United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection Division

PATCH # 062

DOCUMENT: General Market Manual, February 2020

REMARKS:

Assisting Inspector Assignment of Samples on Notesheet

During inspections of large lots, it is not unusual to have an additional inspector(s) assist in grading samples. For proper accountability, whenever assisting inspectors grade samples, each sample must be assigned to the inspector that graded the sample. For the FV-300N notesheet, this is done by having each inspector place their initials to the left of the recorded sample. For electronic notesheets (i.e. FEIRS), inspectors will select their name from an "assisted by" dropdown for the recorded sample.

When an additional inspector(s) has assisted in running samples during the inspection, they will also sign the certificate prior to issuance whenever practical.

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United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection Division

PATCH # 060

DOCUMENT: General Market Manual, February 2020

REMARKS: The following is updated information to be placed in the "REMARKS" section of Terminal Market Inspection (TMI) certificates for the purposes of Commodity Procurement inspections.

Commodity Procurement

The purchase order (PO) contains all the information that is required to be recorded on the issuing certificate. All certificates must contain the following statement:

> "Meets (Fails to Meet) the **Requirements of Solicitation ___**, **Solicitation Sales Order number __**, **Purchase order number ____**, and **Purchase Line Item number ___**."

If the load/lot fails the requirements an additional statement of "**account ___**" will be added to clarify the factor that caused the failure, such as:

> "Fails to Meet the Requirements of Solicitation ___, Solicitation Sales Order number ___, Purchase order number ___, and Purchase Line Item number **account** marked size."

Provide additional information in Remarks as necessary to further clarify the account factor, such as:

> "Size marked on cartons is not the size required per the Solicitation."

In FEIRS there is a drop-down remark available to complete this statement efficiently and accurately.

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Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Agricultural Marketing Service

Specialty Crops Program

Specialty Crops Inspection Division

AIM Inspection Series

General Market Manual

February 2020

"SCI moving forward in the 21st Century using technology, innovation, and old fashioned hard work"

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, 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.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a general instructional guide for receiving market inspectors. For specific instructions on the certification of fresh products, please refer to the specific commodity inspection standards, inspection instructions, and visual aids located on the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) website for Fruit, Vegetable, Nut, and Specialty Crop Grade Standards and Other Resources. If you need help on a topic not covered by these instructions, please contact your immediate supervisor, Regional Branch Chief, Federal Program Manager or HQ Inspection Operations staff in Washington, DC.

The AMS Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division developed these instructions to help authorized personnel inspect agricultural commodities.

These instructions do not establish any substantial rule not legally authorized by the official grade standards. These instructions replace General Market Inspection Instructions dated April 1988 and include, but not limited to, all previous correspondence, memos, inspection instructions, or procedures.

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.

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- A series of options will become available,
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AUTHORITY

SCI Division Mission Statement

Support the global specialty crops market by collaborating with the agricultural community to provide trusted, impartial, prompt, and accurate quality assurance and food safety verification services.

Authority for the SCI Division Inspection Service

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. §1622 (h)(1)), as amended, states:

"To inspect, certify, and identify the class, quality, quantity, and condition of agricultural products when shipped or received in interstate commerce, under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of Agriculture may prescribe, including assessment and collection of such fees as will be reasonable and as nearly as may be to cover the cost of the service rendered, to the end that agricultural products may be marketed to the best advantage, that trading may be facilitated, and that consumers may be able to obtain the quality product which they desire, except that no person shall be required to use the service authorized by this subsection."

Inspectors Have No Regulatory Authority

Federal and Federal-State inspectors do not have regulatory authority. They are authorized to serve the fresh fruit and vegetable industry by certifying the quality and condition of products they are asked to inspect. The use of our services by financially interested parties is optional and must be requested. AMS is responsible for enforcing the Export Apple Act and Export Grape Act. Inspectors issue an Export Form Certificate when the inspection shows that a shipment meets the requirements of the Acts. AMS also enforces the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act of 1930, as amended, (PACA), which includes some authority for the inspection of fresh fruits and vegetables. Under the PACA, inspectors report misbranding.

Authority to Inspect Imported/Interstate Shipments

Federal inspectors and Federal-State market licensees are authorized to perform inspections on all fresh products for which they are trained and authorized to inspect from any state or country, with the following exceptions:

- Bulk loads, bulk bins, or any other packed containers that are not marked with a point of origin may be inspected by a Federal-State Shipping Point Licensee (SPL). A shipping point certificate can only be issued when a thorough check has determined that the product was not previously inspected.

- Products being imported at designated border inspection points require Federal inspectors or Federal-State market licensees authorized to perform inspections on the particular commodity that are properly trained and licensed. All imported inspections performed under Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended, receiving market work and will be charged according to the Schedule of Fees and

Charges at Destination Markets as referenced in 7 CFR Part 51.

- Inspections being performed for repackers. Repacking operators often request both an incoming receiving market inspection and an outgoing inspection at the time of shipment. Incoming shipments from another state or country require a Federal inspector or market licensee, unless the shipments fall under one of the categories above. The type of inspector required for outgoing shipments depends on the circumstances. If the repacker requests an inspection, the containers have not been repacked, and markings show the product is from another state or country, a Federal inspector or market licensee is required unless the shipment falls under the second category above. If the product has been repacked and the containers do not show the original state or country of origin, or if the inspector is certain whether the product has been repacked and another state or country of origin is shown on the container, an SPL may perform the inspection and issue a shipping point certificate.

- Use of market licensees on interstate shipments of table stock product or products destined for processing. If the shipment was inspected at shipping point, a Federal inspector or market licensee must perform any subsequent re-inspection. If the shipment was not inspected at shipping point, an SPL may perform the inspection and issue a shipping point certificate.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INDUSTRY

Inspectors must:

- Maintain cordial but professional relations with members of industry, and
- Maintain confidentiality in discussions of operations with other industry officials.

Inspectors must not:

- Accept favors or gifts from industry members,
- Engage in gambling games, such as poker, with industry,
- Assume responsibility for any packing or receiving market operations, or
- Criticize industry officials, other inspectors, or the policies and procedures of the inspection service.

Rules of Conduct for Inspectors

Inspectors may not:

- Have any direct or indirect financial interest in the products they sample and inspect,
- Consume alcoholic beverages while on duty,
- Perform their duties in a manner that demonstrates disregard for written and/or oral instructions,
- Falsify expense vouchers or time sheets,
- Accept money or gifts from industry,

- Borrow money or accept other favors or gifts from industry members, or
- Solicit or accept a bribe.

Violations of these rules of conduct are cause for disciplinary action.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Bribery

Each inspector must carry an OIG-USDA Report Bribery/Assault, Fraud, Waste and Misconduct Hotline card at all times.

Any AMS employee or licensee who believes that a bribe was offered, solicited, or accepted by another employee or licensee must immediately report that information directly to the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) by the OIG hotline web page at: http://www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm or by telephone at 800-424-9121. Report situations where a forthright offer is made, or if you suspect you are being "felt out" or that an offer of a bribe could reasonably be implied. Follow OIG's instructions to avoid jeopardizing any subsequent investigation.

AMS has confidence in the honesty and integrity of its employees. However, we are obliged to inform all employees and licensees involved with sampling or inspection of product of the consequences of bribes, bribery attempts, and acceptance or solicitation of bribes. The United States Code of Laws, Title 18 of the U.S. Code Section 201, Crimes and Criminal Procedures, states in part:

"Whoever…being a public official or person selected to be a public official, directly or indirectly, corruptly demands, seeks, receives, accepts, or agrees to receive or accept anything of value personally or for any other person or entity, in return for:

- being influenced in the performance of any official act;
- being influenced to commit or aid in committing, or to collude in, or allow, any fraud, or make any opportunity for the commission of any fraud, on the United States; or
- being induced to do or omit to do any act in violation of the official duty of such official or person…shall be fined under this title or not more than three times the monetary equivalent of the thing of value, whichever is greater, or imprisoned for not more than fifteen years, or both, and may be disqualified from holding any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States."

If you believe that you have been offered a bribe, or suspect you were being felt out for a bribe or a bribe offer could be reasonably inferred, or that another employee or licensee was offered or has solicited or accepted a bribe:

- Do not take the bribe.
- Immediately report the incident to the USDA/OIG Bribery Hotline at 800-424-9121. Contact information is also on the OIG hotline web page at:

http://www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm.

- Do not discuss the incident with anyone, including your supervisor(s), unless instructed to do so by OIG.

Making False Use of Official Certificates, Marks, or Other Identification

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. §1622 (h)(4)), as amended, states:

"Whoever knowingly shall falsely make, issue, alter, forge, or counterfeit any official certificate, memorandum, mark, or other identification, with respect to inspection, class, grade, quality, size, quantity, or condition, issued or authorized under this section or knowingly cause or procure or aid, assist in, or be party to, such false marking, issuing, altering, forging, or counterfeiting, or whoever, knowingly shall possess without promptly notifying the Secretary of Agriculture or his representative, utter, publish, or use as true, or cause to be uttered, published, or used as true, any such falsely made, altered, forged, or counterfeited official certificate, memorandum, mark, identification, or device, or whoever knowingly represents that an agricultural product has been officially inspected or graded (by authorized inspector or grader) under the authority of this section when such commodity has in fact not been so graded or inspected shall be fined not more than $1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both."

REQUESTING INSPECTIONS

Who May Apply for an Inspection

Any financially interested person or authorized agent may apply for inspection (Section 51.5 of the Regulations Governing Inspection). This includes shippers, packers, receivers, dealers, commission merchants, carriers, and brokers. A broker is financially interested to the extent of the brokerage and expenses incidental to the sale of product. Those who are merely negotiating for a purchase are not yet "financially interested." The applicant must pay the fee and make settlement with other financially interested parties. The certificate is issued to the party making the application for inspection, whether this party is a shipper, receiver, broker, grower, carrier, or Government agency. Do not accept inspection requests in the name of another financially interested party unless the requestor can supply documentation showing they are authorized to make such requests. File a copy of the authorization to secure the inspection for another party (e.g., a fax, e-mail, or letter) with the inspection office that confirms the application.

Application for Inspection (SC-237)

All requests for services are required to be documented by completing a SC-237, there are no exceptions from this requirement for one-person markets or contract warehouses.

The Application for Inspection (Form SC-237) is the only form that may be used to officially request services. Requests may be made in writing, orally, or by telephone, e-mail or fax, and must include all pertinent information related to the inspection. A SC-237 must be completed, in its entirety, for each request for service. The SCI Division uses this form to record requests for inspection; the AMS PACA Division uses information on this form to settle claims. These forms must be filed in the local offices.

Completing the SC-237

Complete the form in its entirety. "Location of Product(s)" will provide the location of the product to be inspected. This may be a physical address, store location or building designation within the geographical coverage area of the market office. "Car Number or License Number" may refer to other means of identifying a lot, such as license number of a trailer, storage lot number, stencil marks, or waybill numbers. Always record the quantity to be inspected, as this is generally the basis for assessing fees. Record the particular purpose of each inspection, such as:

- quality and condition,
- condition only,
- size,
- net weight, or
- other specifications in the contract, without which the inspection and certificate would be incomplete.

You may need to explain to the applicant the different types of inspections that are available to ensure that the application includes the factors the applicant wants covered by the certificate. Getting detailed and accurate information can avoid the necessity of a second inspection. If the applicant does not know what type of inspection they want, provide a Quality and Condition inspection, and base the inspection on the U.S.No.1 grade unless containers are marked to some other grade.

Changes to the inspection request must be noted on the original SC-237, including the name of the person requesting the change. If the original SC-237 is not available these notations should be made in the "Remarks" section of the inspection certificate.

A. Date and Time

The date and time listed on the SC-237 in the "Date" and "Time" blocks are the date and time the service is being requested to begin, known as the "requested for" date and time. It is not the date and time the SC-237 was received, known as the "request received" date and time. The "request received" date and time is the date and time the request was ***retrieved*** from the fax machine, from the office voicemail, from an email inbox or taken verbally over the phone or in person. It is not the date/time stamp on received fax requests, the date/time the applicant listed on a submitted SC-237 or the time stamp recorded on office voicemail messages.

- When requests are made via telephone during normal office hours the current date and time will be the "request received" date and time.
- When requests are made via fax, voicemail or email the date and time of when these requests were retrieved will be the "request received" date and time.
    - When requests are made via voicemail or email the date and time when the message was timestamped or listed in the email inbox will be noted under Remarks on the SC-237. If requested by the applicant this date and time will be listed on the inspection certificate.

- Inaccurate dates and times listed on applicant submitted SC-237's will be lined out with initials and correct dates and times will be listed.
- If the "request received" date and time is the same as the "requested for" date and time, only the "requested for" date and time will be listed on the SC-237.
  - Thus when only one date and time is listed on a SC-237 it is considered to be both the "request received" and "requested for" date and time.
- If the "request received" date and time is not the same as the "requested for" date and time the "request received" date and time will be noted under Remarks on the SC-237. If requested by the applicant this "request received" date and time will be listed on the inspection certificate.

Examples if normal office hours are 7:00am to 3:30pm:

- The applicant calls Tuesday at 7:10am for an inspection to begin ASAP, enter Tuesday's date and 7:10am as Date and Time on the SC-237.
- The applicant calls Tuesday at 7:10am for an inspection to begin at 10:00am, enter Tuesday's date and 10:00am as Date and Time and "Request received (Tuesday's date) @ 7:10am" under Remarks on the SC-237.
- The applicant calls on Friday at 2:00pm for an inspection to begin Monday at 8:00am, enter Monday's date and 8:00 AM as Date and Time and "Request received (Friday's date) @ 2:00pm" under Remarks on the SC-237.
- The applicant faxes a completed SC-237 to the office early Tuesday morning. The applicant entered 3:00am as Time. The SC-237 is retrieved off the fax machine at 7:00am. Line out and initial 3:00am and list 7:00am as the Time.
- The applicant leaves a request for inspection via voicemail Wednesday morning for an inspection to begin ASAP. The voicemail timestamp indicates the message was recorded at 10:10am. The message was retrieved that day at 11:45am. Enter Wednesday's date and 11:45am as Date and Time and "Voicemail timestamped (Wednesday's date) @ 10:10 am" under Remarks on the SC-237.

This is important information for proceedings under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA).

B. Recording Completed Certificate Number

For completed inspection requests the issued certificate number(s) will be recorded on the SC-237.

C. Cancelled Inspections

If a service request is cancelled by the applicant write "Cancelled By" and the name of the person cancelling the request across the body of the SC-237. Each office must maintain a file and accounting of cancelled SC-237s.

Filling the SC-237

SC-237s will be kept in a file separate from corresponding completed certificates. The file will be established by date and month within the fiscal year.

Declining an Inspection Request

You may decline inspection requests in certain instances. If you encounter any of the following situations, notify your supervisor immediately for guidance; the supervisor will contact the applicant:

- The applicant objects to the inspector cutting an adequate number of specimens to determine internal quality or condition;
- There is evidence of fraud or misrepresentation;
- The applicant or its employees interfere with the inspector;
- Performing the inspection would jeopardize the safety of the inspector;
- The applicant refuses to pay for previous inspections;
- It appears that performing the inspection would not be in the best interest of the Government (7 CFR §51.9, 51.10, 51.16, 51.27, 51.46 and 51.54-59) or
- If the product is under seizure or in the process of being put under seizure by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or U.S. Customs Service (Customs). In this instance, only FDA or Customs may release the product.

In cases that require immediate action, except for refusal to pay for previous unpaid inspections, you may be able to refuse the inspection services to an applicant for a period of time. However, the applicant is entitled to a hearing before a permanent debarment of the service can be made effective. If the inspections are made at a Federal-State cooperative market, procedures must also be taken up with the proper official of the cooperating state and their Federal Program Managers must be notified.

Priority of Requested Inspections

The following types of inspections will be assigned and completed as a priority above other requested services:

1. Appeal Inspection
2. Section 8e import
3. Commodity Procurement
4. Tomato Suspension Agreement
5. PACA misbranding
6. Freezing only
7. Chilling injury
8. Lots with unusually high or low temperatures being reported
9. Loaded lots at the discretion of the local supervisor or Inspector-in-Charge

Daily Desk Log

All Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division offices and inspection points providing terminal market inspection services must maintain a daily assignment log of service requests documented via a SC-237 or SC-237a. This information can serve many uses, including to ensure that all certificates have been submitted.

The log must include:

- Date and time the service is requested or requested for.
- Date and time the service was assigned to be performed.
- Applicant name.
- Assigned inspector name.
- Commodity inspected.
- Number of lots requested.
- Lot identification such as PO or Bill of Lading number.
- Issued certificate number.

To further assist in efficient operation of the office or inspection point the log may include:

- Estimated fee as listed on the issuing certificate.
- Location of product.
- Hours of overtime charged/claimed.
- Leave activity.
- Vehicle usage.
- Import or contract warehouse related information.

The log will be used to verify that service requests are assigned, completed or cancelled in a timely manner. It allows for quick access to information regarding inspector locations and workload. This information is useful when determining new assignments or responding to applicant inquiries. It can also be utilized for quick reference in researching issued certificate numbers.

In an effort to keep information uniform and consistent a standardized electronic format will be used. A designated template to download for local use is available via SharePoint. Once downloaded, the template will be saved and accessed locally via each office or inspection point's shared folder on the SCI shared drive. This electronic format allows for quick editing and completion while being easily accessed and shared among staff and supervisory chain-of command.

- A single log will be kept by each office or inspection point for each fiscal year.
- On the log each tab is a month of the year. All service requests for a given month will be logged within that month's tab.
- Within a particular month, all service requests for a given day will be logged by Request Date and Time from top down within that month's tab. The Request Date and Time is the date and time the applicant has requested the service to begin. If no date and time are

requested for the service to begin, the date and time when the service request was received by the office or inspection point will be the Request Date and Time.

- Cancelled service requests will have “Cancelled” entered in the Certificate field.
- All services listed within a day, but not completed that day, will be carried down to the next business day and will have “C/O” entered in the Certificate field with text being changed from black to red.
- All services carried over will be copied down to the next business day with text being changed from red to black.
- Remarks may be used to list any pertinent information associated with the request.
- All appeal service requests will have “appeal” listed in the Remarks in red ink.
- For inspectors issuing paper certificates the issued paper certificate number will be recorded, not the associated Fresh Electronic Inspection Reporting/Resource (FEIRS) billing certificate number.
- All inspection services will list the completed certificate number, “Cancelled”, or “C/O” by the end of two business days from the Request Date. Audit services will list the date when the daily on-site portion of the audit was completed.

REQUEST DATE	TIME REQ.	ASSIGNED DATE	ASSIGNED TIME	APPLICANT NAME	INSPECTOR	COMMODITY	LOTS	LOT IDENTIFICATION	CERTIFICATE(S)	EST. FEE	LOCATION

INSPECTION EQUIPMENT

The SCI Division furnishes each inspector with the necessary inspection equipment to perform inspection duties. Each inspector must take care of this equipment and keep it in good working order. These tools are the property of USDA and/or the State agency responsible for inspections, and are accountable in the same manner as all other public property. Each inspector is issued, or has access to, at a minimum the following equipment:

- Bucket
- Crate Opener
- Scales (4, 6, and 25 or 30 pound)
- Knife
- Thermometers (two digital)
- Ring Sizers (USDA tomato, Florida tomato, general fruit and vegetable, potato and onion, California cherry, and Washington cherry and grape, as appropriate)
- Caliper
- Calculator
- Clipboard
- Writing Instruments

- Certificates
- Compilation of Grade Standards*
- Commodity Inspection Instructions*
- Refractometer *
- Pressure Tester *
- Digital Camera and Case
- Coring Knife *
- Garlic Press *
- Platform Scale (75 pound) *
- "Triner" Scale *
- Electronic Scale (70-ounce or 5-pound)

  * This equipment may be retained in the office rather than maintained by the inspector.

Inspector Grading Equipment Inventory Sheet

The Terminal Market Inspector Grading Equipment Inventory Sheet (see Appendix VI) is completed when inventoried equipment is issued and returned or transferred. Inspectors are expected to maintain equipment in suitable condition, with consideration for wear under normal use. Inspectors may be held responsible for replacement costs for lost or damaged equipment. Items described as "if applicable" may not be required for each individual inspector. Additional equipment not listed may be required in certain offices and should be listed in the blank spaces provided. Digital cameras, laptops and wireless network aircards should be listed on the office equipment inventory sheet and not on the Inspector Grading Equipment Inventory sheet.

Scales

Before using a barrel scale, be sure that the cylinder works freely within the barrel and that the scale is held by the ring when the reading is made. Otherwise, it may not be in a perpendicular position and friction will cause an error in reading.

Test scales periodically to confirm they are working properly. Twenty-five (25) and 30-pound scales are graduated to read to a quarter pound and are used to accurately determine weights as small as a quarter pound.

Each office has a "Triner" or electronic digital scale. The Triner scale is used to weigh borderline specimens when determining percentages above or below a certain weight, such as size for count/size potatoes. Periodically zero out scales and verify their accuracy using check weights.

Thermometers

Before recording temperatures, pre-cool the thermometer by inserting it into a specimen and allowing enough time to stabilize the reading. Then place the thermometer into another specimen to record the temperature. Thermometers require careful handling. Do not attempt to insert a thermometer into hard or frozen specimens without first making an opening with a sharp pointed instrument.

Check approved digital thermometers at least twice each week by using an approved digital calibration device (Tel-Tru) or by following the ice and water bath procedure below:

1. Fill an appropriate size beaker with ice and then water.
2. Stir for 2 minutes and then immerse the thermometer for 2 minutes in the center of the mixture. Do not permit the thermometer bulb to rest against the side of the container. The thermometer may be held vertically by fitting it through a perforated piece of cardboard positioned across the top of the beaker.
3. The thermometer should read within ± 2° of +32°F (0°C).

Record results on the Thermometer Check log. Digital thermometers are battery powered and should be monitored accordingly for battery life. Approved digital thermometers show temperature readings in tenths of degrees. Record all temperatures on the notesheet and certificate to the nearest whole degree.

Round readings ending in .5 or higher to the next higher degree and those ending in .4 or lower to the next lower degree. Always carry two digital thermometers.

Minimum Specifications for Digital Thermometers

Range:	0 to 120 °F
Accuracy:	±2 °F (within the 0 to 120 °F range)
Resolution:	1 °F

Thermometers that do not meet these minimum specifications are not approved for official SCI Division inspections and must be recalibrated or disposed of.

Recalibration

Digital thermometers that have a bead type thermistor sensor seldom require recalibration. The reason for this is the long-term stability of the thermistor sensor. Nevertheless, if it is necessary to calibrate to a specific control temperature, turn the calibration screw on the dial to the left to decrease the temperature reading or to the right to increase the reading.

The following procedure is recommended if recalibrating at 32°F (0°C).

1. Fill a container with crushed or chipped ice.
2. Add water slowly until it overflows.
3. Add more ice until it is packed tightly to the bottom of the container, allowing excess to overflow.
4. Insert the stem of the thermometer at least 2” into the container and allow it to stabilize for 5 minutes. Note: It is important that the tip of the thermometer not touch the bottom of the container.
5. If the temperature reading is 32°F, the thermometer is accurately calibrated. If necessary to adjust the thermometer, do so by small amounts and allow it to stabilize before making any additional adjustments.

Approved digital thermometers may be procured from the SCI Division Supply Depot or from other sources, so long as the digital thermometer meets the minimum specifications. Save

brochures or packing materials that show the thermometer meets these specifications. Unless authorized by SCI Division headquarters, digital thermometers bought from other sources by Federal offices or inspectors are not reimbursable.

Lighting

Proper lighting is required to perform an accurate inspection. If proper lighting is not available to perform an accurate inspection, postpone the inspection until there is adequate light. Be sure to advise the applicant of the circumstances.

Colors can vary significantly due to the color and type of the ambient light source. Observe questionable specimens under natural light. Examine specimens when judging certain factors, such as blanching of celery, yellowing of limes, color of citrus and grapes, and the percentage of good red color on apples, in natural light (i.e. direct sunlight) before making a determination.

CARRIER, LOAD, LOT

Carrier Access

Exercise caution and use good judgment when accessing a carrier or storage containers. Consider environmental conditions, such as temperature, when accessing carriers or storage containers.

Outside Temperatures

In extreme weather situations such as frigid temperatures or excessive heat, be aware of the potential for damage to the commodities due to exposure to these elements while in a carrier or storage container. In extreme temperature conditions, you may want to decline or postpone the inspection until conditions are more favorable. Applicants who want the inspector to proceed with the inspection in such conditions must submit a written request for such service.

Once a request is made in writing for the inspector to continue with the inspection, take all precautions to minimize the exposure risk to the product. Certain commodities such as avocados, bananas, pineapples, and green tomatoes are more susceptible to temperatures colder than 45 °F. Take care to minimize the exposure of these products to temperatures below this range. Also, use precautions to minimize the exposure of refrigerated commodities to hot, dry temperatures.

Type of Carrier

Generally, carriers used to ship fresh fruits and vegetables may be classified as refrigerator, baggage, box, insulated box, ventilated box, railcar, or mechanical refrigerator. If any special type of carrier is used, a special name may be given provided it is official with the railroad company, such as “Bunkerless Refrigerator Car.” If a mechanical refrigerator type of car is encountered, such as an SIRX, include a statement “Temperature controls in operation” or “Temperature controls not in operation,” as appropriate, as determined by the presence of cool air or heat being given off, the sound of motors in operation, or other means.

Trailer Identification

Registration (license) plates are usually attached to or near the rear brake lights on over-the-road trailers. Record the license number and state of issue with extreme care as the license plates are sometimes changed during or after loading or prior to arrival at destination. Make every effort to record the license number on the trailer that is backed against the unloading dock even if it requires asking the driver to pull the trailer forward a sufficient distance to be able to read the license. For safety reasons, never crawl under the trailer to get this information or stand between the trailer and loading dock.

Identification of “Piggy-back” Trailers, Vans, or Boxes on Railroad Flat Cars

When inspecting produce in “piggy-back” trailers, show the transportation company's identifying initials and number as the “carrier or lot identification.” This information usually appears on the side or end of the trailer. Do not use the license plate number unless there are no trailer initials and number. You do not need to show the flatcar number on which the trailer is loaded, but you may include that on the notesheet.

Railcar Identification

The identifying number of a railcar is the letters and numbers found on the end or side of the outside of the car. Some cars that have been repainted show different numbers inside and outside. Always use the outside numbers and initials. Report the numbers on the railcar exactly as they appear.

Ship or Airplane Identification

When the carrier is an ocean-going ship or airplane, use “Ship” or “Air” in the prefix block and give the full name of the ship, or the number of the airline bill or flight number in the “Carrier Type/Name” block. Be sure to include the source for this information in the appropriate block. If identifying information is not available, enter “NO ID” in the prefix or number sections of the “Carrier/Lot Identification” block. Advise the applicant that an inspection certificate with “NO ID” does not carry as much credibility as a certificate with some form of identification.

Lot Identification

If a carrier or license number is not available, but other identification assigned by the applicant is available, such as “Purchase Order Number,” “Lot Number,” or “Bill Of Lading Number,” enter that information in the “Carrier/Lot Identification” block. The information should be entered in this block only when the lot(s) are unloaded and the carrier or license plate is unavailable. If the number of digits and/or letters to be entered exceeds seven, enter the first seven characters and record the entire number in the “Remarks” section.

Loading Status and Condition of Loads

At the beginning of each inspection, record the status of the load. Specifically, record whether the lot presented for inspection is:

- Still Loaded (LO) on the truck,
- Unloaded (UL) onto the dock or warehouse floor, or
- Partially Unloaded (PU), meaning a portion of the lot is still loaded on the truck and a portion of the lot is unloaded.

Lots that are partially unloaded must be inspected as two separate lots. Identify one lot as the loaded portion, and the other lot as the unloaded portion. For Loaded (LO) and Partially Unloaded (PU) lots, note the car or trailer number in the appropriate block. Enter each of these loaded and unloaded lots separately in the "Products" section. Certification of the number of packages should show the number or approximate number of packages remaining on the conveyance and the number or approximate number of packages that were unloaded. For loaded and partially unloaded lots, provide a statement describing the condition of the load.

Make every attempt to obtain some form of identification for the lot presented for inspection. If the applicant is unable to provide a purchase order number, bill of lading number, sales order, or any other form of identification for the load, note "NO ID" for the "Lot ID," and record the inspection as a Lot Inspection (LI) in the "Loading" section.

Always note the condition of load and containers on the notesheet and report condition on the certificate if any shifting and/or breakage or other damage to containers is present, as this may be the basis of settlement of a claim against the carrier. Clearly show the arrangement of containers, giving the number of layers and rows, and showing whether the load is "through" or "divided with center bracing."

If more than one certificate is issued on different products in a mixed load, show the loading information only on the first certificate. For example, for mixed commodities such as green onions, sweet peppers, and cucumbers, the loading statement might be:

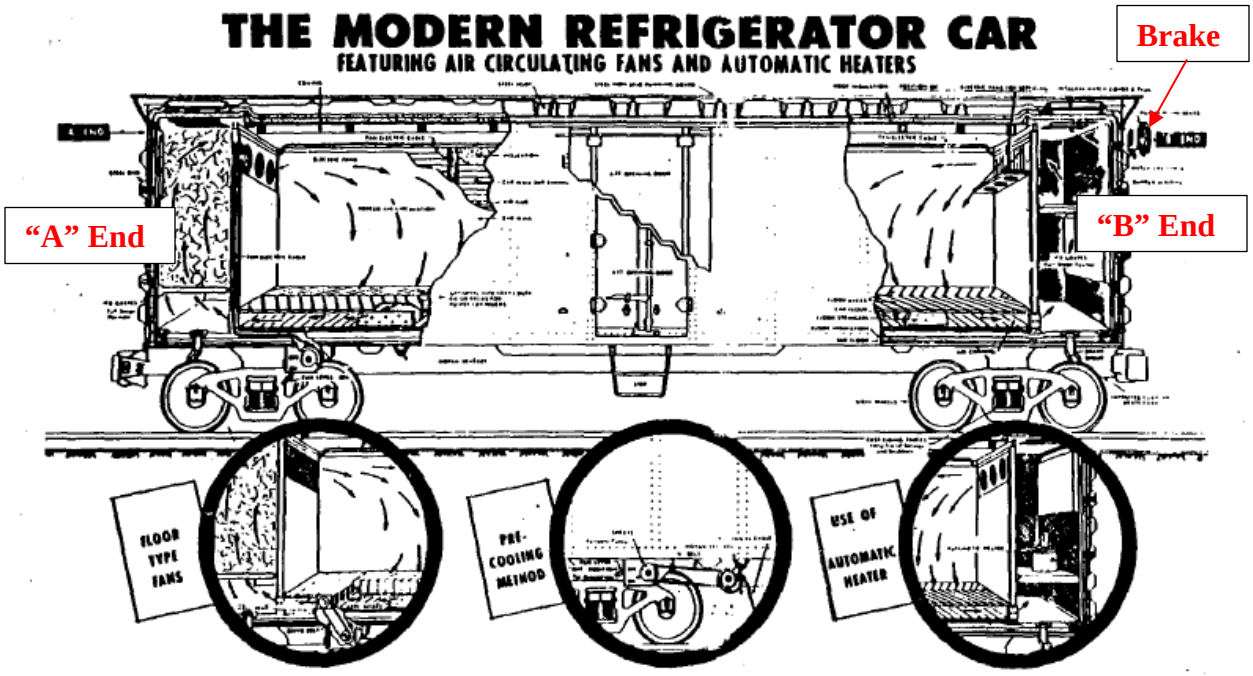
- "Through mixed load, lengthwise and crosswise, 4 to 8 rows, 5 to 9 layers; green onions in rear 1/4 of load, lengthwise, 8 rows, 6 layers; sweet peppers at 1/2 length of trailer, lengthwise, 6 rows, 9 layers, cucumbers in front of trailer on 2 pallets, lengthwise and crosswise, 2 and 3 rows, 6 layers per pallet."

If the applicant requests a separate certificate for each shipper on one or more commodities, the condition of load and containers on each certificate should reflect only the information applicable to that shipper's product(s). If part of the load or one or more commodities are not offered for inspection, show on the last notesheet and certificate "Applicant states above trailer also contains other products not offered for inspection" in the "Remarks" section. Cross-reference the certificates issued should be cross-referenced under "Remarks."
The following are terms, statements, and descriptions of the status of loads and containers.
<u>Terms Describing Conveyance</u>

A. Railcars

1. "B" End: The end of the railcar on which the hand brake wheel is located (viewed from the outside).

2. “A” End: The end opposite the B end.

