. The original certificate is reversed, and copies of the appeal certificate are sent to all financially interested parties.

Denying Request for Appeal

Requests for an appeal inspection may be denied under the following circumstances:

A. The complaint concerns a factor which may have undergone a change of condition since the original inspection, such as:

    1. Oxidation of frozen fruits,

    2. Severe de-tinning of apple sauce or other canned product,

3. Hydrogen swells or other types of spoilage,

4. Frozen broccoli or asparagus spears that are shattered due to possible mishandling,

5. Flavor deterioration of canned citrus juice due to long storage at high temperatures, and

6. Severe dehydration of frozen vegetables.

B. The lot cannot be identified.

C. The first inspection certification was based on restricted sampling. For an example of a certificate showing restricted sampling, see the Certification Manual.

D. Code marks do not agree with the original inspection.

E. Count does not agree with the original certificate. There are certain exceptions to this provision. If the original certificate covered a large lot, and the re-inspection covers a substantial quantity of merchandise, an appeal on a portion of the original certificate may be granted, provided that there is no question about identity. However, an appeal would not be granted on a very small segment of the original quantity; for example, if the quantity would be substantially less than the quantity represented by a single sample unit on the original inspection.

F. Lot is not accessible for proper sampling.

G. If there has been a revision to the grade standards between the two inspections, and such revision would affect the grade assigned to the product.

H. The original certificate is Grade Not Certified (GNC) account unsanitary conditions of the plant, or use of unsound or unwholesome raw material.

For example, a frog or mouse may be found in a container during the original inspection. Plant conditions may warrant a GNC certificate even though this incident is strictly accidental. It would be most unlikely that a re-inspection of the lot would find another frog or mouse. However, SCI would not deem it advisable to completely ignore previous production or inspection history and reverse the original inspection certificate.

I. Reasons for appeal are inadequate or frivolous, for example: “I just don't trust the inspectors in the (location) office.” A request for an appeal inspection is only considered when a company is able to present SCI with valid technical reasons or substantive data that would support a claim of inaccuracy/error of USDA grading.

J. When it is not in the interest of USDA to perform the appeal. This is a broad category and National Programs Mission Support would need to evaluate all facts in order to render an appropriate decision.

Even if denied an appeal inspection due to any of these reasons, the applicant may request a re-inspection or an up-to-date inspection on the lot in question. The result of this new inspection would establish the grade of the lot except that no grade would be assigned if USDA records show that the original certificate was GNC account unsanitary processing conditions, or use of unsound or unwholesome raw material.

Performing the Appeal

A. Information Required

The application may be made orally or in writing. If made orally, it must be confirmed in writing. It must include:

1. The location of the lot,

2. The reason(s) for the appeal,

3. The date and serial number of the certificate covering the original inspection of the product, and

4. The name of issuing office.

B. Sampling

The sampling rate on an appeal inspection should be at least the next sample size larger than the normal sampling rate for the lot size, based on the single sampling plan. In other words, if the sample size in the Regulations would normally be 13 for the size of lot involved, at least 21 sample units would be drawn on the same lot for an appeal inspection.

If the applicant merely requests an up-to-date inspection and it is not known until the sample is examined that an appeal is in order (as determined by SCI), the certificate should not be issued until additional sample units are drawn.

Since stratification can occur in large containers, at least a portion of samples of bulk container lots (such as 30 pounds frozen) should be full containers. For example, frozen strawberries may contain rocks that would tend to settle to the bottom of the container during handling prior to freezing. A subsample from the top or center of the can is not likely to reveal the presence of this type of foreign material.

C. Who May Perform the Appeal Inspection?

Any inspector other than the inspector who performed the original inspection may perform an appeal inspection. The inspector should be the same grade or higher than the inspector who performed the original inspection. Whenever practical, two inspectors who are thoroughly familiar with the product should be assigned to conduct the appeal.

If one inspector starts the inspection, and the need to issue an appeal inspection certificate doesn't become evident until the inspection is partially complete, a second inspector should be called in to confirm the results.

D. Notify the Regional Operations Branch office and National Programs Mission Support

If a formal appeal is filed, or if during a routine re-inspection procedure it appears that an appeal is in order, notify the Regional Operations Branch office and NPMS (SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov). They may require a few samples to verify the new inspection results.

E. Examination of Product

Because of the economic significance of the appeal, all samples of the product should be very carefully graded and checked for all factors. If objective tests are available, they should be used.

F. Grade Not Certified

Ordinarily an appeal would not be granted because of unsanitary plant or product conditions where the original inspection findings make an appeal unjustified. See above section on Denying Request for Appeal.

Fees

Appeal fees are as follows:

- **Grade Sustained** – charge regular fee plus expenses.
- **Grade Reversed** – no charge for inspection, but charge applicant for expenses incurred in sampling or shipping samples.

An appeal certificate reversing the original inspection can only be issued after receiving authority from NPMS. If the inspection results indicate that this is the case, submit details to the Regional Office. The Regional office will confer with NPMS before results are reported or a certificate is issued.

Certification

See the Certification Manual for specific information related to the certification of appeals and re-inspections.

FEE COMPUTATION

Current Fee Documents

The current fees for various inspection services are located on the AMS web site at the following internet address: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading/fees.

Fees for Lot Inspection of Processed Fruits and Vegetables

Table I	Product Grouping.
Table II	Fees for Product Grouping.
Table III	Fees for Dried Fruits and Processed Raisins (Excluding Figs & Dates).
Table IV	Fees for Coffee, Tea, and Sugar Products.
Table V	Fees for Samples Submitted by the Applicant.
Table VI	Fees for Update Samples.
Table VII	Fees for Special Agreements for Lot Inspection.

The hours in Tables II, III, and IV are for grading the product. This includes time for set-up, clean-up, document preparation, and other time spent in normal inspection and certification, as well as analysis (including all analyses called for in the Foreign Material Manual). The hours do not include travel and sampling time, nor do they include special requirements, such as Vitamin C analysis on fortified products. Fees for sampling, condition of container, checkloading, and case stamping must be charged at a minimum of one-half hour for each task.

If the fees computed using the applicable tables are determined to be inadequate or excessive for the time involved, bill for the actual time required for the inspection. However, prior to billing clear this with the Regional Operations Branch office.

Table I – Product Grouping

(Use with Table II. For Dehydrated Fruits, use Table III – Fees for Dried Fruits and Processed Raisins, and the table within the Dried Dates section)

GROUP I
Includes all non-standardized products and products covered by U.S. Grade Standards, except for those products which are listed in Groups II through IV, and Table IV.

