



Destination Examination – Shelf Stable Products

I. Purpose

This document provides procedures for performing a destination examination on shelf stable canned or pouched products.

II. Policy

A destination examination is a third-party evaluation performed by USDA, AMS graders (graders) that can be requested when the condition of livestock and poultry products has been questioned at the point of delivery. Destination examinations for canned and/or pouched product must be done in accordance with the [7 CFR part 42: Standards for Condition of Food Containers](#). Results of the destination examination and pertinent information from any shipping documents regarding the load being examined must be recorded on the [AD-3061: Container Examination Worksheet](#) for metal cans or [AD-3066: Container Examination Worksheet](#) for flexible pouches. This final examination of commodity products determines whether products have arrived at destination in an acceptable/satisfactory condition, have not been tampered with, and are ready for further distribution. Each destination examination can also serve as a valuable opportunity to hear the concerns of the recipient and have a discussion about product quality.

III. Procedures

A. Examination Requests

A destination examination may be requested for one or more of the following attributes listed below. Graders must work with their supervisor to coordinate the logistics of the destination examinations such as time, location, point of contact and completion of the [LP-109: Application for Service](#). At the request of the recipient or supplying vendor, additional attributes not listed below may be examined.

Condition attributes:

1. The identity and quantity of the product.
2. The condition, and type of containers.
3. The extent of visible damage from shifting pallets due to improper palletization/stacking or mishandling.

B. Shipping Documents

Obtain the shipping certificate (LP-210P) or Certificate of Conformance (COC) and bill of lading which accompanied the shipping container. Verify that the seal numbers are the same as shown on the certificate. Load information including the shipping date, destination examination location, shipping



facility location, production location, seal number, purchase order number, sales order number, and item number should be transferred to the appropriate fields on the examination worksheet.

C. Attribute Examinations

1. Container Quantity

The total number of containers for each destination examination should be verified by the grader. The total must be recorded in the appropriate field on the examination worksheet. If this number does not match the total stated on the shipping certificate and/or the bill of lading, a note must be made in the remarks.

An official recount is required when the delivery vehicle arrives with broken or missing seals or other evidence of suspected tampering. In this case, graders must personally count all containers on the unit and record any evidence of tampering found. If necessary, note the number of cases short in the remarks on the examination worksheet.

2. Container Condition

a) Determine the Appropriate Sampling Plan

Graders must determine the appropriate sampling plan to use based on the total number of individual containers in the lot using the table below. For each sampling plan, the table shows the sample size and accept or reject criteria for each defect classification (Critical: 0.25, Major: 2.5, Total:10.0). The “Other than Origin Inspection” side of the table must be used for destination examinations. This information is transferred to the “Sampling Plan Used” section of the Destination Examination Worksheet.

Table I—Single Sampling Plans for Normal Condition of Container Inspection

Code	Lot size ranges— Number of containers in lot	Type of Plan	Acceptable quality levels												
			Origin Inspection						Other Than Origin Inspection						
			Sample size		0.25		1.5		6.5		0.25		2.5		10.0
			Ac	Re	Ac	Re	Ac	Re	Ac	Re	Ac	Re	Ac	Re	
CA	6,000 or less	Single	84	0	1	3	4	9	10	0	1	4	5	13	14
CB	6,001–12,000	Single	168	1	2	5	6	16	17	1	2	7	8	23	24
CC	12,001–36,000	Single	315	2	3	8	9	28	29	2	3	13	14	41	42
CD	Over 36,000	Single	500	3	4	12	13	42	43	3	4	18	19	62	63
CE		Single	800	4	5	18	19	64	65	4	5	27	28	95	96

Ac = Acceptance number.
Re = Rejection number.

Example: Grader is examining a lot size of 600 cases where 24 individual containers are unitized in each case. Therefore, the total number of individual containers in the lot is 14,400. Using the table above, the grader determines the appropriate sample plan to use is “CC” because 14,400 falls between



12,001 – 36,000 containers. Based on this sampling plan, the grader would sample 315 individual containers. They would accept the lot if there were 2 or fewer critical defects, 13 or fewer major defects, and 41 or fewer total defects.

b) Determining Total Number of Sample Cases

When individual containers are packed 12 or less to a case, sample no more than 6 individual containers from any one case. When individual containers are packed between 12-60 to a case, sample no more than 12 individual containers from a case.