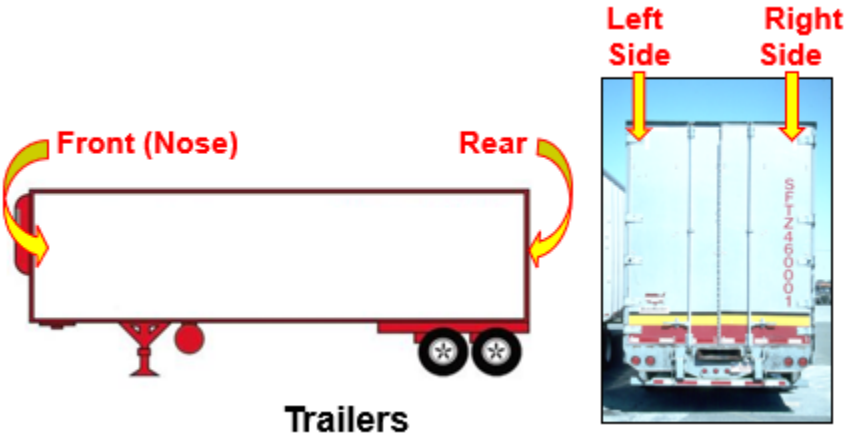


3. “R” Side or Right Side: The “R” Side or Right Side of a railcar is the side of the car on the right of the inspector when standing inside the car and facing the “A” end.

4. “L” Side or Left Side: The “L” Side or Left Side of a railcar is the side of the car on the left of the inspector when standing inside of the car and facing the “A” end.

B. Trailers

For Semi-trailers and box type trucks, use the door location to help as a reference point. Rear of trailer is where the doors open for loading. This is also the area where a license plate would be found. Front or “Nose” of trailer is opposite the rear doors and usually where the refrigeration or cooling unit is located. The right is on the inspector’s right side, left is on the inspector’s left side when standing at the rear doors of the trailer looking toward the front of the trailer. See examples below.



C. Paper Lining

Paper lining is sometimes applied to the walls of a railcar or trailer as a precaution against freezing. Show which portions of the car or trailer are “paper lined” and the height to which paper extends on the walls, including the doors.

Examples:

“Walls papered to within approximately 2 feet of ceiling.” or

“Walls papered to height of doors.”

D. Heaters

Trailers arriving from cold areas sometimes have heaters. Show the type of heater (e.g., oil, coal, wood, or charcoal), its location, and whether “burning” or “not lighted.” If a heater is present, be careful about entering trailers before they are ventilated.

E. Doors

Note whether the doors on all conveyances were “open” or “closed” when you arrived to begin the inspection.

1. Doorway: The space enclosed by door casing.

2. Space Between Doors: The space in the railcar between the doorways on each side of the trailer. Products should not be reported as being in the “doorway” if they are in the “space between the doors.”

3. Doorways Boarded Across or Boards Across Doorways: Use these terms to describe doorway protection of bulk loads when the railcar is loaded full length. Show the height, either in number of feet or “to height of load.” Report if the

doorways are boarded from side to side and the “space between doors” is empty in the “Condition of Load and Containers” section.

4. Doorways Slatted: This term applies to slats (usually wooden) across the doorways for retaining the bulk of packaged load. Show how high slats extend.

F. Vents

Vents are openings in the ends of conveyance for the purpose of ventilation. They may be “open” or “closed.” Note if there are multiple vents in different positions and show their respective locations, e.g., “Upper right front vent open, other vents closed.”

G. Adjustable Load Dividers

Many mechanical refrigerated railcars have permanent bulkhead type dividers that can be used to separate the car into compartments or hold a partial load intact. Use the term “adjustable load dividers” to identify this equipment and its location.

Examples:

“Adjustable load dividers in place next to doors each end of car.”

“Adjustable load dividers in place 1/4 length of car in A end and against side walls next to doors B end of car.”

H. Defective Equipment

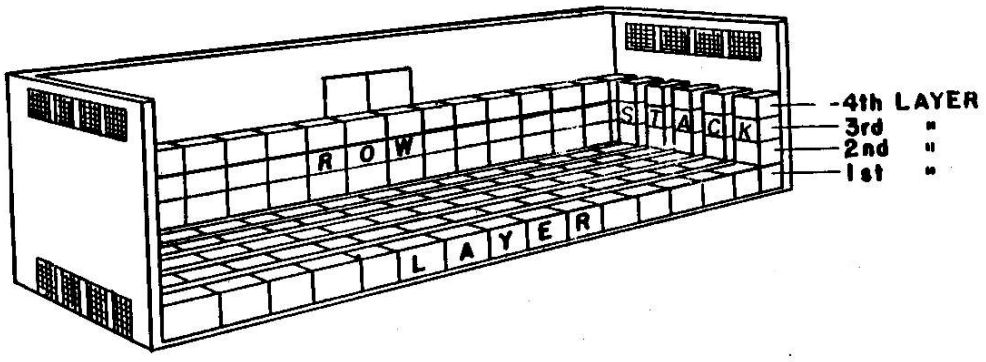
Statements about defective equipment should refer only to such equipment that has a detrimental effect on the product. If doors do not fit, state the width of the space at one or more sides. Show any other damage to the car or trailer that may affect the condition of the shipments, including leaks in the roof, looseness of siding and roof sheathing, holes in floor, contamination of floor by grease, or the presence of chemicals such as salt. Ensure your description of defective equipment is precise and clear.

If the receiver or carrier specifically requests information about defective equipment, or when it is known that a protest had been filed claiming defective equipment and evidence is being presented to substantiate this claim in the form of a private inspection bureau certificate, show the exact conditions of the equipment in question even if it has no effect on the condition of the produce, e.g., exact statements about the size and location of openings or cracks in the doors.

<u>Terms Describing Loading and Bracing</u>

Use appropriate terms to describe loading and bracing for loads to ensure uniformity in the preparation of certificates, and to clearly describe the condition of the load.

Refer to the example below regarding the terms “Layer”, “Stack” and “Row.”



A. Layer

A course or stratum of the load that is parallel to the floor of the carrier and one container in height.

1. Counting Layers: There is only one “top layer” and one “bottom layer.” When counting layers, start at the bottom or floor layer and count up. When describing the number of upper or lower layers, use “upper 2 layers” or “lower 3 layers.” Do not use “2 top layers” or “3 bottom layers.”

   Example:

   “Load divided lengthwise, 6 layers, 7 rows, center bracing intact.
   Alternate layers double stripped, strips nailed.”

   If the load and the containers are in good order or fully loaded, the statement of arrangement is all that is necessary. Always record the condition of loaded lots and cartons on the notesheet, but you only need to report this information on a certificate if requested by the applicant, or there is significant damage to cartons and product.

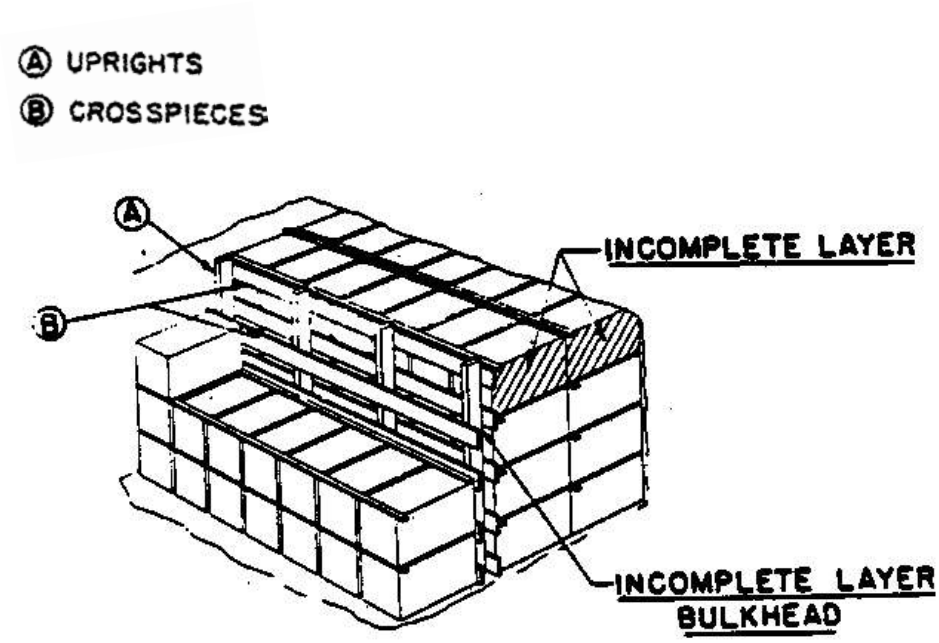
   If the load is “broken” or partly unloaded, use the statement “partly unloaded.” Show the arrangement of the amount left in the conveyance and not the number of packages that have been removed.

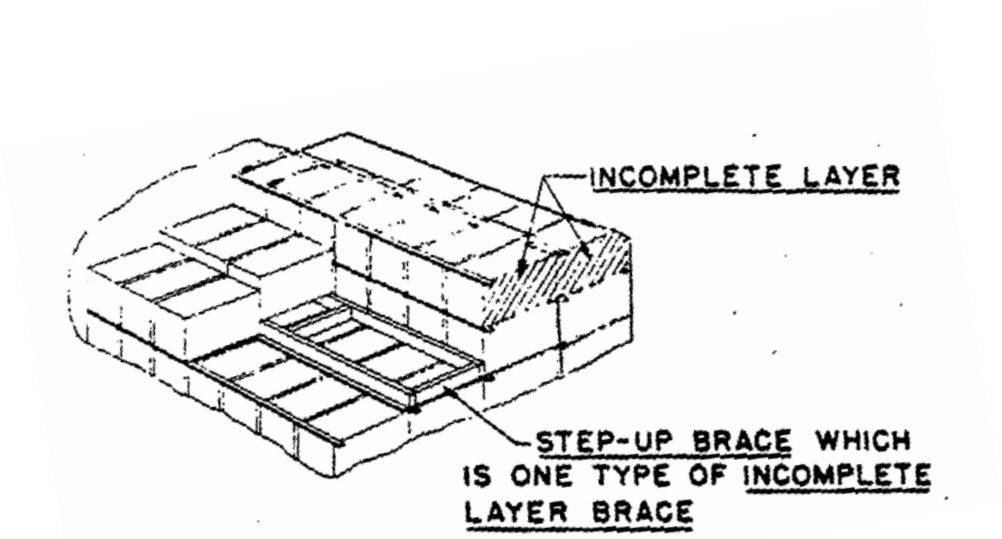
   If the shipment has been unloaded onto a pier or into a cold storage or warehouse room, and the method of arrangement of the packages has no bearing on any condition of the product that may be reported, you can state “stacked at above location,” or “stacked on pallets at above location,” or “pallets banded,” or “pallets enclosed in open mesh wrap.” Describe any damage to the stacked containers.

2. First Layer: The layer of containers resting on the floor or floor racks of the carrier, or on pallets or slip-sheets.

3. Second Layer: A second layer counting up from the floor.

4. Incomplete Layer: A layer, usually the top layer, in which there less than a full number of containers. See examples below.





B. Stack

Containers extending from one side of the carrier to the other, parallel to the end of the carrier.

1. Stack Numbering: The stacks in the car numbered consecutively from each end of the car toward the doorway, or in trailers from front (nose) to rear, e.g., Stack No.1, A end, is the first stack in the A end of the car.

C. Row

Containers extending lengthwise of the carrier, parallel to the sides of the carrier and one container in width. Three objects are required to make a row, which is defined as a "series of objects in a continued line." If only one stack or two stacks are mentioned, state as so many containers wide.

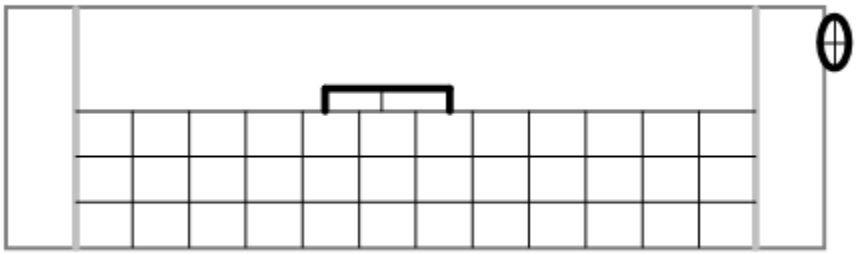
Example:

"1 stack of hampers 7 wide, 1 stack crates 5 wide, remainder of load crates 7 rows."

D. Through Load

A load with no space between doors; the containers are loaded from end to end of carrier. There may be space fillers consisting of end gates, end braces, and bulkheads, spacing strips and spacing frames. In trailers, this would be a load with no space between the last pallets and the doors. See example below.

Through Load

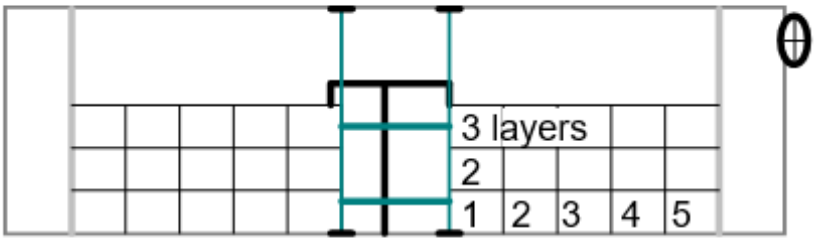


No significant spaces

E. Divided Load

A load that is separated into two units at door by center bracing, center gates, center bulkheads, or adjustable load dividers. See example below.

Divided Load



Load separated into units, usually at the side or center door

Example:

"Divided load, center braced, 5 rows, 3 layers."

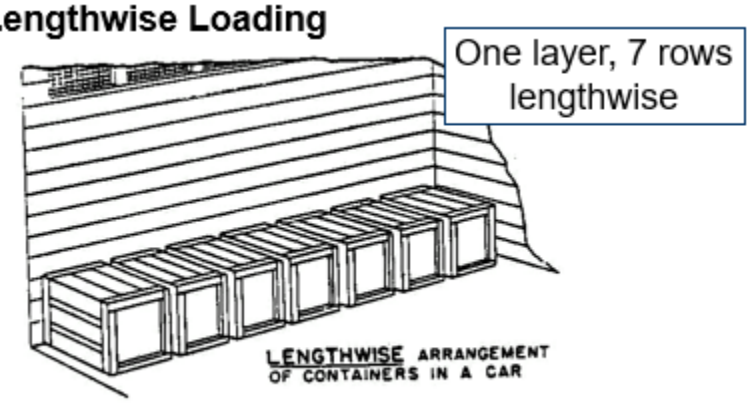
F. Space Between Doors

In a railroad car, the space between the doors, usually between the bracing gates or bulkheads. The "doorway" is the area enclosed by the door casing.

G. Lengthwise Loading

Containers that are arranged with their ends towards the ends of the carrier. See example below.

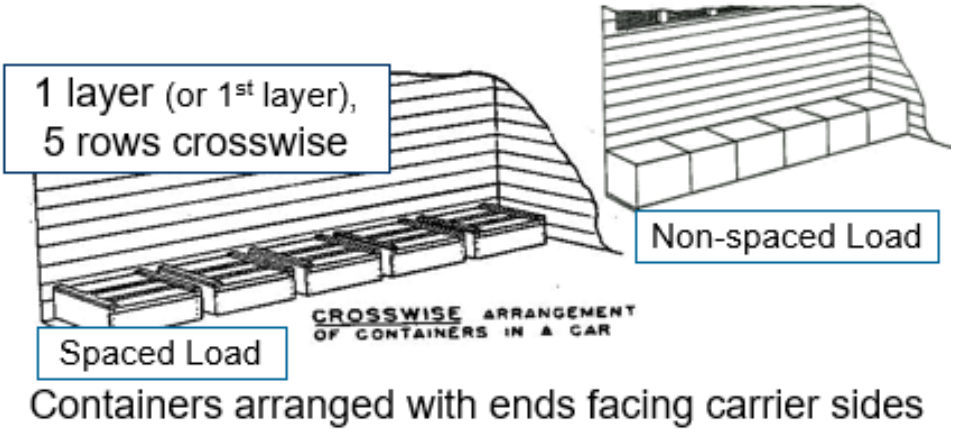
Lengthwise Loading



Containers arranged with ends toward end of carrier

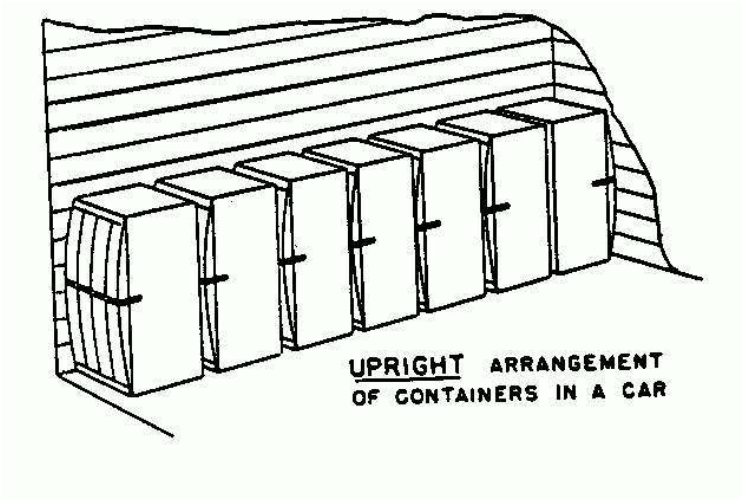
H. Crosswise Loading

Containers arranged with the ends facing the sides of the carrier.



I. Upright Loading

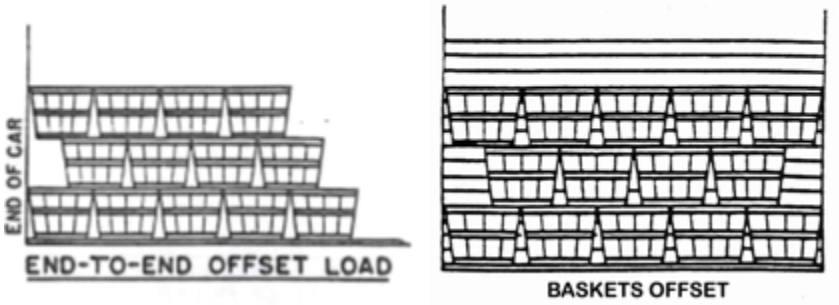
Containers that are facing toward the floor and ceiling of the carrier.



J. End to End Offset Load

This describes load in which the containers, particularly baskets, and specifically climax baskets, are arranged in rows so that each container in all layers except the first layer is offset and rests equally on two containers beneath. This method requires loading containers by rows from one end of the carrier to the other. This is the most common method of loading bushel baskets. See example below.

End to End Offset



Example:

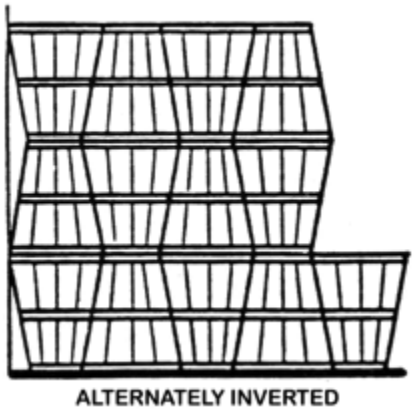
"Floor stacked in rail car, 3 layers, 5 to 4 rows, offset stacked"

K. Alternately Inverted

Containers, particularly hampers and baskets, half of which are placed with tops up and half with tops down. In each row and stack, adjacent containers are placed in opposite positions and containers in adjacent layers are placed top-to-top and bottom-to-bottom. See example below.

Alternately Inverted

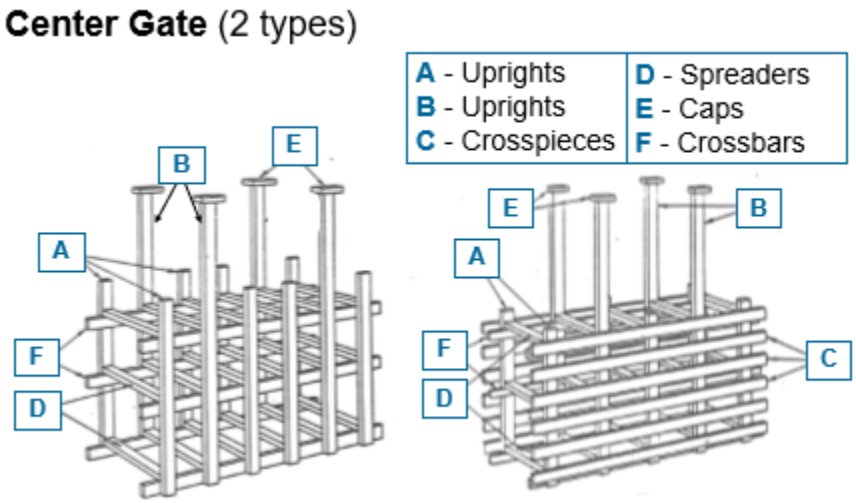
3 layers, 5 to 4 rows stacked in trailer



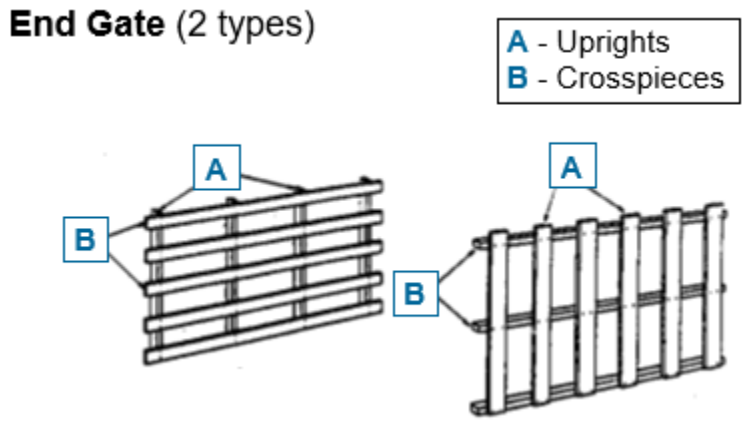
L. Space Filler

Structures, frames, or strips used to fill lengthwise space in the carrier. Designate fillers by type, such as center gates, center bracing, center bulkheads, end gates, end braces, end bulkheads, spacing strips, and spacing frames.

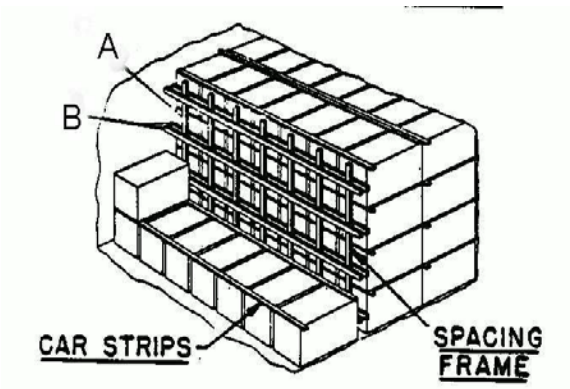
1. Center Gate: A structure placed between the two parts of a divided load to fill the lengthwise space remaining in the carrier at the doorway.



2. End Gate, End Brace, and End Bulkhead: A structure placed at the end of the carrier to fill part or all of the lengthwise space in a through load.



3. Spacing Frame: A structure made of strips or boards that is placed between adjacent stacks to fill part or all of the space in a through load.



4. Spacing Strips: Strips or boards placed between adjacent stacks to fill part or all of the space in a through load.

5. Strips: Strips of wood or cardboard-type material on the containers that are generally used to prevent containers from shifting crosswise in the carrier. Some or all layers may be "stripped." Stripping may or may not be "nailed." Restrict statements about nailing to the portion of the load that you are able to see. Packages are "single stripped" when only one strip is used on a single layer of a stack, and "double stripped" when two strips are used. If stripping is not customarily used or when the packages are fragile, show whether the container is single stripped or double stripped.

   Example:

   Divided load, center braced, 5 rows, crosswise loading, 6 layers, alternate layers stripped, strips nailed. Strips, which have been nailed one on top of the other to get additional thickness, are "two-ply."

6. Vertical Stripping: Report strips that run from top to bottom of the container as: "Vertical strips at corners of lugs," or "Vertical strips at ends of containers."

7. Top Ice or Ice over Load: Chunked ice or crushed ice that is distributed over the top of the load. State the depth of top ice in inches or feet (as "approximately"). If the depth is not uniform, show the variation and the portion of the load covered in top ice.

   Examples:

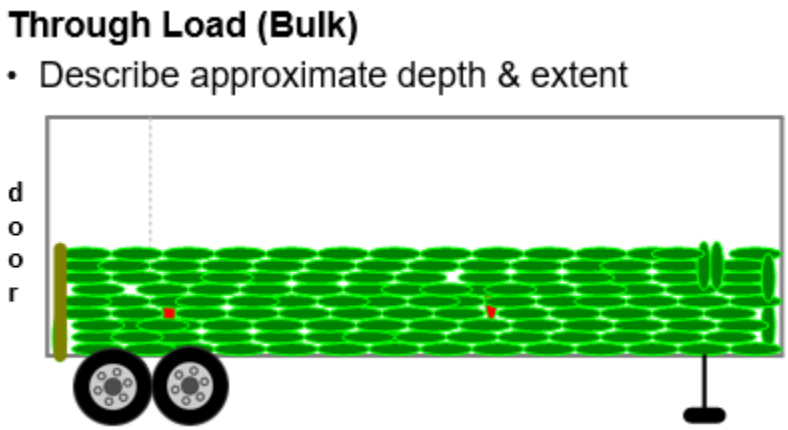
   "Approximately 4 to 8 inches of top ice over entire load" or

   "Approximately 1 to 6 inches top ice over approximately ½ of top of load."

   Report ice over the top of the load under the heading "Condition of Load and Containers."

M. Bulk Loads

If the product is in bulk, such as cabbage or potatoes, show the approximate depth of the load and whether it is loaded the entire length of the conveyance, or if the ends are braced with slats or a solid bulkhead retaining the load. See example below.



Examples:

"Bulk, in vented trailer (open) from rear door, floor load watermelons range from 3 to 5 feet in depth through load."

"Bulk, divided load, 2 to 5 feet deep, bulkheads in place next to doors at each end of car."

N. Palletized Load

Describe the loading of the pallets, and the number of rows and layers of containers on the individual pallets as well and the strapping used.

Example:

"Through load, 2 pallets wide; 3 rows, 16 layers on pallets."

This much abbreviated description is the minimum to be reported. More detailed information may be reported, such as the number of containers per layer. Indicate if banding by means of plastic or metal bands or mesh or plastic wrapping is present.

If spacers are present, an example of a proper description would be:

"Six inch cardboard spacers between 2 pallets and rear doors."

O. Stacked on Pallets

Describe how the containers are off-loaded and stacked on pallets and stored in a cooler, warehouse, or storage trailer. Straps, filament tape, or film wrap may be applied horizontally to steady the containers when the pallets are moved.

P. Slip Sheets

Flat fiberboard sheets that are similar in size to a pallet and used as a pallet under a block of containers. Slip sheets are not always found under the floor layer of containers. A block of containers may be loaded on another block or two in height.

Example:

"Slip sheets on floor under first layer, between 4th and 5th layers, and between 8th and 9th layers."

Q. Pads and Straw, Hay, and Shredded Paper

These products may be used as protection against bruising or freezing in bulk loads, particularly of watermelons. Cushion pads, cardboard, and shredded paper and other loose materials also may be used on the floors and sidewalls of conveyances to minimize bruising by the floor and sidewall sacks of products such as potatoes and onions. If these protective materials are present, show their thickness and suspension. Note the presence of these materials if they have a bearing on damage to the product because of bruising in floor layer packages. Do not use trade names such as "Jiffy" for pads.

Examples:

"Cardboard or cushion pads on floor racks or over floor beneath most bottom layer sacks, none under some sacks."

"Floors (floor racks) covered with cushion pads. End and sidewalls covered to height of load."

"Floor covered with straw, side walls covered with cardboard to approximately 4 feet in height."

<u>Condition of Containers</u>

Note any abnormal conditions of containers. Report damage to containers, such as crushed, indented, wet moldy spots on sacks, and wet or leaky condition due to decay or any other factors. Describe containers in general terms and provide the number and size of wet spots.

Example:

"Many sacks show from 3 to 5 wet spots ranging from 1 to 5 inches in diameter."

If the containers are badly weather stained, dirty, torn, or have an unsightly appearance, describe the condition under the "Other" heading.

Shifted Loads

The inspection certificates must show, in accurate detail, the exact damage resulting from shifting of loads.

If the load is shifted, show whether the shift is lengthwise or crosswise, and the amount of shift in inches or feet, reporting as little as ½-inch increments. Clearly describe whether the shift occurred in all layers or only in certain layers.

Example:

"Load shifted from A end of car from 3 inches in bottom layer to 18 inches in top layer. 9 badly crushed lugs noted next to B end bunker wall with portion of contents spilled from 3 lugs."

State, in general terms, if any damaged containers are noted in the remainder of the load. Carefully examine any damaged containers to determine the extent of damage to the product. If you find damage in more than a few containers, report it as a Condition factor, noting the number or percentage of specimens affected.

Example:

"In crushed lugs from 1 to 5, mostly 2 to 4 badly bruised or crushed tomatoes."

Damaged containers that have been segregated by the applicant or that can be counted with accuracy should be inspected and reported as a separate lot. If damaged containers have not been segregated or cannot be counted with accuracy, sample them proportionately and inspect the entire lot as one lot. State if the containers are crates, boxes, or lugs, and they have shifted off the strips, showing as accurately as possible the number of containers that have shifted.

Example:

"Load shifted from 3 inches in 4th layer to 8 inches in top layer from A end of car, affecting 6 stacks next to bunker. Practically all lugs in these layers are off strips, and resting on lids of those underneath."

Check the lugs underneath for bruising and, if found, report it as a Condition factor.

Example:

"In lugs underneath lugs shifted off strips, from 3 to 6 tomatoes per lug in contact with lids are badly bruised."

If a shift occurs in containers that are baskets loaded in an offset manner, note that the baskets were loaded in an offset manner and describe the shift, e.g., the load has shifted away from one bunker wall and some of the top layer baskets have toppled over into the space left by the shift. Do not measure from the bunker wall to the original offset baskets and report that space as the amount of shift in the top layer.

The following is an example of how to describe a shift in a load of basket products:

- "Bottom layer baskets shifted 2 inches, second layer 1 foot and top layer 18 inches from end wall. Six badly crushed baskets noted next B end wall."

Do not state that the top layer of the load shifted the distance between the wall and the offset baskets, as they were originally loaded away from the bunker. If the baskets have not toppled over and remain in the top layer, a shorter statement could be made, such as:

- "Load shifted from A end of car from 6 inches in bottom layer to 1 foot in top layer. Some baskets throughout load have sides crushed in 2 to 4 inches. Three badly crushed baskets noted next B end wall, 2 with contents partly spilled."

If containers are broken, racked, squeezed, or turned on their sides, show if the contents spilled, or are spilling or intact. Report any damage to the contents of the containers and, as appropriate, include a notation referencing the broken or damaged containers. A shift in a load is very important from a claim viewpoint, so take extreme care in describing all shifts very clearly so anyone reading the certificate can picture the actual condition of the load, and the condition of the contents of the containers.

Marking Carriers

Marks of a Previous Inspection

When performing inspections on loaded or partially unloaded lots always look carefully for markings on the trailer or railcar walls that provide evidence of a previous inspection. Record any such markings on the notesheet. If you determine that a shipping point or another destination market certificate has been issued on the same lot, do not report the results of a subsequent inspection without first checking with your supervisor for guidance. The subsequent inspection may be an appeal inspection.

Shipping Point Marks

Carriers inspected at shipping points may be marked with the State initial and the date. A few states mark carriers with stickers. This marking usually appears on the wall of the carrier near the doors or on the ceiling.

Example:

"ME-05-12-14" indicates that the trailer load was inspected in Maine on May 12, 2014.

Marking Carriers After an Inspection

Mark the inside wall of the carrier near the rear doors with the number of the office from which the certificate will be issued, date, type of inspection, and inspector number using the marking device (black marker) issued to each inspector. Use the following abbreviations to denote the type of inspection:

- QAC or Q&C – Quality and Condition
- CON – Condition only
- FRZ – Freezing only
- SEE – Section 8e import

Mark each carrier unless it is being unloaded or the operator objects to marking the trailer. Upon completing the inspection of any lot that was previously inspected at another market, substitute the mark of the office making the second inspection for the original mark. Neatly cross through the previous mark and record the current marks adjacent to it. This is especially important when a load may be rejected, reloaded, and moved to another location.

