



**Commodity Specification**

**Ground Turkey  
For Cooking Only  
In a  
USDA-Approved Facility**

**October 2006**



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## **I. GENERAL**

### **A. Product Description**

Ground turkey (commodity) will be further processed into fully cooked products. The commodity that will be produced under this Specification will be packaged and packed in the following form as specified in the contract:

Ground Turkey for Cooking Only in a USDA-Approved Facility (233540) - Frozen ground turkey packed for further processing. The commodity must be packed in commercial containers as required within this Specification. A purchase unit will total 40,000 pounds (18,144 kg).

### **B. Food Defense Requirements**

Contractors and subcontractors participating in the commodity purchase program must have a documented food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of finished product after production. The plan shall address the following areas: (1) food security plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) slaughter and 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) controlled access to production and storage areas. The food defense plan shall be made available to USDA Certification Agents immediately upon request. Verification of the Food Defense Program at the processing, storage and distribution facility will be conducted by the USDA Certification Agents.

### **C. Commodity Complaints**

The Contractor/producer must immediately report all complaints received on the commodity to the USDA Contracting Officer.

## **II. COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS**

### **A. Basic Requirements**

1. Date Processed. The commodity may not be processed more than 30 days prior to the date of the contract.

2. Origin of Turkeys. The commodity must be produced and processed from ready-to-cook turkeys, turkey parts, boneless parts, meat and skin (turkey products) which were produced, raised, and processed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. If the Contractor processes or handles turkey products originating from sources other than the United States, its territories or possessions, Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, the Contractor must have an acceptable identification and segregation plan for those turkey products to ensure they are not used in the commodities produced under this Specification. This plan must be made available to a representative of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA

## II.A.2.

(Grader), and the Contracting Officer or agent thereof upon request. The contractor must ensure that both the Contractor and subcontractor(s) maintain records such as invoices, or production and inventory records evidencing product origin, and make such records available for review by the Grader or other Government official(s) in accordance with Article 76 of USDA-1.

3. Inspection. Processing operations must comply with Poultry Products Inspection Regulations (9 C.F.R. part 381) and be under the supervision of a representative (Inspector) of the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Inspection for contract and specification compliance will be in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit Products (7 C.F.R. part 70) and the U.S. Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry (AMS 70.200 *et seq.*) under the supervision of a Grader. The Grader will be responsible for certification of compliance with the requirements of this Specification for chilled turkey products; formulation, processing, cooling of ground turkey; packaging and packing; freezing; labeling and marking; sampling; laboratory results; net weight; and checkloading.

4. FSIS Requirements. The commodity must be produced and processed in a FSIS federally inspected establishment, be accurately marked and/or labeled, and meet all FSIS regulatory requirements, including all microbiological testing requirements, currently in place and required by this Specification.

5. USDA Sampling Option. USDA may select additional product for further inspection or may draw samples for laboratory analyses.

6. Turkey Products from Other Plants. Chilled turkey and turkey products may be transferred or obtained from other plants to produce the ground turkey, provided they: (a) have been processed, handled, and identified in accordance with this Specification, and (b) comply with the freshly slaughtered, non-basted, organoleptic, and other applicable requirements of this Specification as evidenced by USDA certification.

a. Type, class, and specific name of the product, part, boneless part, or meat; date slaughtered; and the USDA-assigned plant number must be shown on each shipping container.

b. The chilled turkey and turkey products must be at an internal product temperature not higher than 40° F (4.4° C) and not lower than 26 ° F (-3.3 ° C) when shipped from the origin plant and when received at the destination plant.

### B. Requirements for Turkey

1. Sources of Meat and Skin. The commodity must be prepared from freshly slaughtered young turkeys. The meat and skin must be from non-basted carcasses and parts (no solution or ingredients added). No frozen or previously frozen carcasses or parts may be used.

## II.B.

2. Time Requirements. The chilled turkey and bone-in, skin-on or skinless turkey parts must be deboned and used in the finished commodity within 7 calendar days after the date of slaughter. Within this 7-day timeframe, deboned meat (with skin attached or without skin) from turkey and turkey parts must be used in the ground turkey within 36 hours after deboning.

3. Maximum Temperature. The temperature of the carcasses and bone-in or boneless parts must not exceed 55° F (12.8° C) at any time during preparation or processing of these turkey products into ground turkey.

4. Cooling Requirements. Carcasses and bone-in or boneless parts which are not used in the ground turkey on a continuous basis, must be cooled by cooling methods/media that ensure that the internal product temperature is continuously lowered to not higher than 40° F (4.4° C) and not lower than 26° F (-3.3° C).

5. Cooling Medium.

a. Cooling methods and media (e.g., liquid CO<sub>2</sub> , dry ice, or liquid N<sub>2</sub> ) may be used to maintain the temperature of meat and parts.

b. Water, refrigerated water, slush ice and water, or ice used to cool or maintain the temperature of meat or parts must not be incorporated into the ground turkey. Liquid associated with normal product purge is acceptable.

6. Neck and Crop Skin. Neck skin may not be used in ground turkey. The fatty, blubbery, spongy fat and membranes must be removed from the skin covering the crop area before it can be used.

7. Requirements for Desinewing. The long bone (tibiotarsus) must be removed from the drumsticks before the drumsticks (with or without attached skin) are processed through a desinewer to remove the tendons.

8. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects.

a. Organoleptic requirements. Meat, boneless parts, deboned drumsticks, and parts (bone-in) will be examined on a continuous basis for the organoleptic requirements listed in Table 1. Any product that does not comply with the organoleptic requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

b. Defects.

(1) A sample of 30 pieces of meat, boneless parts, deboned drumsticks, and parts (bone-in) will be examined for the defects listed in Table 1 before formulation or size reduction. The frequency of sampling and the number of defects allowed will be those outlined **II.B.8.b.(1).**

in Poultry Programs' Sample Plan Level 1 (SPL-1). If the sample has more defects than the maximum tolerance for the sample plan, the product the sample represents will be rejected.

