

United States Department of Agriculture

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Agricultural Marketing Service

Specialty Crops Program

Specialty Crops Inspection Division

Commodity Specification for Frozen Vegetables

June 2017

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I. General

A. U.S. Standards

Frozen vegetables (product/commodity) produced under this Commodity Specification must meet the requirements specified in the applicable United States Standards for Grades of Frozen Vegetables (U.S. Standards) effective on the date of the Solicitation/Invitation for Bid (IFB). The U.S. Standards are published separately and are incorporated herein and made a part of this Commodity Specification.

B. Exceptions to U.S. Standards and/or Commercial Item Description (CID)

Exceptions to the U.S. Standards for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) frozen vegetables purchases and/or CID are found in Section II, Individual Commodity Specifications, of this document. Additional exceptions may be specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. Any exceptions contained in the applicable Solicitation/IFB shall have precedence over the requirements contained herein, for that Solicitation/IFB only.

1. Order of Precedence

If the contract documents are inconsistent or contradictory, the following order of precedence will prevail: Solicitation/IFB, Master Solicitation, Amendments to the Commodity Specifications, and Commodity Specifications and/or Supplement(s).

C. Product Origin

- Commodities delivered pursuant to this Commodity Specification shall have originated from crops that have been 100 percent grown, processed, and packed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, (hereinafter referred to as the United States). See Section I., F. of the Master Solicitation.
- 2) If the contractor handles any commodity originating from sources other than the United States, the contractor must have a written plan to segregate the commodity. This segregation plan will include an identification and record system for all commodities to ensure they are completely segregated and cannot be used to fulfill purchase orders awarded by USDA. Such segregation plan must be made available, within 10 days of purchase order award, to representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
- 3) The contractor must maintain positive written documentation records evidencing 100 percent domestic origin to the grower level. Contractors must also ensure that the documentation provided by any subcontractors demonstrate the same level of traceability. The burden of proof of compliance is on the contractor.

Documentation may include load or warehouse storage receipts for raw product (i.e., bin tags), product blend (formulation) records, product coding explanations, finished product, warehousing records, shipping or payment records, or other documentation or evidence that clearly establishes the product's domestic origin.

- 4) Contractors must provide the domestic origin certification and supporting documentation records to representatives of the AMS Fruit and Vegetable Program, Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division (USDA Inspector) when requesting inspection service. USDA Inspectors will select and review at least one code for each purchase order or IDIQ contract to determine compliance with the Agency's domestic origin requirements.
- 5) Such records must be available for review by the Government in accordance with FAR 52.214-26. In the event of an audit, AMS auditors will examine as many codes as is necessary to verify compliance.
- 6) Self-certifications by contractors and subcontractors will not be accepted.
- 7) Failure to observe this requirement may lead to suspension or debarment, purchase order termination, and penalties at Title 18, Section 1001 of the U.S. Code concerning falsification of information.

D. Kosher Products

Occasionally, USDA solicits offers to sell KOSHER products. Such products are identified on the solicitation with the letter "K" incorporated into the WBSCM material descriptions. Vendors must comply with the applicable dietary (KOSHER) laws as established by the "613 COUNCIL OF KASHRUTH" in the production of these commodity products. Vendors must not bid on these purchase unites unless they can be properly verified.

Vendors receiving purchase order items identified as "KOSHER" must contact the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York (BJENY) at telephone 646-427-5365 prior to manufacturing the commodity product to arrange for certification of compliance with the applicable dietary (kosher) laws.

E. Packing Season

All frozen vegetables must be from the current packing season/crop year, unless otherwise specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB.

F. Shipment

Shipment of frozen vegetables must be at 0 degrees (plus or minus 10 degrees F).

G. Grade of Frozen Vegetables

All frozen vegetables must be U.S. Grade A (as defined in the U. S. Standards) unless otherwise specified in Section II, Individual Product Specifications, herein or the applicable Solicitation/IFB.