See Appendix I for numbers assigned to the different Terminal Market Offices.

Restrictions

Accessibility

When carriers are so heavily loaded that the only accessible packages are those adjacent to the doors, try to get the applicant to make more of the load accessible. Document if the applicant is unwilling to make more of the load available on your notesheet and certificates. Make a statement similar to the following:

- "Inspection restricted to two pallets nearest rear doors, further accessibility refused by applicant,"
- "Inspection restricted to 4 pallets nearest rear doors made accessible by applicant."

You cannot make this statement unless you actually check with the applicant or one of their representatives. Document on your notes the name of the person with whom you talked.

For loads of tomatoes or other products with glued layers that are difficult to remove and sample, ask the applicant for help in obtaining your samples. If the applicant cannot help, restrict your inspection to the upper three layers of the pallets.

Make every effort to perform unrestricted inspections on unloaded lots. As a last resort, an unloaded lot can be restricted to accessibility. If that occurs, show the number and location of accessible pallets as part of the restriction.

If the certificate is restricted to the accessible portion of the load due to heavy loading, the restriction under "Remarks" should describe whether it applies to both the commodity and loading. If the restriction applies to the commodity and not to the loading, use the following statement:

- "Inspection and certificate restricted to product in the upper layers."

If the restriction applies to both product and loading, use the usual restriction and state the number of layers in a statement like this:

- "Inspection and certificate restricted to product and loading in the upper three layers."

If shift or breakage has been described in stacks next to end walls or in lower layers, and it is necessary to restrict the certificate, do not restrict both product and loading to upper layers even if the samples were selected from this portion of the load. Inspection of product might properly be restricted to upper two layers and restriction of remainder of load. Restrict the certificate to both commodity and loading to the portion that can be examined unless you can determine the extent of shift and breakage in lower layers or rear stacks.

Keep restrictions because of loading to a minimum. Restricted certificates because of loading are undesirable and the inspection should only be restricted when the load is so shifted or the loading is such as to make complete sampling impractical to finish the inspection. If these conditions make restriction necessary, report on the notesheet and in the "Remarks" section on the certificate.

Restrictions to Parts of a Load

Note if use of a truck made a load accessible or other possible explanations when an unrestricted certificate is issued on a load ordinarily inaccessible or requiring restriction.

Example:

"Inspection made during process of unloading, truck furnished by applicant to make load accessible."

Clearly word the restriction of the certificate to a part of the load so there can be no misunderstanding about what it covers. The following are terms most commonly used to describe such carrier restrictions:

A. Adjacent to the Doors or Nearest Rear Doors. This term applies to packages in the rows next to the doors. Refuse service if only these packages are accessible for inspection and state the following on the certificate:

   - "Applicant refused to make load accessible."

B. Between Doors. Use the statement "between doors" if you wish to cover all packages between both sets of doors in railcars, including the packages by adjacent doors.

C. Each Side of Doors. It is frequently necessary to restrict a certificate to all layers in one or two stacks on each side of doors. This is especially true in cars showing freezing in the bottom layer packages where the load is divided. A restriction of this kind should read:

   - "Inspection and certificate restricted to product in all layers of 2 stacks nearest doors each side of car and upper 2 layers in remainder of stacks."

DETERMINING TYPE OF INSPECTION

It is very important to determine the kind of inspection desired before you start. Nearly all terminal market inspections are for condition or grade determination. Only conduct an appeal inspection after the applicant confirms, in writing, that they are protesting previous inspection results, or if you find yourself in an appeal situation while performing a grade determination.

The only exception would be for inspections made on lots delivered to Defense Personnel Support Center (DPSC) Distribution Points or Naval Supply Depots. In those cases, if you find a material error in inspection at origin or previous inspection point, notify the proper authority.

Any financially interested party may request an appeal inspection. If a grade inspection is requested, follow the usual appeal procedure (see Appeal Inspections). The same policy applies to all spot inspections of Government purchases of surplus commodities. Corrections of grade certification of Government purchases, whether for the Armed Forces or other Government agencies, at the earliest possible opportunity will protect the Government's interest and eliminate possible subsequent misunderstandings.

PERFORMING THE INSPECTION

Sanitary Practices

Protecting the safety of the U. S. food supply requires a coordinated effort throughout food production, distribution, transportation, marketing, and consumption channels. The responsibility to safeguard our food supply is shared by everyone, from the grower to the consumer. It is important that everyone handling fresh produce understand the importance of personnel cleanliness and sanitary practices with respect to food safety. Individuals at each step along the farm-to-table chain have a responsibility to help ensure the safety of our food supply and prevent food safety hazards. As USDA representatives inspectors must lead by example. SCI sanitary guidelines provide practices that SCI employees and Federal-State Inspection Program (FSIP) cooperators must use while performing fresh produce inspection and related activities.

See the SCI Sanitation Manual for specific employee sanitary responsibilities for fresh produce inspection.

Representative Samples

Accurate certification is possible only if the samples examined are truly representative of the entire lot. Do not over-emphasize conspicuous containers in the lot or disproportionately sample bad containers. For example, spotted containers in a shipment of potatoes should not be sampled more heavily than the same proportion of clean containers or vice versa.

Take samples from all portions of the pallets (top, middle and bottom) regardless of the difficulty in obtaining samples. If you cannot obtain your samples from these various locations because of strapping, glue, or other obstacles, restrict your inspection to the portion of the load/lot that was

representatively sampled. Include samples of different sizes, grower or packer marks, PLI numbers, as well as various locations in the load.

Use of Manifest Records

A record of the manifest may be obtained, when practical, in order to determine the number of packages of different varieties, brands, and marks in the lot. This information will assist you to give proper attention to the different factors when selecting samples such as different sizes, grower's or packer's marks and various locations in the load.

Deceptive Loading

Always consider the possibility that packages may have been placed in a certain way to affect sampling. Recoopered (fixed up) packages should be avoided when sampling, unless specifically requested by the applicant to determine the amount of damage therein. Examine damaged packages in otherwise undisturbed loads and report them separately as separate lots where or when practical.

Number of Samples

All unrestricted lots will have a minimum of three samples examined. Lots with less than three containers will have all containers examined to be considered unrestricted. Beyond this minimum requirement, no exact rule can define the number of additional samples that must be examined because of the variations in inspection conditions. Several commodities such as watermelons and Net Weight inspections have a specific number of samples that must be examined. See specific commodity inspection instructions for further guidance.

As a general guide the goal is to sample 1% of the containers in the lot. This number may be larger or smaller depending on the amount of defects in the lot. Very low or very high percentages of defects may change the sample number to less or more than 1%, respectively. It is entirely the inspector's responsibility to <u>examine enough samples to ensure that the certificate issued will accurately describe the quality and condition of the lot.</u>

A straight load of one PLI and a single grower or packed by one or two packers may involve less sampling than a load of mixed PLIs and various growers and packers. Any sample that differs materially from the others examined should be taken as a warning that the lot is irregular and that more samples must be taken. Use the following sample rates as a guide and all are dependent on the amount of defects in the lot:

- For lots or loads that contain more than 2,000 containers, the goal is to sample two-thirds of 1 percent of the containers in the lot.

- For products with 10 or less specimens in the container, the goal is to sample 1-1/2% to 2% of the containers in the lot. Examples include cauliflower, cantaloups, honeydews, and mangos.

- When sampling master containers, the above sampling rates apply based on the number of master containers; however, depending on the commodity type, one or two consumer packages may be selected from each master container selected for sampling. Be consistent and select a set number, e.g., one or two, consumer packages from each master container.

  Note: Refer to specific commodity instructions or your supervisor if you are uncertain as to the proper method of sampling.

- If the applicant supplies sample pullers, it is the inspector's responsibility to ensure the lot is properly sampled. This will require the inspector to mark the containers that are to be sampled or to implement an Officer-in-Charge (OIC) or Federal Program Manager (FPM) approved sampling plan from the applicant. In either case, the inspection service must supervise the sampling in person; official samples may not be pulled when inspection personnel are not on site.

Additional Samples

When the inspector has finished the initial inspection and is still in doubt regarding the results, examine additional samples until the uncertainty is resolved.

Example:

If you find packages that contain the grade limitations of dirt, quality defects, etc., and suspect that other packages may contain more than the limit, examine additional samples until you resolve the factor in question.

These additional samples must represent lot and must be recorded on the notesheet.

Examine Specimens from Various Places in Containers

If only a portion of the contents of a package are inspected, select the sample(s) from various places in the containers.

Example:

A lot of Snap Beans with three samples to examine, draw the samples from various locations, such as the top, middle, and bottom of the container (see commodity specific instructions).

Include all layers of crates, baskets, and boxes in the sample. If you suspect decay or freezing injury in the bottom or end of packages in all containers, including sacks, select samples from that portion of the container so that representative portions of these often-localized defects are included in the examination. Do not over-sample these locations.

The examination of a sample consisting of only part of the contents of a container does not warrant a statement that the container shows certain conditions. Always use the term "sample"

when only part of the contents of the container was examined. When the entire contents in all sample units are examined, name the container.

Sample Size

For some commodities, the sample size is defined in the grade standards. When it's not defined in the standards, as a general rule, examine the entire contents if the container contains 50 specimens or fewer or 50 pounds or less.

Make samples as uniform in size as possible. Container or sample tolerances in individual packages necessitate examining larger samples or the entire contents of packages to determine whether such tolerances are exceeded. If a lot is out of grade only because of defects exceeding the sample, container, or lot tolerance in one or a few samples, examine the entire contents of at least one of these containers on those commodities, where practical. On commodities such as peas and onion sets, double the size of at least one sample.

For commodities packed in consumer-size containers with a set sample size, do not double your sample size if it exceeds the sample tolerance.

Example:

For a lot of potatoes packed in 5-pound bags, the sample size would be 20 pounds (4 bags). If sample, container, or lot tolerances are exceeded, you do not need to double to sample size to 40 pounds.

<u>Containers Not Marked to a Net Weight</u>

When the container is not marked to a net weight, and the sample is the entire container, and tolerances are determined on the basis of weight, the inspector must weigh the entire contents of the container to determine the sample size. If the container is marked to a net weight, that weight will be the sample size.

Consumer Packages

When consumer packages are packed in master containers or shipping cases, the consumer package is usually the unit for inspection. It is generally not permissible to combine the contents of two or more of these packages to form the sample; however, you should review specific commodity standards and instructions to verify the necessary sample size. In addition, some U.S. grade standards specifically provide no restrictions on the percentage or number of defects permitted in individual packages, provided the average is within the tolerance. Certain commodities such as potatoes, carrots, topped radishes, oranges, strawberries, and tangerines have specific fixed or uniform sample sizes. If the standard provides a fixed or uniform sample size, refer to the specific standard for the number and/or percentage of defects permitted in individual packages and application of tolerances.

When inspecting citrus fruit (i.e. clementines), under the U.S. Standards for Grades of Tangerines, sampling is by count, as based on a minimum 25 count sample. For containers with

less than 25 fruit the procedure of examining the entire contents of a secondary adjacent or contiguous container will apply.

Individually Wrapped Specimens

In the case of individually wrapped products such as cauliflower, celery, or wrapped lettuce where one of each specimen is packed in a film bag, tray, or other container, consider the contents of the master container the unit for inspection. The wrap must be removed from each specimen for proper examination.

Recording Sample Results

Inspectors shall record sample results immediately at the completion of each sample and prior to running additional samples or calculating percentages. Sample results will be recorded onto an official scoresheet. If samples are recorded on something other than an official scoresheet, that document must be retained and becomes part of the official inspection record.

Calculating Percentages

When the sample size is uniform, calculate the defect's total percentage by totaling all of the specimens scored for that defect, divide that total by the total of all samples then multiply by 100. When the size of samples is not uniform, determine the defect percentage individually for each sample and divide by the number of samples examined. The policy of determining the percentage for each sample makes it easy to tell whether the sample exceeds the package tolerance for the grade for those products that contain such a provision.
Example:

Uniform sample size

	CT.	DK
	50	4
	50	3
	50	1
Total	150	8

(8 ÷ 150) x 100 = 5%

Variable sample size

CT.	DK	%
42	4	10%
51	3	6%
54	1	2%
3		18%

18% ÷ 3 = 6%

Cutting Specimens

You must cut specimens to determine the presence and percentage of internal defects such as hollow heart in potatoes and water core in apples. While it is not policy to cut large amounts of produce, it is advisable to check the internal quality as a matter of precaution due to growing conditions, use of vine killers, hormone sprays, or other cultural practices that may result in internal problems.

Note: If the applicant objects to cutting an adequate number of specimens to determine the internal quality or condition of the product, you may reject the application for inspection or restrict your inspection to external defects only.

Commodities with Defined Cutting Plans

Some commodities, such as potatoes, citrus, and apples, have specific cutting procedures and/or plans. When inspecting such commodities and cutting for internal defects, follow the specific cutting procedure or plan.

Commodities without Defined Cutting Plans

For commodities that do not have specific cutting plans, use the following procedure. Always maintain a column for cut specimens on the notesheet.

During the normal inspection process, randomly cut a sufficient number of specimens to examine the internal quality of the product. If internal defects are determined to be present, use the following sampling plans, when applicable, as a guide. These plans are for commodities without specific cutting plans outlined in their respective inspection instructions. Base the percentage of internal defects on the cut sample. If it is impractical to apply the following guidelines, cut a sufficient number of specimens and base the percentages on the entire sample.

If there are external indicators for internal defects, cut the suspicious specimens as necessary and base the percentages on the entire sample.

If during the normal inspection process a sufficient number of randomly cut specimens show that internal defects are present in the lot, begin to cut a random sample of five (5) specimens from each sample. Include those already randomly cut specimens as part of the five to be cut. Do not select and cut another random five. If any scorable (internal defect) specimen is found in the 5-count sample, cut an additional 15 specimens from the sample (for a total of 20 specimens cut) or a total of 5 pounds for commodities inspected on a weight basis.

If a cut sample exceeds the application of tolerances for the commodity, increase the cut sample size to the entire container or to the normal sample size for those commodities with application of tolerances that are based on the sample to determine if the sample has met or exceeded the sample or container tolerances.

If the application of tolerances are exceeded in one of the samples, cut 20 specimens or a total of 5 pounds in each of the remaining samples to provide an accurate percentage of internal defects.

For commodities based on ounces or grams, such as Brussels sprouts, the cut sample will consist of at least one half of the sample.

If the sample is based on consumer units, cut the entire sample.

Recouping Loads and Packages

After completing an inspection, you must repack, recoup, and replace all packages examined in as close to the original condition as possible, unless the applicant offers to do the reconditioning. Unless specifically instructed by the applicant to do otherwise, repack defective specimens (including decay) found in the container. Do not repack cut specimens and specimens with holes from thermometers. Also, do not return samples that you have examined to the lot/load; instead, set them aside for the applicant to handle.

Furnishing Information on Shipping Point Inspections

At the request of a receiver or broker who has a proven financial interest in a lot, you can share information about whether a certain shipment has been inspected at point of origin and its grade. If you do not know this information, advise the receiver/buyer to contact the shipper at point of origin. PLI is one indication that an inspection was performed at shipping point.

Inspectors Notes

The importance of the notesheet cannot be over-emphasized. Inspectors shall record sample results immediately at the completion of each sample and prior to running additional samples or finalizing percentages Do not make a statement on the certificate that cannot be substantiated by the notes on the notesheet. Double check all certificates for accuracy against the notes prior to signing. If there is a mistake on the notesheet, draw one line through the mistake, initial, and make the proper change. Never erase or scribble on the notesheets. All notesheets must be accurate and legible.

Symbols Suggested for Use on Notesheets

The following abbreviations of terms are suggested to promote uniformity on notesheets and to conserve writing time and space. Similar symbols may be developed and used by inspectors, but the terms should be clear enough in meaning that any inspector would be able to interpret and write a certificate from the notesheet:

- Pack: T, FT, or S (tight, fairly tight or slack). Slack is always described in inches or fractions of an inch.
- Size: U, FU, or I (uniform, fairly uniform or irregular) L, M, or S (large, medium or small)
- Color: G, LG, YG, GY or Y (green, light green, yellowish-green, greenish-yellow, yellow)
- Ripeness: H, F, FR, RF, (hard, firm, firm-ripe, ripe and firm (melons)), R, S or OVR (soft or overripe)

General Quantity Terms

Unless used to denote a general factor of the lot or the container as a whole (i.e. loading and pack statements) general quality terms must be based on a sample by sample analysis and recorded per

sample on the notesheet with a column maintained and reported in the “Other” or “Lot Summary” section on market certificates. If a “mostly” term refers to a narrower range within an extreme range (as with diameters, weights or heads, color percentages on apples, etc.) enough representative specimens should be measured, weighed, or otherwise judged to establish with certainty the truth of the statement being made.

Occasional	1 to 5% (use only with reference to containers)
Few	10% or less
Some	11 to 25%
Many	26 to 45%
Approximately Half	46 to 54%
Most, Mostly	55 to 89%
Generally	90% or more
Practically All	96% or more

To indicate the portions of a sample the following symbols and abbreviations are suggested:

- A single letter indicates “GENERALLY.”
  - H = Generally Hard
- Two letters with no other symbol indicates the first letter refers to “Generally” and the second “FEW.”
  - H F = Generally Hard, Few Firm
- A circle around the letter indicates “MOSTLY.”
  - W = Mostly Well
- A double line under the letter indicates “MANY.”
  - FW = Many Fairly Well
- A single line under the letter indicates “SOME.”
  - NBMS = Some Not Badly Misshapen

Complements of Most Quantity Terms Necessary

A complement is defined as one of two mutually completing parts. The terms “occasional,” “few,” “some,” “many,” “approximately half,” and “most” require complements of some kind to account for the entire 100%. Under some uses “practically all,” “generally” and “mostly” require complements. These complements may be:

- another quantity term;
- a percentage;
- certain mark or marks, preferably with number of packages shown; or
- a definite portion of load shown by descriptive location, preferably with number of packages given if it is a package load.

The type of complement used is determined by conditions. For the factor dirt, examples are:

- “In most packages fairly clean, in many slightly dirty.”

- "Mostly clean to slightly dirty, 5 to 25%, average 15% dirty."
- "In most packages clean; in J. Doe Mark, (loader's count 35 packages) dirty."

If it is desirable to state a "mostly," make separate columns on the notesheet for recording the factors to which this term is to be applied. If the "mostly" refers to a narrower range within an extreme range (as with diameters, weights or heads, color percentages on apples, etc.) enough representative specimens must be measured, weighed, or otherwise judged to establish with certainty the truth of the statements to be made.

Correct compliments of quantity terms must also be reported in conjunction with defects such as decay and soft. For example, if the certificate shows the decay percentage for apples as 18% with a firmness statement of "Generally Firm", this would be incorrect. A correct firmness statement would be "Mostly Firm" since "Mostly" accounts for 55% to 89% of which the 18% of decay would account for the remaining balance of the firmness statement.

Occasional

Use the term "occasional" only in reference to containers. All other general quantity terms apply to both packages and individual specimens. For individual specimens, limit the use of these terms to such factors as color, cleanness, firmness, and maturity. Always report decay, specific blemishes, defects, and the part of a lot that shows a commercially undesirable state of maturity in percentages or fractions.

Generally

You can use the word "generally" on certificates without complement. Reporting that the pack is "generally tight" means that any exceptions are not worthy of mention. To promote uniformity of its use, "generally" should not modify firm if no other condition factors are present unless more than 1% is fairly firm or soft. If 1% or less is fairly firm or soft, describe the product as firm. The same rule applies to all descriptive terms, such as color, form, smoothness, and cleanness.

Examples:

Strawberries with 1% overripe and -1/2% decay: "Firm"

Watermelons with 7% decay, 2% overripe: "Generally firm."

Shipping Point Factors

Lot in Grade at Shipping Point, Out of Grade at Market Account Condition

Frequently, lots are not out of grade at shipping point but may be out of grade at market due to decay or other defects that are considered condition factors.
Example:

A load of California tomatoes are not out of grade at shipping point despite having sunken discolored areas. However, en route and at destination, the sunken discolored areas may have progressed and put the load out of grade on account of condition. Treat and report this as a regular inspection unless unusual conditions arise. unusual conditions could include lower layer cartons showing a high amount of defects or the timeframe in which the lot was previously inspected at shipping point. Contact your supervisor for further instructions when encountering unusual conditions as these could also lead to appeals.
Cases where the shipping point inspector finds the lot in grade for quality and condition defects, and the market inspector finds sufficient quality defects that places the lot out of grade on account of quality, may become an appeal inspection of shipping point (see Appeal Inspections section). Contact your supervisor for further instructions when encountering this situation.

Inspections for Factors Not Covered by Shipping Point Certificate

You can perform a new inspection for one or more factors that were not covered by the original certificate on a lot that was previously inspected.

Example:

Confirmation of sale on a shipment of potatoes may specify "U.S. No. 1, with 80% or more 2-1/4 inches or larger," while the shipping point certificate simply shows "U.S. No. 1" and the buyer wishes additional information on the percentage of 2-1/4 inch or larger potatoes. If the applicant is only interested in having the additional information certified, restrict the inspection and certificate to this factor only. Make a statement similar to the following in the "Remarks" section:

- "Inspection restricted to size and percentage of 2-1/4 inches and larger only at applicant's request."

If an up-to-date certificate is desired, including the special size statement, report all facts.

Direct any requests from a shipping point supervisor for information on inspection results from receiving markets to the OIC, Regional Branch Chief or HQ Inspection Operations through the appropriate Federal Program Manager.

Reporting Unusual Conditions to Shipping Point Supervisors

If a market inspector observes a condition that may be of interest to a shipping point supervisor, the Officer-in-Charge should report it to the Federal Program Manager(s) for that particular State. Usually, this will be confined to shipping point inspected lots and condition defects that have developed to an unusual extent in transit. In addition, widespread occurrence of decay or other diseases in a commodity are indications of incorrect shipping point certification and that notification is warranted. The Officer-in-Charge should notify the Federal-State Inspection Management Branch Chief, which will notify the Federal Program Manager for that area.

Inspections That Must Be Unrestricted

There are several categories of inspections that cannot be restricted either to a portion of the containers in the lot or to a group of factors such as condition only. These include:

Canadian Import Requirements

Inspection certificates issued at origin or loading point must be unrestricted and cover the entire lot(s). Re-consigned shipments to Canada that were not inspected at shipping point or en route also must have unrestricted inspections.

Certification under The Export Apple Act

Export Form certificates must be for grade and condition, and cannot be restricted to a portion of a lot of apples. However, two or more lots in a load may be covered by two or more Export Form certificates if all packages of apples in the carrier (over the 100-box exemption) are covered by a certificate, and the certificates are properly cross-referenced.

Federal Marketing Orders or Agreements and Government Commodity Purchases

Inspections for compliance or non-compliance with marketing orders or marketing agreements are generally performed only at shipping points; commodity purchase inspections are generally done at the receiving point. Certificates for marketing orders and agreements, and commodity purchases must be unrestricted and cover the entire lot(s) or load(s). Be aware of all products covered by Marketing Order (see Summary of Marketing Orders) and always check with your supervisor for previous inspections if there is a possible conflict with requirements of any marketing order.

U.S. Import Requirements under Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937

Section 8e import requirements are established and enforced to ensure that certain imported commodities meet the same production restrictions as the domestically produced commodity. Section 8e inspections must be unrestricted.

Appeal Inspections

Appeal Inspections must be unrestricted, except if the original inspection was restricted. To be honored as an appeal inspection, the inspection on a restricted inspection must be restricted to the same portion of the lot.

Separating Lots

Always separate lots of the same product with different brands, varieties, grades, states or country of origins, or pack types (volume filled as opposed to tray pack cartons).

If a marked difference in quality, condition, or size is found, and such differences can be definitely associated with different types or sizes of packages or certain markings on the

packages, then the certificate and notesheet must report such differences as separate lots. The package markings that must be separated if there are differences in brands, size, grade, variety, and PLI marks. The notesheet must show the particular markings for each sample so that such differences can be recognized during the inspection process and for appeal purposes. You may not combine readily identifiable in-grade or properly sized lots with identifiable out-of-grade or off-size lots in order to cause the combined lot to either fail or pass. For example:

- A receiver requests an inspection on a load of 800 cartons of potatoes, sizes 70, 80, 90, and 100. The 70s fail on account of hollow heart, and, combined with the other sizes would cause the entire load to fail. However, the 80s, 90s, and 100s, separately computed, are grade U.S. No. 1. The applicant wants the lots combined in order to make a claim against the entire load as failing to grade. In fact, the entire load does not fail; only the 70s fail, and to report the 80s, 90s, and 100s as failing would result in an unjustified report of misbranding and could result in an unjustified claim against the shipper on those lots when they actually meet the grade and size marked. The 70s must be certified as "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1, 70 size account quality", and the 80s, 90s, and 100s as "U.S. No. 1, 80, 90, or 100 size as marked."

If some lots would fail to grade and others would pass, even on the basis of a condition-only inspection, then those lots must be reported separately. On lots that fail, wide differences in total defects or a single defect such as decay would justify reporting as separate lots. An inspector can report as separate lots any time that would provide a clearer picture of the findings. If necessary, examine additional samples from one or more of the lots to establish clearly that there is a marked and consistent difference that can be associated with such marks or packages.

Note: In a case where there may be too many variant brands, varieties, grades, or origins co-mingled throughout the load to properly or efficiently separate lots, contact your supervisor for further guidance as it may be permissible to report as "Mixed Brands" or "Mixed Varieties" with each brand or variety listed next to each sample.

<u>Growers Marks, Packers Codes, and Other Markings</u>

Shippers and packers often mark packages with various sub-markings or codes, including growers' codes, packer numbers, pack dates, and controlled atmosphere codes, to denote information for their own purposes. If you find a marked difference in quality, condition, or grade, and such differences can be definitely associated with the types of sub markings on the packages, then the certificate and notesheet must report such differences as separate lots. If the count breakdown per mark or code is not available from the applicant, report count for the entire load inspected under the first lot with a clear explanation under Remarks on the certificate stating that that total count for all lots is reported under Lot A as a count breakdown, per mark or code, was not available at the time of the inspection.

Product

Show the common name of the commodity under this heading. The common name is generally the title of the applicable U.S. grade standard. The type of commodity, when applicable, may also be shown in this heading, or when clearer or more convenient, in the "Brands/Markings,"

"Origin," or "Lot ID" blocks, as appropriate. The type may also be indicated in the "Products" block, but, as a general rule, do not state the variety in this block. Refer to the SC-300 Manual for examples of product statements.

Always identify the following commodities as one of the types as shown in the following list, in addition to the product name. Again, the type does not necessarily have to be shown in the "Products" block.

Product	Type
Apples	Red, Yellow, Green
Broccoli	Bunched, Crowns, Florets
Cabbage	Domestic, Danish, Red, Savoy
Cucumbers	Fresh, Pickling, Greenhouse
Grapefruit	California, Florida, Texas
Lettuce	Iceberg, Boston, Red Leaf, Green Leaf, Butter
Bermuda-Granex-Grano (BGG) Onions	Yellow, White, Red, Brown, Mixed Color
Northern Onions	Yellow, White, Red, Brown, Mixed Color
Oranges	California, Florida, Texas
Sweet Peppers	Red, Yellow, Orange, etc.
Potatoes	Round White, Round Red, Long White, Russet, Mixed
Spinach	Plants, Leaves, Bunched
Squash	Summer, Winter
Tangerine	Florida, Other
Tomatoes	Fresh, Cherry, Plum, Grape, Greenhouse, On the Vine

For domestically grown grapefruit, oranges, and tangerines, it is not necessary to enter the type in the "Products" block since the type can easily be captured from the "Origin" block. If the origin is foreign, enter (C), (F), or (T) after the product name to indicate the type as California, Florida, or Texas based on which standard is used.

Variety, Type, or Description

The inspection service is not authorized to certify variety; we only inspect for quality and condition. Do not inspect for the specific purpose of certifying variety; reject applications to certify variety with an explanation to the applicant. Include a statement of variety only to identify the lot only if it is marked on containers or specified by the applicant. Advise applicants that identification of products by variety might be done by submitting samples to appropriate USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) personnel.

If the variety of the commodity is marked on the container, record this information in the "Brands/Markings" section on the notesheet, and in the "Brands/Markings" or "Lot ID" sections on the certificate.

Mixed Commodities

The U.S. Standards for Grades of Mixed Commodities were created to provide industry with standards which would allow the certification of lots of mixed products and/or varieties purposely packaged in one container. Examples of these mixed products include, but are not limited to, gift packs, fruit baskets; vegetable baskets; mesh bags containing red apples, green apples, and oranges; cello wrapped trays containing green and yellow squash; etc.

Do not confuse mixed commodities with fresh cut products (products "ready to use"). Do not grade fresh cut products using the U.S. Standards for Grades of Mixed Commodities.

Refer to the Shipping Point and Market Inspection Instructions for Mixed Commodities for further guidance.

Types of Containers

There is no need to describe containers that are the standard types commonly used for the product beyond stating the type, such as wire bound crates, bushel basket, burlap sacks, cartons, mesh sacks, clamshells, or film bags. Use the term "carton" for all types of fiberboard boxes. Although "foam containers" is a trade term, it can be used to describe all types of molded plastic foam containers. A description is required if products are shipped in unusual containers or in variations of a common type of container. Do not use trade names such as "Saxoline," "Bruce Box," or "Howard Crate."

A. Cell and Tray Packs

Report products packed in containers with cell type dividers as "cell type cartons." Report products packed in containers with pressed trays made with molded cups between layers as "tray packed cartons."

B. Used or Stained Containers

Used containers are acceptable for deliveries for domestic consumption. The containers must be clean and free from inappropriate markings. Do not be technical in the interpretation of clean. The containers only need to be reasonably serviceable, appropriate to the commodity, and not stained or weathered. Record on the notesheet if used, dirty, or stained containers are used.

Examples:

"Potatoes in used, inverted sacks."

"Apples in unlidded stained boxes."

Container Markings

Quote container markings as they appear on the package. Identify shipper's marks, logos, or wording that is labeled, printed, or stamped on a container and used as trademarks by the shippers for advertising purposes as shown.

Show the identifying words in the brand in quotation marks in the "Brands/Markings" section of the notesheet and certificate. Sacks, and occasionally other containers, may be printed or labeled with some general design or stock wording appropriate for a particular production region, such as "Idaho Onions." These are not brands. Show this type of container marking as "No Brand."

For consumer packages in master containers, first show the brand on the consumer packages in quotation marks, followed by other pertinent markings, and then show the brand of the master container in quotation marks, followed by other pertinent markings on the master containers.

Example:

16-ounce net weight consumer packages of strawberries labeled "Berry Best" and placed in master flats labeled "Dole" and marked "8-16 oz. clamshells" would be listed on the notesheet and certificate as "Berry Best" followed by the markings "Net Wt. 16 oz. (1 lb.)" packed in master flats labeled "Dole 8-16 oz. clamshells."

If the master container has identical markings as the consumer package, you can use the statement "In master flats printed same."

State if the containers have no labels or brands as "No Brand" so those reading the certificate will know that it was not overlooked. Federal regulations require that old brands and labels which misrepresent the content of the containers be removed or marked out, and the necessary new marking be added by tag, label, or other approved means. If this requirement isn't met, state the facts in the "Brands/Markings" section.

A. Inappropriate Markings

Marked or stamped commodity names, such as boxes labeled "oranges" that contain grapefruit, or sacks containing carrots and printed "cabbage" are misbranded. In these situations, notify the office supervisor as this may constitute a PACA violation.

B. Produce Packed in Containers Showing Several Brands

If produce is packed in containers that show several brands, and are too comingled within a pallet to get an accurate count, use the term "Mixed Brands" for the brand and list as many brands and pertinent markings as practical (use the "Remarks" section for additional space). Sample based on the approximate number of each brand that can be seen. Note which brand was examined for each sample.

If multiple brands are on the containers (each container showing multiple brands) record the more prominent brand as the "brand" and the other as a marking.

C. Produce Packed in Containers Showing Several Markings

If produce is packed in containers showing several marks other than brand, show at least two, or more if space permits, of the marks present under the heading "Brands/Markings." This will support the PACA Division's misbranding program. Incorrect grade markings, States of origin, kind, size, quantity, and weight on the container will serve as evidence of possible violation, but it must be written on the certificate to be valid proof.

D. Growers' Names, Lot Numbers, and Other Lot Identifiers

Show growers' names or numbers in the "Brands/Markings" section. If you need additional space, write "various growers' marks" or "numbers." Sometimes the loading may be altered after completion of inspection, and off-grade lots not covered by the inspection may be substituted. For this reason, you must record growers' marks or lot numbers in the "Other ID" column next to each sample on the notesheet. Growers' marks are especially important for a reinspection or appeal inspections.