(2) If simultaneous size-reduction and bone removal systems are used, whole, bone-in parts shall be examined for the applicable defects listed in Table 1 except for the presence of bone or bone-like material, hard tendon or tendinous material, or cartilage (gristle).

**Table 1. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects for Meat and Skin**

| <b>Organoleptic Requirements:</b> | <b>Criteria</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
|                                   | <b>Defects</b>   |
| <b>All Meat and Parts:</b>        | <p><b>A flesh bruise</b> on meat or on a part that exceeds an area equivalent to the area of a circle with a diameter of 0.75 inch (1.91 cm).</p> <p><b>Large blood clots</b> on the meat or on a part, which exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle with a diameter of 0.25 inch (0.64 cm).</p> <p><b>A defect for discolorations</b> in the meat or skin is when the aggregate area of all discolorations, which are moderate in intensity exceeds an area equivalent to the area of a circle having a diameter of 1.50 inches (3.81 cm).</p> |
| <b>Bone-In Parts:</b>             | <b>More than one-third</b> of the meat missing on a bone-in part.  |
| <b>Boneless Drumstick Meat:</b>   | <b>Bone or</b> bone-like material, except that the knucklebone (patella) may be present.   |
| <b>Other Boneless Meat:</b>       | <p><b>Bone or</b> bone-like material, hard tendon or tendinous material, ligament or ligamentous material, or cartilage (gristle).</p> <p><b>A boneless thigh with</b> more than one-half of the meat missing.</p>   |

## C. Formulation and Processing Requirements for Ground Turkey

1. Formulas. Ground turkey must be formulated according to one of the following two formulas:

a. Boneless meat basis. Formula based on deboned meat (with or without attached skin) or boneless parts. The maximum amount that can be used in a formula is specified when applicable.

(1) White meat (with or without attached skin). The maximum amount of white meat (with or without attached skin) that can be used in a formula is 30 percent of the total weight of the formula. The white meat may be wing meat or the scapula portion. Other white meat trimmed from the frames (white frame meat) may be used. White frame meat is limited to no more than 3 percent of the total weight of the formula.

(2) Dark meat (with or without attached skin). Boneless thighs or boneless and skinless thighs (not more than one-half of meat missing) or desinewed drumstick meat may be used. Dark meat trimmed from the frame (dark frame meat) may be used. Dark frame meat is limited to not more than 2 percent of the total weight of the formula.

b. Bone-in basis. Formula based on whole, bone-in parts (with or without attached skin). The maximum amount of a specific part that can be used in a formula is specified when applicable. These parts are for preparation of ground turkey by mechanically removing the meat and skin from the bones and simultaneously reducing the size of the meat and skin (mechanical and simultaneous reduction process).

(1) Drumsticks and/or Thighs. Whole drumsticks and/or thighs may be used.

(2) Wings. Wings may be whole or portions. Wing tips can only be used when they are part of a whole wing. The maximum amount of wings or wing portions that can be used in a formula is 40 percent of the total weight of the formula.

2. Skin. Neck and crop may be formulated according to II.B.6. Skin that is attached to the meat or parts may be formulated according to II.C.1. in natural proportion only.

3. Fat Requirements. The ground turkey must be formulated so the fat content complies with the requirements in II.E.

4. Processing and Size Reduction.

a. Processing. The meat must be processed and blended, as applicable, and reduced in size by equipment and procedures that produce a uniform blend of meat and skin with muscle fiber-like texture, and having the appearance and functional properties of ground turkey.

### II.C.4.

b. Size reduction. Meat for the ground turkey must be reduced in size by one of

the following procedures:

- (1) Ground through a plate with holes 0.125 inch (1/8 inch) (3.175 mm) in diameter;
- (2) Desinewed or reduced through a desinewer plate or screen with holes 0.0591 inch to 0.0787 inch (1.5 mm to 2.0 mm) in diameter or as required to ensure equivalent removal of tendons present in the meat;
- (3) Reduced through a head consisting of a series of screen plates with rectangular-like openings that measure: (a) 0.018 to 0.020 inch by 0.765 to 0.831 inch and/or (b) 0.018 to 0.020 inch by 0.255 to 0.302 inch. (Measurement of the rectangular-like openings in metric units: (a) 0.4572 to 0.5080 mm by 19.4310 to 21.1074 mm and (b) 0.4572 to 0.5080 mm by 6.4770 to 7.6708 mm.) The screen plates with the smaller openings will be positioned at the exit end of the auger and the number of these screen plates cannot be more than 12 percent of the total number of screen plates in the head; or
- (4) Ground through a plate with holes 2 inches (5.08 cm) in diameter followed by size reduction through a stainless steel cylinder or screen with a series of round openings that divide the surface into thirds. Two-thirds (2/3) of the surface will have openings which measure 0.050 inch (1.27 mm). The exit end (the final 1/3) of the surface will be blank (no openings).

For mechanical removal and simultaneous reduction process, the contractor must give the Grader the model of the machine, the size of the cylinder screen or screen plates, the number of each size and the sequence of the screen plates, which will be used to produce size-reduced meat and skin for use under this Specification. In addition, the contractor must have established control procedures to ensure the cylinder screen or screen plates are in the correct position, the screen plates are in the correct sequence, and that the cylinder screen or screen plates and the auger are aligned and maintained in an operating condition that will continuously produce a product which complies with the texture criteria and other requirements of this Specification. These control procedures must be reviewed and found acceptable by supervisory personnel of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, before size-reduced meat and skin can be used as ground turkey under this Specification.

c. Reducing size of skin.

- (1) Skin which is removed from the meat must be reduced in size to approximately the same particle size as the meat before it is added to a formula.
- (2) Skin must be processed so its fibrous-like texture is not destroyed. The reduced size must be blended uniformly with the meat.

