

**METRIC**

**A-A-20329B**

**March 31, 2022**

**SUPERSEDING**

**A-A-20329A**

**August 24, 2000**

## **COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION**

### **SOUP MIXES, DEHYDRATED**

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorized the use of this Commercial Item Description (CID).**

**1. SCOPE.** This CID covers dehydrated soup mixes (soup mixes), packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by Federal, State, local governments, and other interested parties. **Please note: This document does not guarantee purchase of this item by USDA.**<sup>1</sup>

#### **2. PURCHASER NOTES.**

##### **2.1 Purchasers *must specify* the following:**

- Type(s), style(s), flavor(s), nutrient content claim(s), and agriculture practice(s) of the soup mixes required (Sec. 3).
- When compliance with analytical requirements must be verified (Sec. 7.2).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

##### **2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following:**

- Food Defense (Sec. 10.1) and Manufacturer's Quality Assurance (Sec. 10.2). Purchaser may specify one of the following combinations: Sec. 10.1.1 with 10.2.1 or 10.1.2 with 10.2.2.
- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 11).

**3. CLASSIFICATION.** The soup mixes must conform to the following list which must be specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

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<sup>1</sup> USDA purchase specifications are available at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food/product-specs>.

A-A-20329B

**Types, styles, flavors, nutrient content claims and agriculture.**<sup>2</sup>

**Type I** - Instant

**Type II** - Quick-cooking

**Type III** - Slow-cooking

**Style A** - Non-animal based product (vegetarian or vegan)

**Flavor 1** - Garden vegetable

**Flavor 2** - Cream of vegetable

**Flavor 3** - Spicy vegetable blend

**Flavor 4** - Minestrone

**Flavor 5** - Beans

**Flavor 6** - Peas

**Flavor 7** - Tomato

**Flavor 8** - Lentils

**Flavor 9** - Corn chowder

**Flavor 10** - Onion

**Flavor 11** - Mushroom barley

**Flavor 12** - Sea vegetable

**Flavor 13** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

**Style B** - Animal based product

**Flavor 1** - Poultry

**Flavor 2** - Beef

**Flavor 3** - Pork

**Flavor 4** - Seafood other than sea vegetable

**Flavor 5** - Two or more blended

**Flavor 6** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

**Nutrient content claim a** - Reduced sodium

**Nutrient content claim b** - Low sodium

**Nutrient content claim c** - No salt added

**Nutrient content claim d** - Healthy

**Agricultural practice (1)** - Conventional

**Agricultural practice (2)** - Organic

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<sup>2</sup> Not all options are available from every manufacturer. Check with the manufacturer/distributor for availability.

#### 4. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S NOTES. Manufacturer's/distributor's products must meet the requirements of the:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 7).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's product assurance (Sec. 8).
- Regulatory requirements (Sec. 9).
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 11).

#### 5. PROCESSING GUIDELINES.

**5.1 Processing.** The soup mixes must be processed in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food* (21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 117). When poultry is used in the soup mixes and prepared according to the directions on the consumer packaging, containing 2% or more moist, cooked poultry, they must be processed in accordance with the provisions of the USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), *Poultry Products Inspection Regulations* (9 CFR Part 381) if applicable; and be manufactured under Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) (9 CFR Part 416) and comply with the *Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems* requirements (9 CFR Part 417).

**5.2 Food defense.** The Style A, seafood, beef, and pork soup mixes must be processed and transported in accordance with *Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration* (21 CFR Part 121). The poultry soup mixes must be processed and transported in accordance with the FSIS *Food Defense Guidelines for the Transportation and Distribution of Meat, Poultry, and Processed Egg Products*.<sup>3</sup> These documents identify the kinds of preventive measures food manufacturers, processors, or handlers may take to minimize the risk that food under their control will be subject to tampering or other malicious, criminal, or terrorist actions. The implementation of enhanced food defense preventive measures provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials, other ingredients, and post-production finished product.