H. Fill of Container

- 1) Contractor must meet the net weight for the product as specified in the applicable U.S. Standards unless otherwise indicated herein.
 - a) Shipping cases for frozen product shall contain twelve 2 ¹/₂-pounds, six 5pounds, or 30-pound bulk container.

b) The average net weight must meet the net weight as printed on the label and the Individual Commodity Specification Section II.

I. Packing, Labels and Packaging

1. Primary Containers

a) Vendors have the option to use commercial/retail labeling and packaging which meets all applicable FDA requirements (link to: FDA Food Labeling Regulations) and suitably code marked so that the product can be identified with related inspection certificates or traceability in the event of a recall. Retail labels must meet minimum requirements as specified in the Master Solicitation.

b) All products must be packed in new, commercially acceptable primary containers which meets all applicable FDA packaging and labeling requirements.

(Link to: FDA Food Labeling Regulations)

- c) For containers with net weight of 3 pounds or less.
 - i. Product labeling (regardless of package type and color) must have at least 1 color in addition to black and/or white and a visual representation of the product if the container is not clear.
 - or
 - ii. For non-transparent printed poly containers: Must have at least 1 color in addition to black and/or white and a product viewing window of sufficient size that the product within is easily identifiable.

Minimum FDA labeling requirements are:

- Statement of identity, or name of the food
- Net quantity statement
- Ingredient statement
- Manufacturer or distributor location statement
- Allergen declaration (if product contains a major allergen)
- A "Keep Frozen" statement
- Contains a code which allows traceability of the product in the event of a recall

2. Secondary Container (case) and Markings

- a) Primary containers shall be further enclosed within new, corrugated fiberboard cartons (cases) acceptable by common or other carriers for safe transportation to destinations.
- b) Case flaps gaps, and other openings may not exceed 1 inch and must be fully sealed with tape. Tape must be clear and of commercially acceptable width and strength. The tape must extend at least two inches down the sides

or ends.

- c) Mixing and matching of USDA and commercial labeling methods will not be acceptable.
- d) Two or more different commercial labels are not allowed within a shipping unit (truckload).
- e) For institutional/foodservice pack sizes (larger than 3 lbs net weight) minimum labeling information listed above must appear on the secondary container if not included on the primary packing.
- f) The construction of shipping cases shall be adequate to withstand normal refrigerated shipping and cold storage.
- g) Corrugated fiberboard construction, rated at a minimum of 275 pounds per square inch bursting strength for 30-pound cartons and 40 pound cases and 225 pounds PSI for 20 and 25 pound cases.
- h) Markings for Non-Commercial Shipping Containers must meet requirements of Exhibit 1.

J. Universal Product Codes (UPC)

Contractor UPC's are acceptable for primary containers of product shipped utilizing commercial labels and/or secondary fiberboard cases enclosing commercially labeled product. Primary label and shipping container Universal Product Codes for USDA products if applicable are listed in Exhibit 3. The Contractor's UPC is not acceptable. The shipping container UPC must be marked on the case as shown in Exhibit 2.

K. Palletization Requirements

1) Pallets

Products must be on 48 X 40 inch, non-reversible, flush stringer, and partial four-way entry. New pallets must be good quality wood. Used pallets must be No.1 hardwood or its equivalent in new softwood. **Broken or damaged pallets are unacceptable.** If pallet exchange is desired, the contractor shall arrange for pallet exchange with consignees. USDA is in no way responsible for arrangement of pallet exchange.

2) Unitization

Each delivery unit of frozen vegetables must be unitized. Shipping cases must be stacked and secured from top to bottom, so that each container and layer of containers becomes an integral part of the pallet. Either stretch wrapping with plastic film or "lock 'n pop" is acceptable. The palletized product must be loaded in the conveyance in such a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product.

L. Shipment and Delivery

1) Quantity Tolerance

Contractor will be allowed a tolerance on the final delivery of plus or minus 50 cases of **each product,** from **each shipping point** named in the purchase order.

II. Individual Commodity Specifications

A. Frozen, Asparagus

Cut Spears (Cuts & Tips)

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Sizes (Diameter) of spears and tips medium size or No. 2 classification 3/8 inch or larger but less than 5/8 inch.
- 3. Length of cut 1 inch, plus or minus $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
- 4. Net Weight
 - a. 30 pounds per case (6/5 pound bags.)
 - b. 30 pounds per case (12/2.5 pound bags.)