**II.C.4.**

d. Size reduction equipment. Any bent, broken, or defective blade, cylinder, screen, or plate must be replaced before the size reduction equipment can be used for reducing

meat and skin.

e. Unacceptable size-reduced product. Meat and skin which cannot be used in the ground turkey: (1) comminuted meat; (2) meat or skin-on meat reduced to an emulsified or pasty consistency; (3) meat or skin-on meat which developed a discoloration during size-reduction process; or (4) size-reduced meat or skin-on meat which has been previously frozen.

5. Cooling Size-Reduced Turkey Product. Cooling methods and media (e.g., use of liquid CO<sub>2</sub>, dry ice, or liquid N<sub>2</sub>) may be used before, during, or after size reduction. Ice or ice water must not be used to lower the temperature of the ground product.

6. Temperature of Size-Reduced Turkey Product. If the temperature of ground turkey or any size-reduced component of the product (ground, desinewed, or mechanically reduced meat and skin), hereinafter referred to as “ground product,” exceeds 55° F (12.8° C) at any time, the product is not eligible for use under this Specification.

7. Time and Temperature Requirements for Chilled Commodity. Ground product exiting the size-reduction process must immediately enter a continuous chilling system. The commodity must be maintained at an internal product temperature not higher than 40° F (4.4° C) and not lower than 26° F (3.3° C) for a period not to exceed 48 hours. The commodity must not exceed 55° F (12.8° C). Product exceeding 55° F (12.8° C) shall be rejected for use under this Specification.

8. Time and Temperature Requirements for Packing and Freezing Commodity.

a. Ground product exiting the size-reduction process with an internal product temperature higher than 40° F (4.4° C) must be packed within 2 hours of size reduction and placed in a freezer within 1 hour of packing.

b. Ground product exiting the size-reduction process and immediately entering a continuous chilling system that lowers and maintains the product at an internal product temperature of not higher than 40° F (4.4° C) and not lower than 36° F (2.2° C) must be packed and placed in a freezer within 12 hours of size reduction.

c. Ground product exiting the size-reduction process and immediately entering a continuous chilling system that lowers and maintains the product at an internal product temperature of 36° F (2.2° C) or below must be packed and placed in a freezer within 24 hours of size reduction.

d. Other continuous chilling system(s) may be used when the systems are reviewed and found acceptable by supervisory personnel of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs.

## **II.C.**

9. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects.

a. Organoleptic Requirements. The ground product will be examined on a

continuous basis for the organoleptic requirements listed in Table 2. Any ground product that does not comply with the organoleptic requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

b. **Defects.** A 5-pound (2.27-kg) sample of ground product will be examined for the defects listed in Table 2 prior to packaging the commodity. The examination for defects will be performed with the product in the fresh state.

(1) The examination for bone will be made separately from the examination for other defects.

(2) Regardless of the kind and number of defects (within Table 2) found, any sample containing bone and bone-like material will be cause for rejection of the product the sample represents.

(3) The frequency of sampling and the number of defects allowed will be those outlined in Poultry Programs' Sample Plan Level 2 (SPL-2).

(4) If the sample has more defects than the maximum tolerance for the sample plan, the product the sample represents will be rejected.

**Table 2. Organoleptic Requirements and Defects for Ground Product**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Organoleptic Requirements:</b> | <p><b>Must have:</b> (1) muscle fibers and a strand-like texture and (2) a uniform light and bright color with no discoloration or dehydration.</p> <p><b>Must not have:</b> (1) the texture of comminuted meat or skin, (2) a gritty texture, or (3) an emulsified or pasty consistency.</p> <p><b>Must be free of:</b> (1) rancidity; (2) sour, stale, fruity, sulfide-like, cardboardy, tallowy, oily, oxidized, metallic, acidic, or other off or foreign odors, and (3) foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, plastic, metal).</p> |
|                                   | <b>Defects</b>   |
| <b>Bone:</b>                      | Presence of bone or bone-like material.  |
| <b>Other:</b>                     | Tendons, cartilage (gristle), and ligament or ligamentous material, which exceed 0.50 inch (1.27 cm) in any dimension.   |

**II.C.**

10. Packaging and Packing Ground Turkey.

a. Materials. All packaging and packing materials must be new and clean, and

must not impart objectionable odors or flavors to the commodity.

b. Packaging.

(1) Ground turkey must be: (a) packaged in fiberboard boxes lined with plastic liners or bags, which have oxygen barrier properties, are moisture-proof, and protect the commodity from dehydration, freezer burn, quality deterioration, or contamination during the conditions of use. The color of the plastic liner or bag must provide for easy identification to assist complete removal at the further processing facility; or (b) placed in wax-coated fiberboard shipping containers.

(2) The boxes must be filled with 40 pounds (18.14 kg) of ground turkey. Excess air must be worked out through the open end of the filled package and the package closed by folding and securing the open end of the plastic bag. Metal clips, wire ties, paper-coated ties, or staples must not be used for sealing bags.

c. Packing. Shipping containers must be made of fiberboard and be of such size to pack the commodity without slack filling or bulging.

11. Ground Turkey Rework.

a. Eligible Product. Ground turkey may be reworked provided: (1) the temperature of the ground turkey has not exceeded 50° F (10° C) and has been maintained at that temperature or lower, (2) it complies with organoleptic requirements of II.C.9., and (3) it is incorporated into batches of ground turkey within 12 hours.

b. Time and temperature requirements. Additionally, ground turkey which has been chilled to not higher than 15° F (-9.4° C) or lower, packaged, and maintained at a product temperature of 15° F (-9.4° C) or lower may be reworked within 72 hours from the end of the shift it was produced. When the chilled ground turkey is reworked, the temperature of the commodity must not exceed 40° F (4.4° C) during tempering.

12. Freezing Ground Turkey. The ground turkey must be packaged and/or packed (to protect against quality deterioration) and lowered to an internal temperature of 0° F (-17.8° C) or lower within 72 hours from the time of entering the freezer. If any sample of packaged ground turkey does not comply with the freezing requirements, the product or lot the sample represents will be rejected for use under this Specification.