GROUP II			
Canned		**Frozen**	
Asparagus	Olive Oil & Olive-Pomance Oil	Asparagus	Onion Rings
Corn, W. Kernel	Peaches	Broccoli	Potatoes, French Fried
Cranberry Juice Cocktail	Pears	Brussels Sprouts	Potatoes, Hash Browns
Cranberry Sauce	Pie Filling	Conc. Apple Juice	RTP Cherries
Fruit Butters	Pineapple (all styles)	Corn (all styles)	Succotash
Fruit Concentrates	Pineapple Juice	Cranberries	Turnip Greens w/ Turnips
Fruits for Salad	Plums	Cauliflower	Wax Beans
Fruit Nectars	Preserves	Green Beans	
Fruit Purees	RTP Cherries		
Green Beans	Ripe Olives		
Green Olives	Sweet Potatoes		
Mushrooms	Wax Beans		

GROUP III			
Canned		**Frozen**	**Dehydrated**
Barbecue Sauce	Raspberries	Berries	Dehydrated Fruits
Berries	Salsa	Blueberries	Dehydrated Potatoes
Blueberries	Sauerkraut	Leafy Greens	
Chili Sauce	Spaghetti Sauce	Mixed Vegetables	
Conc. Tomato Juice	Spinach	Peas	
Fruit Cocktail	Three Bean Salad	Peas and Carrots	
Leafy Greens	Tomatoes (all styles)	Raspberries	
Mixed Vegetables	Tomato Catsup	Strawberries	
Peas	Tomato Juice		
Peas and Carrots	Tomatoes and Okra		
Pickles & Relish	Tomato Puree		
	Tomato Sauce		

GROUP IV		
Canned	**Frozen**	**Dehydrated**
Tomato Paste	Frozen Concentrated Grape Juice	Dehydrated Grape Crystals
All Citrus Juices	All Citrus Juice	Dehydrated Citrus Crystals
Peanut Butter		

Table II – Fees for Product Grouping
(Use with Table I)

Sample Size	3	6	13	21	29	38[5]
Group I Products – Hours	3	3.5	4.75	5.75	7	9.25
Group II Products – Hours	3.5	4.5	6.5	8.25	10.5	14.25
Group III Products – Hours	4	5.5	8	11.5	15	20.25
Group IV Products – Hours	4.5	6.5	10	15	20	26.5

[5] For re-inspection only, when lot originally required 29 samples.

Table III – Fees for Dried Fruits and Processed Raisins (Excluding Figs & Dates)

Sample Size	6	12	18	24	30
Composite(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Total Hours for Grading Including One Microanalysis	4	7	10	13	16
Total Hours for Grading with More than One Microanalysis	5.5	10	14.5	19	23.5

Table IV – Fees for Coffee, Tea, and Sugar Products

Products	Hours
Molasses, Syrup, Honey	
3 sample units, or less	3
Each additional sample unit	0.25
Green Coffee	
Green bean grade, first sample	1
For Each additional sample	0.5
Cup test, first sample	1
For Each additional sample	0.25
Combination green bean grade and cup test, first sample	1.5
For each additional sample	0.75
Coffee and Tea - bid sample[6]	
Cup test, first sample	1
For each additional sample	0.25

[6] Charge additional time for analysis at the rate specified in the section titled "Fees for Chemical and Microbiological Analyses"

Table IV – Fees for Coffee, Tea, and Sugar Products (continued)

Products	Hours
Coffee, Instant Coffee, Tea, Instant Tea[6] 1 - 10,000 lbs.	1
10,001 - 20,000 lbs.	2
20,001 - 30,000 lbs.	3
Each additional 10,000 lbs.	0.5

[6] Charge additional time for analysis at the rate specified in the section titled "Fees for Chemical and Microbiological Analyses"

Guidelines for fees for grading services performed on samples submitted by the applicant must be based on the hours specified below. Product groupings are as shown in Table I of this instruction.

Table V – Fees for Samples Submitted by the Applicant (Unofficial Samples)

Product Groups	Two Sample Units or Less of the Same Product [7]	Each Additional Sample Unit
Group I, Hours	2.5	0.5
Group II, Hours	3	0.75
Group III, Hours	3.5	1
Group IV, Hours	4.0	1.25

[7] For products graded on attributes standards, see the Sampling Manual for special procedures for unofficial samples.

Table VI – Fees for Updated Samples

Sample Size (Range)	1 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 13
Total Hours for Update	1.5	2.5	3.5

Table VII – Fees for Special Agreements for Lot Inspections

Sample Size	3	6	13	21	29
Group I, Hours	1.75	2.25	3.25	4.25	5.25
Group II, Hours	2.25	3	4.25	6.5	8
Group III, Hours	2.5	3.25	4.75	7	9.25
Group IV, Hours	3	4	5	8	10

Special agreements for lot inspection service should be initiated when the volume of the total pack suggests that increased personnel efficiency would result. See the Sharepoint AIM Management Site (Intranet link) regarding contractual agreements.

Fees for Continuous Inspection and Pack Certification Contracts

Current service fee rates for processed fruits and vegetables can be found at: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading/fees. Generally, rates charged under a contractual agreement must be those under these Activity groupings on the website:

- "In-plant Inspections Under Annual Contract (year-round)"
- "Lot Inspections"

For additional guidance regarding contract fees and charges see the Contract and Agreements with Industry (intranet link) policy.

Fees for Chemical and Microbiological Analyses

The following table contains the hours to charge for chemical and microbiological analyses that are made at the request of the applicant, or that are required because of specification or program requirements (such as Vitamin C analysis on fortified products). Do not assess a fee for analytical tests when routine tests such as Brix or acidity are associated with quality grading. The applicable fee shown for the various groupings in the previous section, Fees for Lot Inspection of Processed Fruits and Vegetables, incorporates these charge(s) for analysis.

The hourly charge shown includes normal sample preparation time. When the nature of the product requires more than normal sample preparation time, the applicant will be charged for the extra time on an hourly basis to the nearest quarter hour. The charge for this preparation time will be recorded so that it is separately identifiable from the analysis fee.

This fee structure was established to promote uniformity in the charges assessed for chemical and bacteriological tests. When the hour(s) shown for a single analysis is found to be grossly inadequate or excessive for the time involved for a particular test, the fee assessed may be based on the actual time it takes to perform the test(s). However, any modification or variation to the hours shown must be cleared with the Regional Branch Chief.

Type of Test Analysis	Hours for Single Analysis	Hours for Each Additional[8]
Absorbency (grape juice)	½	½
Acidity	¼	¼
Alcohol Insoluble Solids (AIS)	1	½

Type of Test Analysis	Hours for Single Analysis	Hours for Each Additional[8]
Ascorbic Acid (titration)	1	¼
Brix (direct)	¼	¼
Brix (dilution)	½	½
Catalase Test	½	½
Color (honey, etc.)	½	¼
Consistency, Bostwick	¼	¼
Fiber Test (green & wax beans)	1	1
Filth, heavy	½	½
Filth, light (macro)	½	½
Filth, light (micro)	1	1
Fly Egg and Maggot	½	¼
Inset Fragments	1	¾
Insoluble Solids	½	½
Maggot/Larvae/Worm Count	½	½
Maggot Count (Mushrooms Only)	1	½
Methyl Anthranilate	1	½
Microscopic Examination	1	1
Moisture (oven)	½	¼
Mold Count (direct smear)	½	¼
Mold Count (centrifuge)	¾	½
Mold Count (pulping)	1	¾
Naringin	1	¼
Peroxidase Test	½	¼
Potassium Sorbate	1 ½	1
pH	¼	¼
Recoverable Oil (citrus)	1	½

Type of Test Analysis	Hours for Single Analysis	Hours for Each Additional[8]
Salt (back titration)	¾	¾
Salt (potentiometric)	½	¼
Sand Test (raisins)	1	1
Sieve Test	¼	¼
Soluble Solids (refractometer)	¼	¼
Specific Gravity	1	1
Sulfur Dioxide (Monier-Williams)	1 ½	1
Titer	1	1
Total Solids (oven drying)	½	¼
Tough String Test (green/wax beans)	½	½
Viscosity	1 ½	1
Vitamin C	1	¼
Water Insoluble Inorganic Residues (WIIR)	2	1 ½
Wrapper Adherence Test	½	¼

[8] If no charge is listed for an additional analysis, charge at the same rate as a single analysis.