Whole Spears

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Net Weight 15 pounds per case (6/2.5 pound bags.)

B. Frozen, Whole Kernel Corn

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade B or better.
- 2. Color Type Golden (or yellow).
- 3. Variety Frozen Super sweet Whole Kernel Corn may be used as long as it follows the guidelines A-493.
- 4. Net Weight -30 pounds per case.

C. Frozen, Peas

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade B or better, with no additives except salt acquired during processing.
- 2. Net Weight
 - a. 1/30 pounds per case
 - b. 1/30 pounds per case, Kosher
 - c. 12/2.5 pound containers per case

D. Frozen, Green Beans

Grade – U.S. Grade B or better, except shall be U.S. Grade A for extraneous vegetable material.

1. Type – Round.

- 2. Color Green.
- 3. Styles For Material Code 100351, product will be <u>only</u> Style a. CUT, unless specified differently in the Solicitation/IFB.
 - a. Cut provided that the cut style units are one inch in length or longer.
 - b. Sliced lengthwise, or French style.
 - c. Whole.
- 4. Net Weight -30 pounds per case

NOTE: Compliance with "cut" style one inch or longer provisions will be determined using the criteria in the United States Standards for Grades of Frozen Green and Wax Beans", <u>except</u> to change the definition of a minor defect in Table II for "cut" style to read: "Piece shorter than ³/₄ inch in length."

E. Frozen, Mixed Vegetables

- 1. Grade –U.S. Grade B or better.
- 2. Proportions of Ingredients <u>3 way mix.</u>
 - a. Not more than 40 percent by weight carrots (diced style 3/8 to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cube).
 - b. Not more than 40 percent by weight corn (sweet, golden or yellow, whole kernel corn).
 - c. Not more than 40 percent by weight green peas.
- 3. Proportions of Ingredients 4 way mix. (+ or 10 percent).
 - a. 25 percent by weight carrots (diced style 3/8 to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cube).
 - b. 25 percent by weight green peas.
 - c. 25 percent by weight corn (sweet, golden or yellow, whole kernel corn).
 - d. 25 percent by weight cut style green beans predominantly of 1/2 inch to 1-1/2 inch cuts

F. Frozen, Carrots

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Style
 - a. Sliced (straight cut or crinkle cut), maximum diameter 1 ¹/₂ inches.
 - b. Diced ($\frac{3}{8}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cube).
- 3. Net Weight -30 pounds or 12/2.5 pound bags.

G. Frozen, Corn-on-the-Cob

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A (or U.S. Fancy).
- 2. Length Short (3 inches to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

- 3. Color Golden (or yellow).
- 4. Style Trimmed.
- 5. Unit Size 1,320 cases.
- 6. Pack Size 96 ears per case.

H. Frozen, Mashed Sweet Potatoes

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Color Golden, Yellow, or Mixed.
- 3. Style Mashed.
- 4. Net Weight -30 pounds (6/5 pound bags.)

I. Frozen, Cut or Chunks Sweet Potatoes

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Color Golden, Yellow, or Mixed.
- 3. Style Cut or Chunks.
- 4. Cut Size $-\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch.
- 5. Net Weight 30 pounds (6/5 pound bags.)

J. Frozen Broccoli

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Style Short Spears or Florets.
- 3. Each short spear or floret must weigh more than 4 grams.
- 4. Net Weight 30 pounds (6/5 pound bags.)

K. Frozen IQF Spinach

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Style Chopped.
- 3. Package size -12/2 pounds or 20 pounds.

L. Frozen, IQF Mushrooms

All vendors and/or suppliers providing fresh mushrooms shall undergo a "Mushroom Good Agricultural Practices Program" audit, 2010. The audit <u>must</u> be conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Specialty Crops Program (SCP), Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division or licensed Federal-State auditors providing services under a cooperative agreement with USDA oversight. The audit conducted must be the USDA, GAP & GHP Audit for mushroom production. The audit must cover all parts of the operation which are applicable to the commodity being purchased.