**II.C.**

13. Metal Detection. The commodity must be examined by a metal detection device capable of detecting metallic contaminants including, but not limited to, stainless steel shavings, metal clips, metal fragments from cutting equipment, and pieces of wire.

The commodity must be examined after it is packaged or packed in shipping containers in

accordance with the procedures in AMS 910, Poultry Grader's Handbook. Commodity found to be contaminated with metal will be handled in accordance with FSIS procedures. Other procedures for examination of the commodity may be approved by the Deputy Administrator of Poultry Programs, in writing.

14. Ground Turkey for In-Plant Further Processing. Ground product may be delivered within the plant (see section VI.D.2.) when there is an approved contract for further processing between the processing plant and the final recipient of the product. Ground turkey delivered in this manner must be delivered on a lot or subplot basis in the chilled state (at an internal product temperature not lower than 26° F (-3.3° C) and not higher than 40° F (4.4° C)), without being packaged in boxes and frozen, for further processing under contract between the plant and the final recipient. Bulk, chilled ground turkey must be packed in wax coated fiberboard containers, or packaged in plastic-film bags or liners and packed in fiberboard shipping containers, stainless steel or plastic tubs. Other types of packaging and packing may be used for in-plant deliveries of raw ground product upon review and approval by Grading Supervisors. Delivery (point of delivery and acceptance) within the plant must be under procedures approved by Poultry Programs.

#### D. Lots and Sublots

##### 1. Definition of a Lot.

a. A lot is the amount of commodity produced between clean-ups and must not exceed one day's production.

b. The commodity will be sampled for laboratory analyses and analyzed for compliance with microbiological and fat content requirements.

##### 2. Definition of a Sublot.

a. A lot may be separated into sublots for the purpose of sampling and analyzing for compliance with the fat content requirements. Commodity sampled and analyzed for fat content based on sub-lots will be accepted or rejected, or accepted subject to a price discount on a subplot basis. If this option is used, the commodity must be subotted based on consecutively produced containers: (1) shipping containers or (2) pallets. The sublots of containers or pallets must be consecutively identified at the time of packaging or packing.

b. Commodity sampled for microbiological analysis and analyzed on the basis of sublots will be accepted or rejected on a lot basis.

## II.

#### E. Fat Requirements

1. Lots or Sublots. A lot or subplot (as defined in II.D.) of ground product must contain no more than an average of 11.0 percent fat.

2. Price Discounts for Ground Turkey Product.

a. A lot or subplot of packaged ground turkey product with more than 11.0 percent fat (average for the lot or subplot) but not more than 12.5 percent fat will be accepted with the following deviations subject to the price discount indicated:

Fat Content (Average for Lot)

USDA Laboratory Analysis

Discount Applicable

Greater than 11.0% but not more than 11.5%

2.5% of contract price

Greater than 11.5% but not more than 12.0%

5.0% of contract price

Greater than 12.0% but not more than 12.5%

7.5% of contract price

b. A lot or subplot of packaged ground turkey with more than 12.5 percent fat (average for the lot or subplot) will be rejected. A lot or subplot will be rejected when the results of the average of any one of the composite samples exceed 13.0 percent fat.

F. Sampling and Laboratory Analyses

1. Sampling. After packaging, the plant, under the Grader's supervision, will draw random samples for microbiological and fat content analysis.

a. A lot. The number of samples of raw ground turkey (fresh, chilled state) to be drawn from each lot will be as follows:

Number of Shipping

Number of

Containers in Lot

8-ounce samples

250 or less

8

251 - 500

12

501 - 1,000

16

1,001 - 2,000

24

Over 2,000

36

For large bulk containers (combo bins, tanks etc.), the total number of samples drawn must be equivalent to eight 8-ounce samples per 10,000 pounds of product produced.

b. A subplot. A minimum of four (4) packages or primary containers will be drawn from each subplot. The total number of packages drawn from each subplot must be a multiple of four. The total number of packages drawn from all sublots in a lot must equal or exceed those specified for the appropriate size lot described in paragraph a. above.

**II.F.**

2. Samples of Raw Product for Laboratory Analyses.

a. The plant, under the Grader's supervision, will randomly draw samples of ground turkey (fresh state) from each lot or subplot and prepare samples as follows: The plant, under the Grader's supervision will draw an 8-ounce (226.8 g) sample of ground turkey at random from each sample container and separate into three [ (approximately equal) 2.5-ounce

(70.87 g)] sample portions.

- b. Each portion will be placed in a separate moisture-proof sample bag.
- c. The three portions of each cross-section or sample will be used as follows:
  - one for analysis at a USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory.
  - one for the Contractor.
  - one for a reserve sample.

d. Samples will be kept in a freezer under the Grader's control until all samples are drawn and prepared for the lot or subplot.

(1) The reserve samples will be retained in a freezer under the control of the Grader. Reserve samples will be used for laboratory analyses when: (a) the original samples are lost; (b) the original samples arrive at the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory in a condition that does not permit accurate analyses; or (c) requested by the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, Washington, D.C.

(2) The samples for the contractor will be given to the contractor after the lot or subplot has been produced and all the samples for the lot or subplot have been drawn and prepared.

e. Samples which are not used by USDA will be returned to the contractor and reworked in accordance with II.C.10.

3. Laboratory Analysis. The samples will be composited and analyzed by the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory in accordance with any approved Association of Analytical Chemists (AOAC) International or Food and Drug Administration's Bacteriological Analytical Methods Manual, or methods approved by other National or International organizations and accepted by AMS for standard plate count, coliforms, *E. coli*, and fat content determinations.

a. Microbiological Analysis. A lot of packaged commodity must comply with the following microbiological requirements when sampled and analyzed according to II.F. A lot of packaged commodity failing to meet these requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification. Appeals of lab analyses for these requirements are not allowed.

**II.F.3.a.**

- (1) Standard plate count will not exceed 100,000 per gram.
- (2) Coliforms count will not exceed 500 per gram.
- (3) *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) results will be less than 100 microorganisms per gram.