Fees for Dried Dates

In order to provide uniformity in the assessment of fees, the schedule as outlined here must be observed unless circumstances are so unusual as to justify using the hourly rate.

In calculating the fee, when multiple code marks are offered for inspection, bill and certify each code mark or lot separately. Charge for driving and sampling time at the current hourly rate.

Fee Schedule for Dried Dates

Sample Size	3	8	14	26	36	44	56	68	82
Hours	2	2 ¾	4 ½	6 ½	8 ½	10 ¾	13 ¼	16 ¼	19 ¼

Fees for Letter Contracts for Unofficial Samples

The following instructions outline requirements for special letter contracts for unofficial samples. This service may be used by any applicant that does not need official sampling.

The following fees and conditions are applicable to products covered by U.S. Grade Standards, although products not covered by U.S. Grade Standards may be included. Please check with NPMS for the appropriate fee.

A. A sample unit is a container and/or its entire contents, a portion of the contents of one or more containers, or other unit of commodity, or a composite mixture of a product used for inspection (for products graded on attribute standards, see the Sampling Manual).

B. A sample is any number of sample units to be used for inspection.

C. A minimum of six sample units must be used per submittal. Sample units may consist of multiples of one or more products.

D. A minimum of 50 sample units will be submitted per year.

E. Unofficial grading will not be performed on products packed under in-plant inspection, or on lots that have previously been officially inspected.

F. Restrictive Grading or Analysis

The applicant may request the grading to be restricted to any quality or non-quality factor, and/or analysis. The fee for restrictive grading (excluding micro, chemical, or analytical work) will be in accordance with the fee for product Group I. The micro, chemical, or analytical fee will be in accordance with the appropriate fee for that test.

Charges for Inspection – Letter Contracts for Unofficial Samples

Product Groups[9]	Two Sample Units or Less of the Same Product	Each Additional Sample Unit of Same Product
Group I, Hours	1.5	0.25
Group II, Hours	2	0.5
Group III, Hours	2.5	0.75
Group IV, Hours	3	1.0

[9] Product grouping as shown in Table I in the Fees for Lot Inspection Grading Service section.

Certification Fees

Certify to a U.S. Grade

The applicable fee must be in accordance with the current lot inspection rate for Processed Fruits and Vegetables found at the following internet address: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading/fees.

Export Certificates Restricted to Product Condition

The fee for product that is restricted to organoleptic evaluations and certified for export must be in accordance with the current lot inspection rate for Processed Fruits and Vegetables found at the following internet address: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading/fees. The number of hours to charge is shown in the following examples:

A. Sample Units Submitted by an Applicant

Unofficial sample units submitted at one time by an applicant may consist of more than one item, including any number of sample units per item. Charge one hour for the first sample unit, and ¼ hour for each additional sample unit.

Example:

An applicant requests export certification for 20 items and each item consists of two sample units.

20 items x 2 sample units = 40 sample units

- First sample unit = 1 sample x 1 hour = 1 hour charged at the current lot rate.
- 39 additional sample units = 39 samples x ¼ hour = 9 ¾ hours charged at the current lot rate.

Total Cost = 10 ¾ hours charged at the current lot rate.

B. Officially Drawn Samples

When an applicant requests that sample units be drawn from a lot or more than one lot at the same time, the lot or lots must be sampled in accordance with SCI sampling plans. Charge 1 ½ hours for the first three sample units and ¼ hour for each additional sample unit.

The applicant must be charged for travel time, sampling time, condition of container inspection, etc., for officially drawn samples.

When the certificate is restricted to organoleptic evaluation and includes sample units either submitted by an applicant or officially drawn samples, the hours charged include the cost of issuing certificates. Do not charge an applicant for additional certificates, even though the applicant may request that each item be certified separately.

Example 1:

An applicant requests export certification for four lots of product. One lot of canned green beans – 150 cases; one lot of canned pears – 150 cases; one lot of canned corn – 150 cases; and one lot of canned beets – 150 cases. Each lot requires a minimum of 3 sample units. The total number of sample units evaluated is 12. Charge as follows:

4 lots x 3 sample units = 12 sample units

- First 3 sample units = 1 ½ hours charged at the current lot rate.
- 9 additional sample units = 9 samples x ¼ hour = 2 ¼ hours charged at the current lot rate.

Total Cost = 3 ¾ hours charged at the current lot rate.

Example 2:

An applicant requests export certification for three lots of product. One lot of canned peaches – 650 cases; one lot of canned pears – 200 cases; and one lot of canned cherries – 200 cases. The lot of canned peaches requires a minimum of 13 sample units. Each lot of pears and cherries requires a minimum of 6 sample units. The total number of sample units evaluated is 25. Charge as follows:

- First 3 sample units = 1 ½ hours charged at the current lot rate.
- 22 additional sample units = 22 samples x ¼ hour = 5 ½ hours charged at the current lot rate.

Total Cost = 7 hours charged at the current lot rate.

Export Verification Service

Assess the applicant at the hourly rate currently in effect in accordance with the Regulations, 7 CFR 52.42. The fee must cover the time for travel, the verification inspection, and the certificate preparation. Charge one hour for the first certificate on an application. For additional certificates requested by the same applicant at the same time, charge one half hour per certificate.

Dairy Verification Service

The applicant will be charged at the current hourly rate in effect in accordance with the Regulations, 7 CFR 52.42. Charges will be assessed to cover the time for travel, verification inspection procedure, and preparation of the certificate.

Example:

One on-site verification is performed to cover four dairy items, and the applicant submits five samples of processed fruit and vegetable products. Charges to assess are as follows:

1.0 Hours driving time;

2.5 Hours verification inspection and preparation of the dairy export Certificate; and

2.0 Hours for product condition evaluation of the five processed fruit and vegetable items.

5.5 **Total hours** assessed at current hourly rate.

Microanalysis

When such tests are requested by the applicant, or when required by a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defect action level or Division guideline, charges for microanalysis will be in accordance with section Fees for Chemical and Microbiological Analyses.

NON-MANIPULATION CERTIFICATION INSPECTION SERVICE

Inspection for Non-Manipulation Certification combines a Plant Survey, a Condition of Container (COC) examination, and a review of Product Identity Documents. This last item involves tracing records for the product from its departure from the country of origin through its present storage location. A Non-Manipulation Certificate is a Letter Report provided to the applicant to certify that based on SCI inspection of records, COC examination, and plant survey, the product being certified has been:

- Handled in accordance with Good Manufacturing Practices,
- Stored under appropriate conditions, and
- Has maintained its identity to assure continued suitability.

These procedures allow flexibility to meet the applicant's needs. The following references are found in the SCI instructional manuals:

- Form SC-356 (intranet link) – Application for Inspection and Certificate of Sampling
- Regulations section of this manual
- Sampling Manual, Sampling Procedures section
- Condition of Food Container Manual, U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers

- Sanitation Manual, Plant Sanitation Requirements, and Good Manufacturing Practices
- Safety Manual

- Certification Manual

Applicant Responsibilities

- Request the Non-Manipulation Certification service;

- Provide information as requested for Non-Manipulation Certification services by completing the SC-356 - Application for Inspection and Certificate of Sampling form; and

- Provide information indicated on the "Documents required for Non-Manipulation Certification" shown below to the appropriate SCI field office.