If lots inspected are not identified with an official PLI, report other types of lot identifiers unique to the lot being inspected that are printed or marked on containers or attached to pallets to better clarify the identity of the lot. Record these other types of identifiers with each sample on the notesheet and on the certificate. Record these values under "Brands/Markings" or "Other" on paper certificates, and under "Markings" or "Other ID" on FEIRS certificates. When recording other lot identifiers attached to a pallet (pallet ID numbers, barcodes, receivers' lots numbers), include additional statements to clarify the location and placement; such as: "Pallets stickered xxx-xxxx" or "Most pallets with Lot XYZ handwritten on corner board" or "Many pallets show 'Lot XYZ' stickers located on a bottom layer carton." These other types of lot identifiers frequently help determine the validity and integrity of lots being presented for reinspection.

E. Grades, Sizes, and Net Weight Markings

Quote grades and sizes that are printed, stamped, or marked on the container in the "Brands/Markings" section on the certificate. Quote the net weight that is stamped, marked, or printed on the containers on the certificate when it is of value in indicating the size of commonly variable size containers as in the case of sacks.

Example:

Sack tags printed "100 lbs. Net (45kg)."

F. Federal or Federal-State Positive Lot Identification (PLI)

PLI numbers are given to products that have been inspected by a Federal or Federal-State inspector. They are generally printed or stamped on cartons. Often, pallets are tagged and stamped with USDA PLI stickers. PLI numbers always take precedence over any

other type of identification markings or numbers. Always include PLI numbers in the "Brands/Markings" section, if possible. If there is not enough space, record this information in the "Lot ID" or "Remarks" sections, if necessary. All PLI numbers must be recorded next to the samples in the column provided for them on the notesheet. This includes pallets with PLI stickers as well. For full PLI guidance and instructions see the Positive Lot Identification (PLI) Manual.

G. State or Country of Origin

Note the state or country where the product was grown on the notesheet and on the certificate. Do not make a positive statement about origin on your own authority; only quote markings on packages that show the state or country of origin. This policy is necessary because some firms may use one mark on products they pack in two or three states, and the inspector can certify only to the markings and has no way of knowing in which State the produce is grown.

If packages are not marked or the produce is in bulk with no markings, ask the applicant or carrier about the origin of the product and make a statement that is was invoiced or manifested from a certain State. These statements can only be based on some authority other than that of the inspector**.**

If a lot has no markings, show a statement similar to the following in the "Remarks" section:

- "Applicant states product is from Colorado."

If you are unable to ascertain a state or country of origin, record "OT" (for Other) for the origin on the certificate.

Quantity Inspected

Count is always certified unless stated otherwise. Certain types of inspections such as Section 8e and Export certified products must always have count certified by the inspector. If you are provided a manifest or similar document by the applicant, always verify the container count. This number is important to applicants, shippers, and in the event of an appeal.

Make every effort to count the number of containers in each lot. Always enter the number of containers in the appropriate section on the certificate followed by inspector verification. If the number of containers available for inspection is not the same as applied for, make sure the correct lot has been presented for inspection before certifying the amount. If it is impossible to make an accurate count, note the approximate count by designating the Inspector's Count as "No" or "Other" (in FEIRS) and explain the circumstances (e.g., numerous pallets with mixed products). Show consumer-size packages on certificates as the number of master containers. Upon specific request, show the total number of consumer packages in "Remarks."

In some instances, if the product is inspected in a carrier and no record is available showing the definite quantity, note the approximate amount, provided the load is apparently intact and you

are able to count the number of rows, layers, and stacks. If the interested parties have quantity information in the available records, e.g., a manifest or invoice, the information may be stated as: "Manifest shows XXX boxes."

Report the approximate number of packages remaining in partially unloaded carriers at time of inspection. Ascertain the accuracy of the applicant's certification of a definite number of packages. Report the quantity covered by the inspection and not the amount shown on the manifest.

Do not attempt to definitely state the quantity of a lot of bulk products. When necessary, report the measurements of the stock, or state the approximate amount as follows: "Approximately 25 bushels potatoes," or in bulk loads "Approximately 40,000 lbs.," "Manifested as 40,000 lbs." or "Applicant states 40,000 lbs."

You may report the count of unrestricted large lots certified in a warehouse or dockside on authority of someone else, but, in such instances, you should make a rough check to determine that the number of containers reported for the lot appear to be present. Note the reported count by designating the Inspector's Count as "No" or "Other" (in FEIRS) and explain the circumstances (e.g., numerous pallets located in various locations within warehouse).

If the number of containers in the lot is substantially less than that listed on the application and the applicant wants to show the full amount on the inspection certificate, you can report this under "Remarks," upon request. However, you must count the quantity shown on the notesheet and certificate and report it as "Inspector's Count." The statement in "Remarks" may read: "Applicant states original lot consisted of 4400 sacks" or "Applicant states load originally manifested as 1600 cartons."

Always remember that the inspector "certifies" count along with other statements made and that the certificate may be introduced into court as prima facie evidence. Do not certify any definite quantity unless you actually count the containers.

Pack

Refer to facing; completeness of wrapping; use of fiber wraps, shredded paper, cardboard shims, liners, pads, and collars under this heading. Note special neatness or roughness of pack. Show use of crushed or chunk package ice under this heading, stating amount and where it is placed in the package. The various commodity Inspection Instructions contain detailed information about how to report packs for specific products. Generally, you need not mention the features of a pack that are usual and expected, but always note the unusual. For example, it has become standard practice to ship pears without tissue wrapping; so, you need not mention if pears are not wrapped.

Since filling of containers and tightness of pack are so closely related, this manual does not specify which terms should be applied to specific products or containers. If compliance with Standard Pack or Standards for Export is involved, apply the terms and definitions in the standards and applicable inspection instructions.

Describe condition of pack for open or unlidded containers in terms of fill: level full, well filled, fairly well filled, or slack, according to the facts. For other containers, apply terms describing tightness or fill depending upon the product and types of containers (see the product's Inspection Instructions).

Tightness or Fill

Tightness or fill should always be judged when the container is resting on its bottom on a flat, firm surface. Inspectors should also take into consideration whether the package is resting on the ends of other crates which might permit the bottom to become convex. This would make the container appear slack at the top when in reality it is fairly well or well filled.

Products packed in layers in ice should be judged by the tightness of the packages themselves, which may be determined by the amount of ice in the pack.

A. Tight or Well Filled

The package is sufficiently filled to prevent movement of the product within the carton and to furnish the proper bulge with products and packages requiring a bulge.

B. Fairly Tight or Fairly Well Filled

Pack is not ideal, but is between tight or well filled and slightly slack. These packs are tight enough to prevent specimens from moving within the package sufficiently to prevent injury under normal handling conditions. There may be a proper package bulge, but also a slight looseness in layers. Hampers, lugs, crates, and similar packages are filled so that the product is no more than ½ inch below the top edge.

C. Very Tight

The extreme of the condition described beyond Tight. When product is too tight for best results and there is too much bulge for the good of the product, damage may result.

D. Level Full

Meaning the product is level with the top edge of the container.

E. Slack

This term is to be used when the pack cannot be described with any of the preceding terms, but should never be used without describing the slackness in fractions of an inch or inches.

Example:

"Pack is slack. Cartons filled 3 to 4 inches below top edge of container."

F. Bulge

The distance of the highest part of the curve of the lid above the level of the top edge of the ends of the package or the top side slats when they are flush with the tops of the ends. Show the amount of bulge in inches or fractions thereof. In normal circumstances, hampers, lugs, crates, and similar packages with covers should be filled so that the contents are in firm contact with the cover.

In Bulk or Sacks

Do not report pack when the produce is in bulk or sacks. Do not use the descriptive terms for "Fill" for sacks because they do not give any information about the weight of the containers. Fill can only be determined by actual weight. Report it under the "Pack" heading.

Cell and Tray Packs

Judge the fill of tray and cell type containers by the degree of fill of the individual cups in the tray or of the cells in the carton. They are considered tight if there is no movement of the fruit, or fairly tight if there is only slight movement of the fruit. At time of packing, use the bulge on tray packs as a guide for the degree of fill. However, at times these packs may appear to be slack due to variations in the shape of the fruit, or to softening and settling of the trays due to absorption of moisture in storage.

"Cellophane," "Pliofilm," and Similar Terms

Many commodities are packaged with various trade-named wraps, such as "cellophane," or "Pliofilm." Do not use trade names of packaging on the certificate. Describe these types of wraps as "film, "film wrapped," "film packaged," or "film bags." The term "plastic" may be used to describe trays or similar containers that are rigid.

Arrangement in Layers

Only report the arrangement of fruit in the layers at request of the applicant.

A. Straight Pack

A pack in which the specimens in the layers above the bottom layer rest directly over the specimens in the layer underneath.

B. Diagonal Pack

A pack in which a certain amount of space is left between specimens in each layer, and the specimens above the bottom layer rest over the space between the two specimens in the outside rows and four specimens in the inside rows in the layer beneath.

Pack Ice and Top Ice

Some vegetables are packed with ice within the container (Pack Ice) and/or on top of the pallet (Top Ice). Ice is meant to keep the product chilled and wet during shipping. The presence or absence of pack ice can be a very important factor in vegetables inspections. Therefore, in addition to reporting the tightness of the pack, report the amount of pack ice in the cartons. The following should be used to report the amount of pack ice: "No pack ice," "Small amount of pack ice," or "Good amount of pack ice." For example, "Fairly tight, most good amount of pack ice, some small amount."

Presence of top ice will be reported on the notesheet using general quantity terms to describe the overall appearance of the lot in the "Other" or "Lot Summary" section on market certificates. Top ice may consist of chunk ice or crushed ice, which is distributed over the top of the load. Depth of top ice may be stated approximately in inches or feet. If the depth is not uniform, the variation should be shown. Crushed ice may also fill the space through the body of the load, falling down from the top.

Example:

"Approximately one to 1-1/2 feet of chunk and crushed ice covering most pallets, crushed ice through body of load."

Unless otherwise noted in the commodity handbook instruction, reporting of pack ice must be based on a sample by sample analysis and recorded per sample on the notesheet with a column maintained utilizing general quantity terms and reported in the "Other" or "Lot Summary" section on market certificates.

Temperatures

Take and report pulp temperature of products on all lots inspected. This applies to fully or partly loaded conveyances, and to lots located in cold storage, stacked on open docks, or in locations without refrigeration. Record a minimum of three temperatures regardless of the size of the lot.

For lots still located on the conveyance, take the temperatures of loaded lots from various parts of the conveyance while the product is being unloaded. Take temperatures from various layers throughout the entire lot, and make every effort to determine the range of temperatures throughout the entire conveyance. During the winter months when there is danger of freezing damage, take the temperature along the floor and next to the bunkers, when possible. Temperatures at the time of inspection are important in settling damage claims. If you find heating or freezing of the product in some portion of the load, take the temperature in the affected portion and at other points.

Example:

"Temperature of Product: Doorway: top 40 °F Quarter length car, B end, stock in center of third layer sacks 105 °F."

Include temperatures of unloaded products in containers in the outside stacks on pallets as well as within the stacks. Unusual circumstances will necessitate taking more readings. You can report a range of temperatures, noting unusual variations.

- "Temperatures of Product: Range 63 °F to 70 °F in outer cartons of pallets and 40 °F in third layer, center of pallet."

Report produce in the same lot stacked in various locations and having a wide range of temperatures like this:

- "Temperatures of product: Produce in applicant's cooler 36 °F; three pallets on loading dock range from 43 °F to 50 °F center of pallets; range from 62 °F to 70 °F in outer cartons on pallets."

Note: Take extra temperatures on loads of product that show freezing and or freezing injury, as well as heated loads.

When taking temperatures, always "precool" the thermometer by inserting it into a second specimen before taking the reading. This applies to heated loads as well. Be certain your thermometers are in good clean condition.

Size

Size is a grade requirement in many U.S. grade standards. This means the commodities must be a minimum or maximum size to be certified as meeting a specific U.S. grade.

Grade statements for products with specific size requirements must include some form of a size statement. Each set of U.S. grade standards states the exact size requirements, if any, for that specific commodity. Standards also may allow alternates for the stated minimum and/or maximum sizes if the alternate size is specified (either marked on the container or requested by the applicant). In such instances, the grade statement must indicate the minimum and/or maximum size classification on which the inspection was made and be supported by the description of size in the "Other" section.

Size is determined when performing a quality and condition inspection if:

- The grade being applied specifies a minimum and/or maximum length, diameter, or weight, or

- The applicant specifically requests size because the grade has no specified size for the given product
- The applicant specifies a different size if standards permit so doing.

Determine and record a size statement for each sample, showing the smallest specimen to the largest specimen in the sample. If an occasional specimen is clearly above or below the general

minimum or maximum range, ignore it. In addition to the size statement, maintain all applicable offsize columns.

Report diameter and length, weight, uniformity of size, counts, and bunching under the "Size" heading on the notesheet and in the "Other" section of the certificate.

Unless Otherwise Specified (UOS)

Many standards, such as those for potatoes, onions, and strawberries, allow applicants to specify a size that is different from what is required and is generally referred to as being "unless otherwise specified." If one of these lots does not meet the size specified in the grade standard but does meet an otherwise specified size include this size in the grade statement.

Example:

Onions: "U.S. No. 1, 2 inch minimum" or "U.S. No. 1, 1-1/2 inch minimum."

If the size is certified as meeting the requirement of the grade (i.e., the sizes stated in the standard), you do not need to make a size statement in connection with the grade.

Example:

Strawberries: "U.S. No. 1."

This statement alone implies the strawberries meet the minimum size requirements for the grade.

No Size Limitation Specified in the Grade

If there are no size requirements in the grade, the applicant may specify minimum and/or maximum sizes as the basis for the inspection. In such case, the specified sizes must qualify the grade statement.

Examples:

Snap Beans: "U.S. No. 1, 4 inch minimum length."

Cabbage: "U.S. No. 1, 2 to 6 pounds."

Include a note in the "Remarks" section explaining why a specific size or weight is being certified when not required.

Example:

"Inspection based on 4 inch minimum length at applicant's request."

Commodities with Established Size Classifications

Many commodity standards establish specific size classifications for various size ranges typically packed for that commodity. You must refer to specific standards for more information. If containers are marked on the basis of such size classifications, or at the applicant's request, include the classification term in the grade statement.

Examples:

(For BGG Onions) Grade: "U.S. No. 1, Jumbo."

(For Asparagus) Grade: "U.S. No. 1, Large."

(For Domestic Cabbage) Grade: "U.S. No 1, Medium"

Size Marks Required on Containers by Standards

The standards for certain products, including apples, pears and peaches, do not contain size specifications but do require the size or count to be marked on the container. For these products, the count is generally marked on the container, and the size of the product does not need to be determined, unless requested by the applicant. If the product is marked to a specific size (e.g., a minimum diameter), verify the lot meets the specified size(s). When marked or requested by applicant, include size under the "Grade" heading and in the "Other" section.

Examples:

Apples: "U.S. No. 1, 2-1/4 inches minimum diameter"

Apples: "U.S. No. 1, 2-1/2 inches minimum diameter and up as marked."

For these products, if the size is not marked on the container, such as in bulk fruit, and the applicant does not specify size, you need not mention it in connection with grade but must describe it under "Size" on the notesheet and in the "Other" section on the certificate.

Offsize

Record columns on all commodities on the notesheets if size is a grade requirement. On the notesheet, use a column to record the number or weight of specimens that are smaller or larger than what is allowed for the grade.

Example:

Onions certified as Jumbo or Large have a minimum size requirement of 3 inches in diameter. An undersize column must be shown for onions less than 3 inches in diameter. If the minimum diameter is requested to be larger than 3 inches (e.g., 3-1/2) an undersize column for the larger size would be shown instead of the 3 inches.

If containers are marked to a size (e.g., Jumbo or Large), you must keep an undersize column for the 3-inch minimum as well as the size specified.

Because there are differences between commodities and specific size requirements within the same standards, review the standards for any size requirements before starting an inspection. Be aware of minimum and maximum diameters, lengths, widths, and or weights. For commodities that do not have size requirements in the grade, you do not need to include an offsize column on the notesheet unless the applicant requested a specific size.

Size Range and a "Mostly" Statement

For commodities with size requirements, and at the applicant's request, determine and report a size range that documents the largest and smallest specimens found throughout the inspection. If an occasional specimen is clearly above or below the general minimum or maximum range, ignore it. Keep minimum and maximum size columns on the notesheet, as well as any minimum or maximum sizes required for the commodity. Whenever a minimum and/or maximum size and size range are documented on the notesheet, they must be reported in the "Other" section on the certificate

When stating a size range, unless this range is comparatively narrow (generally an inch or less), or the distribution of sizes is not fairly uniform, report a mostly statement to give a clearer description of the sizes found in the lot.

Example:

"2 to 3-3/4 inches in diameter, mostly 2 to 2-1/2 inches."

If you use "mostly," be sure that this range represents 55 - 89% of the specimens in the lot. If the size is fairly uniform, "mostly" is not needed.

Reporting Offsize Within Tolerance

If the lot meets the marked or specified size but has a percentage of offsize within tolerance, state "undersize/oversize/offsize within tolerance" (as applicable) after the size statement.

Size Marked on Containers

If a lot fails to meet a marked or specified size, show the percentage of offsize (undersize or oversize, as appropriate) in the "Average Defects" column. Only show the percentage of offsize in the "Average Defects" column if the lot exceeds the offsize tolerance or when determining a percentage of U.S. No.1 Quality.

If size is marked on the product's container, show a positive size statement in the "Other" section of the certificate.

Example:

"Meets size as marked."

If size is not a definite factor of the grade, such as for beans and okra, but it is marked on the container, show the size and verify that the markings are correct. Some special products require separate instructions for how to report size. These instructions are found in the various commodity Inspection Instructions.

When Offsize Specimens Also Show Defects of Grade

If size is part of the grade or specified by the applicant, score offsize specimens that are also defective twice: once for offsize and once for defects. If the percentage of offsize specimens that are also defective amounts to 1% or more, include the usual size statement, giving the total offsize including those specimens that are also defective. Do not make specific mention of defects. If a significant number of defective specimens are also offsize, use the following statement:

- "Defects also include specimens scored as offsize."

Reporting Counts

Many products, such as citrus, apples, and celery, are packed to a specific count marked or stated on the container. When the count is marked on the container, include that information under "Brands/Markings." If an applicant requests an inspection for count per container, determine the count per container for each sample and report this information on the certificate in the "Other" section.

Example:

"Count ranges from 34 to 54 peppers, averaging 45 peppers per container."

If packages are marked to a specific count, and the applicant requests a count-only inspection or requests reporting the count, and the actual count does not conform to the marked count, report the count range and average on the certificate, and contact your immediate supervisor for further guidance as a possible PACA violation may exist.

Standard Pack

Some commodities have a set of Standard Pack requirements to which they must conform. Generally, Standard Pack requirements are not a grade requirement. Lots are only to be inspected for conformity to standard pack at the applicant's request. Report whether the lot meets or fails the Standard Pack requirements in conjunction with the grade.

Example:

"U.S. No. 1, Standard Pack."

The requirements can be found in the commodity standards that include established Standard Pack requirements. Report details under the "Size" and "Pack" headings on the notesheet.

Defects

General Policy on Describing Defects

Our certificates indicate the commercial value of the product. It is important to note all defects that are serious enough to affect the grade, and that are used as the basis of inspection. Describe these defects clearly. It is equally important to note if no grade defects are present.

Show Amount, Type, and Severity of Defects

In reporting defects, you must accurately show:

- the amounts,
- the particular type or nature of injury, and
- the approximate degree to which the individual specimens are affected.

Group the various quality (and any **similar** condition) defects noted in one general percentage. Mention only two or three of the quality defects in order of their prevalence and descriptor terms for the condition defects.

Examples:

If results are: 4% Scars, 3% Insect Damage, 3% Healed Cuts, 1% Growth Cracks, 1% Caked Dirt show the total amount of quality defects as 12% and list only the first three as they are the most prevalent. "Quality (Scars, Insect Damage, and Healed Cuts)"

If results are: 3% brown surface discoloration and 5% black surface discoloration show the total amount of discoloration as 8% and describe the defect as "Brown to Black Surface Discoloration."

Scoring Specimens Affected by a Combination of Defects

Defects may be the result of injury, damage, serious damage, or very serious damage. These terms are defined in the standards for each commodity, where applicable. Individual specimens may not be affected by a combination of defects to an extent more than that permitted for:

A. Any one defect;

B. More than an equivalent of a combination of lesser degrees of two or more defects; or

C. More than by a combination of lesser degrees of different types of the same general defect, such as light, slightly rough, and rough scars.

> In other words, to meet grade requirements, a specimen may not have a poorer appearance or greater waste when such appearance or waste is the result of a combination of causes than it could from one cause.

When a standard or inspection instruction defines scoring guideline for a specific defect, score a specimen affected by that defect by the definition for injury, damage, serious damage, or very serious damage as specified by that standards' inspection instructions. The general definition of injury, damage, serious damage, or very serious damage (i.e., Slightly, Materially, Seriously, or Very Seriously detracting from appearance) may only be used to score defects that do not have specific scoring guidelines defined in the standards or inspection instructions, or to score a specimen that has a combination of defects, none of which would be scored individually.

Bunched Products

Some products, such as spinach, parsley, leeks, and radishes, are bunched together and packaged as one unit. Score bunched product on the basis of the bunch, not of individual specimens. For bunched products with roots and tops, such as radishes, consider the bunch the unit for defects scored against the tops; score the roots (bulbs) individually. See specific commodity inspection instructions for further guidance.

Quality and Condition

General Meaning of Quality and Condition

It is difficult to apply general definitions of quality and condition to all products, or to specify a classification of such factors as maturity, color, and defects for all products. In general, permanent properties (i.e., defects that do not change over time) are classified as Quality defects. Deterioration and changes of a progressive nature that may have developed or occurred since the product was packed are classified as Condition defects.

> Example:
>
> Red color on apples is clearly a quality factor, but yellowing of the outer leaves of cabbage or lettuce may occur in transit or storage, therefore yellow color of these products is a factor of condition. Ripeness of apples is a condition factor since apples ripen in storage or transit. Maturity of cabbage or lettuce is chiefly a matter of solidity, and therefore, a quality factor. These products do not become less compact or more compact under ordinary transit handling.

If there is a grade for the product, use "defect" to describe the degree of injury. Use the terms injury, damage, serious damage, and very serious damage to describe the degree of defects if these terms are defined in the standards.

Use the term "Quality" or "Quality Defects" on the certificate to report all quality (i.e., permanent) factors that are serious enough to affect grade.

Report all condition factors (i.e., those that can change during transit and/or storage) that are serious enough to affect grade.

Restricting Inspections to a Single (Individual) Quality or Condition Factor

You can restrict inspections to any individual factor(s) at the applicant's request. This includes any condition factor (e.g., decay, bruising, or discoloration); any quality factor (e.g., cuts, shape, and blanching); internal defects only; or, external defects only (e.g., multiple hearts in onions or sprouting on potatoes). Qualify any inspection that does not report all quality and condition factors or any inspection that is restricted to a factor(s) other than quality or condition (e.g. freezing only, temperature only, or weight only) under the "Remarks" section with a statement such as:

- "Inspection restricted to freezing only at applicants request,"
- "Inspection restricted to scars only at applicants request," or
- "Restricted to reporting misshapen only at applicant's request."

Under such restrictions, do not report any grade for the lot in question. Certify the grade only if you perform a full quality and condition inspection. All inspections that are restricted to an individual factor(s), other than condition only, are billed on a carlot fee based on the type of factor(s) inspected. If lot is inspected for a Quality factor, charge a quality and condition inspection fee. If a Condition factor is inspected, charge the condition fee only.

Reporting Quality or Condition Factors That Affect Grade

Many commodities require the reporting of important quality or condition factors such as firmness, color, brightness and size that affect the grade. They impact the overall marketability of the commodity and are reported on market certificates to provide a clearer description of the lot. While most fruits require the reporting of firmness and color, and some vegetables require the reporting of tops or leaf color, refer to individual commodity handbook instruction in determining which specific factors are to be reported.

Unless otherwise noted in the commodity handbook instruction such as "The (quality/condition factor) should be based on the general appearance of the lot as a whole", factors must be based on a sample by sample analysis and recorded per sample on the notesheet with a column maintained utilizing general quantity terms and reported in the "Other" or "Lot Summary" section on market certificates.

A. Descriptive Terms for Deciduous Fruits and Vegetables

When required to report quality or condition factors, use the following terms to describe the stages of firmness/freshness on deciduous fruits and vegetables unless specific terms are in the respective commodity handbook instructions. Refer to applicable commodity handbook instructions for when to report these terms.

These factors must be based on a sample by sample analysis and recorded per sample on the notesheet with a column maintained utilizing general quantity terms and reported in the “Other” or “Lot Summary” section on market certificates.

1. Fruits:

    a. Hard – Mature but with tenacious (tough) flesh that does not yield to moderate pressure.

    b. Firm – The flesh yields very slightly to moderate pressure, but most fruits at this stage are not in good eating condition.

    c. Firm Ripe – The flesh yields slightly to moderate pressure and is fairly palatable, but has not reached prime eating condition.

    d. Ripe – The flesh yields readily to moderate pressure and is in prime eating condition.

    Note: When inspecting apples for U.S. Condition Standards for Export, record the exact percentage of ripe apples on the notesheet and report it in the “Other” or “Lot Summary” section of the certificate.

2. Vegetables:

    a. Fresh – Normal succulence, brightness, and firmness shown by stock when harvested. This is important in fresh vegetables; any impairment of original quality reduces the product’s value.

    b. Firm – Compact, solid, substantial, and unyielding to touch. Indicative of normal development and good condition. Very important in root crops, cucurbits, eggplant, etc.

    c. Crisp – Turgid, brittle, and breaks readily. This denotes a fresh condition that is desirable, e.g., in celery, rhubarb, and spinach.

    d. Tender – Succulent and of delicate texture. This is a desirable condition in certain commodities, e.g., asparagus, artichokes, spinach, and beans.

    e. Flabby – Soft, limp, pliable, and lacking firmness. Flabbiness is often due to loss of stored nutrients and water or account of sprouting or old age, such as in sprouted potatoes or aged carrots.

    f. Pithy – Open texture with air spaces in pith or central portion that is usually the result of very rapid growth. This condition is especially applicable to celery, radishes, turnips, and carrots.

g. Shriveled – Shrunken, drawn, or wrinkled resulting in a marked change in form and often in size. This is an extreme condition resulting from excessive transpiration or old age.

h. Soft, Soft and Puffy, or Spongy – Easily compressed and of loose open texture. This is usually the result of very rapid or irregular growth in commodities such as poorly headed cabbage or lettuce, and immature or sprouted onions.

i. Tough – Tenacious, pliable, and not easily broken. Tough is the opposite of tender. It denotes a condition of overmaturity and lack of succulence.

j. Wilted – Drooping, weak, and lacking turgidity. This condition is usually a result of rapid transpiration that is particularly applicable to leafy vegetables and those containing a very high percentage of water, such as celery, spinach, rhubarb, and lettuce.

k. Withered – Dried out and shrunken from a severe loss of moisture and is usually accompanied by a change of form. This is a more serious condition than "wilted," often due to a severe drought or hot winds. This term is applied to asparagus tips.

Reporting Quality or Condition Factors That Do Not Affect Grade

Inspectors are sometimes asked to report quality and condition factors that do not affect grade. You may only mention factors that do not affect grade at the applicant's request, except as provided by individual commodity instructions. At the request of the applicant, you may show exceptions, such as potatoes having less than the scorable amount of sprouts, even when the factors are not serious enough to affect the grade, under the "Remarks" section by a statement such as:

- "Most tubers show sprouts from just emerging to 1/8 inch, not affecting grade."

If Quality or Condition Varies Depending on Location in Carrier

At times, one end of a conveyance or certain stacks or layers in a load will show a consistent variation from other parts of the lot. If so, report the quality or condition separately, even though the entire lot may be within grade. There are no hard and fast rules for such cases, but, in general, if the size, color, percentages of grade defects, or condition factors are so different that it is readily noticeable, and if you are sure the differences are consistent and can be identified by location, report it separately.

If Quality or Condition Differs According to Package Type or Package Markings

Report any marked difference in quality, condition, or size that is definitely associated with different types or sizes of packages or certain markings on the packages as separate lots on the certificate and notesheet. Package markings that must be separated when such differences exist

include Positive Lot Identification marks, grower numbers, and any other obvious lot identifiers. Show the particular markings next to each sample on the notesheet so the differences can be recognized during the process of inspection and for appeal purposes. Do not combine readily identifiable in-grade or properly sized lots with identifiable out-of-grade or off-size lots in order to cause the combined lot to either fail or pass.

Example:

A receiver requests an inspection on a load of 800 cartons of potatoes, sizes 70, 80, 90, and 100. The 70s fail account hollow heart, and, combined with the other sizes, would cause the entire load to fail, but the 80s, 90s, and 100s, separately computed, grade U.S. No. 1. The applicant wants the lots combined in order to make a claim against the shipper on those lots when they actually meet the grade and size marked. The 70s must be certified as "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1, 70 size," and the 80s, 90s, and 100s as "U.S. No. 1, 80, 90, 100 sizes as marked."

If certain lots would fail to grade and others would pass during the course of an inspection, including a condition only inspection, report those lots separately. On lots that fail, wide differences in total defects or a single defect such as decay justify reporting as separate lots. If necessary, examine additional samples from one or more of the lots to establish clearly that there is a marked and consistent difference that can be associated with such marks or packages.

<u>If Quality and Condition Affect the Same Specimen</u>

If a single specimen is affected by a condition defect and a quality defect, and either would be scorable by itself:

A. Score the specimen against the tolerance that is most affected.
Example:

A lot of potatoes is being certified under the U.S. No. 1 grade. External defects are running at 5%, internal defects are running at 1%. A potato has Hollow Heart (quality) scorable as internal damage and also has a sunken discolored area (condition) scorable as external damage. This potato would be scored as an external condition defect since the external defect tolerance of 5% will be affected the most.

B. In the above example, if you cannot determine whether one tolerance will be affected more than another during the inspection, score the specimen as quality and condition, and cross-reference the two entries on the notesheet. Once the inspection is complete, go back to determine which tolerance, if any, has been most affected. If no tolerance has been affected more than another, see items 3 and 4 below. If you can determine which has been more affected, draw a line through and initial the entry that is not being applied and determine percentages based on the final figures, or

C. If item 1 above does not apply and one defect is more severe than the other, score the more severe defect. (Always consider soft rot or decay as the more severe defect); or,

D. If item 1 above does not apply and neither defect is more severe, score the specimen as quality.

E. If a single specimen is scorable because of a combination of quality and condition defects, but neither would be scorable on its own, score the specimen as condition.

Quality Defects

See inspection instructions for specific commodities' quality defects.

A. Color

The commercial importance of color varies widely by product. In many fruits and vegetables, it is important. In root crops, color is usually secondary to other factors.

The amount of color is generally reported in fractions or percentages of the surface area that is covered by a color characteristic of the variety. Fruit that normally shows a blush or partial color may be described as well colored, fairly well colored, or poorly colored unless the inspection is based on a grade that defines the amount of color in any other terms. In that case, use the working of the grade to describe the color, e.g., tinge of color, or most apples show from a tinge of color to full red.

Example:

- "Mostly 66% to full surface good red color."

  In general, report the percentage of surface color at the applicant's request.

For products with defined color stages, report the ground color in general terms based on the appearance of the lot.
Example:

- Pears: "Mostly light green, some turning yellow, few yellow ground color."

The brightness of color affects the attractiveness of a product. In green vegetables, brightness is an index of the freshness of the product; in colored fruits, it is second in importance only to the amount of color.

The appearance of potatoes and various root crops is generally described in terms of freedom from dirt rather than their color. Describe brightness, dullness, and other factors affecting their general appearance on the notesheet. The term green may refer to color alone and not to maturity or ripeness, or it may mean immature. Use the phrase Green color whenever this term is used to express color alone.

B. Distinction between Mature and Ripe

Mature and ripe both refer to fullness of completion of growth. Mature or maturity is the more restricted term, and refers to the completion of development (Quality factor). Ripe or ripeness indicates readiness or fitness for use (Condition factor). A mature tomato or a mature apple may attain full development without being ripe, that is, without being ideal for consumption. The term "ripe" is used differently by various groups, and botanical and horticultural meanings of the term are not the same. Horticulturally, ripe refers to fruit and vegetables that are fit for use and consumption or "ready to eat." Horticulturally ripe fruit may or may not be botanically ripe. Botanically, ripe means the fruit and vegetables have mature seeds fit for germination and are fully developed.