(4) For original analyses of samples from a lot, the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory will aseptically combine consecutively numbered samples from the lot into groups of four, remove an equal amount from each sample in the groups of four, and combine them into a composite sample for analysis. Each composite sample will be ground and blended into a homogeneous mixture and then analyzed for standard plate count, coliforms count, and *E. coli*. The highest result for each type of analysis will determine whether the lot complies with the applicable microbiological requirements. The results for each composite for a lot will be reported on the USDA Poultry Products Grading Certificate (USDA Certificate). As an alternative to reporting the results on the USDA certificate, the results may be reported on a laboratory generated testing report (Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)) that contains the USDA certificate number. This report may be faxed to recipients.

b. Fat Content Analysis.

(1) The USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory will equally combine the remainder of the samples submitted for a lot or subplot in numerical sequence into four composite samples for fat analysis.

(2) The USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory will grind and mix each composite sample twice into a homogeneous mixture.

(3) Each composite will be analyzed in duplicate for fat. The USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory will report the result for each duplicate to the nearest 100<sup>th</sup> of a percent and the average for each composite to the nearest 10<sup>th</sup> of a percent on the USDA certificate. In addition, the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory will average the results of the composites and report the average for the lot or subplot to the nearest 10<sup>th</sup> of a percent on the USDA certificate, except when the average result for any one composite sample exceeds 11.0 percent fat for ground turkey. As an alternative to reporting the results on the USDA certificate, the results may be reported on a laboratory generated testing report (Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)) that contains the USDA certificate number. This report may be faxed to recipients.

(4) Chemical analysis will be in accordance with any approved Association of Official Analytical Chemists (AOAC) International methods, or methods approved by other National or International organizations and accepted by AMS for fat determinations.

4. USDA Laboratories. The samples for laboratory analyses may be submitted to any one of the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratories listed below, except when AMS determines

**II.F.4.**

that conditions or workload of a specific laboratory do not permit the prompt handling of samples. All costs incurred for shipping the samples and the laboratory analyses will be paid by the contractor.

USDA, AMS, Science and Technology Programs    Laboratory Services Division

National Sciences Laboratory  
801 Summit Crossing Place, Suite B  
Gastonia, North Carolina 28054  
Telephone (704) 867-3873

Minnesota State Department of Agriculture  
90 West Plato Boulevard, Room 241  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107-2094  
Telephone (651) 297-1901

Laboratory Services Division  
Oregon Department of Agriculture  
1207 Northwest Nation Parkway, Suite 204  
Portland, Oregon 97209-2835  
Telephone (503) 872-6644

5. Timely Receipt of Laboratory Results. The contractor must present the commodity to USDA so the product may be sampled, the samples sent to the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory, and the laboratory analyses performed in time for the laboratory results to be available for the contractor to meet the shipment or delivery requirements of the contract. If laboratory results are received by the contractor later than 7 calendar days, excluding Sundays and Federal Holidays, from the receipt of the samples by the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory, the number of days' delay will be added to the shipment or delivery period before liquidated damages for late shipment or delivery will be assessed. The commodity shall not be shipped until receipt of laboratory results to confirm compliance with the microbiological requirements as outlined in II.F.3.a.

For chilled raw ground turkey delivered on an in-plant basis for immediate further processing, the processor is responsible to ensure that the chilled raw ground turkey complies with the microbiological requirements as outlined in II.F.3.a. In order to facilitate timely further processing of chilled raw ground turkey delivered on an in-plant basis, it is permissible to process the chilled ground turkey into cooked finished product prior to receipt of results from microbiological analysis of chilled raw ground turkey samples. Under this provision, adequate controls must exist to clearly identify and link production lots of the chilled ground turkey, and the finished products derived from the corresponding raw chilled ground turkey. This control system shall be reviewed and approved by a member of the supervisory staff of the Grading Branch. Cooked, finished product produced from raw materials that are subsequently found to not meet microbiological requirements for the raw materials shall be rejected for use under this specification.

6. Appeal of Laboratory Analyses. An appeal of original laboratory analyses for fat content on a lot or subplot may be authorized by the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, Washington, D.C. The appeal must be filed and made in accordance with the provisions for an appeal in 7 C.F.R. part 70. Only one appeal per lot or subplot is permitted. Appeals for the microbiological analyses results are not permitted.

## **II.F.6.**

a. For the appeal, a lot or subplot will be sampled and samples prepared by one of the following procedures:

(1) When the reserve samples are available, the Grader will randomly draw from the lot or sub-lot the same number of samples as drawn during original sampling and

prepare the samples as outlined in paragraphs II.F.2. These samples, plus the reserve samples previously prepared during the original sampling of the lot, or subplot, will be submitted for fat analysis.

(2) When the reserve samples are not available, the Grader will randomly draw twice the number of samples required in paragraph II.F.1. from the lot or subplot. Samples will be prepared as outlined in paragraph II.F.2. and submitted for fat analysis.

b. The samples for the appeal will be submitted to the USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory where the original fat analysis was performed.

c. The USDA or USDA-contracted laboratory will combine the samples into twice the number of composites described in paragraph II.F.3.b.(1) and analyze each of the composite samples for fat content. The results will be reported as outlined in paragraph II.F.3.b.(3).

d. The laboratory results of the samples for the appeal will supersede those of the original analysis and will be final.

#### G. Contractor Analysis of Fat Content Program

As an alternative method of sampling and laboratory analyses detailed in section II.F., the Contractor may elect to participate in the Contractor Analysis of Fat Content (CAFC) Program dated April 2001. AMS has developed this program to permit the use of Contractor results to determine compliance with fat content requirements. Any questions about this program should be referred to the Contracting Officer at the following address:

Contracting Officer, Commodity Procurement Branch  
Poultry Programs, AMS, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Rm. 3941-S, STOP 0260  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
Telephone: (202)720-7693  
Fax: (202)720-5871

The Contracting Officer will provide the procedures for participation in the CAFC Program. The Contractor must comply with the: (a) requirements in this Specification (excluding section II.F.), and (b) alternate sampling procedures, lab analysis, and other provisions of the CAFC Program.