**5.3 Organic ingredients.** When organic soup mixes are specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the soup mixes must be produced, handled, and labeled in accordance with the USDA organic regulations by an operation that is certified organic in accordance with the requirements of the National Organic Program (7 CFR Part 205). A Certificate of Organic Production or Handling must be provided to verify that the product was processed and handled in accordance with the USDA organic regulations.

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<sup>3</sup> FSIS *Food Defense Guidelines for the Transportation and Distribution of Meat, Poultry, and Processed Egg Products* is available at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/node/2032>.

## 6. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.

### 6.1 Definitions.

**6.1.1 Instant.** Soup mixes are considered instant when they can be reconstituted in boiling water in approximately one minute.

**6.1.2 Quick-cooking.** Soup mixes are considered quick cooking when they can be prepared by cooking in boiling water for 5 minutes.

**6.1.3 Slow-cooking.** Soup mixes are considered slow cooking when they can be fully reconstituted in boiling water within 40 minutes.

**6.1.4 Reduced sodium.** The reduced sodium soup mixes must comply with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 9 CFR §381.461(b)(6) or 21 CFR §101.61(b)(6). (The reference food may not be *Low Sodium.*)

**6.1.5 Low sodium.** The low sodium soup mixes must contain no more than 140 milligrams (mg) of sodium per reference amount customarily consumed (RACC)<sup>4</sup> (9 CFR §381.461(b)(4) or 21 CFR §101.61(b)(4)).

**6.1.6 No salt added.** The no salt added soup mixes must contain no added salt and must meet the conditions of use and must declare “This is Not a Sodium Free Food” as required if the food is not “Sodium Free” in accordance with 9 CFR §381.461(c)(2) or 21 CFR §101.61(c)(2).

**6.1.7 Healthy.** Food must be in accordance with 9 CFR §381.463, or 21 CFR §101.65(d)(2), and regulatory guidance in effect on the date of the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

**6.2 Labeling.** All ingredients must be declared by their common or usual name in descending order of predominance by weight (21 CFR §101.4) unless exempted by 21 CFR §101.100, or 9 CFR Part 381 as applicable.

### 6.3 Ingredients.

**6.3.1 Vegetables.** The vegetables used in the preparation of the soup mixes must be prepared from the latest season's crop, and be properly mature, wholesome, clean vegetables.

**6.3.2 Animal-based products.** The Style B, animal based soup mixes may contain, but not limited to, dehydrated beef, pork, poultry, or seafood appropriate for the specific flavor. The soup mixes containing poultry must meet the requirements of 9 CFR §381.167. Style A soup

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<sup>4</sup> RACC for dry soup mixes is 245 grams (21 CFR 101.12(b)) Table 2 - Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed Per Eating Occasion: General Food Supply

mixes must not contain any animal-based products. Style B soup mixes may or may not contain vegetable components.

**6.3.3 Noodles.** When present in the soup mixes, the noodles must contain eggs or egg yolks, enriched wheat flour, durum semolina flour and/or whole wheat flour (21 CFR §139.150).

**6.3.4 Macaroni.** When present in the soup mixes, the macaroni must contain enriched wheat flour, durum semolina flour and/or whole wheat flour, and may be formed into various shapes such as but not limited to, elbows, shells, twists, or ribbons (21 CFR §139.110).

**6.3.5 Additional processing ingredients.** When used, all additional ingredients must meet the standards specified in the Food Chemicals Codex (FCC) or, in the absence of FCC specification at a minimum, meet the specifications for quality set by the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP)-National Formulary. The additional ingredients must be approved food additives (21 CFR Part 170) or meet Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) requirements (21 CFR Parts 182 and 184) for those uses by Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

#### **6.4 Finished product.**

**6.4.1 Flavor and aroma.** The soup mixes must have appropriate characteristic flavors and odors. There must be no foreign flavors and odors such as, but not limited to, burnt, scorched, stale, rancid, musty, or moldy.