A copy of the audit standards and checklists are available on the USDA website at <u>http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/gapghp</u>, or from your local USDA or Federal-State inspection office. A listing of USDA and Federal-State inspection offices are also available on the website listed above.

- 1. Color White or Cream; or Brown. Fairly good color may possess a grayish cast that does not seriously affect the overall color or appearance. The color of the gills of the diced units is not darker than tannish gray for white or cream, and may be dark brownish gray for brown. The contrast in color between the gills and surface of the diced units shall not seriously affect the overall color appearance of the product.
- 2. Style Diced.
- 3. Size -3/8 inch. Fairly uniform in size and shape, not more than 15 percent by weight of the units may be more than 3/8 inch.
- 4. Defects Fairly free from defects. Not more than 10 percent by weight may contain discoloration due to brown spot or rust spots that extend into the flesh, or mechanical damage causing a ragged appearance. Mushrooms shall contain no more than an average of 1 piece per 100 ounces of harmless extraneous material (HEM) not limited to loose root material or small pieces of straw no longer than 1 inch in length. Shall contain no foreign material such as: grit, soil or compost; wood splinters; rot or decay; insects or insect fragments; or maggots. Foreign material may be detected upon visual examination during the regular grading process. An exception would be the presence of maggots, and then microscopic examination would be required.
- 5. Character Fairly good character. Units shall be tender; may be slightly soft; with no more than 10 percent by weight excessively soft; fibrous, or rubbery. Mushrooms shall be free flowing and not have more than 10 percent by weight frozen clumps greater than 1 inch in size.
- 6. Flavor and Odor Normal flavor and odor. Mushrooms shall have the odor of fresh, clean mushrooms free from objectionable flavors and objectionable odors of any kind.
- 7. Hydration Mushrooms shall not be hydrated.
- 8. Net Weight -40 pounds per case.

M. Frozen, Vegetable Blends

Vegetable blends shall meet the salient characteristics specified in CID A-A-20294A, effective on the date of the Solicitation/IFB with the following <u>exception</u>:

Analytical requirements in Section 6.1 of CID A-A-20294A for this commodity are not required.

- 1. Sweet Peppers and Onion Blend
 - a. Blend I Two or more vegetable(s) packaged together.
 - b. Vegetable 24, Sweet pepper, green; Designation d sliced.

- c. Vegetable 25, Sweet pepper, red; Designation d sliced.
- d. Vegetable 14, Onion; Designation c strips.
- 2. Additional Quality Factors
 - a. Proportion of ingredients: 34% Green Peppers, 33% Red Peppers, 33% Onions.
 - b. Tolerance of proportions: (+ or –) 10%.
 - c. The final product blend is reasonably free flowing, reasonably bright, and possesses reasonably uniform units.

N. Frozen, Sweet Peppers

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A.
- 2. Types of frozen sweet peppers.
 - a. Type: I, green.
 - b. Type: II, red.
- 3. Style: Sliced (strips).
- 4. Note from U.S. Standard Uniformity: The units are practically uniform in size and the aggregate weight of all strips less than 1-1/4 inches in length does not exceed 30 percent, by weight, of all the units.
- 5. Additional Quality Factors
 - a. Strip size: Width, approximately 3/8 inch; for length, see uniformity above.

O. Frozen, Onions

Style – Strips (width, approximately 3/8 inch, for length see uniformity below)

- 1. Additional Quality Factors
 - a. Color: Good color. The onions have a good characteristic bright color typical of the varieties.
 - b. Appearance: The product is reasonably free flowing, reasonably bright, and has reasonably uniform units. The overall appearance or edibility of the frozen onions is slightly but not seriously affected by markedly variable units, small specks, or other factors.
 - c. Uniformity: The aggregate weight of all strips less than 1-1/4 inches in length does not exceed 30 percent, by weight, of all the units.
 - d. Defects: The onions are practically free of defects such as but not limited to, dark green units, blemishes, peel, mechanical damage, sprouts, root crown, and core material.
 - e. Character: Good character. The onions are uniformly firm and tender, and

practically free of soft and spongy units.