Documents Required for Non-Manipulation Certification

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide clear and concise documentation showing that the product has not been tampered with or undergone reprocessing. To do so, documents must provide uninterrupted documentation, in chronological order, tracing the identity of the product from departure from the country of origin to its present location. Supporting documents are to be submitted with an inventory listing them in chronological order for tracing purposes.

These documents may include, but are not limited to:

- Export certificates from the country of origin;

- Intermediary conveyance document;

- Incoming bill of landing;

- Incoming receipt documents, i.e., warehousing count sheets;

- Inventory control documents; and

- Warehouse documents indicating the date of storage, i.e., storage billing documents.

The following are examples of inadequate documentation:

- A document that cannot be linked to the previous document in the tracing process.

- A lapse in time or a change in location without documented possession of the product would indicate missing documents or possible manipulation of the product.

- Illegible documents
- Documents that show signs of having been tampered with or altered.
- Documents showing intermediary storage within the United States where the storage facility was not a:
    - Bonded Customs Storage facility
    - Storage facility where the product had previously been certified under SCI Non-Manipulation Certification.

SCI Field Office Responsibilities

- Complete the SC-356 – Application for Inspection and Certificate of Sampling form,
- Supply the applicant with a listing of the documents required for Non-Manipulation Certification as indicated above,
- Provide the applicant with an estimated fee. The current fees for various inspection services are located on the USDA, AMS internet site at the following internet address: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading/fees,
- Review the documents submitted by the applicant and complete the Appendix VIII – Product Identity Review Sheet. If the documentation is determined to be inadequate, the inspector will notify the applicant, and request additional documents to complete the tracing process. See examples of inadequate documentation above,
- Schedule product inspection at the warehouse or storage location. Request that the product be staged prior to arrival for accessibility, and ask that warehouse staff be available to assist as needed,
- Provide inspection results to the applicant as follows:
    - Prepare the Non-Manipulation Certificate and send it to the applicant at the address indicated on form SC-356; or
    - Inform the applicant of the failing portion of the inspection and that a Non-Manipulation Certificate is not available;
- Bill the applicant; and
- File the inspection documents in the applicant's file in the SCI field office.

Inspection Procedures

Review

SCI inspection personnel will review the Product Identity documents submitted by the applicant before performing the plant survey or condition of container examination.

A. The following will be recorded on the Product Identity Review Sheet shown above for each document:

1. Title of the document,
2. Number of the document,
3. Originator of the document,
4. Date on the document,
5. Product indicated,
6. Quantity and container size indicated,
7. Label and code markings, and
8. Determination of whether or not the document follows the previous document in the tracing process.

B. Documents will be recorded in chronological order as follows:

1. Export certificate from the country of origin,
2. Documents showing the mode of conveyance, vessel, etc;
3. Any intermediary transport or storage facility documents,
4. Transfer documents from each mode of conveyance,
5. Documents showing receipt of the product at the location where the inspection is being performed, and
6. Inventory and/or storage records for the product at the inspection location.

C. Complete the Appendix VIII – Product Identity Review Sheet; a completed example is shown in Appendix IX – Product Identity Review Sheet Completed Example. Complete the following:

1. Title of Document block to indicate the title of the document being reviewed,

2. Document Number block to indicate the document's identifying code number or serial number,

3. Originator of Document block to indicate the name of the person/organization that signed for or completed the document,

4. Date on Document block to indicate the date the document was completed,

5. Product block to indicate the name of the product as identified on the document,

6. Quantity and Container Size block to indicate the total quantity, size, and type of container of product as identified on the document;

7. Label and Code Markings block to indicate the complete label and code markings as identified on the document, and

8. Document Traces with Previous Document block will be completed with Yes, No, or NA (not applicable).

    a. "Yes" indicates the document can be traced to the previous document in the tracing process by date, location, and/or time;

    b. "No" indicates the document does not trace to the previous document in the tracing process. A lapse of time or change in location without documented possession of the product leads to missing documents, which could indicate possible manipulation of product. If this happens, the applicant will be required to provide additional documentation to complete the tracing process before the Non-Manipulation Certificate can be issued; and

    c. "NA" will indicate the document is the first in a series of documents being traced and has no prior document to which to trace.

D. If the inspector finds inadequate documentation, the problem(s) will be described in the comments section of the Product Identity Review Sheet. If additional space is required, the back of the form may be referenced and used for continuation. The inspector will notify the applicant if inadequate documentation has been provided and request additional documents to complete the tracing process. The following are examples of inadequate documentation:

1. A document that cannot be linked to the previous document in the tracing process.

2. A lapse in time or a change in location without documented possession of the product.

3. Illegible documents.

4. Documents that show signs of tampering or alteration.

5. Documents showing intermediary storage within the United States where the storage facility was not a:

   a. Bonded Customs Storage facility, or

   b. Storage facility where the product had previously been certified under SCI Non-Manipulation Certification.

Plant Survey

A plant survey at the facility where the product is currently stored will be completed in accordance with guidelines in the Sanitation Manual. Only the front page, page 2, and section H of the plant survey are completed. The temperature and other observations (e.g., dry, humid) will be noted on the Non-Manipulation Certificate.

Condition of Container

A condition of container inspection will be performed on the lot in accordance with the Condition of Food Container Manual.

Certification

A letter report will be completed following the guidelines in the Certification Manual. See Appendix X – Example of Non-Manipulation Letter Report. This document will be based on the following:

- Applicant information,
- Product identity review,
- Warehouse evaluation results, and
- Condition of container inspection.

Billing

Prepare billing in accordance with SCI instructions. See SCI Field Office Responsibilities section of this manual.

PRODUCT ORIGIN REQUIREMENTS

SCI inspectors in certain situations may have responsibilities for monitoring and reporting the use of foreign product or product components in processed foods under their inspection. Applicable origin requirements are stated in the procurement documents such as contracts, solicitations, announcements, invitations to bid, or in governing rules or regulations. In some instances, the contractor/producer may be required to provide the SCI inspector with a letter or certification of conformance attesting to the product's compliance with a product origin requirement.

If a product is to be of 100 percent domestic origin, the following examples illustrate products that do NOT meet this requirement:

- Imported pineapple tidbits to be used in a canned fruit cocktail.
- A concentrated or single strength juice product that contains an imported juice concentrate component.
- Use of imported tomato paste in the production of canned vegetarian beans.
- Production of frozen French-fried potatoes from potatoes grown in Canada.

When present at the processing facility, the inspector should monitor product formulation and verify that the product and product components are of the required origin. The inspector should be familiar with and follow the appropriate verification instructions for the product inspected. Discuss deviations with appropriate supervisory personnel and notify the appropriate plant official of any deviations as instructed.

REVIEW PROGRAMS

It is SCI policy to continually evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of its services. An effective means of so doing is a product review program to determine if offices are grading and inspecting products uniformly. SCI currently has several types of product review programs in effect.