**6.4.2 Color.** The soup mixes must possess a color representative of the specific flavor.

**6.4.3 Texture.** The texture of the soup mixes including discernible pieces or particles must be applicable to the type and style specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

**6.5 Defects and foreign material.** The dehydrated vegetables used to produce the soup mixes that have Defect Action Levels must not exceed those tolerances specified in 21 CFR §117.110. All other ingredients must be clean, sound, wholesome, and free from foreign material, such as, but not limited to, extraneous plant material, dirt, plastic, insects, insect pieces or rodent or insect infestation.

#### **7. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS.**

**7.1 Analytical and microbiological requirements.** Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract or purchase order, the following analytical and microbiological requirements for the soup mixes must conform to those in Table I:

**TABLE I. Analytical and microbiological requirements**

Test	Requirement
Sodium - Reduced sodium	Must have at least 25 percent less sodium per RACC <sup>5</sup>
Sodium - Low sodium	Must have 140 mg or less sodium per RACC <sup>5</sup>
<i>Listeria monocytogenes (L. monocytogenes)</i>	Must be negative
<i>Salmonella</i>	Must be negative
Coliform	Less than 10 Colony Forming Units (CFU) per gram (g) or MPN per g <sup>6</sup>
Mold	Less than 10 CFU per g or MPN per g <sup>6</sup>

**7.2 Analytical verification.** Purchaser must specify manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

**7.3 USDA verification procedures.** When USDA certification (Sec. 10.4) is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analytical testing must be performed as follows.

**7.3.1 Product verification sampling.** When USDA verification of analytical requirements is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analytical testing must be performed on subsamples of packages randomly selected from the lot. The number of subsamples must be based on USDA inspection service sampling procedures and plans (7 CFR §52.38). The contents of each will be used to create a composite sample that will be used in the analytical testing.

**7.3.2 Analytical testing and reporting.** When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the analyses must be made in accordance with the following methods from the Association of Official Analytical Collaboration (AOAC) International Official Methods of Analysis (OMA) or as specified in Table II. Any result not conforming to the analytical requirements may be cause for rejection of the lot.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4 on page 4.

<sup>6</sup> Findings indicate zero colonies (CFU) per plate or zero tubes producing gas for MPN.

**TABLE II. Analytical and microbiological testing and reporting**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Reported as</b>
Sodium	AOAC 985.35, 984.27, 2011.14	Nearest 0.1 percent
<i>L. monocytogenes</i>	AOAC 2003.12, 2004.02, 2016.08 or BAM Ch 10 <sup>7</sup>	Must be reported as positive or negative
<i>Salmonella</i>	AOAC 967.28, 996.08, 2013.09 or BAM Ch 5 <sup>7</sup>	Must be reported as positive or negative
Coliform	AOAC 992.30, 966.24, 991.14, 2000.15, or BAM Ch 4 <sup>7</sup>	Nearest CFU or MPN per g
Mold	AOAC 995.21, 997.02	Nearest CFU or MPN per g

**8. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S PRODUCT ASSURANCE.** The manufacturer/distributor must certify that the soup mixes provided meet the salient characteristics of this CID, conform to their own specifications, standards, and quality assurance practices, and be the same soup mixes offered for sale in the commercial market. The purchaser reserves the right to require proof of conformance.

**9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.** The delivered soup mixes must comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of the soup mixes in the commercial marketplace. Delivered soup mixes must comply with all applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FD&C) Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA), and regulations promulgated thereunder. The allergen statement must be provided in a format which complies with FALCPA for any product which contains wheat, fish, milk, soy, tree nuts, eggs, peanuts, and Crustacean shellfish or those in effect on the date of the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. When the soup mixes are used for the Child Nutrition (CN) Programs, the soup mixes must comply with all applicable provisions of those programs. When a CN label is specified, the label must be approved in its final format by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

**10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS.** *Purchaser must specify 10.3 or 10.4. Purchaser may specify one of the following combinations: 10.1.1 with 10.2.1 or 10.1.2 with 10.2.2.*