- f. Flavor and odor: the frozen onions, before and after cooking, have a flavor and odor that is normal and typical for the variety and is free from objectionable flavors and odors.
- 2. The frozen onions have no grit or dirt present that affects the appearance or edibility of the product.
- 3. Net weight
 - a. 30 pounds per case (1/30 pound case).
 - b. 30 pounds per case (6/5 pound bags).
 - c. 30 pounds per case (12/2.5 pound bags).

P. Frozen, Butternut Squash

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A based on the U.S. Standards for Grades of Frozen Squash (Summer Type) with the following exceptions:
 - a. Style Diced, approximately $3/4 \times 3/4$ inch cubes.
 - b. A poorly cut dice is defined as any units smaller than one half the volume of the predominant size unit.
- 2. Net Weight 6/5 pound containers per case.

Q. Frozen Potatoes, Diced

- 1. Grade U.S. Grade A based on U.S. Standards for Grades of Frozen Hash Brown Potatoes.
- 2. The potatoes will be blanched but will not be fried.
- 3. Style Diced approximately ½ x ½ inch cubes and which contain not more than 90 grams, per sample unit, of units smaller than one half the volume of the predominant size unit.
- 4. Net Weight 6/5 pound containers per case.

III. Inspection and Checkloading

A. Requirements

Representatives of the AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Program, Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division (USDA Inspector) must perform the inspection and checkloading. See section X of the Master Solicitation. The cost of inspection, samples taken for inspection, mailing of review samples submitted for evaluation, and any chemical analysis required for testing shall be for the account of the Contractor.

Inspection of frozen products must be performed not more than 60 days prior to shipment. Whether each lot offered meets the product and container requirements of the purchase order must be determined on the basis of representative sample units. Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Frozen Vegetables and Related Products (7 C.F.R. Part 52), and United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 C.F.R. Part 42.140), effective on the date of the Solicitation/IFB.

Case stamping is not acceptable for frozen vegetables.

B. Certification

Subject to (See section X of the Master Solicitation) the acceptability of the quality, weight, packaging, and checkloading of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Inspector.

No product shall be shipped unless the USDA Inspector informs the Contractor that a designated lot is acceptable. Notice by the USDA Inspector that a designated lot scheduled for shipment does not meet requirements of the purchase order shall constitute rejection of such lot.

C. Procedures

The Contractor must give the USDA Inspector at least 7 days advance notice when scheduling inspection service. Prior to sampling, the Contractor must furnish the USDA Inspector with a list of codes and the approximate number of cases per code.

Contractors are encouraged to submit requests for inspection in writing with verifiable receipt notice, such as fax log, to alleviate possible miscommunication.

D. Laboratory Tests

The Contractor must allow 14 days after product sampling for laboratory tests (when required) to be completed and returned.

IV. Failure to Meet Specifications

Any lot which fails applicable specifications prescribed herein will be rejected as not acceptable for delivery. If any lot of frozen vegetables fails to meet the product or packaging requirement, the Contractor may request in writing that USDA accept delivery of the lot. USDA may <u>at its option</u>, accept delivery, provided that the purchase price is the purchase order price less a discount, to be determined by the Contracting Officer.

V. Exhibits

Exhibit 1

Required Markings for Non-Commercial Shipping Containers ALL PRINTING TO BE IN BLACK INK

BOTH SIDE PANELS		BOTH END PANELS		
PRODUCT NAME 1/ 2/		PRODUCT NAME PURCHASE ORDER NO. 3/		
USDA SYMBOL	5/	4/		

KEEP FROZEN

Product name must be printed or stenciled on a separate line in letters at least three-fourths inch high, and all other information must be in letters less than three-fourths inch but at least threeeighths inch high. The USDA Food Symbol must be printed, stamped, or labeled and be of sufficient size to stand out prominently. Case markings must be limited to case codes and those contained in this Exhibit.