Review Program for Processed Raisins

The processed raisin review covers the grading of processed raisins and is conducted monthly. All lots of raisins will be sampled and graded by the field office using normal procedures. The review sample will be selected from the remainder of the composite sample used to determine the quality grade of the lot. It will be selected from the first lot of raisins sampled and graded each month, and subsequently every tenth lot of raisins sampled and graded that month. At the beginning of each month, the review program will begin again, starting with lot 1.

The following procedures will be used by each field office, sub-office, or inspection point grading processed raisins:

1. Sample and grade all lots in accordance with current instructions.

2. The review sample consists of 64 ounces of raisins. Select this 64-ounce review sample from the remainder of the composite used to determine the quality grade of the first lot graded, and subsequently every tenth lot graded during each month.

3. Complete the score sheet and the micro analytical work sheet. In the remarks section of the score sheet, note "Sample submitted on (date) for National Processed Raisin Review."

4. Make two copies of the score sheet and the micro analytical work sheet.

   Prepare an AD-311 Speed Memo with the name of applicant, product name, lot number, codes, field office, and sample number for the month (i.e., first sample, second sample, etc.). Make two copies of the memo.

5. Mark the samples to clearly identify the applicant, lot number, and field office. Also mark on the shipping container "National Processed Raisin Review (insert month and year)."

6. Send the memo, a copy of the score sheet and micro analytical work sheet, and the raisin review sample to the Fresno, CA Area Office within 5 working days after final grading.

7. The Fresno office will grade and perform microanalysis on review samples and record their results on official score sheets and micro worksheets. Photocopies of these documents will be sent to the submitting field office and the Regional Field Operations Branch within 15 working days after the end of the month.

Review of Results and Follow Up

1. The Regional Operations Branch offices and National Program Mission Support will review the inspection results with the Fresno office on a monthly basis.

2. The Regional Operations Branch offices will follow up on lots which show significantly different results between the original lot and the review sample. The Regional Operations Branch office will coordinate corrective action with NPMS and the Area Office.

3. The Associate Director of Field Operations will review reports quarterly. If corrective action is needed, the Division Director and Regional Operations Branch Chiefs are notified.

Review Programs for Flavor Evaluation of Canned Ripe Olives

There are two review programs for the evaluation of flavor in canned ripe olives. The goal of these programs is to maintain uniform inspection of flavor in domestic and imported canned ripe olives. One review will focus on product found to have questionable or off-flavor; the other review will cover canned ripe olives inspected by all SCI offices to establish uniformity. SCI is authorized to grade and certify domestic and imported canned ripe olives under the Regulations, 7 CFR, Parts 932 and 944, which also establish the minimum quality requirements for these products. Canned ripe olives reviewed under these programs will be graded according to the requirements specified in the CFR.

Each SCI Area Office will submit sample units from lots found to have off-flavor for the Questionable or Off-Flavor Review. In addition, all Area Offices involved in inspection of canned ripe olives will participate in the All-Office Flavor Review for olives of all styles and container types.

Procedures for Questionable or Off-Flavor Review

If a questionable or off-flavor is detected during the process of inspecting a lot of olives, the Area Office will submit subsample units representing the lot to all Regional Operations Branch offices, and the Stockton Area office. A final grade and score will not be assigned to the lot until notified by the applicable Regional Operations Branch office.

Three subsamples of equal amounts will be taken from one of the questionable or off-flavor samples inspected by the area office. The olives submitted for review must be from the same sample container inspected by the area office.

- The subsamples of olives will be put into 16-ounce plastic, wide mouth jars with twist top lids. The jars will be filled with brine, sealed, and packaged into shipping cases with cold packs to maintain the condition of the subsamples. Ship the samples by overnight delivery.

- Complete a SC-377 Canned Ripe Olive Flavor Review Sheet (intranet link). Include the Customs Entry Number and shipping container number. Mark each subsample with the shipping container number, and "(insert area office) Questionable or Off-Flavor Review Sample(s)." Include the SC-377 along with the subsample. Send an email to the supervisors in the three receiving offices to notify them that samples are being sent.

- Do not complete the flavor portion of the original score sheet until the flavor review results have been received from your Regional Operations Branch office. The Regional Operations Branch offices and Stockton Area office will determine the flavor grade of the samples. The applicable Regional Operations Branch office will send the results to the Area Office and to National Programs Mission Support via SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov, identifying the reports as "Questionable or Off-Flavor Review Results".

Procedures for All-Office Flavor Review

The All-Office Flavor Review can be activated or deactivated as needed. The Division Director will determine the need for the review with input from the Regional Operations Branch offices, Field Operations, and Standardization Branch. Regional Operations Branch offices will notify Area Offices by email of flavor review activation or deactivation status.

When the program is in effect, each Area Office, including the Stockton Area Office, will select three additional sample units from lots sampled on a monthly basis. For example, if the sampling plan requires 13 sample units, collect 16 sample units from the lot. The three review samples should be duplicate codes matching at least one of the samples drawn for inspection, and all review samples must have the same production code. One way to accomplish this is to pull four containers from a single case, and after verifying that all four codes are the same, mark three containers as review samples. The fourth will be included among the 13 samples for grading.

Area Offices will submit one unopened sample from each lot to all Regional Operations Branch offices and one to the Stockton, CA Area office for review. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the inspection service provided, sample units must be reviewed from various importers and countries of origin.

The Regional Operations Branch offices, Field Operations, and Standardization Branch may change the frequency and number of samples selected at any time. Regional Operations Branch offices will notify field offices of the sampling frequency by email. Area Offices will be asked to submit sample units from lots sampled at one of the following rates:

- From every lot,
- From a predetermined reduced number of lots (such as drawing review sample units from every fifth or tenth lot sampled), or
- At a predetermined number of sample units per month (such as submitting two sample units per month).

Depending on results of the All-Office Flavor Review, and /or recommendations, the Regional Operations Branch offices may select one or more Area Offices to submit additional sample units. The Regional Operations Branch offices will notify the selected Area Offices and by email.

- Immediately upon completion of inspection, the Area Office will submit the review sample unit from each designated lot along with a copy of the score sheets. Sample units will be marked, “(insert area office) All-Office Flavor Review Sample).” Complete and submit the SC-377 Canned Ripe Olive Flavor Review Sheet (intranet link).
- Both Regional Operations Branch offices and the Stockton Area Office will determine the flavor grade of the review samples. The evaluation of Stockton Area Office samples

will be performed by an inspector or supervisor other than the original grader. The applicable Regional Operations Branch office will send the results to the Area Office and Field Operations via SCIinspectionoperatipons@usda.gov, identifying the reports as "All-Office Flavor Review Results."

- The applicable Regional Operations Branch office will follow-up on sample units found to be different than the original grade of the lot and will coordinate corrective action with and respective Area Office.

Product Grade Review Procedures for Products Not Covered by Formal Review Programs (Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program)

These instructions provide for a review of all products:

- For which USDA provides an official grade or determination (including NAG, CIDs, purchase order or buyer's specification).

- Which are not currently covered by a formal grading review program.

Products for the following programs are not part of this review:

- USDA Purchases,
- Operational Rations In-Plant Inspection Review Program,
- Review Program for Concentrated Orange Juice for Manufacturing for Futures Contracts,
- Review Program for Processed Raisins, and
- Review Program for Flavor Evaluation of Canned Ripe Olives.