<sup>7</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, FDA Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) or the FDA BAM Online. <https://www.fda.gov/food/laboratory-methods-food/bacteriological-analytical-manual-bam>

## A-A-20329B

**10.1 Food defense.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a Food Defense Systems Survey (FDSS) or audit must be conducted by USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program (SCP), Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division. Food defense requirements include a documented and operational food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials and other ingredients and post-production finished product. The plan must address the following areas: (1) food security plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) processing, including all raw material sources; (4) shipping and receiving; (5) storage; (6) water and ice supply; (7) mail handling; (8) personnel security; and (9) transportation, shipping, and receiving.

**10.1.1 FDSS.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a FDSS must be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division. The FDSS verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. An AMS FDSS verifies the participating company's adherence to *Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration* (21 CFR Part 121) and if applicable, *FSIS Food Defense Guidelines for the Transportation and Distribution of Meat, Poultry, and Processed Egg Products*.<sup>8</sup>

**10.1.2 Food defense section of the Plant Systems Audit (PSA).** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a food defense audit will be conducted as part of the PSA. The audit will be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division auditors. This verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. The food defense section of the PSA verifies the participating company's adherence to *Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration* (21 CFR Part 121) and if applicable, *FSIS Food Defense Guidelines for the Transportation and Distribution of Meat, Poultry, and Processed Egg Products*.<sup>8</sup>

**10.2 Manufacturer's quality assurance.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer will be required to provide evidence, by certificate that the manufacturing plant has undertaken one of the following quality assurance measures within 12 months prior to providing a bid or no later than 10 business days from the date of the awarding of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated for cause.

**10.2.1 Plant survey.** A plant survey conducted by USDA, AMS is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. The plant survey audit verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive*

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 3 on page 3.



*Controls for Human Food* (21 CFR Part 117). For poultry soup mixes, the manufacturer must comply with the provisions of *Conditions for Receiving Inspection* (9 CFR §§304.3 and 381.22).

**10.2.2 PSA.** A PSA conducted by USDA, AMS is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. The PSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food* (21 CFR Part 117) and verifies that the manufacturer has in place an internal quality assurance program that meets or exceeds USDA requirements. For poultry soup mixes, the manufacturer must comply with the provisions of *Conditions for Receiving Inspection* (9 CFR §§304.3 and 381.22).

**10.3 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor must certify that the soup mixes delivered meet or exceed the requirements of this CID. The manufacturer/distributor must certify via a Certificate of Conformance or other adequate documentation (*as specified by the purchaser*) that the soup mixes meet analytical requirements specified in Sec. 7 of this CID.

**10.4 USDA certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA, AMS, Livestock and Poultry (LP) Quality Assessment Division (QAD) or the SCP, SCI Division inspectors, must be the certifying program. AMS inspectors must certify the quality and acceptability of the soup mixes in accordance with AMS procedures, which include selecting random samples of the soup mixes, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics and analytical requirements of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official AMS score sheets and/or certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, AMS inspectors will examine the soup mixes for conformance to the *Standards for Condition of Food Containers* (7 CFR Part 42) in effect on the date of the solicitation.

**11. PACKAGING.** Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking must be commercial unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

**12. USDA INSPECTION NOTES.** When Sec. 10.4 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification must include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of soup mixes and compliance with requirements in the following areas:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).

## A-A-20329B

- Analytical requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 7). When USDA analytical testing is specified, SCI Division inspection personnel must select samples and submit them to the USDA, AMS, Science and Technology Program (S&T) laboratory for analysis.
- Packaging requirements (Sec. 11 or *as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order*).