### **III. LABELING**

Any deviation from labeling requirements in this Specification must be approved by the Contracting Officer, in writing, prior to the start of production. Labeling and marking information must be water-fast, non-smearing, of a contrasting color, clear, and readable.

Shipping containers or labels with incorrect: (1) contract number, (2) plant number, (3) net

weight, (4) date packed, or (5) name of product must be corrected before they are used. The incorrect information must be blocked out and the correct information legibly printed, stamped, or stenciled in permanent ink. Additionally, the name, address, and phone number of the processor must appear on each shipping container.

A. Raw Ground Turkey Labeling Requirements Labeling and marking information must be: (1) preprinted, stamped, or stenciled on each shipping container; or (2) printed on a pressure-sensitive label and applied to each shipping container. This information, in essentially the same layout, is provided in EXHIBITS 1 and 2.

B. Recycle Symbol and Statement The contractor shall place somewhere on the surface of each recyclable shipping container the recycle symbol shown in EXHIBIT 3. The statement "PLEASE RECYCLE" is to be placed under the symbol. The recycle symbol and statement must be legibly printed in permanent ink.

C. Inventory Control Label The processor may use a pressure-sensitive label to place any additional information (including bar codes) for processor inventory control purposes. This label may be applied somewhere on the surface of the shipping container. The label must not cover or conflict with the labeling requirements of this Specification.

#### **IV. FINAL EXAMINATION OF PACKAGED AND PACKED COMMODITY**

##### **A. Material and Net Weight Compliance**

##### **1. Verification of Materials and Defects.**

a. Verification of packaging and packing materials. Contractor must verify compliance with packaging, packing, and marking material requirements by furnishing the Grader the following certification on company stationery signed by a person authorized to do so by the Contractor:

"(I) (We) certify that the packaging, packing, and marking materials used for any commodity presented for acceptance under the terms of the Commodity Specification for Ground Turkey – For Cooking Only in a USDA Approved Facility dated October 2006, comply or will comply with the terms of this Commodity Specification.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_"

One certification is adequate for all production under this Specification.

##### **IV.A.1.**

b. Packaging defects. Packages in a delivery unit will be examined for defects that affect protection, expose product, or permit dehydration or freezer burn, or quality deterioration during storage, such as tears, holes, or improperly sealed or closed packages. The exterior of filled bags must be clean and free of product.

c. Packing defects. Shipping containers in a delivery unit will be examined for

condition, labeling, and marking defects according to the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers.

d. Tolerance for defects. If samples of packaged commodity or the shipping containers in a delivery unit have more defects than the maximum tolerance for the applicable Poultry Programs' sampling plan, the delivery unit will be rejected.

2. Net Weight. Net weight of each delivery unit will be determined by the test-weighing procedures of Poultry Programs. The net weight of each delivery unit will be determined by a Grader at the contractor's expense. Containers used to ship the ground turkey product will be uniform in both type and size in each delivery unit.

a. Test weighing procedures.

(1) The tare weight of all packing materials will be determined by weighing a representative sample of all packaging components such as plastic-film bags, clips, and fiberboard containers.

(2) A representative sample will be selected in accordance with the following sample plan:

| <u>Number of Shipping Containers in Lot</u> | <u>Number of Shipping Containers in a Sample</u> |
|---|--|
| 1 - 4                                       | All  |
| 5 - 50                                      | 4  |
| 51 - 100                                    | 5  |
| 101 - 200                                   | 6  |
| 201 - 400                                   | 7  |
| 401 - 600                                   | 8  |

For each additional 100 cases, or fraction thereof, in excess of 600 cases, one additional case shall be included in the sample.

(3) For large bulk containers (combo bins, tanks, etc.), the representative sample size shall be reduced by one-half the amount listed in (IV.A.2.a.(2)).

b. Requirements. A purchase or delivery unit must total 40,000 pounds (18,144 kg) net, or multiples thereof.

#### **IV.A.2.**

c. Alternate net weight verification. As an alternative to test weighing at time of loading, the contractor may request on-line verification of net weights. Upon receiving the request, a Federal-State supervisor, Grading Branch, Poultry Programs (or their designee), will determine that the facilities and procedures are in accordance with the applicable Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

d. Weight variations. A weight variation of minus 2 percent or plus 1 percent (39,200 to 40,400 pounds) (17,786 to 18,330 kg)) is permitted on each delivery unit. USDA will pay only for the amount of ground turkey product delivered within the required weight range.

e. Discounts. A delivery unit weighing from 38,000 to 39,199 pounds (17,241 to 17,785 kg) will be accepted at a 3-percent discount in price on the actual weight of the ground turkey product delivered. It is the contractor's responsibility to provide extra ground turkey product to offset shrinkage. All price adjustments will be based on the quantity shipped.

#### B. Prerequisites for Loading and Shipping Frozen Commodity

1. Visual Inspection. Frozen commodity showing any evidence of defrosting, refreezing, or freezer deterioration will be rejected for use under this Specification.

##### 2. Internal Product Temperature.

a. Requirements. The internal product temperature of frozen commodity must be 2° F (-16.7° C) or lower at time of loading. Delivery units with internal product temperatures exceeding 2° F (-16.7° C) and up to 5° F (-15° C) will be tentatively rejected. Tentatively rejected delivery units may be returned to the freezer and the temperature reduced to 2° F (-16.7° C) or lower and reoffered one time only. Delivery units exceeding 5° F (-15° C) or delivery units that have been tentatively rejected and exceed 2° F (-16.7° C) when reoffered will be rejected for use under this Specification.

b. Optional temperature verification. As an option to verifying internal product temperature at time of loading, the contractor may request an alternate method utilizing product temperature sensing devices. If this option is selected, a Federal-State supervisor will determine that the facilities, equipment, procedures, and the Contractor's current level of freezing compliance are in accordance with the established guidelines outlined in applicable Poultry Programs' instructions for this Specification.