Frequency of Product Reviews

- The **Monthly Review Program** is conducted every month by the OIC, Assistant OIC, Sub-Area Supervisor, or an individual officially acting in that capacity.

- The **Four Month Cycle Review Program** is conducted once during period of four-months, resulting in three review periods per fiscal year. The review periods are from October 1 through January 31, February 1 through May 31, and June 1 through September 30. Samples submitted for the Four Month Cycle Review will be reviewed by both the Regional Operations Branch office and National Program Mission Support.

Review sample submissions may be tracked on Appendix XI – Optional Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Submission Worksheet.

Submission of Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Samples

- Label each sample with the following information: field office, applicant, date graded, grade assigned, and inspector.

- Identify exterior of shipping container either "Monthly Review Program" or "Four Month Cycle Review,"
- Identify on exterior of shipping case if frozen or chilled samples are enclosed (Example: "Frozen samples, open upon receipt").
- Freeze samples of chilled product to preserve quality and ship frozen samples to arrive the next day with sufficient dry ice or freezer packs to maintain frozen condition of sample.
- Refrigerate subsamples of canned product to maintain product quality and safety and ship with sufficient freezer packs or dry ice to keep the product cold.
- Ship chilled or frozen samples to arrive the next business day; DO NOT ship before weekends or holidays.
- As appropriate seal and apply tamper evident tape.
- Pack samples securely to prevent damage or deterioration.
- Amount of sample to submit: For most products, the original container or package will be adequate. For products with a specific sample unit size, follow Division procedures to obtain sufficient product for grading. In the case of bulk products, draw a two-pound (thirty-two ounces) subsample (or a minimum of six fluid ounces for juice concentrates). Submit a minimum of thirty-two ounces of single strength juices.

Procedure for Monthly Review Program

A. Lot Inspection

The supervisor will develop a schedule to systematically review one lot per month from the field office and each inspection point.

For each lot selected for review, one sample unit is drawn (two samples if both Monthly and Four Month Cycle Reviews are performed.) The supervisor will designate the lot to be reviewed prior to sampling so that additional sample units can be drawn. This also includes Child Nutrition (CN) products produced under lot inspection.

Complete the top portion of the SC-379 Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Sample Submittal Sheet (intranet link) and submit with the samples brought to the grading lab. The lot will be graded and certified as usual. The review sample will not be graded at this time.

The supervisor will grade the review sample after the inspector has completed grading the lot and issued the certificate (or other inspection document) by completing a score

sheet or annotating the score sheet issued by the inspector. The supervisor should compare the grade of the review sample with the original score sheet(s) and certificate. The supervisor will make any recommendations to the inspector who carried out the original grading, and record remarks in the "Area Office Review" section of the Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Sample Submittal Sheet, Form SC-379.

A copy of the completed Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Sample Submittal Sheet, Form SC-379, and copies of the score sheet(s) (including reverse, if used, or copies of labels) and supporting documentation are then sent to the appropriate Regional office.

The supervisor will record a summary of the review results on the worksheet Monthly Review Program Summary Sheet. The original is retained in the field office, and a copy is mailed to the Regional office at the end of each month.

B. In-plant, CN in-plant, and Quality Assurance Program Inspection

In addition to the review for lot inspection, the supervisor will develop a schedule to systematically review one lot per month from each processing plant (including CN and QAP plants) in operation during the month.

While on a supervisory visit, the supervisor will randomly designate one lot to be used for the monthly product review. For QAP, this lot must have been verified by the USDA grader.

The supervisor will draw one sample unit at random from the designated lot in the warehouse/storage, and complete the top portion of the SC-379 Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Sample Submittal Sheet (intranet link). The supervisor will grade the review sample by completing a score sheet, or annotating the score sheet issued by the inspector, and compare the grade of the review sample with the original score sheet(s) and inspection records. The supervisor will make any recommendations to the inspector who carried out the original grading, and record remarks on the SC-379.

A copy of the completed SC-379 and copies of the score sheet(s) (including reverse, if used, or copies of labels) and supporting documentation are then sent to the appropriate Regional office.

The supervisor will record a summary of the review results on the Monthly Review Program Summary Sheet. The original is retained in the field office, and a copy is mailed to the appropriate Regional office at the end of each month.

Procedure for the Four Month Cycle Review Program

A. Lot and In-plant Product Review

The supervisor will select one lot during each four-month cycle from each of the following:

1. Lot inspections conducted in the field office, and

2. Lot inspections performed at each inspection point.

3. Each of the processing plants, including CN and QAP in operation during the four-month cycle.

For example, a field office having two inspection points and four processing plants should submit three samples for lot inspection (one per field office and inspection point) and four samples representing each of the processing facilities in operation during the period.

After each lot has been graded by the inspector, the supervisor will grade one of each of the review samples by completing a score sheet, or annotating the score sheet issued by the inspector, and compare the grade of the review sample with the original inspection records. The supervisor will make any recommendations to the inspector who carried out the original grading, and record remarks on the SC-379.

B. A second duplicate review sample will be submitted to NPMS with copies of:

1. Score sheet(s), (including reverse, if used, or copies of labels),

2. Supporting documentation (including certificate, letter report or other document, if issued),

3. Lab results,

4. A copy of the SC-379 indicating the results of the field office review, and

5. Label and ship samples following instructions.

Retain a completed copy of the SC-379 in the field office. The supervisors will complete the Monthly Review Program Summary Sheet, retaining the original in the field office and mailing a copy to the Regional office.

NPMS will grade the samples submitted and compare the results. The reviewing official from NPMS will record the grading results and any comments or recommendations on the copy of the Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Sample Submittal Sheet. A summary of all findings will be returned to the Regional Operations Branch Chiefs.

Cost of Samples

The Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Fruits and Vegetables and Related Products provides the authority for the agency to draw samples for review. All costs will be borne by the applicants.

Instructions for Completing SC-379 Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Sample Submittal Sheet

Print off a blank SC-379 Monthly and Four Month Cycle Review Program Sample Submittal Sheet (intranet link). Complete the following fields:

A. Enter the date the sample is mailed/shipped to field office.

B. Select the area office using locations listed in Organizational Directory.

C. Select inspection point using locations listed in Organizational Directory. If samples are not from an inspection point, show "Not Applicable."

D. If samples are submitted to NPMS (Four Month Cycle Review), select "Yes."

E. Select the type of inspection service. For CN, please select "CN Lot" or "CN In-plant" inspection. For other inspections, select the box for "Lot," "In-plant" or "Quality Assurance Program" ("QAP").

F. If "In-plant" inspection service is selected, select the shift inspection was performed.

G. Enter the name of the applicant company as it appears in the billing program.

H. Enter the city, state and zip code for the applicant company.

I. If a certificate is issued, record certificate (including letter report) number. If no certificate is issued, enter N/A.

J. Enter grade assigned. For products with no applicable grade, select/enter NAG.

K. Enter date product was graded (from score sheet, certificate, or other inspection document.

L. Enter the product name as it appears on score sheet, certificate, or other inspection document. All CN products are grouped together and are identified by "CN" prefix. If the product does not appear on the list, new products may be added by typing in "New keyword." For 100% juice blends, use "juice blends" or "juice blends from concentrate" and add any other identifying information in the "Comment" section under "Area Office Evaluation."