C. Factors That Indicate Maturity

In many cases, maturity is the only factor for inspection. It is, however, of sufficient importance to justify some description of state of maturity, e.g., firmness, color, flavor, weight, or other factors, in all cases. Describe color, which directly indicates the maturity of many products, in connection with maturity. In some products, e.g., apples and peaches, color is a factor of grade and quality. In these cases, describe color and maturity separately.

D. Distinction between Ground Color and Varietal Color

Do not confuse ground color with varietal color in the case of some deciduous fruits such as apricots and certain varieties of pears and plums. In addition to ground color, which is a Condition factor that changes in relation to firmness, these fruits may also show blush or red color, which does not change in relation to firmness and would be considered a Quality factor. Since ground color is related to firmness it is best to describe ground color using general quantity terms and report in connection with firmness statements:

- "Pears hard, Ground color green"
- "Pears ripe, Ground color yellow."

E. Insect Injury

Describe any of the various injuries caused by insects in any stage. Common insect injuries include: grub, wireworm, tuber moth, and flea beetle injury of potatoes, worm stings and wormholes in apples, and Silvery white discoloration on tops of Common Green Onions (Thrip Damage).

F. Mechanical Injury and Other Defects

Describe defects such as misshapen, undesirable color, sunburn, growth cracks, dirt, and mechanical injury. These defects are explained in detail in the individual commodity inspection instructions.

G. Determining and Reporting Amount of Loose Dirt

If a lot fails to grade on account of damage by dirt (Quality defect), at the applicants' request, you may report the amount of loose dirt in sample containers under "Remarks."

Example:

- "Ranging from 0 to 4 pounds, average 2 pounds loose dirt in sacks. Amount of loose dirt reported at applicant's request."

Check commodity inspection instructions to verify loose dirt reporting procedures.

Dirt "caked" on product is scored as a Quality defect and based on the individual specimen. See the inspection instructions for specific commodities.

Condition Defects

Defects of a progressive nature are called condition defects. The causes of some kinds of condition factors are evident, e.g., wilting, freezing injury, and bruising are factors that occur after packing. Classify all decays as factors of condition. See specific commodity inspection instructions for a detailed list of condition defects affecting specific commodities.

A. Handling Insects as Quality or Condition Factors

For all commodities, score damage or serious damage by insects as a quality defect if the insects are dead. If insects are alive, score it as a condition defect. When both dead and live insects are present in the sample, score as a condition defect.

B. Statement Not Affecting Grade on Certificates

You may make a statement not affecting grade for condition factors that are not severe enough to affect the grade being applied.

Example:

- Non scorable sprouts on potatoes: "Most tubers show sprouts from just emerging to 1/8 inch not affecting grade."

C. Yellowing and Yellow Discoloration

Always perform inspections under adequate lighting. Natural sunlight is necessary to properly identify yellowing in some commodities, such as limes and cucumbers.

Yellow Discoloration is a common finding of inspections for leafy greens and other vegetables. See the commodity inspection instructions for specific scoring guidelines.

D. Firmness

In most cases, overripe or soft fruit, and flabby, pithy, spongy, tough, wilted, or withered are condition defects. Immature fruit is a quality defect. See Reporting Quality or Condition Factors That Affect Grade section of this manual for firmness terms.

E. Freezing Injury after Packing

Score freezing injury, chilling injury, and frozen product as condition defects and report them in percentages only when found scattered throughout the load. If a definite pattern exists, write a narrative statement. If freezing is found during a Quality and Condition or Condition only inspection, report the extent of the freezing and inspect the remainder of the load for Quality and/or Condition. If the applicant restricts the inspection to freezing only, only conduct the inspection to determine the extent of the freeze damage in the load. If reporting freezing only, report the extent of the injury and do not include a grade statement. In this circumstance, the fee will be determined using the hourly rate.

See the Freezing section under Miscellaneous Inspections and Procedures for further guidance.

Decay

Decay is the deterioration or decline of a specimen involving decomposition that is induced by fungi or bacteria. It is of a complete or progressive nature in the sense of being a rot.

Certain injuries due to fungus and bacteria, which at first are superficial, may develop into definite decays. When a spot or lesion is dry and firm and its progress has been arrested permanently, consider it a quality defect rather than decay or a condition defect.

If possible, show the conditions that caused the decay, e.g., when decay is definitely associated with mechanical injuries or occurred following other quality defects such as stem punctures.

Example:

- "5% Decay (3 to 9%) generally advanced few moderate stages, mostly following mechanical damage."

Clearly differentiate between decay and watersoaked or bruised tissue. Rubbing the discolored or watersoaked tissue between thumb and fingers usually indicates whether it is decay or merely discoloration. If the material disintegrates, report it as decay; if it rolls up into a small particle or ball, do not report it as decay. Carefully examine commodities that commonly show watersoaked bruises from heavy pressure against the ice in the package or over the load. Unless slimy disintegration is definite, do not report this injury as decay, but describe it. Score any such injury that is present in sufficient amounts to be conspicuous on casual examination, or to materially affect the commercial value of the lot.

If you need help identifying the true character of injuries of this kind, consult with your supervisor for further guidance.

If you have doubts in differentiating these injuries, describe the defect and score it on the basis of damage.

A. Reporting Less Than One Percent Decay

If the average for decay or soft rot is less than 1%, report as follows:

-1 = Less than 1% (if average is 0.51 to 0.99%)
-1/2 = Less than one half of 1% (if average is 0.49% or less)
1/2 = One half of 1% (if average is 0.50%)
0 0 = No decay or soft rot

If the average for decay or soft rot is more than one percent, report it to the nearest whole number. Never use the expression “less than 2% decay.”

Example:

- 1.49% would be reported as 1% and 1.50% would be reported as 2%

B. Important Points in Reporting Decay

The important points to remember when reporting decay are the amounts and degree affected (stages). From a commercial standpoint, the most important item is to determine how much of the stock shows decay, but you should cover all points thoroughly in order to make a clear and complete report.

C. Stages of Decay

If the tolerance or application of tolerance for decay or soft rot is exceeded, record on the notes and certificate simply as decay or soft rot, as indicated by the standard, and give the stages in general terms as:

A. Early – approximately 10% or less of the surface or specimens affected;

B. Moderate – approximately 11 to 25% of the surface or specimen affected;
C. Advanced – approximately 26% or more of the surface or specimen affected.

Do not use any terms other than those above.

D. Distribution of Decay
Report on the certificate if there is a marked difference in the amount of decay found in various locations of the carrier, or grower or lot numbers. Report these marked differences as separate lots if you can clearly segregate them. If it’s not possible to

separate lots, which is often the case for grower marks or numbers, make a statement on the certificate like this:

Examples:

- "Two pallets nearest rear doors have high percentages of decay, and the remaining pallets have less than 1%."
- "Highest percent of decay occurs in lot identified by grower number 23."

E. When Percentage of Defects or Decay in Samples is Irregular

When decay or some other factor of quality or condition is found in some packages and not in others, this may be reported as,

- "Decay 8%, range 1 to 20%, advanced stages, highest amount of decay found in packages marked xxx."

F. Determining Percentages of Decay When Specimens are Excessively Deteriorated

Frequently, when inspecting products such as potatoes, onions, or grapes on the basis of weight, samples may contain large amounts of decayed specimens that are so completely deteriorated that they have lost most or practically all of their original weight. Using the actual weight of these badly deteriorated specimens to determine the percentage of decay present would give inaccurate results. For weighing purposes in such cases, use sound specimens that are approximately the same as the original size of the deteriorated specimens. If this is not possible, estimate the decay.

G. Describing Freshness and Firmness on the Certificate When Specimens are Affected by Soft Rot, Other Decays, or Other Factors

Consider the special tolerances for soft and decayed specimens to determine the general terms to be used to describe the firmness of fruit. Due to the rapid deterioration of specimens affected by these injuries, do not consider them firm, as these terms are defined in the U.S. standards or inspection instructions, regardless of the area affected. Do not describe products as firm if other factors have caused deterioration beyond the level permitted under the definitions for firm. Use general terms to describe the firmness of the portion of a lot not affected by soft rot, decay, or advanced deterioration by any other disease.

Example:

- Oranges with 5% Decay: "Generally firm, Decay mostly advanced, some early stages."

Allowances

An allowance is an amount of a particular factor (e.g., defects, foreign material, or staining) permitted in a lot, without regard to tolerances. In addition to the lot tolerances associated with each commodity, some commodities also contain allowances for specific items.

Example:

- Potatoes contain an additional allowance of 5% for Sprouts. If a U.S. No. 1 lot at market contained 4% Sprouts, 3% damage by External Quality Defects, 4% damage by External Condition Defects, and 2% damage by Internal Condition Defects, the lot would pass (does not exceed 10% total defects or restricted tolerance for external or internal defects). However, if the lot had 6% Sprouts, the lot would fail to meet U.S. No. 1.

In applying the rule of one and one-half times or double the tolerances or other exceptions under the application of tolerance, do not include allowances for certain factors that are provided in the Definition of Terms of the standards.

Example:

- Under Definitions of Terms in the U.S. Standards for Potatoes, Sprouting is not a tolerance and therefore the application of tolerances does not apply.

Application of Tolerances

The U.S. standards that have been issued in recent years provide tolerance limits for individual packages. The specified limits for individual packages are not uniform for all products, but most standards provide that:

- When the tolerance is 10% or more, individual containers cannot exceed one and one-half times the tolerance specified, and

- When the tolerance is less the 10%, individual containers cannot exceed double the tolerance specified.

Many standards contain a provision that one defective specimen may be allowed in each package. This is interpreted to mean one for each general tolerance, such as size, external defects, and, where applicable, internal defects. In a few standards, one-tenth (1/10) of the samples may exceed the limits for individual packages; in others, special exceptions are provided for certain factors. Always refer to the particular standards for the correct application of the tolerance.

Some early U.S. standards do not include provisions for applying tolerances to individual packages. For those standards, there is no limit on the percentage of defects or offsize allowed in individual packages. If the average for the lot or a particular tolerance is not exceeded, the lot

will meet the grade or specification, regardless of the percentages of defects or offsize in any container.

MISCELLANEOUS INSPECTIONS & PROCEDURES

Federal Marketing Orders and Section 8e Import Requirements

Federal Marketing Orders and Agreements

Authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (the Act), marketing orders and agreements allow farmers and handlers to collectively address marketing problems. These programs are initiated by industries that choose to have Federal oversight of certain aspects of their operations. AMS oversees marketing orders and agreements to ensure that they operate in the public interest and within legal bounds.

Marketing orders and agreements may set minimum quality requirements, standardize packaging, regulate flow of product to market, and implement other regulations. Marketing agreements only apply to handlers who voluntarily sign an agreement; marketing orders set regulations on all handlers in a specified region once the program is approved via a grower referendum. Fees are collected from handlers to cover the local costs of administering these programs. AMS currently administers fruit and vegetable marketing orders for more than 25 specialty crop commodities.

Section 8e Import Requirements

Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 (AMAA) applies to specific fruit, vegetable, and specialty crop imports into the United States. The law requires imported products to meet the same or comparable grade, size, quality and maturity standards as domestic products covered by Federal marketing orders. These standards protect U.S. consumers from substandard or inferior products. The Marketing Order and Agreement Division (MOAD) under USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) enforces the Federal marketing orders for fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops, as well as compliance with import regulations.

See the AIM Section 8e & Marketing Order Manual for additional information and guidance.

Commodity Procurement Program (CPP)

The AMS Commodity Procurement Program buys fresh fruits and vegetables for distribution to various organizations. These purchases are required to be inspected by the SCI Division at destination, with a few exceptions. Before inspecting any of these purchases, each office will receive specific instructions from HQ Inspection Operations with specific information, including delivery dates, the commodity, and grade requirements. Do not inspect purchased products until you receive the instructions. Do not deviate from the instructions without authorization from HQ Inspection Operations.

It is the inspector's responsibility to verify that all inspection related contractual requirements are met. This includes possible size, pack type and variety requirements. Always refer to the product

specification or product exceptions to be sure what the related contractual requirements are. You can only accept amendments concerning these purchases if you receive them in writing from HQ Inspection Operations or directly from Commodity Procurement.

Inspectors are not to offer opinions or insights into whether to accept or reject a CPP load, or the criteria that may be considered when accepting or rejecting a load. This determination is only made by the Commodity Procurement Contracting officer. If asked, inspectors will refer applicants or receivers to contact their Contracting Officer. What we can discuss is the solicitation requirements and why the load failed these requirements. Keep the information limited to just the facts of the inspection.

- Product Specifications and exceptions per solicitation can be found on the USDA/AMS external website at www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food.

- Purchase Order (PO) information for Federal inspectors can be found on the SCI SharePoint Purchase Orders for Commodity Procurement page. As Fed-State market licensees do not have access to the SCI SharePoint site, they will need to rely on emails sent by their Federal Program Manager to receive Purchase Order information.

- The Master Solicitation for Commodity Procurements detail the federal regulatory clauses and provisions and USDA and AMS policies applicable to AMS procurement activities. These documents serve as the foundation for contracts awarded by AMS and are incorporated by reference into each individual solicitation. This includes requirements for truck seals for each delivery.

Timing

The Contractor must give the USDA at least 72 hours (3 days) advance notice when scheduling inspection service. It is allowable for fresh loads to be inspected en-route to their destination due to limited inspector availability at the destination location. The inspection and certification must occur within 48 hours of delivery to the final destination and the trailer must be sealed by the driver after the inspection is complete.

Vendors are allowed to deliver early with approval from the destination location. An inspection prior to or after the delivery date will not fail the requirements due to delivery date. Place a remark on the certificate that states lot inspected prior to established delivery date of month/day/year.

Truck Seals

Regarding truck seals for fresh product deliveries, do not fail solicitation requirements if the seal was broken prior to arrival of the inspector. Receiver has the option to either leave the seal in place or remove it to unload the pallets prior to inspector's arrival. If the receiver elects to remove the seal they will need to present it to the inspector upon arrival. If the seal has been removed prior to their arrival, the inspector will note on the certificate, under Remarks, the status of the seal.

When noting on the certificate the status of the removed seal consider the following:

- Missing means the seal cannot be provided to the inspector.
- Report if the removed or provided seal is the wrong seal type (as noted in the Master Solicitation) or if the seal number does not match the seal number listed on the Bill of Lading.
- There is no need to mention on the certificate if the correct seal was used, if it matches the Bill of Lading or if it was removed by the inspector at time of arrival.

The seal numbers shall be documented on the Bill of Lading, shipment manifest, or other delivery documents, as applicable, which must be signed or acknowledged by the carrier or its agent. It will be the responsibility of the Contractor to provide enough seals to the carrier service and to ensure that the trailer is sealed after each delivery location (when destined for multiple recipients, i.e. multi-stops). The seal number must be recorded on the appropriate delivery document and correspond with the applied seal at the time of arrival at the next destination.

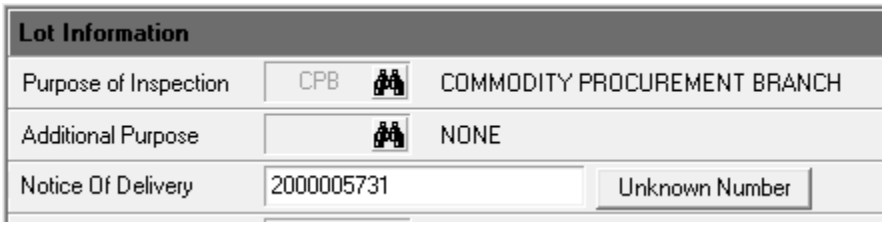
Refer to the Master Solicitation for CP related requirements on seal types.

Multiple Drops

Due to limited staffing and remote locations, contractors have the option to have lots within a load that are destined for multiple receivers inspected at one location. These are referred to as multiple drop inspections. Applicants can request that the inspections for multiple drops occur all at the first stop. A separate inspection and certificate will be needed for each stop. Each certificate will contain an estimated fee calculated separately.

Certification

In FEIRS you must select “Commodity Procurement Branch” for the Purpose of Inspection and enter the Solicitation number into the Notice of Delivery field.



The PO contains all the information that is required to be recorded on the issuing certificate. All certificates must contain the statement **“Meets/Fails to Meet the Requirements of Solicitation ___, Solicitation Sales Order number ___, Purchase order number ___, and Purchase Line Item number ___.** In FEIRS there is a drop down remark available to complete this statement efficiently and accurately.

Certificates issued for multi-drop inspections are valid for 36 hours. After 36 hours lots must be re-inspected and new certificates issued.

Copies

Copies of the certificate will be sent to the applicant, shipper and receiver of the product. Commodity Procurement or HQ Inspection Operations do not require a copy.

Bulk Loads

Since the carrier is the container, do not treat the variation found in bulk loads like similar variations found in packages when applying the rule of double or one and one-half times the tolerance. The load, as a general rule, is sold as a unit and should be inspected as such. If it is divided by bulkheads or partitions, you may inspect it as separate units if the applicant identifies the units as being separate or if there is a material difference in the quality and condition of the units. Do not attempt to report a range or an average for bulk loads.

Take sub-samples throughout the load to be inspected. Sub-samples may be graded separately then added to make 1 complete sample for the load.

For example, for a bulk load of potatoes, take a minimum of five 20-pound sub-samples. Inspect each sub-sample and then add them together to make 1 whole sample.

Example:

Sample size	Quality	Sunken discolored Areas	Soft Rot
20 lbs.	1.0 lb.	2.0 lb.	.50 lb.
20 lbs.	.75 lb.	1.5 lb.	.50 lb.
20 lbs.	.50 lb.	1.0 lb.	1.0 lb.
20 lbs.	.75 lb.	1.5 lb.	1.0 lb.
20 lbs.	1.0 lb.	1.0 lb.	.75 lb.
100 lbs.	**4 lbs. (4%)**	**7 lbs. (7%)**	**3.75 lbs. (4%)**

Fails to Grade US No. 1 account condition.

Do not report a range: 5 SUB-SAMPLES MAKE 1 COMPLETE SAMPLE**.**

Bulk loads must also show a restriction to the upper number inches of the load, unless the load is inspected during loading or unloading and all portions of the load are accessible. In either case, include a statement under “Remarks.”

Dumping Certification

Applicants may request a “dumping certificate” or other evidence of or justification for destroying or discarding produce received in interstate commerce in compliance with the Produce Agency Act of 1927 and the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) of 1930, as amended. The inspection service must honor requests for dumping certification by performing

a Quality and/or Condition only inspection and making a statement on the facts to the following in the "Remarks" section such as:

- "Applicant states that the above lot is to be dumped."

Base the fee on the car lot fee for Quality and/or Condition, whichever applies.

When performing a witness dump where the product is being taken to a landfill, feedlot, etc. or discarded in a trash compactor, the inspector must personally observe the lot being destroyed and certify the facts in the "Remarks" section with a statement such as:

- Inspector witnessed the dumping of above lot in a trash compactor.

For this type of inspection, certify the quantity of containers (a count). Base the fee on an hourly basis for witness dump inspections.

Freezing

Freezing and freezing injury occur under such a variety of conditions that they are among the most difficult factors to accurately describe on the inspection certificate. Report this injury carefully if it is noticeable, as it may detract greatly from the commercial value of the lot. If the damage is slight, it may be of little importance. Describe the degree of injury so the applicant can determine how much the commercial value of the product has been affected.

Describe freezing, freezing injury, and chilling injury in the "Other" section of the certificate. If the condition is scattered throughout the lot and/or container, score it as a defect by percentage, report it in the "Offsize/Defect" column, and describe it in the "Other" section. If the condition shows a definite pattern, describe in general terms the amount of the load, and, in more specific terms, the affected product and the extent to which containers are affected. When doing a quality and condition inspection or condition only inspection, do not charge an additional fee unless determining freezing adds time to the inspection.

At the applicant's request, you can restrict the inspection to freezing only. Assess fees at the hourly rate.

If most containers in the lot are affected by freezing or freezing injury, do not try to certify size, quality or condition; restrict the inspection to freezing only based on your authority and determination.

Familiarize yourself with the effect of this injury on different products. Publications on Market Diseases of Fruits and Vegetables, is an excellent source of information on this defect. Once on the site, type in the search box "Market diseases of fruits and vegetables".

Distinguish between frozen stock and freezing injury. If the product is still in a frozen condition with ice present in the tissues, use the term frozen. Do not show ice crystals were present. The recorded temperature must substantiate that the product is frozen. Fruits typically freeze at a

lower temperature due to sugar content; leafy products typically freeze around 32 °F due to the moisture present. Use the term freezing injury if the product is not in a frozen condition at the time of inspection but shows typical conditions that indicate it had been frozen, such as shriveling, flabbiness, watersoaked, glassy appearance, soft and leaking condition, or internal discoloration.

Do not use the term freezing injury without a description of the nature of the injury. The description is important so that the certificate presents a clear picture of the injury, and describes evidence that the product has been frozen or affected by freezing injury. Do not use terms like frosted or frost injury.

Reporting Freezing and Freezing Injury when a Pattern Exists

To report freezing or freezing injury, provide this information:

A. The extent of injury into the load. State this in terms of approximate inches or feet into the load or in terms of the number of rows, layers, and/or stacks affected.

B. The extent of the injury into the container stated in terms of approximate inches into the container along with the number of specimens affected using general quantity terms.

C. The location of the injury in the containers and load or lot.

D. In the case of freezing injury, a description of the affected product(s).

E. A statement indicating where the freezing occurred or did not occur. This statement must always be substantiated by the facts in the first three steps.

See Appendix VII for a Freezing Pattern Reporting guide.

Carrier Freezing

In the case of carrier freezing, where the injury is confined to the more exposed portions of the load, do not try to state the percentage or fractional portion of the load that his injured. Simply state the distance that the damage extends into the load in the various locations. If the shipment is in bulk, state the extent in feet or in inches. If a portion of the stock is frozen or shows freezing injury next to the floor, carrier side walls, or in the more exposed portions of the load which would indicate that the damage occurred in the carrier, report all pertinent information regarding its nature and extent.
Example:

- “In bottom layer sacks, 2 to 3 layers of potatoes in side of sack adjacent to floor racks show wet breakdown following freezing and so located as to indicate freezing occurred in car.”

Package and Top Ice Freezing

In addition to field freezing and transit freezing injury, freezing from package and top ice can occur, especially on vegetables. Freezing from top ice may occur on the top layer of the load, next to the side walls, and next to the sides of packages in the upper layers where crushed top ice has sifted down into the spaces between rows. This type of freezing may occur before loading, or it may occur after the product is loaded. When reporting freezing due to pack ice, do not attempt to show the location where it occurred.

Reporting Different Types and Extents of Freezing Injury

Below are examples of how to report freezing conditions. Regardless of the cause, all freezing statements must show the:

A. Kind of freezing,

B. Location in the carrier/warehouse,

C. Location in the containers,

D. Portion of load affected,

E. The degree to which affected specimens are injured, and

F. Where the freezing occurred, if this is not self-evident.

Examples of Freezing Statements

Pack Ice Freezing:

- "In most crates, most heads in contact with pack ice are frozen, affecting 2 to 5 leaves to approximately 8 inches in depth."

Top Ice Freezing:

- "In most top layer crates, heads in contact with lids or exposed sides in contact with top ice are frozen, affecting 2 to 5 leaves to approximately 3 inches in depth."

Sidewall Containers Only:

- "In all containers in contact with both side walls, cauliflower in contact with exposed portion of containers is frozen approximately 1 to 2 inches into container and so located as to indicate freezing occurred in carrier."

When the lower layers of the side wall container show freezing, the bottom layer container next to side wall will show freezing next to the floor racks as well as the walls. Show this using this language:

- "Floor layer and second layer container next to one (or both) side walls, cauliflower adjacent to container next to side wall and floor racks is frozen approximately 1 to 3 inches into container."

Side Walls, End Walls, and Floor Layer Crates/Cartons:

- "In all cartons in contact with side and end walls and all floor layer cartons, cauliflower next to exposed end portion of cartons is frozen approximately 1 to 2 inches in from walls, and approximately 2 to 5 inches up from floor racks."

Adjacent to Doors Only:

- "In 10 containers adjacent to rear (or side) door, heads in contact with exposed sides of containers are frozen."

- "In bottom layer containers adjacent rear door, heads in contact with exposed sides of containers are frozen."

- "In 10 containers adjacent door(s), heads in contact with exposed sides of containers are frozen approximately 2 to 6 inches into container, and in two of these containers heads are frozen approximately 1 to 2 inches into container from sides next to floor racks."

All Floor Layers Containers:

- "In all floor layer containers, cauliflower is frozen approximately 1 to 3 inches from sides and/or ends exposed to floor racks, side and end walls."

- "In all floor layer containers, cauliflower is frozen into containers approximately 1 to 4 inch from portion of containers exposed to side and end walls."

All Exposed Containers:

- "In all containers in contact with floor racks, and side and end walls, cauliflower is frozen from approximately 1 to 3 inches into containers from exposed portions. In addition, all top layer containers have heads in contact with tops frozen approximately 1 to 2 inches deep, and located so as to indicate that freezing occurred in car."

If possible, show the exact number of containers affected, but do not guess or try to do this unless you can be sure you are correct, e.g.,:

- "In # crates adjacent floor racks, and side and end walls, cauliflower is frozen approximately 1 to 2 inches into container from end portion of container."

If you cannot give the exact number of containers affected or accurately approximate the total, state the location of the containers in the carrier and how far the freezing extends.

If the shipment is inspected in the carrier and the location of the packages, frozen stock, or freezing injury in the containers clearly indicates that the freezing occurred in the carrier, state it on the certificate.

If you find specimens with freezing injury scattered throughout the load and/or containers but not where freezing would naturally occur, report the percentage of freezing in the average defect column on the SC-300 with a statement in the "Other" section of the certificate describing the injury and the location(s). This occurs when there is a sporadic pattern or no pattern at all. This is the only time you can report freezing in percentages. In these cases, if you are not sure that this injury is freezing, simply score and describe the defect as any other defect based on the normal definitions of injury, damage, or serious damage (e.g., soft, internal discoloration, or wet breakdown in potatoes).

Do not report freezing as having occurred in the carrier after the products have been unloaded unless you are certain that is where it took place. You can report having witnessed the product being unloaded off the trailer or railcar. Report if the applicant's staff unloads the product from the trailer for inspection in the "Remarks" section of the certificate:

- "Applicant's labor made load accessible for inspection."

If the inspection on a pier or in a warehouse shows a definite pattern to the freezing injury, you can describe the injury as:

- "So located as to indicate that the injury (or freezing) occurred after packing, but not in present location."

For some commodities, such as sacks of potatoes, onions, and cabbage, damage is found in various locations in the carrier that indicates that the freezing occurred before the products were placed in the carrier. If the freezing is confined to the sides, tops, or ends of some packages in the shipment, but the appearance of the packages does not indicate where they were located in the car or trailer, do not reference the probability that the freezing occurred in the carrier. Under these circumstances, the statement should read:

- "So located in the packages as to indicate the freezing occurred after packing."

If you cannot determine where or when the freezing occurred, accurately describe the location and nature of the freezing or freezing injury but do not try to show where or when it occurred.

Chilling Injury

Chilling injury, another condition related to cold temperatures, often affects tropical fruit or vegetables such as bananas, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, pineapples, and avocados. Chilling injury results from temperatures that do not freeze the product but are too cold for proper metabolism or maturation of the product. Refer to individual commodity inspection instructions

and/or publications on Market Diseases of Fruits Vegetables for symptoms of chilling injury as it relates to individual commodities.

If you positively identify a defect as chilling injury and it is apparent from the location and pattern of the injury that it occurred after packing, describe the symptoms of the injury that indicate it is chilling injury. Then show the extent of the injury in the load, the extent of the injury in the containers, the location of the injury in the containers and the load, and include a statement indicating where the injury occurred.

Examples:

- Bananas in trailer:

  "In most floor layer cartons, in all top layer cartons, and in some cartons in second layer from top, some to many fingers per cartons are affected by chilling injury, vascular bundles being gray to brown upon peeling of epidermis and exuding little or no juice upon breaking of fruit, and so located as to indicate chilling occurred in trailer."

- Bananas unloaded on pallets:

  "In many cartons scattered throughout pallets and lot, some to many fingers upon breaking, fruit shows comparatively dry skins with brown discoloration of vascular bundles and no exudation of juice which is characteristic of chilling injury and so located to indicate chilling injury occurred after packing, but not in present location."

Net Weight

If an applicant requests an inspection restricted to Net Weight only, advise the applicant that if the results reveal that the average net weight is below the marked net weight on the packages, or if reasonable shortage is exceeded, you will notify PACA as the lot will be considered misbranded. You must show the type and name of scale to be used, the graduation of the scale (e.g., 1/2 ounce, ounce, 1/4 pound, pound, or digital graduation), and the owner of the scale (government or applicant) on the notesheet. Always use check weights to verify the accuracy of the scale. Before you begin the inspection, verify the scale shows zero with no containers on the scale.

<u>Weighing Procedures</u>

If the applicant asks you to certify a specified or marked weight, use the following procedures for both stationary lot sampling and in-line sampling. Read these instructions in their entirety before beginning the process:

A. Normally, emptying five containers of their contents is sufficient to determine the average tare weight of the containers. Empty more than 5 if you find wide variations in tares. Empty containers with pack ice and weigh only the product to determine net weight. Include both the container and pack ice weights to determine tare.

B. Disregard the lot size.

C. Stationary lots: randomly select 36 sample units.
In-line lots: select sample units at timed intervals.

Weight at least 36 sample units for any lot, including when certification is based on a day's run. Weigh all containers in lots consisting of fewer than 36 packages.

D. If a scale reading is between two graduations marks on dial or spring-type scales, read to the nearest graduation mark.

E. Weigh and record each sample unit to the nearest: 1/2 (.50) ounce for containers packed to a marked or specified weight of less than 10 pounds; and, 1/4 (.25) pound for containers packed to a marked or specified weight of 10 pounds and more.

Determine an Exact Average (to 100ths)

After weighing all sample units, the exact average net weight must meet the weight marked on the container or any weight specified by applicant. No individual sample unit can weigh less than the appropriate reasonable shortage limit specified in Table I.

Reporting Procedures

You must report certain results, including:

- The range and average net weight,
- The percentage below marked or specified net weight,
- The percentage below reasonable shortage limit, and
- A statement about the lot meeting or failing to meet marked or specified weight.

Report all lots using the Imperial unit of measure for average tare weight, reasonable shortage limit, and average weight. Report any container markings in either Imperial or Metric.
If lots are certified as failing to meet the requirements of average weight marked or specified, or reasonable shortage limit in individual sample units, make sure the certificate shows under the "Other" section: the average tare; reasonable shortage limit; range in weights; exact average; and, if failing account of reasonable shortage limit in individual samples, the percent of sample units failing to meet the reasonable shortage limit.

Examples:

- 2 lb. package (Fails average weight)
  "Average tare 4 ounces. Reasonable shortage limit: 30.00 ounces net. Range 30.50 to 33.50, average 31.52 ounces net."

- 1 lb. package (Exceeds reasonable shortage limit)
  "Average tare 5 ounces. Reasonable shortage limit: 14.50 ounces net. Range 14.00 to 16.50, average 16.38 ounces with 9 percent of sample units below 14.50 ounces net."

Lots Meeting Average Weight and Reasonable Shortage Limit

If you certify that lots meet the requirements of average weight marked or specified and reasonable shortage limit in individual sample units, the certificate must show that information in the "Other" section.

Examples:

- "Average tare 4 ounces. Reasonable shortage limit: 30.00 ounces net. Ranges 30.50 to 33.50, averaging more than 32 ounces net."

- "Average tare 1.50 ounces. Reasonable shortage limit: 14.00 ounces net. Ranges 16.50 to 19.50, averaging more than 16 ounces net."

The actual weight certification will appear under the "Grade" heading on the inspection certificate:

Examples:

- "Meets marked weight."

- "Fails to meet marked weight account of sample units average below marked weight."

- "Fails to meet marked weight account of unreasonable shortage in many sample units."

If the applicant requests net weight, include the following statement in "Remarks":

- "Net weight determined and reported at applicant's request."

If the weight marked on the containers and your results indicate a misbranding violation, report the number of containers below marked weight to PACA.