Divide the sample size by the sample units per case to determine the number of cases to sample. Use an unbiased random sampling method to select this number of cases from the lot.

Example: A grader has determined that the appropriate sample plan requires a sample size of 315 individual containers. There are 24 cans per case for the product being sampled, therefore the grader must sample 12 individual containers from each sample case. By dividing 315 by 12, the grader determines 26.25 sample cases will be needed. The grader must sample 12 individual containers from each of the 26 cases and an additional 3 containers from the 27th case to meet the 315 individual container sample size.

c) Examine Sample Units for Defects

Visually examine each individual container that is part of the sample for applicable defects. The specific types of defects and classification for each defect are listed on the *Container Examination Worksheets*. For each defect found, record a tally mark next to the defect type on the worksheet. Total the tally marks for Critical, Major, and Minor defects in the bottom section of the form.

d) Determine Acceptance or Rejection of the Lot

Compare the total number of defects in each category to the accept or reject totals for the sampling plan. Mark the appropriate box next to the totals section to indicate whether the lot is to be accepted or rejected. If sampling results determine that the lot should be rejected, graders must place the product on official USDA hold and contact their supervisor immediately. Unacceptable product should be handled as outlined in [section D.2.](#) of this procedure.

3. Palletization/Stacking or Other Mishandling of Product

Improper palletization, stacking, and mishandling can result in damage to the product. Graders must examine the entire load to determine if any pallets are leaning and/or if any cases on the lower layers have been damaged. Leaning pallets not only indicate that the product may have shifted during transport, but unstable pallets cause issues for the recipient when putting product into storage.

Destination examinations can be requested due to obvious damage noticed by the recipient. Graders are encouraged to take numerous pictures of affected product to document the issue in a visual format. In these instances, the grader must use their discretion to determine whether a stationary lot



examination is necessary to assess the condition of the entire load. If a stationary lot examination is deemed unnecessary due to obvious product damage on a portion of the load, graders must work with the facility staff to assess the entire load and segregate the affected product from the acceptable product. The total quantity of damaged containers and remaining acceptable product will be recorded in the remarks so that a partial rejection may occur. Damaged product will be handled as outlined in section D.2. of this procedure.

D. Container Examination Worksheet Submittal

The grader must sign and date the completed worksheet and email it to their supervisor. The supervisor will forward a copy to the National Office. Graders must maintain a copy of the form in their personal records and supervisors must file a digital copy of the form in shared folders as specified by their Regional Office. All records should be destroyed 1 year after the close of the fiscal year in which they were created.

1. Acceptable Findings

For acceptable shipments, the grader performing the destination examination must place the following statement in the remarks of the *Container Examination Worksheet*:

“Product represented by this document was examined and was found to be in acceptable condition.”

2. Unacceptable Findings

For destination examinations that resulted in unacceptable product, the grader must immediately notify their supervisor via phone and email the *Container Examination Worksheet* along with any photos of defective product. They should remain onsite until given further guidance. When necessary, the supervisor or Regional Office may coordinate with the National Office to make a final determination. The supplying vendor must be notified and given the opportunity to pick up any unacceptable product. The official USDA stamps must be obliterated under the supervision of the grader on any product found to be out of compliance during the destination examination before the hold tape may be removed. Stamp obliteration may occur on-site at the destination or at the origin plant when the product is returned.

Container Examination Worksheets covering unacceptable product must carry the following statement:

“Destination Examination – product covered by this document does not meet the requirements of the Commodity Specification.”

Also, include the reason for the rejection, for example:

a) Example 1: Excessive Defects

“Product was found in unacceptable condition due to excessive defects. Product sampled was found to have 10 critical and 13 major defects which exceeds the tolerance for the sample size.”



b) Example 2: Partial rejection due to damaged cases

“45 cases of product were found in unacceptable condition due to pallet shifting resulting in damage to the metal cans. This product was segregated and put on official USDA Hold. The official stamps on the defective product cases were obliterated and the product was disposed of at the warehouse under USDA supervision. The remaining 1,755 cases were found to be in acceptable condition.”