#### C. Inspection and Checkloading

1. Requirements. Inspection for contract compliance will be made by a USDA representative, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. part 70, FSIS regulations, and this Specification, at the site of processing, both during and after processing and packaging. A USDA representative

#### IV.C.1.

may select samples for laboratory analyses or inspect the commodity at any point in transit and after delivery to point of destination. Inspection records must be complete and made available to USDA, as requested, to assure contract compliance.

2. Procedures. The inspection and checkloading required by Articles 54 and 55 of USDA-1 must be performed by a Grader. Procedures to be followed and a schedule of fees for these services may be obtained by contacting the nearest Grading Branch field office or the Chief of the Grading Branch, Poultry Programs, AMS, USDA, Room 3938-S, STOP 0258,

1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0258, telephone (202) 720-3271 ([http://www.ams.usda.gov/plantbook/grbr\\_states2.htm/](http://www.ams.usda.gov/plantbook/grbr_states2.htm/)). The quality, quantity, weight, packaging, packing, and checkloading of the commodity must be evidenced by certificates issued

by the Grader. The Contractor must not ship the commodity unless informed by the Grader that the designated lot or subplot to be shipped meets contract specifications.

## **V. UNITIZATION**

Each delivery unit of commodity, except for in-plant deliveries, must be unitized except for in-plant deliveries (palletized and stretch-wrapped) and comply with the following:

### **A. Pallets**

Pallets must be good quality, wood, 48 inches x 40 inches, nonreversible, flush stringer, and partial four-way entry. Each pallet of shipping containers must be stretch-wrapped with plastic film in a manner that will secure each container and layer of containers on the pallet. Palletized product must be loaded in a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product.

### **B. Pallet Exchange**

Contractors may arrange for pallet exchange with consignees; however, USDA is in no way responsible for such arrangements.

## **VI. SHIPMENT AND DELIVERY**

Shipment and delivery must be made in accordance with the Specification, the applicable Announcement and Invitation, and Articles 56, 57, and 64 of USDA-1, as amended by the Announcement. In addition, the Contractor must adhere to the following provisions:

### **A. Contract Compliance Stamp**

Each shipping container must be identified with a USDA Contract Compliance stamp with the applicable certificate number. A Grader, or other authorized personnel under the supervision of the Grader, will stamp one end of each shipping container prior to shipment. If there is inadequate space available on either end of the shipping container, the stamp may be applied to a side of the container.

## **VI.**

### **B. Grading Certificate**

A copy of the original USDA Poultry Products Grading Certificate issued at time of checkloading must accompany each shipment.

1. Railcar or Piggyback. If shipment is by rail or piggyback, the certificate must be placed in the railcar or trailer for easy access to the Grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

2. Trucks. If shipment is by truck, the driver must, upon delivery, give the certificate to the Grader, warehouseman, or consignee, as applicable.

#### C. Loading and Sealing of Vehicles

Loading must be in accordance with good commercial practices and the sealing must be done at origin under the supervision of a Grader. Thereafter, all delivery units – truck lot or less than truck lot (LTL) quantities – must be secured at all times prior to unloading with tamper proof, tamper resistant, serially numbered, high security seals. The Contractor must maintain a record of each seal number used for truck lot and LTL delivery units. Additionally, the contractor must ensure that the applicable seal identification number is on each bill of lading, shipment manifest, or other delivery documents for each delivery destination.

When LTL delivery units are transported on the same trailer or railcar and destined for multiple recipients, the trailer or railcar must be sealed after each delivery. The seal number must be recorded on the appropriate delivery documents and correspond with the applied seal at the time of arrival at the next destination. It will be the responsibility of the Contractor to provide a sufficient number of seals and ensure that the carrier service (truck or rail) secures the trailer or railcar after each delivery destination. Failure to seal the trailer or railcar after each stop may result in rejection of the shipment by the recipient agency at the scheduled stop and rejection of any subsequent deliveries on the trailer or railcar.

1. Railcar. Each railcar must be sealed. The Contractors are responsible for arranging railcar deliveries of more than one delivery unit so that each delivery unit contained in the same railcar can be completely separated and sealed.

2. Truck or Piggyback. Truck or piggyback shipments must be sealed at origin. A delivery unit shipped by truck or piggyback which includes split deliveries to multiple destinations will require sealing after each drop.

#### D. Delivery Notification

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 56(c) of USDA-1, as amended by the applicable Announcement, the Contractor must follow the instructions in the Notice to Deliver issued by the Kansas City Commodity Office (KCCO) concerning delivery notification. Such notification and

#### **VI.D.**

information of impending delivery are vital in proper execution of delivery. The Contractor must notify the State distributing agency and the consignee of shipment per instructions in the Notice to Deliver. For rail or piggyback shipments, notification shall be made on the day of shipment. For truck shipments, notification of the estimated arrival time should be made as far in advance of delivery as possible. In addition, for truck or piggyback shipments, the Contractor must request and keep scheduled appointment(s). Unloading appointments for truck or piggyback

shipments must be requested from the consignee contact party(ies) at least 24 hours in advance of delivery.

1. In-Plant Deliveries. When in-plant delivery is made, the Contractor must notify the appropriate USDA resident Grader and furnish applicable information.

2. Chilled Ground Turkey. Ground turkey may be delivered in bulk containers in the same plant where the ground turkey was produced (see II.C.14.).

3. Delivery In Storage. Delivery may be made in storage provided the destination in the Notice to Deliver and the place the Contractor has the commodity in storage are the same. Inspection and certification by a Grader are also required for transfers in storage.

## **VII. DESTINATION EXAMINATION**

### **A. Cost for Frozen Commodity Destination Examination**

The cost of a destination examination for frozen commodity, before or after delivery, by a Grader on acceptable commodity will be for the account of USDA. Costs for destination examinations of rejected delivery units will be for the account of the Contractor. The USDA origin Grader will make arrangements for destination examinations prior to delivery.