Example:

- Packages marked "25 lbs. Net wt." Average tare: 2.50 pounds. Reasonable shortage limit: 24.00 pound net. Ranges 22.25 to 26.50, averaging 23.75 pounds per carton with 68% of sample units below marked weight and including 36% of sample units below reasonable shortage limit.

Shippers in several states request certification of net or standard weight (e.g., Florida tomatoes). For any lots that fail to meet marked weight, check with the appropriate SCI Division office to verify if the lot was certified for weight at origin.

The regular spring balance scales furnished to inspectors are not sensitive enough to weigh to the nearest 1/2 ounce. If you are asked to report weights of small packages, use a more sensitive scale. The Supply Depot has scales in stock that will weigh small packages with accuracy. Prepackers and chain stores that pack small packages usually have scales sensitive enough to weigh accurately to the nearest 1/2 ounce. Use check weights to verify the accuracy of the scale.

TABLE I

Reasonable Shortage Limits[1]

Marked or Specified Net Weight[2]	**No Individual Container May Weigh Less Than**
Pounds	Grams Pounds & Ounces
0.50	190.8 ------ 6.50 oz.
1.00	405.6 ------ 14.50 oz.
2.00	859.2 1 lb. 14.00 oz.
3.00	1288.8 2 lbs. 13.50 oz.
4.00	1718.4 3 lbs. 12.50 oz.
5.00	2148.0 4 lbs. 11.50 oz.
8.00	------ 7 lbs. 10.00 oz.
10.00	------ 9 lbs. 8.00 oz.
15.00	------ 14 lbs. 8.00 oz.
20.00	------ 19 lbs. 4.00 oz.
25.00	------ 24 lbs. ------
50.00	------ 48 lbs. ------
100.00	------ 96 lbs. ------

[1] When certifying packages less than 10 pounds and <u>not</u> specifically listed in the table, do not apply a reasonable shortage limit. Lot will fail to meet marked or specified net weight only if the sample units average below the marked or specified weight.

[2] When certifying marked or specified net weight for containers over 10 pounds that are not specifically listed in Table I, no individual sample container may be more than 4 percent below the marked or specified net weight.

Certifying Weight of Products in Bulk Bins

Report only net weight, not gross weight. Bulk bins are exempt from the net weight only restriction. Report gross weight for products in bulk bins only if appropriate scales are available.

Precheck scales for accuracy using an approved standard test weight prior to certification. Division check weights are insufficient for checking the accuracy of scales capable of weighing bulk bins. The applicant's scales are considered prechecked if local weights and measures officials (state, county, or city officials with equipment capable of checking such scales) check the scales and verify their accuracy immediately prior to the weighing in the presence of the inspector. Scales with seals previously applied by weights and measures bureaus under local laws are not considered "prechecked for accuracy."

Weigh all of the bins in the lot, load, or portion of lot remaining, regardless of the lot size, and report the range and average gross weight in the "Other" section. Do not attempt to determine or report a tare weight by weighing a few empty bins; the weights of bins vary too much for accurate certification. On the notesheet, show the type, graduations, and owner of the scale.

If you cannot carry out the above procedure, you may, at applicant's request and expense, accompany the load to a Certified Public Scale, and witness and record the scale readings on our certificate for the gross weight of the load and/or the empty weight of the truck or trailer.

Exceptions to the above procedure may be granted on a case-by-case basis from HQ Inspection Operations or other senior level management as designated.

No Established U.S. Grade (NOG)

If no grade has been established for a product, accurately describe the extent to which an individual specimen is affected to present a clear picture of the product. Do not use the terms injury, damage, serious damage and very serious damage in this instance. Do not use descriptive terms such as materially or seriously affecting appearance, as these are used in the general definitions of damage and serious damage for commodities with established grade standards. Describe the objectionable factors in other terms, such as color, area affected, and depth.

Examples:

- Lychee nuts: "Discoloration is dark brown to black affecting 25% to entire surface area."
- Chayote: "Firm. Discoloration is tan to brown affecting from 25% to 50% of surface area."

Pressure Testing

Applicants may request a pressure test for a more accurate description of the maturity/softness of a specific fruit. Use the following equipment and procedures for any commodity that does not have an established procedure in the U.S. standards or inspection instructions, such as kiwifruit.

Equipment

- Approved pressure tester (available from SCI Division Equipment/Supply Depot)
- Sharp knife

Procedure

A. Apples are generally tested with a 7/16 inch (11 mm) plunger tip. Pears, stone and other fruit are generally tested with a 5/16 inch (8 mm) plunger tip.

B. Samples containing more than 20 fruit, select 5 random specimens from each sample.

   1. Samples containing less than 20 fruit, select 2 random specimens from each sample.

C. Remove a 1/2 to 3/4 inch diameter disc of the skin from opposite sides of the fruit at the equatorial axis.

D. Place the fruit on a flat surface.

E. Reset the tester and place the plunger against the exposed flesh and press with increasing pressure until the plunger tip has penetrated into the fruit up to the groove around the plunger tip. A slow straight penetration of the plunger is essential. Sharp movements and sudden pressure may impair the readings.

F. Repeat the test on the opposite side of the fruit, but not on an area that has had pressure from the flat surface. Record the readings from both sides of each fruit.

Remarks on the Certificate

Upon completing the inspection, note on the notesheet and under “Remarks” on the certificate:

- “Pressure testing was determined on a total of _____ specimens, with each specimen tested on opposite sides of the equatorial axis with a ___ inch (____mm) plunger and reported at applicant’s request.”

Additionally, report the pressure test range on the notesheet and certificate. If the range is greater than 3 pounds, add a “mostly” statement.

Example:

- “Pressure test range 6 to 11, mostly 8 to 9 pounds.”

Soluble Solids (Brix)

Use the following equipment and procedures for any commodity that does not have an established procedure in the U.S. standards or inspection instructions. Products such as cantaloupes, table grapes, and watermelons have specific guidelines and instructions in determining soluble solids in their respective commodity inspection instructions.

Equipment

Use the following items to properly determine soluble solids. Thoroughly clean and dry all equipment before using.

- Approved refractometer (available from SCI Division Equipment/Supply Depot)
- Sharp knife
- Garlic press (available from SCI Division Equipment/Supply Depot)
- Cup or bowl
- Plastic spoons
- Distilled water
- Cheesecloth or soft cotton towel

Procedure

Prepare the refractometer and make sure it reads “0.”

Randomly select two specimens from each sample inspected.

For large specimens, use the knife to remove a uniform size V cut piece or plug from each specimen that extends to the pit, core, or center of each specimen. Remove any skin and/or flesh in contact with any pit (no more than 1/8 inch), and, if necessary, slice the piece or plug into small pieces to be squeezed. For small specimens that will fit into a press (e.g., berries), squeeze the intact specimen.

Use the garlic press to squeeze the juice from each piece or plug into the cup, making a composite sample.

Scoop out a small amount of juice and place on the refractometer lens. Close the cover and record the reading on the notesheet.

Remarks on the Certificate

Upon completing the inspection, include the following on the notesheet and under “Remarks” on the certificate:

- “Soluble solids were determined with a refractometer. A total of ___specimens were tested and reported at applicant’s request.”

Digital Imaging

SCI offers digital imaging as an additional terminal market inspection service. Any financially interested party can request digital images of fresh fruits and vegetables depicting the appearance of produce, defects, shifted loads, brands and container markings, and the condition of the containers.

When applicants request this optional service, they receive the processed images via email along with an issued FEIRS FV-E300 or FV-E301 certificate. Any financially interested party in possession of the issued FV-E300 or FV-E301 can also access the digital images via https://fpbinspections.ams.usda.gov/. Images will not be available on this website until a minimum of 24 hours after the completion of the inspection and only for a period of 90 days. Digital images are password protected to prevent one industry participant from obtaining access to the images of another industry participant's products.

The applicant shall be cautioned when using this service for color critical elements. The USDA reserves the right to decide whether the images are a good representation of the factors in question. USDA also reserves the right to make a statement on certificates in connection with the images that the colors may be inaccurate due to the quality of the monitor or software used to view the images. Based on the quality of the images, USDA may decide not to process the images. If the images are not processed, no additional fee will be added to the inspection and the applicant will be notified.

Equipment

Inspectors in each terminal market location are equipped with or have access to a USDA issued capture device. These devices include: digital cameras, mobile telecom devices (cell phones or iPhones) or tablets/laptops. Any of these USDA issued devices may be used to process digital images. The use of personal devices to process digital images is not authorized. Current image technology within USDA issued devices provide enough image quality to process images that meet or exceed resolution requirements for web posting, no additional calibration is necessary. Filters of any kind are not to be used. Use of integrated flash is also not recommended for close-up images as often this will create a “flash-back” and overexpose the subject which distorts the image clarity.

Benefits

Because digital images are attachments to issued USDA FV-E300 and FV-E301 certificates they become certified prima facie visual evidence and can be used in dispute resolution involving the

Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA). Digital images also assist produce growers, shippers, brokers, buyers, and distributors in making better business decisions and assist all parties involved in settling disputes. Digital images assist in quality control, product procurement, and marketing efforts and increase the value of our traditional inspection services.

Requests for Digital Imaging

An applicant may request digital imaging in conjunction with an inspection or may request only digital imaging. If digital imaging is provided in conjunction with an inspection, it is typically reported on the FV-E300 Fresh Electronic Inspection Reporting/Resource System (FEIRS) Market Inspection Certificate. All processed digital images, whether they are used or not, remain the property of the USDA. Requests for digital imaging shall be reported on the SC-237 Request for Inspection.

Capturing Images

Although the applicant typically states the factors to be illustrated, inspectors must take enough images to clearly illustrate the severity of the factors involved. The inspector is responsible for selecting specimens that accurately portray the factors requested or identified during the inspection. Additional images should be taken that show the brand(s) and/or marks and that show the general placement of the lot in the conveyance. A minimum of six to ten images per application shall be taken. Additional images may be taken at camera angles and focal lengths to ensure that good selections of images are available.

Separate images should be made for each defect when the average percentage of an individual defect in the lot exceeds 5%. All defects, which individually average less than 5%, may be combined in one or more images. Although the severity of the defect is not stated in the image caption, a range in severity (least affected to most affected, as found in the inspection samples) of the defect should be shown in the image.

The following images will be included with all digital imaging requests:

- Image of the conveyance
- Image of the pallets
- Image of cartons
- PLI
- Defects
- Unusual situations (shifts, damaged or wet containers, etc.)

Digital Images must clearly show the damage to the product or container and must also show product identification such as lot numbers, container labels or truck tags to identify the ownership of the product. Inspectors are also encouraged to take a enough variation of images at different camera angles and focal lengths to ensure that good selections of images are available prior to processing.

Images that show defective specimens must also show product identification and ownership. To show ownership, include a variety of images that show the container markings and the carrier number, if available.

Image Background

Prior to taking an image, choose a neutral background or one that is uniformly contrasting. Light colored cardboard lids, or a white legal pad are often used and are readily available. Do not place the specimen on backgrounds of varying colors and avoid backgrounds of the same color spectrum as the specimen (i.e. yellow legal pad for lemons).

Image Lighting

Prior to taking the image, check to see how much ambient light is available. Natural light provides the most realistic colors and should be used whenever possible. Use of flash will illuminate the specimen but may not produce the best shot. If possible, avoid using the flash as it tends to "wash out" color and texture.

Image Staging

Be aware of what the camera sees, not what you see. Carefully notice what the specimen looks like from the camera's perspective and then "stage" or set up the specimen for the shot. To capture the best angle for the defect, use small props (cardboard, foam, wood, etc.) to help position the specimen (props should not be visible in the shot).

For dense objects like potatoes, onions, and apples use a knife to cut a flat spot on the specimen to assist in positioning for a better image. Practice this technique to avoid destruction of a good defective specimen. Another staging technique that works well (if it is the right commodity) is to flatten an area on the specimen so it is positioned for a good image.

Skin Glare

Commodities with shiny surfaces (tomatoes, peppers, apples, citrus, etc.) are difficult to capture due to skin glare. Using a flash will compound this problem. Experiment with ambient light and camera positions to find the best angle to take the image. Additionally, specimens with texture or contours are very difficult to accurately capture. Different light intensities will achieve different results. Slightly less light, in some instances, may produce an image that is more defined.

Image Framing

When focusing, fill the frame as much as possible with the specimen. Keep the visible background to a minimum. Unless the desired image is a close-up of a defect or specific area of the specimen, the entire specimen should be visible. Experiment with different camera positions, horizontal and vertical, to achieve a full frame. Additionally, become familiar with zoom and macro features of the capture device.

Keeping the capture device steady can help to produce higher quality images. If you have difficulty holding it steady throughout the shot(s), prop the device on a solid object. If produce boxes or pallets are used to prop take additional precautions to prevent the device from being dropped or damaged.

Processing

If digital imaging is provided in conjunction with an inspection, it is typically reported on a FEIRS FV-E300 certificate and images are attached. If only digital imaging is requested, it will be reported and attached on a FEIRS FV-E301. Utilizing FEIRS is the only way to process official digital images. Official digital images may be attached to the FEIRS certificate delivery email, but only when they are also included as attachments to the issued certificate.

Processing instructions are located on the FEIRS homepage. While these instructions were designed for use with a stand-alone digital camera, any USDA issued capture device can be used to save the images locally to the FEIRS laptop. This is normally achieved by emailing the images to the users USDA email and downloading to a local folder. Once in a local folder, follow the instructions as listed to attach the selected images to FEIRS.

Image Descriptions

Each image attached to a FEIRS certificate must include a description. Each description must identify the contents of the image. When the image contains pallets or cartons which are not damaged, a simple statement such as "Applicant's pallet," "Applicant's cartons" or "Applicant's cartons with PLI markings" will be adequate. When there is damage to the cartons or shifted pallets, the descriptive statement should include wording to indicate the number of cartons or pallets damaged and a description of the damage.

When the image shows defective specimens found during an inspection, the description should include the name of the defect such as: “Growth cracks” or “Decay.”

When listing defect descriptions, do not identify them as to their severity, simply name the defect. For example, use “skin breakdown,” do not use “damage by skin breakdown.”

Certificate Remarks

Once digital images are attached to a FEIRS FV-E300 or FV-E301 certificate, FEIRS will automatically insert a remark into the Lot Summary stating:

- “There are images associated with this inspection.”

Additional remarks are to be added to the certificate providing a clear statement regarding the nature of the requested service:

- “Digital images taken at applicant's request to show shifting of pallets on conveyance upon inspector arrival.”
- “Digital images taken at applicant's request to show nested decay.”
- "Digital images taken at applicant's request to show wet and leaking cartons.”

Fee

The applicant will be responsible for all digital imaging service fees and will be charged on an hourly basis with a 1-hour minimum.

CERTIFICATE

Care in Recording Data

All notesheets must be legible, and so complete and clear in meaning that any person with knowledge of inspection work could write the certificate from the notesheet. Be sure that all items covered by the certificate are accurately accounted for on the notesheet, that all computations are clearly shown, and that no essential data is missing. Indicate clearly on the notesheet whether weight, volume or count basis is used. If the samples are of irregular size, show the percentages for each sample. This applies to any inspection performed. Check all information carefully before beginning to write the certificate. The notesheet and certificate are prima facie evidence of any inspection.

Preliminary Verbal Reports

If you provide a preliminary verbal report of inspection results, you must record the facts given in case the applicant claims facts other than those shown on the certificate. Only make verbal reports from the notesheet or from the certificate, and never from memory. If you give a verbal report, include remarks on the inspection notesheet showing the name of the person to whom the report was given, and the time and date.

Example:

- "Reported by phone to John Doe, 11:15 A.M., November 25, 2002."

Inspection Certificate

Each certificate has a specific purpose.

- The SC-300, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Certificate, is used to certify all regular commercial receiving point inspections at terminal markets, en route certification and import certifications.

- The SC-301, Certificate of Miscellaneous Inspection Services, is used for miscellaneous type inspections.

- The SC-205, Export Form Certificate, SC-205-1, Export Form Certificate (Under a Documented Quality Assurance System) and FV-205, Memorandum of Inspection for Canadian Destinations, are the only certificates recognized by Canadian Customs Service for certification of compliance with Canadian Import Requirements. The SC-205, Export

Form Certificate, is also used for certification of apples and table grapes to export destinations other than Canada.

The Supply Depot provides each office with certificates that are serially numbered. Issue the certificate books and individual certificates consecutively. Ensure that certificates are properly accounted for before, during, and after issuance. Refer to AIM document Serially Numbered Forms Accountability for the Division's policy on the accountability and security of certificates.

All certificates are hand written and generally issued upon the completion of the inspection. The only exception is if inspectors are using laptop computers with the Fresh Electronic Inspection Reporting/Resource System (FEIRS), in which case the SC-300 is a FV-E300 and the FV-301 is a FV-E301. Refer to Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Certificate (SC-300) Manual and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Certificate (FV-301) Manual for detailed instructions on completing these certificates.

What the Certificate Covers

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, authorizes the certification of "class, quality, quantity, and condition" of agricultural products, including fresh fruits and vegetables.

Grade: Means a class or rank of quality.

Quality: Means the inherent properties of a product that determine its relative degree of excellence. At destination, permanent factors, i.e., those that do not change over time, are considered quality.

Condition: Means the relative degree of soundness or preservation of a product and includes, but is not necessarily limited to, its firmness or stages of ripeness, decay, freezing, shriveling, flabbiness, or any other changeable or progressive factor that may affect its marketability.

Quantity: Means the number or weight of the product and/or containers.

Keep in mind that "Quality and/or Condition" refers to " favorable quality" and "favorable condition" as well as "unfavorable quality" and " unfavorable condition." The certificate must present a clear picture of the facts found during the course of the inspection. All statements must be clear and concise. The reader must never be left in doubt on any point. Give complete information under each heading on the certificate and notesheet. Only statements of facts are permitted on the certificate.

Prima Facie Evidence

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended and Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act of 1930, as amended, both provide that certificates issued by licensed USDA inspectors are prima facie evidence of truth of the statements they contain in all Federal courts. In our case, the term "prima facie evidence" means that our certificates are sufficient legal evidence for the proof of facts certified unless contradicted and overcome by superior evidence. The certificate can be entered into a Federal court as evidence without an inspector necessary to testify to the facts.

Preparation and Distribution of Certificates

The certificates for receiving markets (SC-300 and SC-301) should be written upon completion of the inspection at the inspection site. Refer to the SC-300 Manual and FV-301 Manual for details on completing and distributing these certificates.

Percentages

A. Exact Average Percentages

Make every effort to furnish accurate and exact whole percentages whenever possible, except as noted below. Always report findings exactly as found. Base statements dealing with percentages on the inspection of sufficient samples that are representative of the lot. Report exact whole percentages, except when reporting color classification for fresh tomatoes, when significant deterioration prevents you from obtaining exact weights as in advanced stages of soft rot of potatoes, and when reporting the percentage of number one quality at the request of the applicant and the quality is less than 85%. In these latter cases, report approximate average percentages only.

B. Reporting Ranges

The possibility of encountering irregular conditions necessitates a definite policy on reporting ranges. Report ranges from the lowest percentage (including 0) to the highest percentage. If all samples have the same percentage, report that number twice for the range.

Example:

- If all samples ran 10%, show the range as (10 to 10%).

Report ranges when any lot or container tolerance, including restrictive tolerances, is exceeded, or if any average exceeds 5% (6% or more). Report a range for a specific defect that does not exceed any of the above requirements at the request of the applicant.

Examples:

- Lettuce: 12% tipburn (0 to 34%),
- Oranges: 8% skin breakdown (3 to 15%),
- Northern (Other Than) Onions: 3% wet sunscald (0 to 7%)
- Sweet Peppers: 7% bruising (7 to 7%).

Note: Do not report ranges for bulk loads. Refer to Bulk Loads section for Bulk Loads.

C. Reporting Fractional Percentages

Use fractional percentages only on the certificate to report small amounts of decay or, in the case of peanuts and tree nuts, if exact figures are required. If the average of the scores on the notesheet results in a whole number and a fractional percentage, use the following rules:
If the fractional percentage is 0.49% or less, round the percentage down to the next lower whole number, except when reporting decay or soft rot.

Example:

- Report 1.49% as 1% and 10.37% as 10%.

If the fractional percentage is 0.50% or more, round the percentage to the next higher whole number, except when reporting decay or soft rot.

Example:

- Report 1.53% as 2% and 10.68% as 11%.

Note: See section on Decay for reporting fractional percentages for decay and soft rot.

For additional examples, refer to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Certificate (SC 300) Manual and/or individual commodity inspection instructions.

D. Use of the Terms Defects "Well Within Tolerance," "Within Tolerance," and "Average Within Tolerance."

The terms defects "well within tolerance," "within tolerance," or "average within tolerance" are used more frequently when issuing paper SC-205, SC-300, and SC-301 certificates. FEIRS will not automatically use these terms, although they can be added during the inspection. You may use these terms so long as no condition defects can be combined with permanent defects to cause the lot to be out of grade.

1. "Defects well within tolerance" means that no container exceeds the tolerance for total defects, serious defects, decay, or any other factor for which a specific tolerance is provided, and the average of total defects in the lot does not exceed one-half of the respective tolerance.

2. "Defects within tolerance" means the average of total defects does not exceed the lot tolerance and no container contains defects in excess of the lot tolerance.

3. "Defects average within tolerance" means the average of total defects does not exceed the lot tolerance, there are samples that exceed the lot tolerance, but none of the samples exceed the container tolerances.

For multiple lots in which one or more lots is well within tolerance while others are within tolerance, show:

- "Each Lot: Grade defects within tolerance."

Reporting Grade

Use this heading to report whether the inspected lot meets the grade requirements, other specifications on which the inspection was based, and/or the grade marked on the containers.

A. Grade Statements

Report lots that are out of grade due to permanent grade (quality) factors under the "Grade" heading on the certificate as:

- "Fails to Grade (grade applied) account Quality or Size when size is part of grade."

This applies even if the lot contains condition defects that are also in excess of the tolerance. Do not mention condition factors under the "Grade" heading when the lot is out of grade due to permanent quality defects or size when size is part of grade.

Report lots in which permanent quality factors are within the tolerance but one or more condition factors are found to cause the lot to exceed the lot tolerance under the "Grade" heading as:

- "Fails to Grade (grade applied) account Condition."

Exception: The apple and pear standards require that defects or factors that may have developed after storage or in transit be considered as affecting "condition" not "grade." In those cases, under "Grade" state:

- "U.S. (Fancy, No. 1, etc.), decay being a factor of condition."

If there are no grades for the product and you did a quality and condition inspection, state the following under the "Grade" heading:

- "No established U.S. Grade"

Report lots that are out of grade only because one or more samples exceed the container or sample tolerance under the "Grade" heading as:

- "Fails to Grade U.S. (Fancy, No. 1, etc.) account condition in (e.g., few, some, etc.) samples."

B. Certification under Other than Official Grade Standards

1. Contract specifications: A number of shippers, including private firms and cooperatives, have established standards and/or grades that vary somewhat from those officially published by Federal or State Departments. These entities may request certification in accordance with their own standards/grades. You may certify on the basis of such unofficial standards if they have been printed in such definite form so that their requirements are absolutely clear.

2. State Grades: Many states have their own grade standards for specific commodities. Apply state grades when these grades are marked on the container or requested by the applicant. Each office should have state grade standards available. If a state grade is not available, call your supervisor for further guidance.

C. Lots Meeting a Higher Grade than Marked

All inspections are based on the U.S.No.1 grade unless containers are marked to a different grade or the applicant requests that the inspection be based on something other than a U.S. No.1. Sometimes, inspection results will indicate that the lot would make a higher grade, e.g., U.S. Fancy instead of U.S. No. 1. In such cases, you may certify the higher grade at applicant's request so long as the notesheets verify the product was inspected according to the higher grade standards and tolerances.

D. Special Grade Designations

Descriptive words such as Table grapes; Bermuda-Granex-Grano onions; and, Red, Yellow, Orange or Mixed color sweet peppers are part of the grade name in addition to the grade designations, e.g., U.S. No. 1 or U.S. Fancy. Never omit these special grade designations if they apply.

Examples:

- "U.S. No. 1 Table,"
- "U.S. No. 1 Red"
- "U.S. No. 1 Bermuda-Granex-Grano."

Review the applicable standards to verify any designations that should be used in conjunction with the grade statement.

E. Total All Grade and Condition Defects for Individual Samples

While permanent grade (quality) defects plus condition factors may average within the grade tolerance, the lot may be out of grade because individual containers or samples

exceed the container or sample tolerance. Total all quality and condition defects for each individual sample to ensure that the grade is certified correctly. If the total for any container exceeds the percentage permitted by the grade, you cannot certify the lot as being in grade. In such cases, report the grade:

- "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1 account (quality or condition or size when size is part of grade) in (few, some, ect.) samples."

F. Reporting Commercial and Combination Grades

Report the lot as grading U.S. Commercial or U.S. Combination without any further reference to the percentage of U.S. No. 1 quality, except if the applicant requests (via SC-237) the percentage of U.S. No. 1 quality in a Commercial or Combination grade.

G. Determining the Percentage of U.S. No. 1 Quality at Applicant's Request

Determine the percentage of U.S. No. 1 Quality by subtracting from 100 the total percentages of offsize (if size is part of grade), quality, and condition defects, and the percentage of certain defects covered under additional tolerances for certain commodities, such as discoloration in Florida citrus or peelers in Northern onions. If the percentage of No. 1 quality is 85% or more, report the actual percentage. If the percentage is less than 85%, round to the nearest 5% and qualify with the word "Approximately." For example, report 87% or 92% as such. Report 82% or 79% as "Approximately 80% U.S. No. 1 Quality."

Note: If size is not a factor of grade, such as in apples or peaches, disregard undersize in figuring the percentage of quality of a specific grade, except when a size is specified and certified in connection with a percentage of U.S. No. 1 quality. Do not certify percentage of U.S. No. 1 quality if the lot is out of grade account of general appearance factors.

H. Grade Statement Examples

- "U.S. No. 1"
- "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1 account Quality."
- "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1 account Size."
- "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1 account Condition."
- "Washington Extra Fancy, bruising being a factor of condition."
- "U.S. No. 1 but fails to meet requirements of Standard Pack account irregular sizing."

- "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1 account quality, now approximately 80% U.S. No. 1 Quality."
- "U.S. Combination."
- "U.S. No 1 but fails to meet Top Tater requirements account slightly dirty potatoes."
- "U.S. No. 1. Fails to meet marked size."
- "Fails to grade U.S. No. 1 account condition, now contains approximately 65% U.S. No. 1 Quality."
- "No established U.S. grade." Note: Only use this statement if a quality and condition inspection is performed.

Certificates Review Prior to Issuance

Carefully review certificates before signing and issuing. All information on the certificate must be correct, especially the carrier number and lot numbers because a certificate is inadmissible in court if these numbers are incorrect. Never make erasures or corrections on vital areas such as carrier number and initials, time and date, name of applicant or shipper, grade statements, and percentages of defects, or size. Make any corrections to non-vital areas by drawing a single line through the error, initialing it, and writing in the correct information.

Releasing the Certificate

You may communicate the results of the inspection to parties who are financially interested prior to delivery of the certificate. Prior to the inspection, supervisors will notify inspectors if payment of an inspection fee is required before distributing certificates. If immediate payment is required, do not issue certificates until the applicant has paid for services rendered. NEVER accept cash for payment. Federal applicants can contact the USDA service center to have a credit card processed for payment, or they can provide a check payable to USDA. Federal-State licensees should contact their respective Federal-State inspection offices for payment procedures, these procedures cannot include cash payments. Report transaction numbers, check numbers, and payment amounts under "Remarks."

For information about voiding, correcting, filing, distributing, and issuing corrected certificates, refer to the SCI Field Supervisor Manual and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Certificate (SC-300) Manual.

Shipper Copies

A copy of the certificate is to be provided to the listed shipper upon completion. Certificate copies will be provided by the certifying inspector or designated administrative support personnel via email or fax within 24 hours of completion of the certificate. Providing shippers a

copy of the certificate reinforces inspection program integrity by deterring certificate tampering. This ensures that both shippers and receivers have accurate information on which to settle claims involving shipments of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Email addresses and fax numbers of shippers with FEIRS account numbers can be found on the SCI National Shippers Contact List. Other commonly listed shippers can be found on the PACA National Shippers Contact List or via a local copy of Blue Book Services, Inc., "The Blue Book" directory. Both lists are available on the SCI HQ Inspection Operations SharePoint site for Federal employees or via a Federal Program Manager for Federal-State employees. The SCI Document Control Team updates the SCI National Shippers Contact List when alerted to new or updated information; PACA updates its list annually. When either is updated, notification is sent to employees along with a reminder to use only the most current list. The current SCI National Shippers Contact List will have the date of the latest update in the upper right hand corner. Lists from earlier dates are NOT current and are not to be used. Employees may save lists locally to their laptop or desktop computer but will need to delete the previous version and save each current list as updated notifications are received.

Occasionally, employees may receive requests directly from shippers to update or create new contacts on these lists. Updates or new contacts received will be forwarded to the SCI Document Control Team at SCIDocumentControl@ams.usda.gov to help ensure lists remain current and useful.

FEES

The phrases Terminal Market, Receiving Market, and Destination Market are used interchangeably. The following guidance is being issued to further set Division policy regarding Terminal Market Inspection (TMI) fees and explains how services are to be charged.

As referenced in 7 CFR Part 51 – Fresh Fruits, Vegetables and Other Products (Inspection, Certification, and Standards) Subpart A-Regulations; §§51.37 - 51.44, Schedule of Fees and Charges at Destination Markets, Appendix II-Schedule of User Fees can be used for referencing fresh fruit and vegetable fees.

Determining Lot Quantities

When fees are calculated on a lot basis, use Appendix IV "Table of Carlot Equivalents" to determine whether the quantity of product requested for inspection represents "over half a lot" or "equal to or less than half a lot." For container sizes not listed in the table, determine the number of packages in a full lot by dividing the weight per trailer load by the weight of the package. Divide this result by two to determine the number of packages in a half lot. Product unloaded directly from the same over the road, land or air transportation shall not be charged more than a carlot fee for a single lot of the same product when it is determined that it exceeds a carlot equivalent.

Lot Quantities of 50 Packages or Less

Quality and condition and condition only inspections for lots of 50 Packages or less will be charged the same rate as Quality and Condition or Condition Only Inspections for Additional Lots of the Same Product as listed in Appendix II-Schedule of User Fees.

Bulk Bins

For product in bulk bins, determine the number of packages by dividing the net weight of the product in the bulk bin by the net weight of the package most typically used for that product. Then multiply that figure times the number of bulk bins to determine if the lot is "over half a lot" or "equal to or less than half a lot."

Weight, Freezing, Count, Size, or Temperature Inspections

Fees for weight, freezing, count, size, or temperature inspections are charged as follows:

- Weight only - Hourly Based Inspection Services rate with a 2-hour minimum;
- Weight in combination with quality and/or condition - lot fee plus one Hourly Based Inspection Services hour;
- Freezing, count, size, or temperature only - Hourly Based Inspection Services rate with ½ hour minimum;
- Freezing in combination with quality and/or condition - lot fee;
- Count or size with condition only - quality and condition lot fee.

All inspections that are restricted to an individual factor(s), other than condition only, must be billed on a lot basis based on the type of factor(s) being inspected, e.g. quality and/or condition.

Dockside Inspections

Dockside inspections of an individual product unloaded directly from the same ship will be charged according to the package weight dependent on if the packages weigh less than 30 pounds or if they weigh 30 pounds or more. Minimum charge per individual product will be at the Minimum Charge per Individual Product for Dockside Inspection rate. A minimum charge for each additional lot of the same product will be at the Dockside Inspections for Additional Lots of the Same Product rate.

When performing inspections of products in sea containers unloaded directly from sea transportation, or when palletized products unloaded directly from sea transportation are not offered for inspection at dockside, lot fees apply. However, when palletized products are offered for inspection at dockside but the inspection service and the applicant, for reasons of efficiency or to facilitate the inspection process, agree to inspect the product(s) at another location, the package fee for dockside inspections will apply.

Contract Inspections

Under a contract basis inspection services are provided on a commitment basis where an on-duty inspector is provided for a predetermined time period, normally forty hours per work week and charged at the Hourly Based Inspection Services rate. Contract basis consists of a written and approved service agreement between Specialty Crops Inspection Division (SCI) and an applicant. For additional inspectors requested to provide additional inspection work at a contract site, the normal lot rate must be charged.