### 13. REFERENCE NOTES.

#### 13.1 USDA services.

**13.1.1 QAD certification.** For QAD certification contact: **Quality Assessment Division, LP, AMS, USDA, Room 3932-S, STOP 0258, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0201, telephone (202) 720-5705 or via E-mail: [QAD.BusinessOps@usda.gov](mailto:QAD.BusinessOps@usda.gov).**

**13.1.2 USDA certification.** For USDA certification information contact: **National Program Mission Support, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, via E-mail: [SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov](mailto:SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov).**

**13.1.3 USDA FDSS, plant survey, and PSA.** For USDA FDSS, plant survey, and PSA contact the Chief, Auditing Services Branch, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1566 South Building, STOP 0247, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0247, telephone (202) 720-5021, fax (866) 230-9168, or via E-mail: [SCAudits@usda.gov](mailto:SCAudits@usda.gov).

**13.1.4 Analytical testing and technical information.** For USDA technical information on analytical testing, contact the **Laboratory Approval and Testing Division, S&T, AMS, USDA, STOP 0272, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0272, telephone (202) 690-4089 or via E-mail: [LATD@usda.gov](mailto:LATD@usda.gov).** Samples for specified USDA analytical testing should be sent to the USDA, AMS, S&T laboratory for analysis at: **USDA, AMS, S&T, National Science Laboratory, 801 Summit Crossing Place, Suite B, Gastonia, NC 28054.**

#### 13.2 Sources of documents.

##### 13.2.1 Sources of information for nongovernmental documents are as follows:

Copies of the AOAC International OMA may be obtained from: **AOAC International, 2275 Research Boulevard, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20850-3250, telephone (301) 924-7077.** Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org> for nonmembers and <http://www.eoma.aoac.org> for members and AOAC OMA subscribers.

Copies of the Food Chemicals Codex and U.S. Pharmacopeia may be purchased from: **United States Pharmacopeia Convention, 12601 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, MD 20877,**

telephone (800) 227-8772 or (301) 881-0666, fax (301) 816-8148 or on the Internet at: <http://www.usp.org>.

### **13.2.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:**

Applicable provisions of the Standards for Condition of Food Containers are contained in 7 CFR Part 42, the National Organic Program are contained in 7 CFR Part 205, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regulations are contained in 7 CFR Part 210, APPENDIX C to Part 210, the Food Safety and Inspection Service are contained in 9 CFR Parts 300 to 599, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act are contained in 16 CFR Parts 500 to 503, and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act are contained in 21 CFR Parts 1 to 199. These documents may be purchased from: **Superintendent of Documents, New Orders, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000.** Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover/NOVUS, and American Express) purchases may be made by calling the Superintendent of Documents at (866) 512-1800, (202) 512-1800. These documents may also be obtained free of charge on the Internet at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR>.

Copies of the FSIS Food Defense Guidelines for the Transportation and Distribution of Meat, Poultry, and Processed Egg Products are available online from: **USDA, FSIS on the Internet** at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/node/2032>.

Copies of U.S. standards and inspection instructions for fruits, vegetables, and other specialty products may be obtained from: **USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division, 100 Riverside Parkway, Suite 101, Fredericksburg, VA 22406, telephone (650) 552-9073, fax (650) 552-9147, or via E-mail: [FVSupplyDepot@usda.gov](mailto:FVSupplyDepot@usda.gov) or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards> and <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/how-purchase-equipment-and-visual-aids>.**

Copies of the FDA Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) are available online from: **FDA, Center of Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) on the Internet** at: <https://www.fda.gov/food/laboratory-methods-food/bacteriological-analytical-manual-bam>.

Copies of this CID and the Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) are available from: **Director, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1536 South Building, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, via E-mail: [CIDS@usda.gov](mailto:CIDS@usda.gov) or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cids> and <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2019-title7-vol2/pdf/CFR-2019-title7-vol2-part42.pdf>.**

## **A-A-20329B**

### **CIVIL AGENCY COORDINATING ACTIVITY:**

DOJ - BOP  
HHS - FDA  
USDA - SCP, FSIS  
VA - OSS

### **PREPARING ACTIVITY:**

USDA - SCP

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

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

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

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