



June 2002

## **NOTICE TO POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS OF BEEF STEW TO THE USDA**

In the near future, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will issue Announcement LS-91, titled "Purchase of Canned Beef Stew for Distribution to Federal Food Assistance Programs" that will set forth the contractual and specification requirements for the purchase of domestically produced canned beef stew.

The canned beef stew will only be purchased from suppliers that are approved by AMS. To become an approved supplier, an offeror will be required to submit a Technical Proposal and sample product and successfully complete a pre-award assessment audit. Offeror(s) including currently approved suppliers, interested in becoming (or remaining) an approved supplier are required to submit the following for evaluation and approval:

### **Product Sample:**

- (1) Six (6) cans of the beef stew--the sample cans must be labeled to include the ingredient statement and Nutrition Facts Panel that conforms to the attached Item Description and Checklist of Requirements, dated June 2002.

### **Technical Proposal:**

- (1) Include a detailed description of each item offered and each of the production steps that are taken to meet or exceed the minimum product requirements set forth in the Item Description and Checklist of Requirements for Canned Beef Stew, dated June 2002.
- (2) Describe all the quality assurance methods used to verify conformance to all requirements. This will include the monitoring and measurements taken during the process to verify conformance with each requirement. All measurement results shall be recorded and made available to AMS.
- (3) Identify all corrective actions to be taken if deviations from contractual and specification requirements occur during production, and all preventative actions to be taken to preclude a reoccurrence.

To become (or remain) an approved supplier and be eligible to bid on the first Invitation, the Technical Proposal and product sample listed above must be submitted prior to **July 19, 2002**. This will allow sufficient time for AMS to evaluate the Technical Proposal materials, product samples, and conduct the required pre-award supplier assessment audit. Please forward the product samples and complete Technical Proposal package to the attention of: Contracting Officer; Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 2610-South Building; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250. It is strongly

## Notice to USDA Beef Stew Suppliers

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recommended that the required materials and samples be forwarded by express or courier service to ensure timely delivery.

After the Technical Proposal(s) and samples are evaluated and approved, an AMS audit team will perform an in-plant assessment of the facilities, processes, and quality control program used to produce the product(s) to determine the supplier's ability to meet contractual requirements. The audit will include an evaluation of the potential contractor's and subcontractor's facilities, equipment, procedures, and the appropriate documents and forms used during the production of the canned beef stew. Documentation must support production of a product that complies with the Item Description and Checklist of Requirements dated June 2002. In addition, the audit will consist of the review of purchasing, receiving, production, quality control, inventory and shipping records, and interviews with management and production personnel.

The results of the AMS evaluation of the product sample and Technical Proposal(s), and notification to supplier will take approximately ten working days. Suppliers with approved samples and Technical Proposals should contact Jim Riva, (Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch) on (202) 720-1124 to arrange for a pre-award supplier assessment audit.

If further information is needed or questions arise related to contractual or specification requirements, please contact Patricia Lewis of the Commodity Procurement Branch on (202) 720-2650.



William T. Sessions  
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Livestock and Seed Program

**ITEM DESCRIPTION AND  
CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS  
FOR CANNED BEEF STEW -- JUNE 2002  
CODE - A590**

**I. ITEM DESCRIPTION**

- Item - Beef stew must contain discernable chunks of beef, carrots and potatoes in gravy. One additional vegetable is permitted.
- Fat/Sodium - Fat must not exceed 5 g (grams) per 100 g serving. Sodium level will not exceed 415 mg per 100 g serving.
- Packaging/ - Individual cans of beef stew will have a net weight of 24 ounces. Twenty-four  
Packing cans will be unitized to a net weight of 36 pounds.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) may specify individual cans to have a net weight of 40 ounces (A product code will be issued). Twelve cans will be unitized to a net weight of 30 pounds.

**II. CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS**

Beef stew must be produced in accordance with Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) regulations and this checklist of requirements below.

**A. MATERIALS**

Contractors are responsible for providing sufficient product traceability and must have records to verify the source of raw materials used in each lot of product. All vegetables and other significant ingredients (more than 1percent) shall be derived from U.S. produced products.

**1. BEEF**

- Beef must originate from U.S. produced livestock and will be verified in accordance with Audit, Review, and Compliance (ARC) Branch Instructions for Domestic Origin Verification and Material Requirements.
- Beef must originate from slaughter establishments that handle non-ambulatory (cattle that are unable to walk under their own power) commonly known as "downers" in accordance with FSIS Directive 6900.1R1 - Humane Handling of Disabled Livestock, issued 11/02/98. Carcasses originating from such animals must be segregated and the product from them cannot be included in USDA purchased ground beef.
- Beef must originate from slaughter establishments that do not use direct air-injected pneumatic stunners.
- Beef that is mechanically separated from bone with automatic deboning systems, advanced lean (meat) recovery (AMR) systems or powered knives, is not allowed.
- The beef shall appear as discernable chunks in the finished product.

**2. VEGETABLES**

Carrots and potatoes must be the primary vegetables as listed on the ingredient statement. One additional vegetable is permitted. All vegetables shall be of size so that they are discernible in the finished product.

### **3. OTHER INGREDIENTS**

Seasonings and ingredients used for flavoring and gravy must be similar to those normally used for commercially marketed beef stew.

### **4. FINISHED PRODUCT FAT AND SODIUM LIMITATIONS**

Fat - The fat content must not exceed 5 percent (no more than 5 g per 100 g serving). Declared fat content will be stated on the nutrition facts panel on each can label according to FSIS nutritional labeling regulations.

Percent fat = (Total fat ÷ Serving Size) x 100.

Sodium - Sodium level must not exceed 415 mg per 100 g serving.

## **B. PREPARATION FOR DELIVERY**

### **1. PACKAGING AND PACKING**

Individual cans of beef stew will have a net weight of 24 ounces. Twenty-four cans will be unitized to a net weight of 36 pounds. Each delivery unit will consist of 1,000 shipping containers with a net weight of 36,000 pounds (16,330 kg).

When specified by AMS, individual cans will have a net weight of 40 ounces. Twelve cans will be unitized to a net weight of 30 pounds. Each delivery unit will consist of 1,200 shipping containers with a net weight of 36,000 pounds (16,330 kg).

All cans will be unitized by packing into new fiberboard shipping containers, placing on fiberboard trays with plastic shrink wrap or plastic shrink wrap only. Only one size and style of unitized containers may be offered in an individual shipping unit.

### **2. LABELING**

Shipping containers and cans will be labeled to include all information required by FSIS regulations.

### **3. PALLETIZED UNIT LOADS**

Unless otherwise specified in the invitation, all truck, rail, and piggyback shipments of product shall be unitized by stacking the shipping containers on pallets. The shipping containers shall be held firmly in place by applying plastic stretch-wrap as tightly as possible around all of the tiers stacked on the pallet.

Pallets shall be flush, 48 inches long by 40 inches wide, stringer or block design, partial or full four-way entry, nonreversible, and suitable for use in the shipment of approximately 2,000 pounds of food product.

Pallet loads shall be stacked in a manner that minimizes the overhang of the shipping containers over the edges of the pallets and exposes the principle shipping container display panel of all boxes to facilitate certification examinations.

### **4. TRACEABILITY AND SHIPMENT**

All cans shall bear a code that is traceable to a production lot and date. All product must be delivered to AMS destinations under seal.

## **C. WARRANTY AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

A warranty and customer service clause that includes customer complaint resolution procedures shall be included in the technical proposal. These procedures will be used to resolve product complaints from recipient agencies or AMS.