See AIM Contracts and Agreements with Industry policy for further guidance

Inspection for Products under Canadian Import Requirements

When an SC-205 is requested for product on which an unrestricted inspection has been previously performed that proved the product met Canadian Import Requirements, and that certificate is still valid as per established time frames, a subsequent inspection is not required and the fee for issuing the SC-205 must be charged on an Hourly Based Inspection Services basis with a ½ hour minimum. In these instances the original certificate is referenced on the SC-205. For lots not previously inspected or where the timeframe for the certificate has expired, detailed notesheets are required and fees must be based on the lot equivalency rate for Quality and Condition. This same policy applies to the issuance of export forms of apples and table grapes.

All Other Types of Inspections Performed

For all other types of inspections (i.e., product certification for Department of Defense contractors, State institutions, and tree nut inspections; etc.), the fees must be based on the time spent on-site performing the inspection and must be charged on an Hourly Based Inspection Services basis with a ½ hour minimum for work performed during the grader's regularly scheduled work week.

Premium Time (Overtime)

Lot or Packaged Based Inspections

In addition to the lot or package based inspection service fee, charge the Premium Time (Overtime) for Lot or Packaged Inspection Based rate as listed in Appendix II-Schedule of User Fees, when this service type is performed outside the employee’s normal tour of duty hours. This rate is ½ the Hourly Based Inspection Services rate, rounded up to the nearest whole dollar. Charge in ¼ hour increments, rounded up to the nearest ¼ hour.

Hourly Based Inspections

In addition to the hourly based inspection service fee (i.e. under an hourly contract, net weight, temperature only, etc.), charge the Premium Time (Overtime) Hourly Inspection Based rate as listed in Appendix II-Schedule of User Fees, when this service type is performed outside the employee’s normal tour of duty hours. Charge in ¼ hour increments, rounded up to the nearest ¼ hour.

Premium Time (Federal Holiday)

Lot or Packaged Based Inspections

In addition to the lot or package based inspection service fee, charge the Premium Time (Holiday) for Lot or Packaged Inspection Based rate as listed in Appendix II-Schedule of User Fees, when this service type is performed by a Federal employee during normal tour of duty hours on a Federal Holiday. Charge the regular overtime rate for hours before or after the normal tour of duty hours. This rate is ½ the Hourly Based Inspection Services rate, rounded to the nearest whole dollar. Charge in ¼ hour increments, rounded up to the nearest ¼ hour.

Hourly Based Inspections

A. Within Normal Tour of Duty

In addition to the hourly based inspection service fee (i.e. under an hourly contract, net weight, temperature only, etc.), charge the Premium Time (Holiday) Hourly Inspection Based Within Normal Tour of Duty rate as listed in Appendix II-Schedule of User Fees, when this service type is performed by a Federal employee on a Federal Holiday within the employee's normal tour of duty hours. Charge in ¼ hour increments, rounded up to the nearest ¼ hour.

B. Outside Normal Tour of Duty

In addition to the hourly based inspection service fee (i.e. under an hourly contract, net weight, temperature only, etc.), charge the Premium Time (Holiday) Hourly Inspection Based Outside Normal Tour of Duty rate as listed in Appendix II-Schedule of User Fees, when this service type is performed by a Federal employee on a Federal Holiday outside of the employee's normal tour of duty hours. Charge in ¼ hour increments, rounded up to the nearest ¼ hour.

Request for Additional Certificate Copies

Requests for additional certificate copies of an occasional nature are provided free as part of good customer service and in promotion of our services. However, when requests involve a significant number of certificates, occur frequently, or involve considerable administrative resources the time spent completing the request must be charged on an Hourly Based Inspection Services basis with a ½ hour minimum.

Waiting Time Charges

A charge for waiting time must be made at the hourly rate (rounded to the nearest half hour) in addition to the lot, package, or hourly fees when an inspection is delayed because the product is not available or not readily accessible. When waiting time is charged state under "Remarks" on the certificate that the fee includes a charge for waiting time.

Travel Charges

A charge for travel expenses must be applied in addition to the lot, package, or hourly fees in accordance with approved Division guidance. These fees may include; airfare, mileage, tolls, parking fees and travel time. Guidance for charging applicants for travel related expenses by Federal and Federal/State terminal market inspection offices, and the procedures to be used in calculating travel charges for typical non-contract service situations can be found within the Terminal Market Travel Charge Policy.

Mixed Loads

When multiple products are inspected and:

- A continuation certificate is needed for product from the same shipper:
    - The fee is determined on a lot basis for each individual product;
    - For hand written certificates: the total fee for all products must be shown on the first certificate only, and draw a line in the fee block on each continued certificate and make a statement in the Remarks section such as "Fees charged on Certificate No. 999999."
    - For FEIRS certificates total fee is shown on the first lot only with "See Page 1" in the fee block on each continued lot on the certificate.
- The applicant requests separate certificates for each shipper and/or product:
    - Separate certificates must be issued for each lot as requested by the applicant;
    - The fee must be determined and reported on each certificate on a lot basis according to the quantity of product on each certificate.

Lots in Excess of a Full Lot (i.e., Railcars or Brake Bulk unloaded from a ship)

When lots are in excess of the standard lot equivalent the following rule should apply:

- Charge only full lot fee until the quantity reaches ¼ more than the standard lot equivalent. For each additional complete ¼ lot, charge an additional ¼ lot fee.
- This rule does not apply for lots loaded or unloaded from a single over the road conveyance when the quantity is in excess of the standard lot equivalency, e.g. 50 foot trailer.

Charges for Restricted Inspections

Restricted inspections are charged on the basis of the quantity certified, regardless of the restriction. When the inspection is specifically requested on a single brand or grade, the charges must be based on the quantity inspected. For example: the trailer contains both Brand X and

Brand Y; however, the applicant required only Brand Y be inspected. The fee is based on the quantity of brand Y only. The notesheet and certificate must show a remark such as; "Restricted to above noted lot only, trailer contains other product not coved by this inspection."

Appeal Inspections

Fees for appeal inspections must be charged as normal except as follows:

- When appeal inspection results reverse the original inspection results, and the same applicant was already charged for the original inspection, no inspection fee will be charged; only applicable travel expenses must be assessed.

- On market inspections that reverse shipping point inspections, the receiver must be charged as normal.

Responsibility for Payment of Fees

The applicant is responsible for payment of all fees and expenses incurred in providing the requested inspection service. Financially interested parties other than the applicant must not be billed by the inspection service. If another financially interested party requests an inspection they must be listed as the applicant before the inspection will be made.

REINSPECTIONS AND APPEALS

New Certificate after Resorting or Reassembling Load

If a lot that was previously certified is reconditioned to remove defects, or change containers, or a new lot has been assembled from other previously certified lots, the original certifications are not valid for the reconditioned lot. When you perform a new inspection, you can cross-reference the new certificate with the original certificate(s) at applicant's request, and state the facts involved (e.g., lot has been reconditioned, repacked into different containers, or assembled from previously certified lots).

Reinspections

A reinspection is any inspection performed on a previously inspected lot. Both certificates are considered valid and as determined by HQ Inspection Operations, the reinspection certificate would be cross referenced with the previously issued certificate.

An applicant may request a second inspection be performed on a previously inspected lot for the following reasons:

- To determine the present condition and secure a certificate showing any deterioration that may have occurred since the first inspection,
- To secure an up-to-date certificate for sales purposes.

Note: If an applicant is dissatisfied with the results or accuracy of an inspection or inspection certificate and requests a reinspection, this is an appeal-not a reinspection-and appeal inspections procedures as outlined below under Appeal Inspections must be followed.

Initially the sampling rate when performing a reinspection is the same as when performing a non-reinspection. Follow the inspection sampling guidance **Number of Samples** under PERFORMING THE INSPECTION section of this manual. When these sampling results are complete and prior to issuing the certificate, contact HQ Inspection Operations for determination of possible further action that may include cross referencing the two certificates or initiating formal appeal procedures.

Dump Inspections

Often a dump inspection is requested on a lot that was previously inspected. If it is determined that a lot requested for a dump inspection was previously inspected, this is considered a reinspection. While still at the inspection site and prior to issuing the dump certificate, contact HQ Inspection Operations once sampling results are complete for determination of possible further action. This may include cross referencing the two certificates or initiating formal appeal procedures.

When performing a *witness* dump (the product is being immediately disposed of a trash compactor/truck there is no inspection, thus there is no reinspection, contact with HQ Inspection Operations will not be necessary.

Lots with PLI Markings

There are times when a reinspection takes place, but not initially requested by the applicant. This case most often involves lots that are Positive Lot Identified (PLI).

The lot would be “positive identified” if PLI marks were on the container. PLI provides the highest degree of assurance that a specific load, or lot, is linked to an official inspection certificate or serially numbered notesheet. PLI marks signify that a lot has been previously inspected and can be identified throughout the marketing chain. When inspecting a lot with PLI you are performing a reinspection.

Since PLI indicates that the product was previously certified, you must determine if the prior certification took place at shipping point or another destination market location. If the certification was made at a shipping point location and your lot being inspected fails to make grade on account of permanent defects, specified size, count, etc. you are in an appeal situation and you should check with your supervisor or contacting HQ Inspection Operations staff for guidance. If you determine that a destination market certificate was issued on a PLI lot, do not report the results of your subsequent reinspection without first checking with your supervisor or contacting HQ Inspection Operations staff for guidance as your inspection may be an appeal inspection.

Marked Carriers

If you see an indication of a previous inspection (e.g., an inspection mark on a carrier/trailer wall) or suspect that the carrier was previously inspected in another market, notify your supervisor at once. The supervisor will call the market office indicated for a copy of the previously issued certificate, showing all details, including restrictions. Depending on certain factors, the inspection at the subsequent market may be treated as an Appeal inspection.

Requesting a Reinspection

Be aware that applicants often use the term "reinspection", when they are really seeking a reversal of the previous inspection results. The distinctions in these cases involve the nature and timing of the request. These would include:

- The applicant states that the previous inspection was inaccurate or states they are dissatisfied with the results.
- The reinspection is requested within a few hours of the previous completed inspection
- The reinspection is requested for the identical purpose as the previous and has the identical number of containers.

Communicate with your supervisor and applicant when encountering these factors as some applicants may wish to request an appeal but are hesitant to use the term.

Appeal Inspections

An appeal inspection is a reinspection that involves a ruling on sustaining or reversing the original inspection. Appeal inspections can be performed by mandate or by request. Appeals are mandated when a lot that has been positive lot identified (PLI'd) at shipping point is running out of grade due to permanent defects, size or count during a destination market inspection. Appeals may be requested when any financially interested party is dissatisfied with the results or accuracy of an inspection or inspection certificate and requests a second inspection be performed.
There are three basic types of appeals:

- Market on Same Market (Boston/Boston),

- Market on a Different Market (Boston/Chicago), and

- Market on Shipping Point (Boston/Immokalee).

Since official inspection certificates are accepted in all U.S. courts as prima facie evidence, it is extremely important that conflicting certificates do not exist on the same lot. In enforcing the PACA, the AMS PACA Division has been involved in cases in which both the plaintiff and defendant produced USDA certificates that had differing grade statements. Often, the conflict in the certificates involves misbranding. In such cases, it is very difficult to settle the claim or prove the product is misbranded unless one of the certificates can be reversed.

Once the grade, quality, condition, size, or weight of a specific lot has been certified, no conflicting certificates should be issued on the lot unless it is apparent that the change was due to age, storage, handling, or other condition factors. If such a change has taken place, the original (previous) certificate is valid as of the date of the first inspection; the later certificate is valid as of the date of the second inspection.

You must determine if a prior certification has been made. An appeal inspection will be in order for any lot that has maintained its identity via PLI or carrier identification number and fails to make grade on account of permanent defects, specified size, count, etc. Inform the applicant of the situation as additional time will be needed to complete the appeal process.

Requesting an Appeal Inspection

Appeals may be requested when any financially interested party is dissatisfied with the results or accuracy of an inspection and requests a second inspection be performed to correct this perceived inaccuracy.

Inspectors must always perform appeal procedures and report results to HQ Inspection Operations whenever an appeal is requested.

The application must be made in accordance with the REQUESTING INSPECTIONS section of this manual and all information must be provided on the application for inspection (SC-237). HQ Inspection Operations must be notified if the appeal request is on a lot previously inspected by supervisory staff or a training officer.

Obtain the original inspection results as soon as possible after receiving the application for inspection. For Market on Market this may require contact with another market office OIC, IIC or supervisor. For Market on Shipping Point this may require contact with the Federal Program Manager for the State issuing the original certificate.

All appeals properly requested will be performed, but not all performed appeals will be honored as appeals.

Cancelling an Appeal Inspection Request

The applicant may withdraw an application for an appeal inspection any time before the appeal inspection starts. However, the applicant must pay any travel, overtime, or other expenses that have been incurred in connection with the application. Once the inspection has begun, the application can only be withdrawn in accordance with these provisions:

A. Lots Involving Misbranding

When it is established that the lot is misbranded, the applicant cannot cancel the inspection or take “Condition Only,” regardless of whether the lot has identity or was unloaded without identity. You can determine misbranding as soon as the first sample has been examined or as late as the completion of the inspection. If an appeal has not

been requested, but the inspection reveals that there is a conflict with the previous certification involving misbranding, apply appeal procedures.

B. Lots Not Involving Misbranding

If the conflict in inspections does not involve misbranding, the applicant may request a "condition only" inspection or cancel the inspection entirely provided they pay related fees and expenses. The applicant may withdraw an application for an appeal inspection any time before the appeal inspection starts. However, the applicant must be charged any travel, overtime, or other expenses that incurred in connection with the application.

Who May Perform an Appeal Inspection?

The original inspector will not perform an appeal inspection on themselves. The original inspector may be utilized to positively identify the lot as the previous lot inspected but will not take part in the appeal inspection.

For Market on Market appeals, whenever possible, two inspectors designated by the OIC, Regional Branch Chief or Federal Program Manager should perform an appeal inspection with at least one being of equal or higher grade than that of the inspector who made the original inspection. Appeal inspections performed by two inspectors must be signed by both inspectors. When two is not possible (i.e. staffing, remote location of product, etc.), one may be utilized providing they are of equal or higher grade than that of the original inspector.

A Market Licensee may perform an appeal on an inspection made by another Market Licensee. A Market Licensee may not perform an appeal on a Federal market inspector unless authorized by HQ Inspection Operations.

For Market on Shipping Point: one market inspector designated by the OIC, Regional Branch Chief or Federal Program Manager may perform an appeal inspection on a lot previously inspected and certified at shipping point.

Due to a conflict of interest, subordinates should not perform appeals when their supervisor performed the original inspection. Contact your OIC, Regional Branch Chief or Federal Program Manager for additional guidance.

Performing the Appeal

All inspectors assigned to perform appeals have unique responsibilities in performing this extremely urgent type of inspection. Rulings by HQ Inspection Operations are based on information received from the appeal inspector. In this regard the appeal inspector is acting as an agent of HQ Inspection Operations to gather critical data that will be used to issue a ruling. The following guidance will help ensure fair and accurate information is presented:

- Be extremely diligent in representative sampling.
- Follow all instructions as they relate to sample size and defect scoring guidelines

- Be aware of all unique aspects of the commodities' tolerances or allowances
- Use references, such as visual aids and color comparators.
- Record and report any markings that may help confirm the identity of the lot.
- Be decisive toward lot separation regarding markings such as codes or dates where there is a significant variance in defects.
- When needed, ask for guidance from supervisors or HQ Inspection Operations
- Take the time to perform the inspection accurately and thoroughly. Results have great impact toward the integrity of the service. Reversal rulings lessen the value of our service and we treat these instances as learning opportunities for continual improvement.
- Whenever possible, include digital photos of containers, brands, PLI, and defects on all appeals.

A. Restrictions

1. Perform an unrestricted inspection covering the entire lot or entire portion remaining, except for market on market inspections that were previously restricted must remain restricted to the same portion to be honored as an appeal.

2. If it is not possible to make an unrestricted inspection, cover as much of the load as possible. Report any restriction and the reason for it on the notesheet (and certificate, if issued). Make every effort to obtain the receiver's cooperation in making the entire load accessible. You may contact PACA if the lot in question is misbranded and the receiver does not cooperate.

B. Sampling Rate and Sample Size

1. Use a sampling rate that is at least double the rate on product remaining at time of the appeal inspection as described in the inspection sampling guidance **Number of Samples** under PERFORMING THE INSPECTION section of this manual.

2. The sample size must be at least the normal weight or count for the commodity. If the tolerance is exceeded in any sample, and unless the grade standard precludes it, examine the entire contents of that sample; if you cannot, double the normal sample size before failing the lot due to sample(s) exceeding a container tolerence.

C. Shipping Point Notesheets

When performing a market on shipping point appeal that is PLI'd the OIC, Regional Branch Chief or State Supervisor will contact the Federal Program Manager of the shipping point location for copies of the SPI notesheets pertaining to the PLI.

D. Determining Positive Identity of Lots

While lots that are PLI'd can be considered positively identified, most appealed lots do not have such markings. In absence of a PLI, determining lot identity is the obligation of the inspector(s) on site at the time of the appeal. Thus, the inspector must:

- Coordinate with the OIC, Regional Branch Chief or State Supervisor to determine if the original inspector may be utilized to positively identify the lot as the previous lot inspected.
- Record lot identifiers that are marked on the containers such as grower codes or pack dates.
- Complete a search of the warehouse location for other lots of the same brand and markings.
- Inquire to the warehouse representative if any portion of the lot had left the location, was returned, or was repackaged prior to the start of the appeal inspection.

Report any relevant findings to HQ Inspection Operations when submitting the results for ruling.

E. Misbranded Lots

Obtain any available documentation from the applicant or receiver that shows carrier numbers (e.g., bill of lading, manifest, or SPI certificate). This may allow verification that the lot was previously certified. If the lot was previously inspected, the carrier number on the documentation obtained at destination must agree with the carrier number on the SPI certificate. Advise the applicant that it is most important that they immediately furnish the documentation to avoid the shipper being cited for a misbranding violation by PACA.

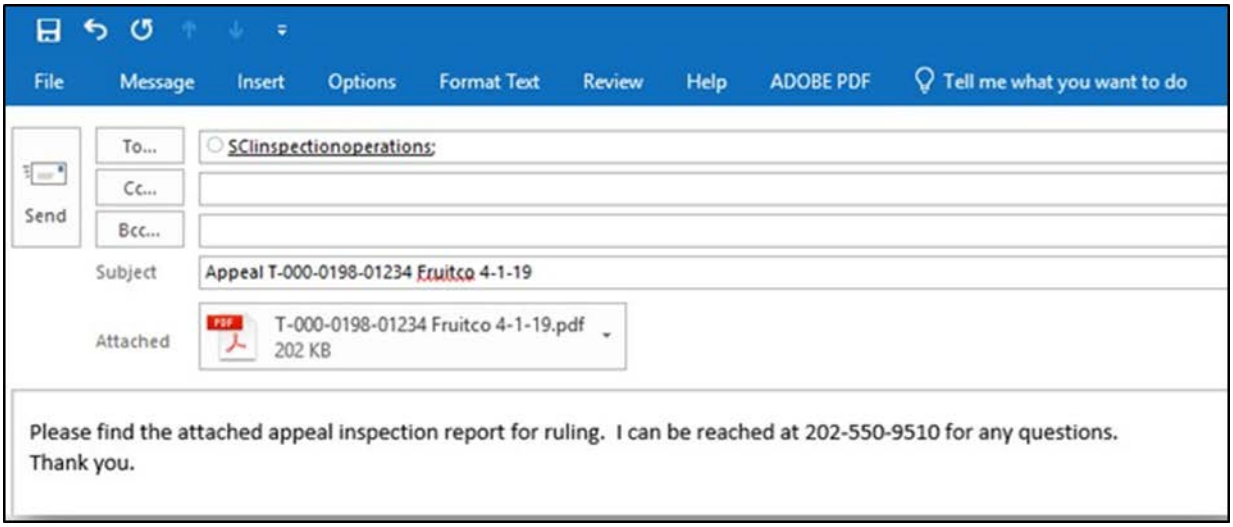
Submitting Results for Ruling

Once the appeal inspection is complete, and prior to signing or issuing the certificate, submit requests for ruling by completing an Appeal Inspection Report (Appendix V) and submit via fax to 800-844-401-7909 or via email to SCIinspectionoperations@ams.usda.gov. Complete the form in its entirety using the original certificate or SPI notesheet as a basis. Contact HQ Inspection Operations for questions on completing the form. Avoid using shorthand codes for defects. Utilize the remarks section whenever practical for reporting PLIs applied after lot failed inspection.

Other Required Information:

- Any marked lot identifiers such as digits or codes to be used in determination of lot identity.
- Range and Average of Defects found,
- Stages of Decay,
- Name of inspector(s) performing the appeal,
- Phone number where inspector(s) can be reached for follow-up questions,
- Any restrictions (with explanation)

When emailing the completed Appeal Inspection Report to SCI Inspection Operations the subject line will be "Appeal" followed by the certificate or scoresheet number of the original inspection, the applicant name requesting the appeal and the date the appeal was performed. This same format will be used when naming and saving the Report. The body of the email is also a place to list the appeal inspector's contact number or any other relevant information not listed on the form. See example below.



Rulings

A. HQ Inspection Operations will review the submitted Appeal Inspection Report and issue a ruling back to the appealing inspector.

B. Once a ruling has been made, notify the applicant of the results immediately, and forward a copy of the appeal certificate to the applicant and shipper. In addition, notify PACA when misbranding is involved.

C. Special Reporting for Misbranded Lots without Positive Identity

1. Report results to the applicant and advise that the lot will be reported to PACA as a possible misbranding.

2. Inform PACA that you have a possible misbranding and that a possible reversal is pending. Fax the certificate to 202-690-3966 or e-mail it to the PACA Misbranding Officer.

3. Contact the Federal Program Managers in the state of origin as soon as possible. If they cannot match a certificate on the lot, they will advise the shipper that HQ Inspection Operations requires a copy of the certificate covering the lot within 3 days. Otherwise, handle a lot reported to PACA as a misbranding as a regular inspection and issue the certificate with no reference to any previous inspection. Do not consider:

   - Warehouse certificates,
   - Lot certificates without lot numbers,
   - "Applicant states" carrier numbers, or
   - State manifest certificates signed by persons other than the inspector (unless the master certificate or other SPI certificate verifies that the inspector observed the lot being loaded into the carrier.

     In all cases involving the SPI certificate(s), certify the carrier number on inspection short form or manifest certificate.

4. If HQ Inspection Operations receives proper documentation within the prescribed time frame, they will review the facts available and, if appropriate, call the market office involved to give the shipping point certificate number and authority to reverse. If the documentation is not received within the prescribed time frame, or if the facts are not in order, they will instruct the market office to issue the certificate without referencing the shipping point and to advise PACA that the lot will not be reversed. In either case, do not issue the certificate until you receive the instructions from HQ Inspection Operations or other senior level management as designated.

D. The decision to *honor/not honor* an appeal may only be made by HQ Inspection Operations, inspectors must always perform appeal procedures whenever an appeal is requested.

The appeal will be honored by HQ Inspection Operations provided:

1. The lot can be positively identified as the lot previously certified by means of a

trailer license number, car or van number, approved Federal-State Positive Lot Identification (PLI), other unique lot identifiers marked on the containers or verification by the original inspector.

2. The lot is misbranded and is not positively identified. However, documentation such as bill of lading, manifest, SPI Certificate, etc., may be accepted as sufficient evidence that it was the same lot previously certified.

3. The complaint concerns a factor such as quality, grade, size or weight which would not have changed since the previous inspection.

4. The complaint concerns a condition factor, which may change, but the time lapse, temperatures, perishability of product and degree and type of deterioration makes it apparent that the condition was present at the time of previous inspection.

5. If it is apparent that inspection procedures have not been followed, that sampling was performed improperly, or that the lot was improperly certified due to lapse of judgment by the inspector.

The appeal may not be honored by HQ Inspection Operations when:

1. A complaint that concerns a factor that may have undergone a change of condition since the original (previous) inspection.

2. The original inspection was restricted to submitted samples or the portion of the restricted load is not identifiable.

3. Less than two-thirds of containers from the original (previous) manifest are not accessible for sampling or have been disposed of.

4. A lot cannot be positively identified, and misbranding is not involved.

5. The shipping point certificate was a warehouse/platform inspection, or the only identity of the lot is through a manifest certificate issued by a person other than a USDA inspector.

6. An appeal inspection has already been made on the lot.

Appeals on Imported Products

We do not recognize certification programs of other countries or make appeal inspections on products certified by other countries' inspection personnel. Make all inspections on imported products on equivalent U.S. Grade Standards with special emphasis on the minimum requirements for products covered under Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended. The exception is shipments of potatoes from Canada, which may be inspected on the Canadian grade with authorization from HQ Inspection Operations.

Appeals of Carriers Inspected at Other Receiving Markets

If you see an indication of a previous inspection (e.g., a mark on a trailer wall) or suspect that the carrier was previously inspected in another market, notify your OIC or supervisor at once. The OIC or supervisor will call the market office indicated for a copy of the previously issued certificate, showing all details, including restrictions. Depending on certain factors, the inspection at the subsequent market may be treated as an Appeal inspection.

Certification

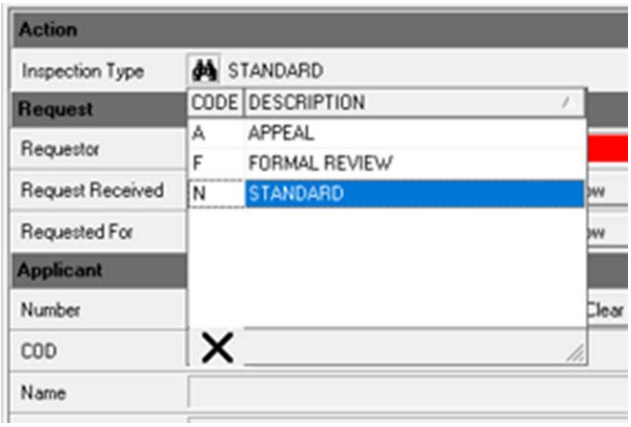
In addition to reporting the usual information on the inspection certificate, include the following for these form types.

A. SC-300

"APPEAL INSPECTION" written in capital letters in the upper right-hand corner of the certificate above the serial number.

B. FEIRS FV-300E

Verify the Inspection Type is correct as based on the ruling of appeal or no appeal.
APPEAL will be used if ruling states the appeal was sustained or reversed.
FORMAL REVIEW will be used if the appeal is a Formal Review appeal
STANDARD will be used if ruling states appeal requested and performed but not honored.



C. For all types

1. A statement under the "Remarks" heading such as: "This certificate covers an appeal inspection reported in Federal certificate (enter original certificate number), dated (enter date the original certificate was issued) which is hereby (reversed or sustained) as to (quality/condition/grade/maturity/size, etc.). Use the ruling statement on the Appeal Inspection Report as the basis for the remark.

2. Separate certificates whenever portions of the original certification are reversed and others are sustained, or are not included in the appeal process. Each certificate must have an appropriate "Remarks" statement and a statement about cross referencing to the other certificate.

3. A statement in the "Remarks" or "Other" section explaining why the Appeal request was not honored, if that is the case. Use the statement from the Appeal Inspection Report. For example:

   - "Appeal requested and performed but not honored due to inability to identify lot as that previously inspected."

   - "Appeal requested and performed but not honored due insufficient number of packages remaining."

     "Appeal requested and performed but not honored due increase in packages in second inspection."

Appeal Inspection Notes

Each certificate must be based on the notes made at the time of the inspection. All notesheets become part of the permanent record of the inspection and must be attached to the file copy of the certificate. The information on the notesheet is confidential but can be disclosed upon the written request of the applicant or any financially interested party.

Fees

Charge the applicant mileage, per diem, overtime, or related expenses involved in the appeal inspection, regardless of whether the appeal is sustained or reversed.

For appeals requested and performed but not honored: charge standard lot and sublot fees. Charge the applicant any mileage, per diem, overtime, or related expenses involved in the reinspection.

For appeals sustained: charge standard lot and sublot fees for lots or portions of lots sustained during appeals. Charge the applicant any mileage, per diem, overtime, or related expenses involved in the reinspection.

For appeals reversed: do not charge lot or sublot fees for Market-on-Market appeals. Do charge standard lot and sublot fees for Market-on-Shipping point reversals. Most often this occurs when a market certificate reverses a shipping point certificate that was PLI'd.

If a portion of the same load (lot) is sustained, issue a separate certificate charging the regular fee.

If PACA is the applicant, charge the hourly rate for the inspection time plus any related expenses or overtime.

Formal Review

A Formal Review is the final option for contesting the results of a previously inspected lot or a previously appealed lot. A Formal Review can only be requested once an appeal has been requested, performed and ruled on. Any financially interested party to the original or appeal inspection may request a Formal Review. All requests for a Formal Review must be forwarded to HQ Inspection Operations. HQ Inspection Operations will coordinate the completion of the requested Formal Review.

Once the formal review process is complete the rulings are considered final and issued to the applicant.

PACA

Misbranding Under PACA

The PACA Division handles misbranding violations of fruits and vegetables under the PACA, and is authorized to request inspections of commodities owned or controlled by PACA licenses to determine if a lot is misrepresented. PACA does not require any markings on containers (e.g., grade, weight, size, count, or origin), but, if any such markings are used, they must accurately represent the product. For example, if cartons are marked “Net Wt. 50 lbs.” and the inspection reports “Net Wt. 46 lbs.,” this would constitute a misbranding violation against PACA.

If you find a possible misbranding situation when an inspection is complete, notify the applicant that the lot may be misbranded and that the results will be reported to PACA. If a certificate is issued for a lot that has been reported to PACA for misbranding, e-mail or fax a copy of the certificate to the PACA Division in Washington, DC, and to the Federal Program Manager or Officer-in-Charge. Report all misbranding to the person appointed by PACA headquarters to handle such matters. The address and phone number for PACA misbranding is:

Misbranding Officer
PACA Investigative Enforcement Branch – Misbranding Unit
USDA, AMS, F&V Program, PACA Division
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 1509 South Building
Washington, DC 20250
Phone: (202) 720-5073

Give Priority to Requested Inspections under PACA

Inspections requested by the PACA Division are considered priority inspections. In emergency situations, PACA may arrange for access to a particular lot, and ask for an inspection and a certificate without being accompanied by a representative. Base fees for inspections conducted

under PACA's authority on the hourly rate, plus travel, per diem, and other necessary expenses that may be incurred.

PACA Inquiries

If you are unsure about proper action to be taken in response to PACA inquiries, immediately contact your immediate supervisor for guidance. If unsure about a possible misbranding violation, immediately contact the misbranding officer for a determination.

For possible misbranded lots, you may provide the applicant with PACA's phone number so they can contact the Division directly with any questions they may have. PACA will notify the applicant when a misbranding occurs.

Do not:

- Attempt to advise dealers, brokers, or other shipper representatives of their rights or obligations under the PACA or attempt to interpret its provisions.

- State an opinion about whether an inspection meets Good Delivery Tolerances under PACA, as each instance is considered by the PACA Division on a case-by-case basis.

- Assume responsibility for transmitting the complaint of any party to a PACA Division representative. Give these parties the telephone number and address of the nearest PACA office and advise them to communicate directly with the PACA Division. PACA regional office addresses and phone numbers are listed in the SCI Division Directory.

For more information on the PACA Division and the law, visit https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/paca.

REFERENCE LINKS **Version Date (Printed for distribution)**

☐ **The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. §1622 (h)(1)):** _____
http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title7-section1622&num=0&edition=prelim

☐ **AIM Document Serially Numbered Forms Accountability:** _____
https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/SeriallyNumberedFormsAccountability.pdf

☐ **Positive Lot Identification (PLI) Manual:** _____
http://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Positive%20Lot%20Identification%20%20Manual.pdf

☐ **Sanitation Manual:** _____
https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/AIM%20Inspection%20Series%20Sanitation%20Manual.pdf

☐ **SC-205:** _____
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/SC-205.pdf

☐ **SC-205-1:** _____
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/SC-205-1.pdf

☐ **SC-207:** _____
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/SC-207.pdf

☐ **SC-237:** _____
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/SC-237.pdf

☐ **SC-300:** _____
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/SC-300.pdf

☐ **SC-301:** _____
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMSFormsCatalog/SC%20301.pdf

☐ **SCI Division Supply Depot:** _____
https://origin-edit.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/how-purchase-equipment-and-visual-aids?_ga=1.143509749.1928447350.1426518487

☐ **Section 8e Import Requirements:** _____
http://origin-staging.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/section8e?_ga=1.171991143.590402700.1409873492

☐ **Shipping Point & Market Inspection Instructions Mixed Commodities:** _____
https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/IIMixedCommodities.pdf

☐ **Summary of Marketing Orders:** _____
http://origin-staging.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/section8e?_ga=1.171991143.590402700.1409873492

☐ **Terminal Market Travel Charge Policy:** _____
https://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/terminal-market-travel-charge-policy

☐ **Title 18 of the U.S. Code Section 201:** _____
http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title18-section201&num=0&edition=prelim

Checked Materials have been printed from the links in this manual and included for reference.