M. Select product type: “Canned” (Heat process), “Chilled,” “Frozen,” or “Dried” (Dehydrated).

N. Enter code marks as they appear on score sheet, tally sheet, certificate or inspection documents.

O. Inspector should print and sign official name. (If QAP, indicate if the individual is plant employee.)

P. Area Office review. This section should be completed by a supervisor or someone officially acting in that capacity. If acting, this should be reflected by “acting OIC,” “acting AOIC,” or “acting subarea supervisor” next to the signature.

1. Indicate if supervisor’s grading results agree with inspector’s results by selecting Yes or No.

2. Comments – use this section to record:

a. Security strip numbers.

b. Any corrective actions and follow-up to errors in grading or supporting documents.

c. Please record grading results on inspector’s score sheet adjacent to sample results, or on a separate score sheet submitted with supporting documents. Identify as “see score sheet attached”

d. Use this location to identify sample number or identification (such as Winter Haven DP-4)

e. Review supporting documents and indicate if they are submitted (yes or no). Supporting documents include score sheet or tally sheet (include reverse or attached information if applicable), analytical results, certificate, requirements (copy of buyer’s specification or purchase order), waivers, certificate, results of CN review, and cooking or preparation instructions (for CN products).

f. Record if the supervisor’s grading results are attached (yes or no).

g. If samples were sent in a cooler, please indicate if the cooler needs to be returned (yes or no).

h. Please indicate if the freezer packs need to be returned (yes or no).

Q. Supervisor should print and sign name. If person is “acting,” this should be indicated as John Smith, acting OIC.

R. Record date supervisor reviewed sample and supporting documents. Print a copy of the form, sign it and attach to supporting documents and submit with sample.

S. NPMS Review. Record yes or no for the following:

1. Inspector's supporting documentation submitted,

2. Supervisory evaluation documentation attached (score sheet),

3. I agree with the Grader's evaluation,

4. I agree with the Area Office evaluation.

5. In the Results of Evaluation section, record the following information:

   a. Indicate if correct form versions are used,

   b. Indicate if any portions of the submittal sheet are incomplete,

   c. Are statements on inspection documents sheets in accordance with Division instructions,

   d. Are there errors on the supporting documents?

   e. Record any comments from panel, is flavor weak? Is it still within the grade assigned by inspector/supervisor (but should have been assigned a higher or lower score? Is the sample received less uniform, more or less firm, more or less uniform than results on supporting inspection documents?

   f. Has the sample been submitted in a timely manner?

6. Record name and signature of person conducting the review.

7. Record date of review.

REFERENCE LINKS

Version Date (Printed for distribution)

☐ **7 CFR 52 Sections (circle as applicable): 3, 12, 13, 38, 41, 42, 53, 54, 81** _____
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-I/subchapter-C/part-52?toc=1

☐ **18 U.S.C. § 1905, Trade Secrets Act** _____
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-21/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-110

☐ **21 CFR 110 Good Manufacturing Practices** _____
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-21/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-110

☐ **29 CFR 1910.146 Confined Spaces** _____
https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-B/chapter-XVII/part-1910/subpart-J/section-1910.146

☐ **AMS Service Fees** _____
https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading/fees

☐ **Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** _____
http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ210/html/PLAW-104publ210.htm

☐ **Examolite and Prooflite Overhead Luminaire Operation Manual** _____
https://www.xrite.com/-/media/xrite/files/literature/misc/e/examolite-prooflite_manual_en.pdf

☐ **FDA Labeling Guidelines** _____
http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/default.htm

☐ **H&H Industries Colour-Master 75 Light Bulbs** _____
https://www.lightsbyhh.com/products/fluorescents/colour-master/hh752

☐ **Light Bulbs for Macbeth Examolite SD-840B** _____
https://www.xrite.com/categories/parts-accessories/sd840b-d65-macbeth-daylight-48-t12-lamps

☐ **Light Bulbs for Macbeth Examolite TC-440** _____
https://www.xrite.com/categories/parts-accessories/tc440b-daylightincandescent-blend-48-t12-lamp-kit

☐ **PACA Division Home Page** _____
https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/paca

☐ **Waveform Lighting** _____
https://www.waveformlighting.com/

Checked Materials have been printed from the links in this manual and included for reference.

APPENDIX I

Reserved for future use.

APPENDIX II – LETTER AGREEMENT

Electronic version of the Letter Agreement

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
LETTER AGREEMENT
Plant Assisted Continuous Inspection Program
Plant Assigned Personnel

I (We) _____,
(Plant Official(s) Printed Name)

located at _____,
(Plant Name and Address)

hereby agree to assign the plant personnel shown below to assist the Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division inspector in performing certain routine tasks as listed:

Name	Tasks Assigned	Date

The above employee(s) will be under the direct supervision of the SCI Inspector-in-Charge in the performance of the above tasks. The plant employee(s) will have access to all written instructions describing the procedure or method that is relevant to the job function, and if applicable, a job instruction sheet will be prepared to describe the tasks.

_____ _____
By *(Print & Sign Name of Plant Management)* By *(Print and Sign Name of Officer-In-Charge)*

_____ _____
Title Title

_____ _____
Date Date

APPENDIX III – MISBRANDING REPORT

Electronic version of the Misbranding Report

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
MISBRANDING REPORT

CERTIFICATE NUMBER	DATE OF CERTIFICATE

NAME OF DIVISION EMPLOYEE REPORTING THE VIOLATION	OFFICE ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER
APPLICANT NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER
RECEIVER NAME	ADDRESS *(if known)*	TELEPHONE NUMBER *(if known)*

PRODUCT INSPECTED	NUMBER OF CASES

MISBRANDING FACTOR		
☐ GRADE	☐ ORIGIN	☐ WEIGHT

PRINCIPAL LABEL (CONTAINER) MARKS
SHIPPING CONTAINER (CASE) MARKS

LOCATION OF LOT	
LOCATION NAME	LOCATION ADDRESS

REMARKS

APPENDIX IV – DAILY PACK REPORT (EXAMPLE)

ABC Canning Company DAILY PACK REPORT	REPORT DATE	01/01/2024	PAGE 1 OF 1
	COMPANY	ABC CANNING COMPANY	
	LOCATION	PERALTA, CALIFORNIA	

ITEM	CANNED CLINGSTONE	SIZE	CODE MARKS	SIRUP	FORWARD	TOTAL	PACKER GRADE	FINAL GRADE
	PEACHES, HALVED	48/8 OZ	M9 OVER B2P	HEAVY			B	
	PEACHES, SLICED	48/8 OZ	M9 OVER B2SP	HEAVY			B	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/303	M9 OVER B2P	HEAVY			B	
	PEACHES, SLICED	24/303	M9 OVER B2SP	HEAVY			B	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/303	M9 OVER C2P	LIGHT			C	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/303	M9 OVER C3P	LIGHT			C	
	PEACHES, SLICED	24/303	M9 OVER C2SP	LIGHT			C	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/2 1/2	M9 OVER A2P	EXTRA HEAVY			A	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/2 1/2	M9 OVER B2P	HEAVY			B	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/2 1/2	M9 OVER B3P	HEAVY			B	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/2 1/2	M9 OVER C1P	LIGHT			C	
	PEACHES, HALVED	24/2 1/2	M9 OVER C2P	LIGHT			C	

INSPECTORS	TODAYS TOTAL PACK

REMARKS							
Item Nos		Grade		to		account	
Item Nos		Grade		to		account	
Item Nos		Grade		to		account	
Item Nos		Grade		to		account	
Item Nos		Grade		to		account	

NOTE: SEE SYMBOL DESIGNATION SHEET FOR SYMBOL MEANINGS.