E. Reporting Billing Hours, Expenses, and Volume

For any new service locations, an LP-109 must be completed by the vendor with their billing information and destination examination location. The forms must be emailed to the Business Operations Branch (BOB) at QAD.BusinessOps@usda.gov prior to providing service in order to obtain the request number. If product is found to be unacceptable or a partial rejection occurs the fees, expenses, and associated costs for the examination must be billed to the vendor.

Alternatively, when results of the destination examination determine that the product is acceptable the fees, expenses, and associated costs for the examination must be billed to Commodity Procurement (CP). The supervisor must email the BOB at the above email requesting a new request number with the same work location using the CP billing account number.

The appropriate unscheduled request number obtained from the BOB must be used for entries in work reports and expense logs in ABI. State trust states must transfer the information from the LP-109 to their own equivalent form(s) and make appropriate entries into their work reports and expense logs. The volume of product examined must be recorded in ABI as “DE” in the “Acceptance Service” section and “NG Dest. Inspection” in the “Officially Graded” section.

Exhibit 1: AD-3061- Container Examination Worksheet example.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CONTAINER EXAMINATION WORKSHEET TABLE IV – METAL CONTAINERS	PRODUCT <i>Canned Chicken</i>	TYPE AND SIZE OF CONTAINER <i>24/12.5 oz. cans</i>
	LOT NO.	LOT SIZE* <i>43,200</i>
	CONTRACT NO. <i>1234567</i>	
Name and Address of Applicant <i>Generic Chicken (Vendor)</i> <i>612 Electric Ave</i>	INSPECTION STATUS OF LOT* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL <input type="checkbox"/> RESUBMITTED *As stated by applicant.	INSPECTION POINT <i>Big Food Bank</i> <i>27 Stock St</i>

CODES AND APPROXIMATE NO. OF CONTAINERS PER CODE* ADDITIONAL CODES SEE REVERSE

Production date: *11/23/2023*

Purchase Order: *41000LLLLL*; Sales Order Number: *500004554*; Item: *100*

SAMPLING PLAN USED	No. of Sample Units	CRITICAL		MAJOR		TOTAL (Minor, Critical, and Major Defects)	
		AQL: 0.25		AQL: 1.5		AQL: 6.5	
		Ac	Re	Ac	Re	Ac	Re
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Normal	CODE <i>CD</i>				<i>2.5</i>		<i>10</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Tightened							
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduced							
First Sample	<i>500</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>63</i>
Second Sample							
Total Sample							

Defect No.	Type of Defect	1 st Sample	2 nd Sample	Defect No.	Type of Defect	1 st Sample	2 nd Sample
	Type or size of container or component parts not as specified	NONE PERMITTED					
1	Closure incomplete, not located correctly or not sealed, crimped, or fitted properly: (a) Heat processed primary container	CRITICAL		209	RUST: (rust stain confined to the top or bottom double seam or rust that can be removed with a soft cloth is not scored as a defect) (a) Rust stain	Minor	
101	(b) Non-Heat processed primary container	MAJOR					
201	(c) Other than primary container	Minor		112	(b) Fitted rust	MAJOR	
202	Dirty, stained, or smeared container	Minor		210	Wet cans (excluding refrigerated containers)	Minor	
102	KEY OPENING METAL CONTAINERS (when required): (a) Key missing	MAJOR		211	DENT: (a) Materially affecting appearance but not usability	Minor	
103	(b) Key does not fit tab	MAJOR		113	(b) Materially affecting usability	MAJOR	
104	(c) Tab of opening band insufficient to provide accessibility to key	MAJOR		212	BUCKLE: (a) Not involving end seam	Minor	
105	(d) Improper scoring (band would not be removed in one continuous strip)	MAJOR		114	(b) Extending into the end seam	MAJOR	
106	METAL POP-TOPS: (a) Missing or broken pull tab	MAJOR		115	Collapsed container	MAJOR	
107	(b) Missing or incomplete score line	MAJOR		213	Paneled side materially affecting appearance but not usability	Minor	
108	FLEXIBLE POP-TOP: (a) Poor seal (wrinkle, entrapped matter, etc.)	MAJOR		116	Solder missing when required	MAJOR	
203	(b) Short pull tab	Minor		117	Cable cut exposing seam	MAJOR	
109	(c) Missing pull tab	MAJOR		118	Improper side seam	MAJOR	
204	(d) Torn pull tab	Minor		2	Swell, springer, or flipper (not applicable to gas or pressure packed product nor frozen products)	CRITICAL	
110	OPEN TOP WITH PLASTIC OVERCAP (when required): (a) Plastic overcap missing	MAJOR		3	Leaker or blown container	CRITICAL	
111	(b) Plastic overcap warped (making opening or reapplication difficult)	MAJOR		214	FROZEN PRODUCTS ONLY: (a) Bulging ends 3/16-inch to 1/4-inch beyond lip	Minor	
205	OUTSIDE TINPLATE OR COATING (when required): (a) Missing or incomplete	Minor		119	(b) Bulging ends more than 1/4-inch beyond lip	MAJOR	
206	(b) Blistered, flaked, sagged, or wrinkled	Minor		4	METAL DRUMS: Leaking filling seal (bung) swell ¹	CRITICAL	
207	(c) Scratched or scored	Minor		120	Leaking filling seal (bung) swell ¹	MAJOR	
208	(d) Fine cracks	Minor			¹ Defect classification depends on the severity of the defect		