APPENDIX I – TERMINAL MARKET OFFICE NUMBERS

000	Wash DC HQ		
001	Baltimore/Jessup, MD	042	Baton Rouge, LA
002	Atlanta/College Park, GA	043	Fairbanks, AK
003	GAP-GHP (Federal)	044	Nashville, TN
004	Boston/Everett, MA	045	Mobile, AL
005	Buffalo, NY	046	Seattle, WA
006	Chicago, IL	047	Rochester, NY (Fed-State)
007	Cincinnati, OH	048	Richmond, VA (Fed-State)
008	Cleveland, OH	049	Quincy, WA
009	Columbus, OH	050	Augusta, ME
010	Detroit, MI	051	Hunt Valley, MD
011	New York/Bronx, NY	052	Lomo Station, CA
012	Philadelphia, PA	053	Roanoke, VA
013	Pittsburgh, PA	054	Hartford, CT
014	Indianapolis, IN	055	Albany, NY
015	Kansas City, MO	056	Miami, FL
016	St. Louis, MO	057	Oklahoma City, OK
017	Memphis, TN	058	Tampa, FL
018	Madera, CA	059	Asheville, NC
019	St. Paul, MN	060	Oklahoma SPI
020	New Orleans, LA	061	San Antonio, TX
021	Blackfoot, ID	062	Little Rock, AR
022	Norfolk, VA	063	South Bend, IN
023	Helena, MT	064	Syracuse, NY
024	Harrisburg, PA	065	Wilkes-Barre, PA
025	Houston, TX	066	Charlotte, NC
026	Columbia, SC	067	Birmingham, AL
027	Dallas, TX	068	Milwaukee, WI
028	Denver, CO	069	El Centro, CA
029	Sacramento, CA	070	Charleston, WV
030	Monte Vista, CO	071	Riverhead, NY
031	Phoenix, AZ	072	Brooklyn/Queens, NY
032	Salt Lake City, UT	073	Fresno, CA
033	Portland, OR	074	Chico, CA
034	Los Angeles/Commerce, CA	075	Montgomery, AL
035	San Francisco, CA	076	Savannah, GA
036	Merrill, OR	077	Portland, ME
037	Newark/North New Jersey, NJ	078	Orlando, FL
038	Winter Haven, FL	079	Providence, RI
039	Raleigh, NC	080	California PIQ
040	Jacksonville, FL	081	GAP-GHP (State)
041	Trenton, NJ	082	Tifton, GA

083	Louisville, KY	122	Kauai, HI
084	El Paso, TX	123	Maui, HI
085	IP Audit Program	124	Boise, ID
086	Albany, GA	125	Caldwell, ID
087	Belle Glade, FL	126	Kerman, CA
088	Dover, DE	127	Spokane, WA
089	Grand Rapids, MI	128	Salem, OR (Fed-State)
090	Presque Isle, ME	129	Moses Lake, WA
091	Dothan, AL	130	Yakima, WA (Fed-State)
092	Imperial, CA	131	Monett, MO
093	Hastings, FL	132	Knoxville, TN
094	Vineland, NJ	133	Alamo, TX
095	Williamston, NC	134	Hammond, LA
096	Chambersburg, PA	135	Riverside, CA
097	Reading, PA	136	Pasco, WA
098	San Juan, PR	137	Walden, NY
099	Vidalia, GA	138	Pompano Beach, FL
100	Onley, VA	139	Lodi, CA
101	Suffolk, VA	140	Delano, CA
102	Waynesboro, VA	141	Exeter, CA
103	Winchester, VA	142	Ceres, CA
104	Greeley, CO	143	San Diego, CA
105	Lansing, MI	144	Hermiston, OR
106	Las Cruces, NM	145	Jackson, MS
107	Grafton, ND	146	Palmetto, FL
108	Bartow, FL	147	Wenatchee, WA
109	Gorman, TX	148	Santa Maria, CA
110	Stevens Point, WI	149	Firebaugh, CA
111	Anchorage, AK	150	Idaho Falls, ID
112	Nogales, AZ	151	Medford, OR
113	Yuma, AZ	152	Milton-Freewater, OR
114	Shafter/Bakersfield, CA	153	Ontario, CA
115	Coachella, CA	154	Montpelier, VT
116	Parlier, CA	155	Salisbury, MD
117	Oxnard, CA	156	Burley, ID (Fed-State)
118	Salinas, CA	157	Billings, MT
119	Stockton, CA	158	Dublin, NC
120	Hawaii Island, HI	159	Inwood, WV
121	Honolulu, HI (Fed-State)		

APPENDIX II – SCHEDULE OF USER FEES

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Fees		
When performing inspections of product unloaded directly from land or air transportation, the charges shall be determined on the following basis	**Rate**	**Start Date**
Quality and Condition Inspections for Over Half Lot	$210.00 per lot[1]	10/1/19
Quality and Condition for Half Lot or Less and Condition Only for Over Half Lot	$174.00 per lot[1]	10/1/19
Condition Only for Half Lot or Less	$161.00 per lot[1]	10/1/19
Quality and Condition or Condition Only Inspections for Additional Lots of the Same Product	$96.00 per lot[1]	10/1/19
Quality and Condition and Condition Only for Lots of 50 Packages or Less	$96.00 per lot[1]	10/1/19
Dockside Inspections – Each package weighing < 30 lbs.	$0.044 per pkg.[1]	10/1/17
Dockside Inspections – Each package weighing 30 lbs. or more	$0.068 per pkg.[1]	10/1/17
Minimum Charge per Individual Product for Dockside Inspection	$210.00 per lot[1]	10/1/19
Dockside Inspections for Additional Lots of the Same Product	$96.00 per lot[1]	10/1/19
Hourly based inspection services	$93.00 per hour[1]	10/1/19
Premium Time (Overtime) Lot or Packaged Inspection Based	$47.00 per hour	10/1/19
Premium time (Overtime) Hourly Inspection Based	$32.00 per hour	10/1/19
Premium time (Holiday) Lot or Packed Based	$47.00 per hour	10/1/19
Premium time (Holiday) Hourly Based Within Normal Tour of Duty	$64.00 per hour	10/1/19
Premium time (Holiday) Hourly Based Outside Normal Tour of Duty	$47.00 per hour	10/1/19
Rate for Billable Mileage	$1.96 per mile	08/01/18

[1] Additional travel costs will apply where applicable.

APPENDIX III – METRIC CONVERSIONS

United States Customary Units are normally used for issuing inspection reports. On occasion, it may be necessary to use metric units.

The fundamental unit of length in the metric system is the METER. The GRAM is the primary unit of mass or weight; the LITER the unit of volume. All other units are the decimal subdivisions or multiples of these. Metric terms are formed by combining the words "METER" "GRAM" and "LITER" with the six numerical prefixes:

Prefix	Meaning	Units
Milli = one thousandth	1/1000	0.001
Centi = one hundredth	1/100	0.01
Deci = one tenth	1/10	0.1
1 meter, gram or liter		1
Deka = ten	10/1	10
Hecto = one hundred	100/1	100
Kilo = one thousand	1000/1	1000

As a general rule, use the terms meter, gram, and liter with appropriate multiple or submultiple prefixes representing steps of 1,000 (.001) only to report net quantity. For example: kilometer, meter, or millimeter. Use centimeters to report small areas in terms of square centimeters (cm^2).

Do not capitalize symbols or use periods after the symbol. Always write symbols in the singular form. **DO NOT ADD** "s" to express the plural when the symbol is used.

For the purposes of uniformity, use the following symbols in metric statements of net quantity (volume, weight, length or area):

Volume	**Weight**	**Length**	**Area**
l = liter	g = gram	m = meter	m^2 = square meter
ml = milliliter	kg = kilogram	mm = millimeter	cm^2 = square centimeter

Approximate conversions for common inspection quantities:

Quantity	**Conversion**	**Quantity**	**Conversion**
1-7/8 inches	47.625 millimeters	6 ounces	170.097 grams
2-3/8 inches	60.325 millimeters	20 pounds	9.072 kilograms
2-1/2 inches	63.500 millimeters		

Approximate mathematical conversions from Customary to Metric and Metric to Customary:

Length

Known	Multiply by…	… to find	Multiply by…	… to find
Inches	25.4	millimeters	2.54	centimeters
Feet	.3048	meters	304.8	millimeters
Yards	.9144	meters	914.4	millimeters
Miles	1609.34	meters	1.60934	kilometers

Weight or Mass

Known	Multiply by…	… to find	Multiply by…	… to find
Ounces	28.3495	grams	28349.5	milligrams
Pounds	0.453592	kilograms	453.592	grams
Kilograms	2.20462	pounds	35.274	ounces
Short Ton (U.S.)	907.185	kilograms	0.907185	metric tons

Volume

Known	Multiply by…	… to find	Multiply by…	… to find
Ounces	29.5735	milliliters	0.0295735	liters
Pints	473.176	milliliters	0.473176	liters
Quarts	946.353	milliliters	0.946353	liters
Gallons	3785.41	milliliters	3.78541	liters

APPENDIX IV – TABLE OF CARLOT EQUIVALENTS

Commodity	Weight/ pkg. (lb.)	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Apples				
Standard cartons, including:	40	42,000	1,050	525
Tray Pack (include film wrap)				
Volume fill & bushel cartons				
10/4 & 8/5 lb. bags				
Standard cartons 12/3 lb.	36	38,000	1,050	525
Half bushel cartons	20	42,000	2,100	1,050
Asian Pears (Apple Pears)				
1-layer cartons (European)	15	27,000	1,800	900
1-layer (Shoebox)	10	27,000	2,720	1,360
2-layer cartons	21	36,000	1,700	850
Apricots/Apriums				
1-layer cartons	8	23,040	2,880	1,440
2-layer cartons	18	37,000	1,760	880
3-layer cartons	21	35,200	1,760	880
Volume fill	24	37,000	2,050	1,025
Anise				
2/3 cartons/crates	45	40,000	900	450
WGA cartons	65	40,000	600	300
Celery cartons	50	40,000	800	400
Cartons - 24's	40	40,000	1,000	500
Artichokes - Loose pack cartons	23	39,000	1,700	850
Asparagus				
Pyramid cartons/crates	28	35,000	1,250	625
Cartons/crates bunched	11	35,000	3,200	1,600
Avocados				
1 layer flats/cartons	13	40,000	3,100	1,550
2 layer flats/cartons	25	40,000	1,600	800
4/5 bushel cartons	40	40,000	1,000	500
2 layer cartons (Imports)	23	40,000	1,750	875
Bananas - cartons	40	40,000	1,000	500
Beans				
Bushel baskets/cartons/crates	30	32,000	1,050	525
Cartons	20	32,000	1,600	800
Beets, *bunched*				
Cartons/crates - 24's	38	38,000	1,0001,	500
Cartons/crates - 12's	20	38,000	900	950
Beets, *topped*				
50 lb. sacks	50	40,000	800	400
25 lb. sacks	25	40,000	1,600	800

Commodity	Weight/ pkg. (lb.)	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Berries (other than Strawberries)				
12-1 pint tray/flats	11	22,000	2,000	1,000
12-6 ounce tray/flats	5	22,000	4,400	2,200
12/4.4 oz.	3.3	15,840	4,800	2,400
12/6 oz. (Raspberries/Blackberries)	4.5	17,280	3,840	1,920
12/6 oz. (Blueberries)	4.5	21,600	4,800	2,400
Broccoli				
Cartons/crates - 14's,18's	23	25,000	1,000	550
Florets 10 lb. film bags	10	33,000	1,100	550
Brussels Sprouts - cartons	25	26,000	1,050	525
Cabbage				
Domestic cartons/crates/sacks	50	45,000	900	450
Savoy	40	45,000	1,100	550
Bulk Bins	2,000	40,000	--	20,000
Cantaloups - 2 layer cartons/crates	40	44,000	1,100	550
Carrots, *bunched* - cartons/crates - 24's	26	45,000	1,700	850
Carrots, *topped*				
50 lb. sacks	50	45,000	900	450
Master sacks (i.e.48/1 lb.)	48	45,000	950	475
25 lb. sacks	25	45,000	1,800	900
20/12 oz. bags	15	45,000	3,000	1,500
Cauliflower - cartons - film wrapped	25	31,000	1,250	625
Celery				
Cartons/crates	60	45,000	750	375
Hearts - master bags	28	45,000	1,600	800
Cherries				
20 lb. carton (WA)	20	40,000	2,000	1,000
18 lb. cartons (CA)	18	40,000	2,200	1,100
11 lb. cartons (CE)	11	40,000	3,600	1,800
Corn, Sweet				
Cartons/crates (42-50 lbs.)	42	44,000	1,050	525
Sacks	37	44,000	1,200	600
Cranberries - 24 lb. cartons	24	40,000	1,650	825
Cucumbers				
Bushel & 1-1/9 bushel cartons/crates	55	45,000	800	400
Cartons 24's	22	45,000	2,050	1,025
Cartons Greenhouse	12	45,000	3,750	1,875
Eggplant				
Bushel & 1-1/9 bushel cartons/crates	33	40,000	1,200	600
1/2 bushel cartons/crates	17	40,000	2,350	1,175
Escarole/Endive				
1-1/9 bushel cartons/crates, cartons - 24's	25	31,000	1,250	625
Belgian Endive cartons	10	31,000	3,100	1,550

Commodity	Weight/ pkg. (lb.)	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Figs				
1 layer flats	8	30,000	3,750	1,875
12-1 pints	12	30,000	2,500	1,250
Garlic - cartons/crates	30	35,000	1,150	575
Grapefruit				
Cartons (FL & TX)	40	45,000	1,100	550
Cartons (AZ & CA)	34	45,000	1,300	650
Grapes, Table				
19 lb. cartons/lugs	19	45,000	2,350	1,175
5-down Euro		32,300	1,700	850
6-down cartons		34,200	1,800	900
Foam		29,260	1,540	770
18 lb. cartons/lugs	18	45,000	2,500	1,250
11 lb. cartons/lugs	11	45,000	4,100	2,050
Grapes, Juice				
36 lb. lugs	36	45,000	1,250	625
42 lb. lugs	42	45,000	1,050	525
Greens (except spinach)				
Bushel baskets/cartons/crates	25	25,000	1,000	500
Crates 12’s - bunched	15	25,000	1,650	825
Honeydew Melons - 1 layer cartons/crates	30	44,000	1,450	725
Kiwifruit				
1 layer flat	7	28,000	5,000	2,500
Volume fill cartons	20	38,400	1,920	960
10/2 lbs.	22	35,200	1,600	800
Leeks - 4/5 bushel cartons/crates	20	26,000	1,300	650
Lemons - 4/5 bushel cartons	38	45,000	1,200	600
Lettuce				
Iceberg cartons	50	45,000	900	450
Iceberg, *chopped* cartons	20	45,000	2,250	1,125
Iceberg, *cleaned/cored* cartons	30	45,000	1,500	750
Iceberg, bulk bin	1,000	45,000	45	22
Boston/Bibb 1-1/9 bushel cartons/crates	22	25,000	1,150	575
Boston/Bibb/Red/Green Leaf - Cartons - 24’s	20	25,000	1,250	625
Bibb-12/quart basket/cartons	5	25,000	5,000	2,500
Romaine - 1-1/9 bushel cartons/crates	22	45,000	2,050	1,025
Cartons - 24’s	40	45,000	1,100	550
Limes				
10 lb. cartons	10	36,000	3,600	1,800
4/5 bushel cartons	40	36,000	900	450
Mangos-1 layer flat/cartons	10	40,000	4,000	2,000

Commodity	Weight/ pkg. (lb.)	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Miscellaneous Citrus				
Kumquats - cartons (FL)	23	45,000	1,950	975
Kumquats - loose (CA)	10	45,000	4,500	2,250
Clementines - cartons	22	45,000	2,050	1,025
K-early/Uglifruit - cartons	40	45,000	1,100	550
Mandarins/ Satsumas - cartons (AZ, CA)	25	45,000	1,800	900
Mushrooms				
10 lb. cartons	10	20,000	2,000	1,000
Flats	20	20,000	1,000	500
Nappa				
Celery crate	50	45,000	900	450
WGA crate	70	45,000	650	325
1-1/9 bushel crates/cartons	40	45,000	1,100	550
Nectarines				
2 layer flat/volume fill carton	25	42,000	1,700	850
2 layer flat/cartons (CE)	18	42,000	2,300	1,150
Okra				
Bushel basket/crates/cartons	30	32,000	1,050	525
1/2 bushel basket/crates/cartons	15	32,000	2,100	1,050
5/9 bushel cartons/crates	18	32,000	1,800	900
Onions, *dry*				
25 lb. sacks	25	45,000	1,800	900
40 lb. cartons	40	45,000	1,100	550
50 lb. sacks	50	45,000	900	450
Master sacks (16/3 lb.)	48	45,000	950	475
Onions, *green* - cartons - 48's	13	24,000	1,850	925
Oranges				
4/5 bushel cartons (FL)	43	45,000	1,050	525
7/10 bushel cartons (TX)	42	45,000	1,050	525
Cartons (CA)	38	45,000	1,200	600
10/3 lbs.	30	33,000	1,100	550
4/5 lbs.	20	30,000	1,600	750
Volume Fill	25	40,000	1,600	800
Papaya				
Cartons (HI)	10	30,000	3,000	1,500
Cartons 3.5 kg	8	30,000	3,750	1,875
Cartons 35 lb.	35	35,000	1,000	500
Parsley				
1-1/9 bushel crates/carton - 60 bunches	21	21,000	1,000	500
4/5 bushel crates/lug	14	21,000	1,500	750
12 quart basket	7	21,000	3,000	1,500

Commodity	Weight/ pkg. (lb.)	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Parsnips				
1/2 bushel basket/carton	25	40,000	1,600	800
1 bushel basket	50	40,000	800	400
25 lb. sacks	25	40,000	1,600	800
Peaches				
3/4 bushel container	38	42,000	1,100	550
26/1.5 lbs. cartons	39	35,100	900	450
Western volume filled cartons	25	42,000	1,700	850
1-layer cartons (CA)	12	36,960	3,360	1,680
2-layer cartons (CA)	22	42,000	1,900	950
2-layer cartons (CE)	18	42,000	2,300	1,150
2-layer RPC	29	34,800	1,200	600
3-layer cartons	33	42,000	1,250	625
Pears				
4/5 bushel box/cartons	45	45,000	1,000	5000
1/2 box/cartons	23	45,000	1,950	975
18 kg crates (import)	40	45,000	1,100	550
Peas				
Green - 1 or 1-1/9 bushel basket/crate/carton	30	31,000	1,050	525
Snow (Pea Pods) - cartons	10	31,000	3,100	1,550
Southern - bushel hamper	25	31,000	1,250	625
Peppers, Sweet				
1 bushel & 1-1/9 bushel cartons/crates	28	44,000	1,550	775
Cartons/crates (CA, TX, MX)	30	44,000	1,450	725
1-1/4 bushel crates/cartons	35	44,000	1,250	625
Peppers, Other				
1/2, 5/9 bushel crates/cartons	15	44,000	2,900	1,450
Cartons	10	44,000	4,400	2,200
1-1/9 bushel crates/cartons	30	44,000	1,450	725
Persimmons				
1 layer cartons/lug (Fuyu/Hachiya)	7/10	25,000	2,880	1,440
2 layer cartons/lug	10	17,600	1,760	880
Volume fill	25	40,000	1,600	800
6/3 lbs.	18	27,000	1,500	750
8/3 lbs.	24	26,400	1,100	550
Pineapples				
1 layer cartons	20	40,000	2,000	1,000
2 layer cartons	40	40,000	1,000	500
Plantains - cartons	50	40,000	800	400

Commodity	Weight/ pkg. (lb.)	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Plums				
2 layer cartons/lug (CE)	18	42,000	2,350	1,175
20/2 lbs. cartons	40	36,000	900	450
26/1.5 lbs. cartons	39	35,100	900	450
Cartons - tray or volume	28	42,000	1,500	750
Volume fill (RPC)	28	33,600	1,200	600
Pluots				
2-layer	18	28,160	1,760	880
20/2 lb. cartons	40	36,000	900	450
26/1.5 lb. cartons	39	35,100	900	450
Standard Volume fill	28	44,800	1,600	800
RPC volume fill	28	33,600	1,200	600
Pomegranates				
1 layer cartons/lug	11	31,680	2,880	1,440
2 layer cartons/lug & volume fill	22	35,200	1,600	800
26/1.5 lbs.	39	35,100	900	450
Potatoes				
100 lb. sacks	100	45,000	450	225
50 lb. sacks/cartons	50	45,000	900	450
20 lb. bags	20	45,000	2,250	1,125
10 lb. bags	10	45,000	4,500	2,500
Prunes				
Western cartons	30	42,000	1,400	700
Cartons/lug (CE)	18	42,000	2,350	1,175
Pumpkins - 1 or 1-1/9 bushel crates	50	40,000	800	400
Radishes, *bunched*				
Cartons/crates - 48's	35	43,000	1,200	600
1/5 bushel cartons/crates	30	43,000	1,450	725
16 quart baskets - 24's	15	43,000	2,850	1,425
Radishes, *topped*				
25 lb. sacks	25	43,000	1,700	850
Master bags (24/8oz)	12	43,000	3,600	1,800
Cartons 14/1 lb. bags	14	43,000	3,050	1,525
Rhubarb - cartons 15 lb.	15	40,000	2,650	1,325
Spinach				
Bushel crates/cartons	25	25,000	1,000	500
1-2/5 bushel cartons/crates	32	25,000	800	400
Cartons - 24's	20	25,000	1,250	625
Cartons 12/10-oz bags	8	25,000	3,100	1,550
Squash, summer				
1/2 & 5/9 bushel crates/cartons	21	40,000	1,900	950
1 bushel, 1-1/9 bushel crates/cartons	42	40,000	950	475
Crates/cartons/lug (CA, MX)	26	40,000	1,550	775

Commodity	Weight/ pkg. (lb.)	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Squash, fall & winter –				
1-1/9 bushel cartons/crates	50	40,000	800	400
Strawberries				
12/1 pint flats	12	24,000	2,000	1,000
8/1 pint flats	8	24,000	3,000	1,500
8/18 oz.	9	25,920	2,880	1,440
Sweet Potatoes - cartons/crates	50	40,000	800	400
Tangelos				
4/5 bushel cartons/crates	43	45,000	1,050	525
1/2 bushel cartons	25	45,000	1,800	900
Tangerines				
4/5 bushel cartons/crates	43	40,000	950	475
Cartons (AZ/CA)	25	40,000	1,600	800
Tomatillos - crates/cartons	40	42,000	1,050	525
Tomatoes				
2 layer flats/cartons	20	42,000	2,100	1,050
3 layer cartons	30	42,000	1,400	700
Cartons 25 lb. (including Plum)	25	42,000	1,700	850
Tomatoes, Cherry - 12/1 pint flats & loose	15	40,000	2,650	1,325
Turnips & Rutabagas				
1 bushel crates & 50 lb. sacks	50	40,000	800	400
1/2 bushel carton/crates & 25 lb. sacks/bags	25	40,000	1,600	800
Watermelons				
Cartons	75	45,000	600	300
Bins	1,050	45,000	42	21
Bulk	---	45,000	---	22,500

Miscellaneous (not listed above)

Commodity	Weight/ pkg.	Weight/ trailer load	Pkgs./ carlot	Pkgs./ 1/2 carlot
Miscellaneous Tropical Fruit/Vegetable	---	35,000	---	---
Miscellaneous Citrus	---	45,000	---	---
Miscellaneous Herbs	---	40,000	---	---
Miscellaneous Oriental Vegetables	---	35,000	---	---
Christmas Trees	500 trees	40,000	---	---

APPENDIX V – APPEAL INSPECTION REPORT

Electronic version of Appeal Inspection Report

USDA

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Was Appeal Requested by Applicant? Yes No

Appeal Inspection Report (Fresh Product)

Email to: SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov or fax to 844-401-7909

ORIGINAL	APPEAL
SPI MKT	SPI MKT
Product	Applicant
PLI	PLI
Other Lot Markings	Other Lot Markings
Brand	Brand
Unloaded Loaded Ptly. Unlded Bulk Restricted	Unloaded Loaded Ptly. Unlded Bulk Restricted
Date Time	Date Time
Inspector	Inspector
Certificate	Certificate
No. of Containers Temperatures	No. of Containers Temperatures
No. of Samples Size of Samples	No. of Samples Size of Samples
Remarks:	Remarks:

INJURY	DAM	SER DAM	V.S. DAM	Range	Number of Original Lots / Defects/Offsize / Number of Appeal Lots	INJURY	DAM	SER DAM	V.S. DAM	Range

Grade Statement	Grade Statement

Original Inspection: as to Date Time:

Authorized to: By: Digital Images Taken? If misbranded as to grade, size, weight, count, etc., report to PACA Misbranding Officer at 202-720-5073

Remarks:

APPENDIX VI – INSPECTOR GRADING EQUIPMENT INVENTORY SHEET

Electronic version of Inspector Grading Equipment Inventory Sheet

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture

TERMINAL MARKET INSPECTOR GRADING EQUIPMENT INVENTORY SHEET

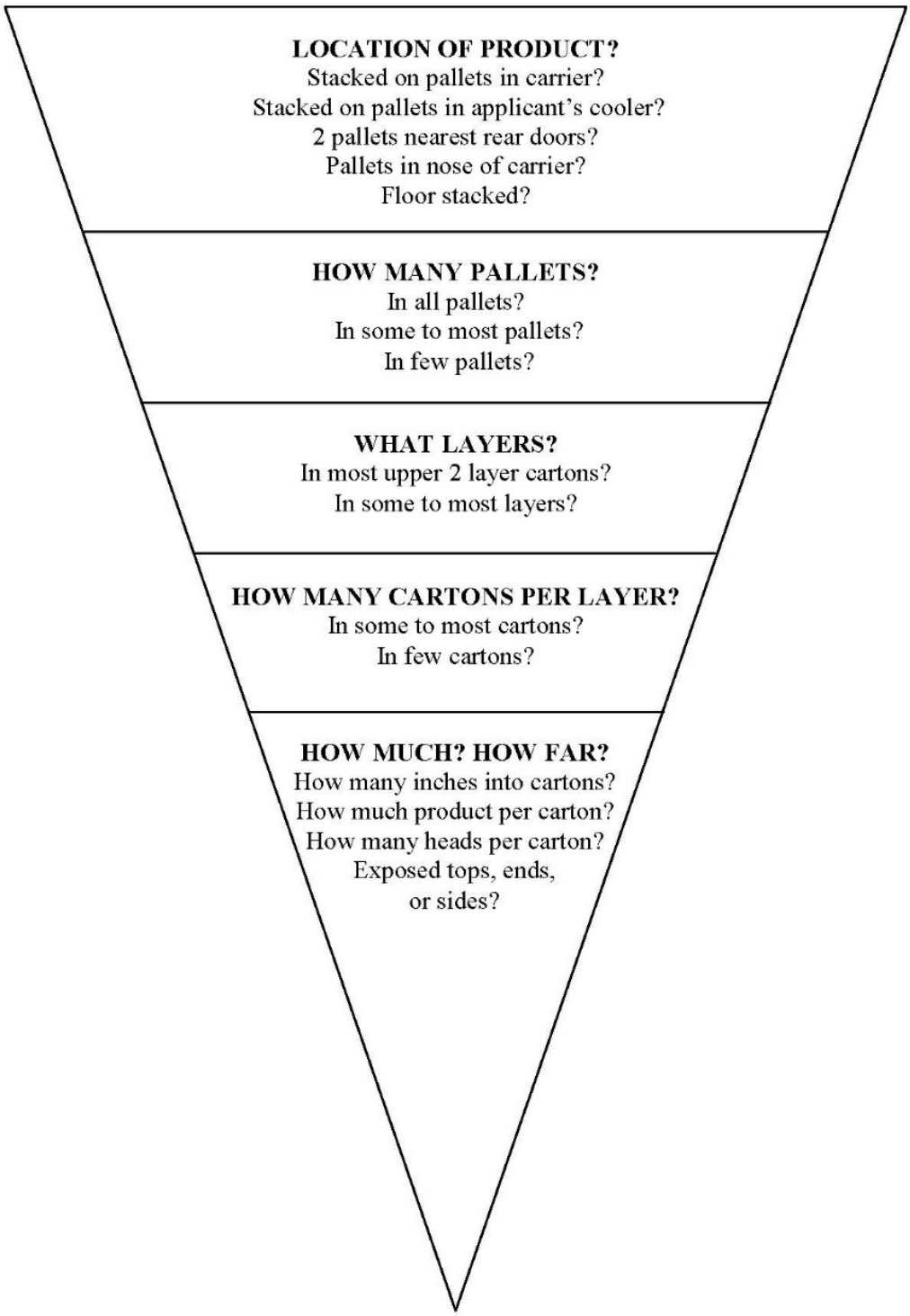
Inspector Name: _____ **Market Office/Inspection Point:** _____

ISSUING EQUIPMENT: Inspectors and supervisors or Training Officers (TO) will examine each item of equipment. The supervisor or TO will enter the date of issuance in "DATE ISSUED." If all equipment is in suitable condition, the inspector and supervisor or TO will sign and date the "ISSUED EQUIPMENT" section.

RETURNING EQUIPMENT: Inspectors and supervisors/TOs will examine each item of equipment. The supervisor or TO will enter the date of return in "DATE RETURNED/TRANSFERRED." Missing or damaged items will be noted in the REMARKS section. Upon completion the inspector and supervisor or TO will sign and date under the "RETURNED EQUIPMENT" section. If listed equipment is to be transferred with the employee to another field office and not returned, list the office receiving the transferred equipment in remarks.

DATE ISSUED	DATE RETURNED/ TRANSFERRED	ITEM DESCRIPTION	REMARKS
		USDA Carrying Case (backpack, rolling bag)	
		Calculator	
		2 Digital Thermometers	
		Caliper II	
		Diameter Gauge	
		Area Gauge, IA #30G	
		Wash. Dept. of Agriculture Cherry Sizer USDA 2011 (Blue)	
		CA Dept. of Agriculture Cherry Sizer 2016 (Black)	
		Grape Sizer, 12-blade Set	
		4-3/4 in. Fruit Knife (Knife I)	
		Tape Measure	
		2 or 4 and 6 lb. Chatillion Barrel Scale	
		25 lb. Chatillion Barrel Scale	
		General Purpose Ring Sizer 6-blade Set	
		Florida Tomato Sizer 3-blade Set	
		USDA Tomato Sizer 4-blade Set	
		Refractometer and accessories (if applicable)	
		Canvas Bucket or Harvest Bag	
		Crate Hammer	
		Safety vest (if applicable)	
		Clipboard	
		Computer Lock	
		Potato Color Comparator I, POT-CC-1, January 1998	
		Potato Color Comparator II, POT-CC-2, April 2008	
		Watermelon Color Comparator, WAT-CC-1 March 2000	
		Watermelon II Color Comparator, WAT-CC-2, August 2014	
		Cucumber Color Comparator CC-1 Medium Green, Aug. 2011	
		Lime Color Comparator, LIM-CC-1, July 2000	
		Sweet Cherry Color Comparator, PL-1, July 2012	
		Lettuce Color Comparator, LT-CC-1, August 2013	
		Onion I Color Comparator, ONS-CC-1, Sept 2001	
		Onion II Color Comparator, ONS-CC-2, Sept 2001	
		Pear I Color Comparator, PR-1, 1999	
		Pear II Color Comparator, PR-2, 2012	
		Tomato Color Chart February 1975	
		OIG-USDA Bribery/Assault, Fraud, Waste, Misconduct Hotline Card	

ISSUED EQUIPMENT		RETURNED/TRANSFFERED EQUIPMENT	
The equipment listed above is issued in good condition and the inspector agrees to care for and keep the equipment in suitable condition with consideration for wear under normal use.		The equipment indicated above has been returned in suitable condition except as noted in the REMARKS column.	
SIGNATURES	DATE	SIGNATURES	DATE
Inspector: SIGN HERE		Inspector: SIGN HERE	
Supervisor/TO: SIGN HERE		Supervisor/TO: SIGN HERE	

General Market Manual Appendix VI (02/2020)

APPENDIX VII – FREEZING PATTERN REPORTING GUIDE