### **B. Commodity Requirements**

Before acceptance by consignee, the commodity may be examined by a Grader on a spot-check basis for temperature, condition, identity, and when applicable, count. The commodity may be examined for conformance to contract provisions at any time required by the Contracting Officer.

### **C. Temperature**

The frozen commodity must arrive at destination at an average internal product temperature not to exceed 10° F (-12.2° C) with no individual temperature exceeding 15° F (-9.4° C).

## **VII.C.**

The chilled commodity must arrive at destination at an internal product temperature not higher than 40° F (4.4° C) and not lower than 26° F (-3.3° C). Commodity not meeting these

temperature requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

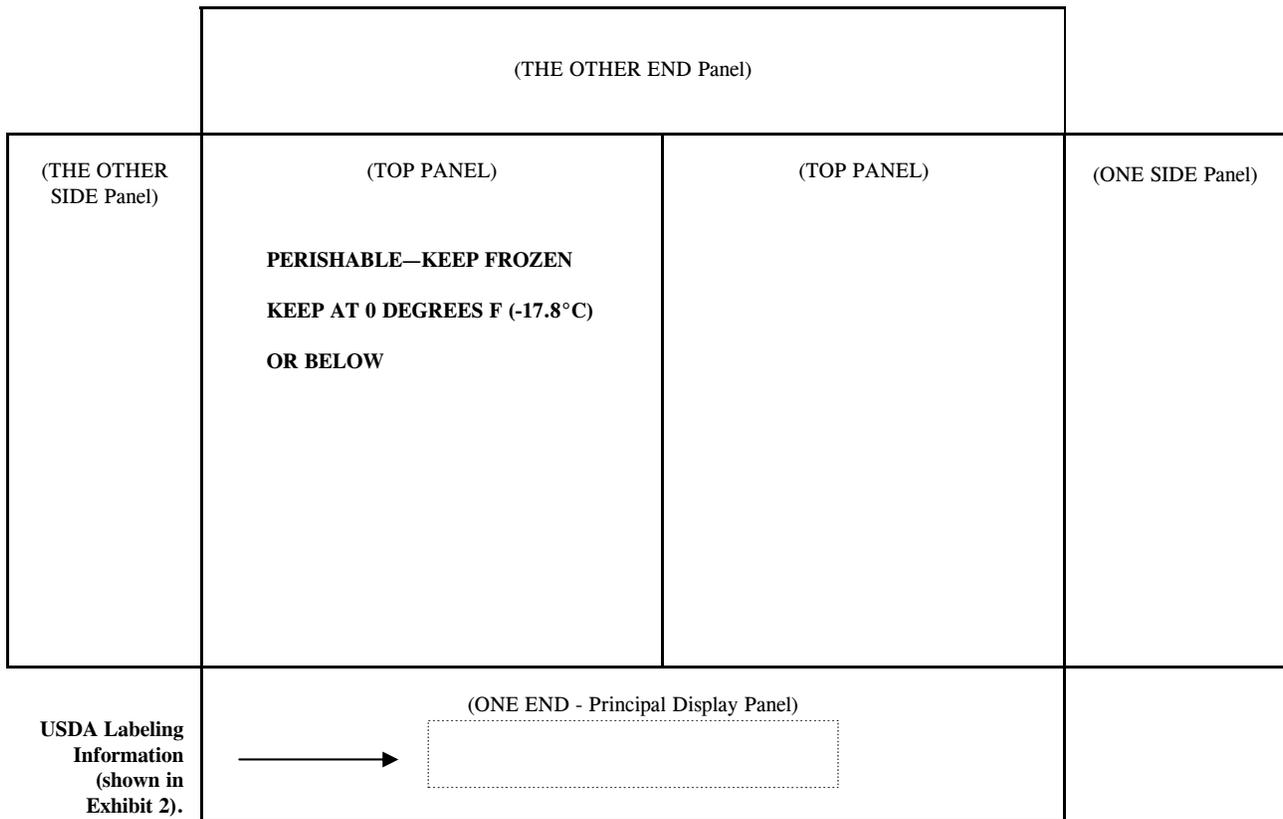
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Craig Morris  
Deputy Administrator  
Poultry Programs

Attachments

## EXHIBIT 1 USDA Labeled Shipping Containers

**Marking Information:** Shipping containers must be marked substantially as shown below. Detailed USDA labeling information is provided in EXHIBIT 2. Markings must be preprinted, stamped, stenciled on containers, or printed on a separate pressure-sensitive label and applied to containers. The USDA symbol, copy on back of Specification, is to be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height and may be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor’s name, address, and phone number must be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor name and address must indicate the individual processing plant, the company headquarters, or the company address and phone number that handles product complaints.



**EXHIBIT 2 USDA Label Information - Ground Turkey – For Cooking Only in a USDA-Approved Facility**

**Marking Information:** Labeling information must be printed on the principal display panel of each shipping container as provided in EXHIBIT 1. Markings must be preprinted, stamped, stenciled on containers, or printed on a separate pressure-sensitive label and applied to containers. The USDA symbol, copy on back of Specification, must be a minimum of 2.25 inches (5.72 cm) in height and may be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor’s name, address, and phone number must be printed on the “TOP PANEL” or principal display panel. The processor name and address info must indicate the individual processing plant, the company headquarters, or the company address and phone number that handles product complaints.



**Ground Turkey  
For Cooking Only  
in a  
USDA-Approved Facility**

**KEEP FROZEN**

Processor’s Name,  
Address, and Phone Number

Net Weight  
\_\_ LBS. ( \_\_ KG)

CONTRACT NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE PACKED Month, Day, and Year

**EXHIBIT 3 “Please Recycle” Symbol and Statement**



**PLEASE  
RECYCLE**

EXHIBIT 4 USDA SYMBOL