APPENDIX V – CERTIFICATE REQUEST WORKSHEET

Electronic version of the Certificate Request Worksheet

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
CERTIFICATE REQUEST WORKSHEET

NO.		**DATE**	
TO		**PLANT**	

CERTIFICATE NO.	CASES	CAN SIZE	ITEM	COUNT SIZE	SOLIDS SYRUP

APPLICANT	**ADDRESS**
SHIPPER OR SELLER	**ADDRESS**
RECEIVER OR BUYER	**ADDRESS**

CONTRACT OR ORDER NO.

GRADE ACCORDING TO *(check appliable box)*		
U.S. STANDARDS ☐	FED. SPEC ☐	OTHER ☐

CERTIFICATE REQUIRED *(check applicable box)*				
SC-146 ☐	SC-147 ☐	SC-149 ☐	SC-66 ☐	SC-67 ☐

DAY AFTER PACK	UP TO DATE
DATE DESIRED	SIGNED

REMARKS *(Applicant, shipper or seller and receiver or buyer may be any company or individual designated.)*
ATTENTION WAREHOUSE: The warehouse must furnish a list of locations, with included codes, side marks and case counts necessary for the above items on the reverse side of this form. This information must be dated and signed by the warehouse person and all copies forwarded to the USDA.

DATE FORWARDED BY USDA:	**CERTIFICATES FORWARDED BY USDA TO:**	
	Originals	**Copies**
DISTRIBUTED BY USDA:		
SUPERINTENDENT		
SALES		
WAREHOUSE		
FILE (USDA)		

APPENDIX VI

Reserved for future use.

APPENDIX VII

Reserved for future use

APPENDIX VIII – PRODUCT IDENTITY REVIEW SHEET

Electronic version of Product Identity Review Sheet

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Page __ of __

SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
PRODUCT IDENTITY REVIEW SHEET

DATE _____

PRINT AND SIGN NAME _____

TITLE OF DOCUMENT *(as shown on document)*	**DOCUMENT NUMBER** *(as shown on document)*	**ORIGINATOR OF DOCUMENT** *(as shown on document)*	**DATE ON DOCUMENT** *(as shown on document)*	**PRODUCT** *(as shown on document)*	**QUANTITY AND CONTAINER SIZE** *(as shown on document)*	**LABEL AND CODE MARKINGS** *(as shown on document)*	**DOCUMENT TRACES WITH PREVIOUS DOCUMENT** *(Yes, No, N/A)*

COMMENTS

APPENDIX IX – PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION REVIEW SHEET COMPLETED (EXAMPLE)

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
PRODUCT IDENTITY REVIEW SHEET

DATE 11/25/2023

PRINT AND SIGN NAME John Smith

TITLE OF DOCUMENT *(as shown on document)*	DOCUMENT NUMBER *(as shown on document)*	ORIGINATOR OF DOCUMENT *(as shown on document)*	DATE ON DOCUMENT *(as shown on document)*	PRODUCT *(as shown on document)*	QUANTITY AND CONTAINER SIZE *(as shown on document)*	LABEL AND CODE MARKINGS *(as shown on document)*	DOCUMENT TRACES WITH PREVIOUS DOCUMENT *(Yes, No, N/A)*
Certificate from (country of origin)	ABC 123	Agricultural Department Country of Origin A.B. Inspector	10/23/23	(Product as identified on certificate)	125,000 kg. 5,000 25 kilogram Bags	Really Good Food Product A123, B123, C123	N/A
Shipping Bill of Lading	000111222333	Land or Sea Import Company Jack D. Shipper	10/25/23	(Product as identified on shipping bill of lading)	125,000 kg. 5,000 25 kg. Bags	Really Good Food Product A123, B123, C123	Yes
Incoming Port Receipt	A1B2C3	Port of Entry Mary L. Smith	10/27/23	(Product as identified on incoming port receipt)	125,000 kg	Really Good Food Product A123, B123, C123	Yes
Shipping Bill of Lading	XYZ445566	Ship to You Inc. J. Doe	10/29/23	(Product as identified on incoming bill of lading)	125,000 kg 5,000 25 kilogram Bags	Really Good Food Product A123, B123, C123	Yes
Warehouse Receiving Slip	09876	The Warehouse Co. I. M. Boss	10/30/23	(Product as identified on incoming Warehouse slip)	5,000 25 kilogram Bags	Really Good Food Product A123, B123, C123	Yes
Warehouse Storage Bill	987345000	The Warehouse Co. I. M. Boss	10/21/23	(Product as identified on warehouse storage bill)	5,000 25 kilogram Bags	Really Good Food Product A123, B123, C123	Yes

COMMENTS
Documentation Acceptable.

APPENDIX X – NON-MANIPULATION LETTER REPORT (EXAMPLE)

Electronic version of the Letter Report Template (intranet link)

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection Division

January 25, 2024

YAK-002-24

Jack Radloff
Operations Manager
Growers and Shippers Company
101 Your Street
Anytown, USA 23456

Reference: Inspection performed on January 25, 2024

Dear Mr. Radloff:

We have completed the warehouse portion o the plant survey for warehouse XYZ located at 123 North Warehouse Drive, Anytown, USA 23456. The warehouse conditions observed were acceptable.

A condition of container inspection was performed on the lot. The lot was found to meet applicable U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers. The sample units were labeled Really Good Food Product, 25 kg. *(all primary label information including code markings should be included, as noted in the Certification Manual).* Certificate number(s) *(ABC123, etc.)* shows that *(insert the product name)* was imported into the USA from *(insert Country of origin)* and stored at XYZ warehouse for a period of 9 months. Based on our inspection of records we have determined that *(insert the product name)* was handled in accordance with good manufacturing practices and stored under appropriate conditions to assure its security and continued suitability.

Inspection of records shows these samples represent 208 pallets of 24/25 kg containers each and 1 pallet of 8/25 kg containers, weighing a total of 125,000 kilograms.

Sincerely,

Name
Title

(Replace this information with your office info)

1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 1536-S, Stop 0240, Washington, D.C. 20250-0240
Phone: 202-720-5870 • Fax: 202-720-0393

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APPENDIX XI – OPTIONAL MONTHLY AND FOUR MONTH CYCLE REVIEW PROGRAM SUBMISSION WORKSHEET

Electronic version of the Monthly Review Program Submission Worksheet

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

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SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION

OPTIONAL MONTHLY AND FOUR MONTH CYCLE REVIEW PROGRAM SUBMISSION WORKSHEET

FIELD OFFICE _____ **START DATE**_____ **END DATE** _____

PRODUCT	APPLICANT OR PLANT	TYPE OF INSPECTION	INSPECTOR	GRADE ASSIGNED	FIELD OFFICE REVIEW					
					DATE REVIEWED	GRADE ASSIGNED	SUPERVISOR INITIALS	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR INSPECTOR *(Yes/No)*	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR SUPERVISOR *(Yes/No)*	CORRECTIVE ACTION *(Yes/No)*