REMARKS

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TABLE XI – LABEL, MARKING, OR CODE							
101	Not specified method	MAJOR		202	Torn or mutilated	Minor	
102	Missing (<i>when required</i>)	MAJOR		203	Text illegible or incomplete	Minor	
103	Torn or scratched, obliterating any markings on the label	MAJOR		204	In wrong location	Minor	
104	Incorrect	MAJOR		OTHER (Specify)			
201	Loose or improperly applied	Minor					
		Minor	Major	Critical	Total	ACTION TAKEN BASED ON FIRST SAMPLE	
First sample	11	16	8	34	<input type="checkbox"/> LOT ACCEPTED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LOT REJECTED <input type="checkbox"/> SECOND SAMPLE		
Second sample	-	-	-		ACTION TAKEN ON SECOND SAMPLE (if required)		
Grand total	11	16	8	34	<input type="checkbox"/> LOT ACCEPTED <input type="checkbox"/> LOT REJECTED		
DATE INSPECTED				SIGNATURE OF INSPECTOR (<i>Print and Sign Name</i>)			
12/15/23				Grader Signature			

ADDITIONAL CODES

"Product was found in unacceptable condition due excessive defects. Product sampled was found to have 8 critical defects which exceeds the tolerance for the sample size."

CONTAINER EXAMINATION WORKSHEET FOR INTERIOR DEFECTS

TABLE XII – INTERIOR CONTAINER DEFECTS ²							
101	De-tinning in metal container material affecting usability	MAJOR		201	De-tinning metal container not materially affecting usability	Minor	
102	Enamel missing (<i>when required</i>) in metal container	MAJOR		202	Black spots in metal container	Minor	
103	Enamel breakdown in metal container material affecting usability	MAJOR		203	Enamel breakdown in metal container material not affecting usability	Minor	
104	Other defect(s) of the interior of the container (metal, plastic, paper, rigid, etc.) e.g., interior damage, tear, delamination, missing layer, off-odor, interior blisters, etc. that materially affects usability	MAJOR		204	Defect(s) of the interior of the container (Metal, plastic, paper, rigid, etc.) e.g., interior damage, tear, delamination, missing layer, off-odor, interior blisters, etc. that materially affects appearance, but not usability	Minor	
				OTHER (Specify)			

² Acceptance Numbers for Selected Sample Sizes for Interior Container Defects Found when Using Quality Samples are below:

Sample Size (n = number of containers)	Major		Total	
	Interior Defects		Interior Defects	
	Ac	Re	Ac	Re
n - 13	0	1	2	3
n - 21	1	2	3	4
n - 29	1	2	4	5
n - 38	2	3	5	6
n - 48	2	3	6	7
n - 60	2	3	7	8

	Minor	Major	Total	ACTION TAKEN
Interior Defect Summary				<input type="checkbox"/> LOT ACCEPTED <input type="checkbox"/> LOT REJECTED
DATE INSPECTED				SIGNATURE OF INSPECTOR (<i>Print and Sign Name</i>)