



## **Agricultural Marketing Service**

**Commodity Specification**  
**BULK PACK BONELESS**  
**SKINLESS**  
**TURKEY THIGHS**

**APRIL 2013**

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## **I. GENERAL**

### **A. Product Description**

Bulk ready-to cook young turkey boneless skinless thighs produced under this Specification will be packaged and packed in the following form as specified in the contract:

Bulk Pack Boneless Skinless Turkey Thighs (100883) - Bulk packed for further processing, chilled boneless skinless turkey thighs produced from ready-to-cook young turkeys (AMS 70.202). Frozen may be specified in the Solicitation. The commodity must be packed in commercial containers as required in this Specification. A purchase unit will total 36,000 pounds (16,329 kg).

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

Contractors and subcontractors participating in the commodity purchase program must have 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 finished product after production. The plan shall address the following areas: (1) food defense 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 the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Auditor immediately upon request. Verification of the Food Defense Program at the processing, storage, and distribution facility will be conducted by the USDA/AMS Auditor.

### **C. Commodity Complaints**

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

### **D. Humane Handling**

All poultry shall be humanely handled in accordance with all applicable USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulations, directives, and notices.

## **II. COMMODITY SPECIFICATION**

### **A. Basic Requirements**

1. Date Processed. The commodity must not be processed prior to date of contract.

2. Origin of Turkeys. The commodity must be produced and processed from turkeys 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 carcasses and parts 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 carcasses and parts to ensure they are not used in the commodity produced under this Specification. This plan must be made available to a representative of the Grading Division, (LPS) Program, AMS/USDA (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).

3. Inspection. Processing operations must comply with Poultry Products Inspection Regulations (9 CFR part 381) and be under the supervision of a representative of USDA/FSIS (Inspector). Inspection for contract and Specification compliance will be in accordance with the Regulations Governing the Voluntary Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit Products (7 CFR part 70) and the U.S. Classes, Standards, and Grades (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 ready-to-cook turkey thigh meat, packaging and packing; freezing; labeling and marking; sampling; net weight; and checkloading.

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

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

6. Substitution. Bulk pack commodity may be delivered in accordance with 7 CFR part 250.30(f) (Substitution of donated foods with commercial foods).

7. Turkey from Other Plants. Turkeys, turkey thighs, and boneless skinless turkey thighs may be transferred or obtained from other processing plants to produce boneless skinless thigh meat, provided they: (a) have been processed, handled, and identified in accordance with this Specification, and (b) comply with the organoleptic, non-basted, and other applicable requirements for turkey carcasses as evidenced by USDA certification.

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

b. The chilled turkey carcasses and parts 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. Meat

1. Source of Meat. The commodity must be from ready-to-cook young turkeys (AMS 70.202).

### 2. Requirements for Meat.

a. Meat. The boneless skinless turkey thigh meat may be obtained by warm deboning and must be chilled immediately to no higher than 40 °F (4.4 °C) and no lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C).

b. Cooling requirements. Boneless skinless thighs that are not used on a continuous basis must be cooled by cooling methods/media that ensure that the internal product temperature is continuously lowered to be between 40 °F (4.4 °C) and 26 °F (-3.3 °C).

#### c. Cooling medium.

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

(2) Containers of boneless skinless thighs must not contain added water (e.g., water from ice or slush ice and water). Liquid associated with normal product purge is acceptable.

d. Organoleptic requirements. Boneless skinless thighs will be examined on a continuous basis for organoleptic requirements. The chilled boneless skinless thighs must be free of rancidity; fruity, sulfide-like, cardboardy, tallowy, oily, metallic, chlorine-like, or other foreign or off-odors; free of foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, metal, plastic, wood); must show no evidence of mishandling or deterioration; and must have a bright color with no evidence of dehydration or freezing and thawing. Any product that does not comply with the organoleptic requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

e. Meat defects. Boneless skinless thighs will be examined for defects on a sampling interval basis using Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program's (LPS) Sample Plan Level 1. If the sample has more defects than the maximum tolerance for the sample plan, the product the sample represents will be rejected.

(1) A sample of 30 pieces of boneless skinless thighs will be drawn and examined for the defects, shown in Table 1, before it is used in the formula. The frequency of sampling and the number of defects allowed will be those outlined in the LPS's Sample Plan Level 1 (SPL-1) for boneless thighs. Separate examinations will be made for: (a) bone and (b) other defects.

(2) Regardless of the kind and number of defects (within Table 1) found, any sample with bone or bone-like material greater than 0.40 inch (1.02 cm) will be cause for the rejection of the product the sample represents.

(3) If the number of bone defects exceed the maximum for the "target" level, or results in a rejection, the frequency of sampling for bone defects will be increased to 30 pieces of boneless skinless thighs drawn twice each sampling interval until the cumulative number of bone defects reverts back to the "target" level.