- 1/ Insert any additional product style, pack, packing media, or further definition as applicable.
- 2/ Insert the size and number of packages per case, i.e. 6 /No. 10 cans, 6/5 pound bags, 12/46 ounce cans, 1/25 pound bag.
- 3/ Insert the last five digits of the purchase order number.
- 4/ Insert name of Packer and Packer's Address City, State, and Zip Code. This information can be placed on the end panels or the side panels.
- 5/ Insert Universal Product Code (see Exhibit "3").

Recycle symbols and statements can be placed on bottom panels (Exhibit "4" and "5").

Exhibit 2

Alternative Label for Shipping Containers (Includes all Required Information)



Product Name Style Purchase Order Number xxxxx Packed by: ABC Growers Any Town, CA 99999

KEEP FROZEN



Exhibit 3

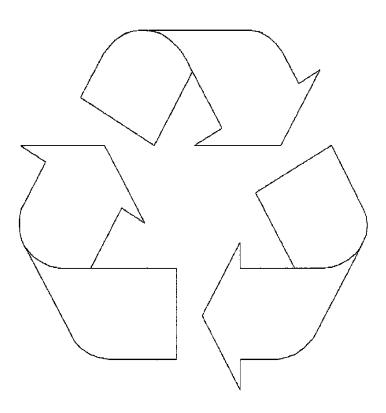
Universal Product Codes

Frozen Vegetables	WBSCM Material	Primary Container	Secondary Container
Asparagus, Whole Spears (6/2.5 lb.)	100304	7 15001 00304 1	1 07 15001 00304 8
Asparagus (12/2.5 lb.)	100346		1 07 15001 00346 8
Broccoli (6/5 lb.)	110282	7 15001 10282 9	1 07 15001 10282 6
Broccoli (30 lb.)	110473		1 07 15001 10473 2
Butternut Squash Diced (6/5 lb.)	110861	7 15001 10861 6	1 07 15001 10861 3
Carrots Sliced (30 lb.)	100352		1 07 15001 00352 9
Carrots Sliced (30 lb.), Kosher	110064		1 07 15001 10064 8
Carrots Diced (30 lb.)	110480		1 07 15001 10480 4
Carrots Diced (12/2.5 lb.)	110481	7 15001 10481 4	1 07 15001 10481 7
Corn (30 lb.)	100348		1 07 15001 00348 2
Corn-on-the-cob (96 ears per case)	100349		1 07 15001 00349 9
Corn-on-the-cob (96 ears per case), Kosher	110061		1 07 15001 10061 7
Green Beans (Cut Style, 30 lb.)	100351		1 07 15001 00351 2
Green Beans (Cut Style, 30 lb.), Kosher	110063		1 07 15001 10063 1
Mixed Vegetables (4-way mix, 6/5 pound)	110871	7 15001 10871 5	1 07 15001 10871 2
Potatoes (Diced, 6/5 lb.)	110844	7 15001 10844 9	1 07 15001 10844 6
Sweet Potatoes Mashed (6/5 lb.)	100354	7 15001 00354 6	1 07 15001 00354 3
Sweet Potatoes Chunks (6/5 lb.)	110562	7 15001 10562 2	1 07 15001 10562 9
Mushrooms Diced IQF-CTN (40lb.)	110421		1 07 15001 10421 8
Peas (12/2.5)	110763	7 15001 10763 3	1 07 15001 10763 0
Peas (30 lb.)	100350		1 07 15001 00350 5
Peas (30 lb.), Kosher	110062		1 07 15001 10062 4
Random Cut Sweet Potatoes (6/5 lb.)	100353	7 15001 00353 9	1 07 15001 00353 6
Spinach Chopped IQF-PKG (12/2 lb.)	110391	7 15001 10391 2	1 07 15001 10391 5
Spinach Chopped IQF-CTN (20 lb.)	110392	7 15001 10392 5	1 07 15001 10392 8

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Exhibit 4

"Please Recycle" Symbol and Statement



PLEASE RECYCLE

SCI Division Commodity Specifications Effective Date: June 2017 Frozen Vegetables 18 of 19

Exhibit 5

"Corrugated Recycles" Symbol and Statement



Corrugated Recycles

SCI Division Commodity Specifications Effective Date: June 2017

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Exhibit 6 USDA Symbol