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

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

<b>Organoleptic Requirements:</b>	<b>Meat must not:</b> (a) be rancid; have a fruity, sulfide-like, cardboardy, tallowy, oily, metallic, chlorine-like, or other foreign or off-odors; contain foreign materials (e.g., glass, paper, rubber, metal, plastic, wood); and (b) show evidence of mishandling or deterioration; or dehydration or freezer burn or thawing and refreezing. Meat must have a bright color;
<b>Boneless Meat:</b>	<b>Defects</b>
<b>Bone:</b>	Presence of <b>Bone or bone-like material</b> greater than 0.40 inch (1.02 cm). Presence of <b>Bone or bone-like material</b> less than or equal to 0.40 inch (1.02 cm). See II.B.2.e.
<b>Discoloration:</b>	<b>Moderate discolorations</b> exceeding an area equivalent to the area of a circle with a diameter of 0.50 inch (1.27 cm). <b>Lightly shaded discolorations</b> exceeding an area equivalent to the area of a circle with a diameter of 1 inch (2.54 cm). Slight discolorations are permitted, provided the discoloration does not detract from the overall appearance of the meat.
<b>Other:</b>	<b>Cartilage</b> (gristle), hard tendons or tendinous material or blood clots.
<b>Boneless Thighs:</b>	<b>Thigh with</b> more than one-half of the meat missing.

3. Packaging and Packing Materials. All packaging and packing materials must be clean and in new condition, must not impart objectionable odors or flavors to the commodity, and must be safe (cannot adulterate commodity or be injurious to health) for use in contact with food products.

a. Plastic-film bags. Plastic-film bags used for the commodity must have tear resistance (tensile, bursting, and impact strength) and the stability to protect the commodity during handling and storage. The bags must be closed by commercial methods and materials.

b. Shipping containers. Fiberboard shipping containers used to pack the commodity must be closed by commercial methods and materials.

4. Chilled Commodity. Chilled commodity must be delivered to the destination as specified in the shipping instructions in commercial containers with a commercial cooling medium; for example, (a) in wax-coated fiberboard containers, (b) in covered combo bins or tanks, or (c) packaged in plastic-film bags and packed in fiberboard shipping containers. The bags need not be vacuum packed. Chilled commodity must be delivered to destination within 5 calendar days after the turkeys are slaughtered.

5. Frozen Commodity. Frozen commodity must be delivered to the destination as specified in the shipping instructions in commercial containers with a commercial cooling medium; for example, (a) in wax-coated fiberboard containers or (b) packaged in plastic-film bags and packed in fiberboard shipping containers (cases). The bags need not be vacuum packed.

The commodity must be chilled (internal product temperature lowered to 40 °F (4.4 °C) or lower immediately after processing). The chilled commodity must be processed, packaged and packed, and placed in a freezer within 7 calendar days after the date of slaughter. Within this 7-day timeframe, the commodity must be placed in a freezer within 48 hours of packaging and packing. If the chilled commodity is not placed in a freezer immediately after packaging or packing, the commodity must be held at a temperature not higher than 36 °F (2.2 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C). The packaged or packed commodity must be frozen (internal product temperature lowered to 0 °F (-17.8 °C) or lower within 72 hours from the time of entering the freezer). When packaged or packed commodity is held at a temperature below 26 °F (-3.3 °C), the commodity will be considered to be in a freezer and is subject to the 72-hour freezing requirement that begins at the end of the shift the commodity enters the 26 °F (-3.3 °C) or lower facility.

### III. LABELING

#### A. Shipping Containers

1. Requirements. USDA-assigned plant number, type and name of commodity, date of production, and net weight of commodity must be shown on each container, tank, or bin.

2. In-Plant Deliveries. When in-plant delivery is made, the contractor must label and mark the end product(s) according to requirements of the State distributing agency.

#### B. Free Along Side Vessel Deliveries

FAS vessel deliveries that are not source loaded in a seavan are required to show the final destination's overseas address as provided in the Sales Order/Item Number. The address must be clearly printed on at least two sides of each pallet.

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

#### A. Material and Net Weight Compliance

1. Verification of Packaging and Packing Materials. The 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 Bulk Pack Boneless Skinless Turkey Thighs dated April 2013, comply or will comply with the terms of this Commodity Specification.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_”

One certification is adequate for all production under this Specification.

2. Net Weight. Net weight of each delivery unit will be determined by the test-weighing procedures of LPS Program. Containers used to ship commodity will be uniform in both type and size in each delivery unit. The commodity must be delivered chilled subject to an agreement in writing with the processor receiving the commodity, or as specified in the applicable Solicitation, it may be delivered frozen.

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 according to applicable LPS program's instructions.

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

<u>Number of Cases in Lot</u>	<u>Number of Cases 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 (IV.A.2.a.(2)).

b. Requirements. A purchase unit or delivery unit of bulk pack boneless skinless turkey thighs must total 36,000 pounds (16,329 kg) net, or multiples thereof. Any delivery unit weighing less than 36,000 pounds (16,329 kg) net will be rejected.

c. Net weight determination. The net weight for frozen commodity will be determined at origin and, for chilled commodity, at destination. Net weight at destination will be determined by removing the product from the packaging and packing materials and weighing on a direct net weight basis. The net weight of each delivery unit will be determined by a Grader at the contractor's expense.

B. Prerequisites for Loading and Shipping Frozen Commodity

1. Visual Inspection. The frozen boneless skinless turkey thigh meat commodity must have uniform light and bright color. 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. 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 commodity temperature of frozen commodities at time of loading, the contractor may request an alternate method utilizing commodity temperature sensing devices. If this option is selected, a Federal-State supervisor, Grading Division, LPS Program will determine that the facilities, equipment, procedures, and the contractors' current level of freezing compliance are in accordance with the established guidelines outlined in the applicable LPS Program's instructions for this Specification.

### C. Inspection and Checkloading

1. Requirements. Inspection for contract compliance will be made by a representative of the USDA, in accordance with 7 CFR part 70, FSIS regulations, and this Specification, at the site of processing, both during and after processing and packaging. A representative of USDA 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 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 Division field office or the Director, Grading Division, LPS Program, AMS, USDA, Room 3932-S, STOP 0258, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0258, telephone (202) 720-3271. The quality, quantity, weight, packaging, packing, and checkloading of the commodity must be evidenced by certificates issued by the Grader. Contractor must not ship the commodity unless informed by the Grader that the designated commodity to be shipped meets contract specifications.

## **V. SHIPMENT AND DELIVERY**

Shipment and delivery must be made in accordance with the AMS Master Solicitation, Solicitation, and this Specification. In addition, the contractor must adhere to the following provisions:

### A. Contract Compliance Stamp

Each 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 container prior to shipment.

## B. Grading Certificate

A copy of the original USDA Poultry 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 and less-than-truck lot (LTL) quantities--must be secured at all times prior to unloading with tamper resistant, serially numbered, high security seals. Suppliers of commodities, products and/or services shall be responsible for placing seal(s) on all doors of each transportation conveyance upon completion of loading or servicing. Seals shall be serially numbered, barrier-type and meet the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards (F-1157-04). Seals shall be 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch diameter cable, high security bolt, or equivalent. The contractor must maintain a record of each seal number used per 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, certificate, or other delivery documents for each delivery destination.

When LTL delivery units are transported on the same trailer and destined for multiple recipients, the trailer 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 to the carrier service and to ensure that the trailer is sealed after each delivery destination. Failure to seal the trailer after each stop will result in rejection of the shipment by the recipient agency at the next scheduled stop and rejection of any subsequent deliveries on the trailer.

1. Railcar. Each railcar must be sealed. The contractors are responsible for arranging for 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 in accordance with Section V.C. of this Specification.

#### D. Delivery Notification

The contractor must comply with the AMS Master Solicitation regarding Advance Shipping Notices (ASNs) and unloading appointments. Chilled commodity requires special planning by the processing plant receiving the commodity. The consignee contact party must be consulted well in advance of delivery to allow time for the receiving plant to arrange its production schedule.

1. In-Plant Deliveries. In-plant delivery of up to three sublots per purchase unit of the commodity is permitted when the contractor slaughters and further processes (in accordance with a contract between contractor and final recipient of the final commodity(ies)) in the same processing plant. Test weighing of sublots will be done in accordance with procedures established by LPS Program, AMS.

2. Delivery In Storage. Delivery may be made in storage provided the destination in the Sales Order/Item Number 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.

3. Split Delivery. The contractor may deliver product in two or more trucks upon the approval of the recipient and upon the Grader being available to perform the necessary checkloading and final acceptance duties. The contractor is responsible for providing appropriate documentation evidencing delivery to ensure proper payment.

### VI. DESTINATION EXAMINATION

#### A. 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.

#### B. Temperature

Chilled commodity must arrive at destination at an internal product temperature of not higher than 40 °F (4.4 °C) and not lower than 26 °F (-3.3 °C). Frozen commodity must arrive at destination at an average internal temperature not to exceed 10 °F (-12.2 °C), with no individual temperature exceeding 15 °F (-9.4 °C). Commodity not meeting these requirements will be rejected for use under this Specification.

#### C. 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.



Director, Food Safety and Commodity Specification Division  
Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program