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Specialty
Crops
Program

DRAFT Commodity Specification for Frozen Fruit Juices

June 2024

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GENERAL

U.S. Standards

Frozen fruit juices (product/commodity) produced under this Commodity Specification must meet the requirements specified in the applicable United States Standards for Grades of frozen fruit juices (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.

Exceptions to U.S. Standards

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

Product Origin

In accordance with the latest version or the AMS Master Solicitation for Commodity Procurement – Domestic Programs (MSCP-D) Sections 4A52.225-1a, b, c, d, e, f, and 4A52.225-3, contractors must meet all domestic origin requirements with further clarifications shown below.

- 1. Contractors will make all paperwork available to USDA that confirms fruit, vegetable, and nut commodities purchased for USDA food assistance outlets are 100 percent grown in the United States. This means that products shall have originated entirely from crops 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) in accordance with responsible commercial practices, during the packing season, and from the crop year(s) specified.**
- 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 responsibility for compliance is borne by the contractor, regardless of whether the product was processed/packed in their facility or if it originated from other sources (i.e., subcontractors and suppliers). If a contractor receives crops or products originating from other sources, it is up to the contractor to obtain proof of domestic origin compliance from those sources.**

4. Examples of documentation submitted may include but are not limited to harvest documentation, receipts for raw product, storage records, production or packing records, product blend (formulation) records, product coding explanation (i.e., day code, lot number, pack date etc.), finished product warehousing records, shipping records, Bill of Lading signed by the recipient, or other documentation or evidence that clearly establishes the product's domestic origin from the originating orchard/field/vineyard/farm/etc. to its final destination including all steps in the process.

5. An acceptable domestic origin verification traceback must include the following in addition to documentation establishing domestic origin:

- Signed Exhibit 1 Domestic Origin Certification
- Table of Contents
- Narrative or flow chart explaining the documentation provided
- The narrative or flow chart establishes the process from field to destination, documentation substantiates that process proving domestic origin.
- An explanation of the code/ lot number (Code Breakdown) where applicable
- Each page should be numbered and referenced in Table of Contents
- All pertinent information should be highlighted on each document
- Documentation must be clear and concise and must relate directly to the code or load being traced
- Trace information submitted must include the physical location of the originating field, farm, orchard, or vineyard. P.O. Boxes are NOT acceptable. Physical Address or GPS coordinates are required.

NOTE: Failure to comply with the above requirements, or any submittals consisting of mass unorganized “data dumps” will not be reviewed by SCI and final statuses will be reported to the Commodity Procurement representative as Incomplete.

6. 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.

7. Self-certifications by contractors and subcontractors will not be accepted.

8. 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.

Packing Season

All fresh fruit to be manufactured into frozen fruit juices must be from the current crop year, unless otherwise specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. An example would be - if the harvest for fresh apples to be manufactured into frozen apple juice or frozen apple juice concentrate is August 2023 through October 2023, then any product purchased for delivery from August 2023 through July 2024, would have a current crop year of 2023.

Shipment

Frozen juices shall be held, tendered, and transported at a temperature of 0 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. **Any load received by the recipient at destination that exceeds (is warmer than) 0 degrees Fahrenheit may be cause for rejection.**

Grade of Frozen Fruit Juices

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

Fill of Container

1. Contractor must meet either the drained weight or the fill weight for the product as specified in the applicable U.S. Standards unless otherwise indicated herein. Each container must be as full as practicable. The product must occupy at least 90 percent of the container.
2. The average fill of container must meet the fill of container as printed on the label and the Individual Commodity Specification, Section II.

LABELS AND PACKAGING

Primary Containers (Containers and Labeling)

1. Vendors have the option to use commercial labeling and packaging which meets all applicable FDA requirements and contains a code which allows traceability of the product in the event of a recall, or they may use non-commercial packaging and labeling as specified in the Master Solicitation.
 - a. Two or more different commercial labels will not be acceptable within a shipping unit (truck load).
2. The processors' own commercially acceptable "brand" labels may be used on all Solicitations/IFBs. Distributor's "brand" labels are not acceptable. **If using commercial labels, then that brand's UPC codes are acceptable.**
3. All products must be packed in new, commercially acceptable primary containers. Frozen juice shall be packed only in the container size and type specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. The primary package must be suitably code marked so that the product can be identified with related inspection certificates.
4. Product packed in containers must be effectively sealed so as not to leak when thawed.
5. All juice container labeling must also meet the following formatting criteria:

- a. Must include, at a minimum, Two (2) color, in addition to black and/or white.
- b. Must incorporate a graphic (photo or illustration) depicting the product/contents on the principal display panel.
- c. Suitably code marked so that the product can be identified with related inspection certificates.

Secondary Containers (case) for Commercial Labels

1. Primary containers shall be further enclosed within new, corrugated fiberboard cartons (cases) acceptable by common or other carriers for safe storage and transportation to destinations.
2. Case flaps, gaps, and other openings may not exceed 1 inch and must be fully glued or sealed with tape. If tape is used in lieu of glue, it must be clear and of commercially acceptable width and strength. The tape must extend at least two inches down the sides or ends.
3. Mixing and matching of commercial and non-commercial labeling methods will not be acceptable.
4. Two or more different commercial labels will not be acceptable within a shipping unit (truck load).

Secondary Containers (case) for Non-Commercial Labels

Packages with non-commercial labels shall be further enclosed within new, corrugated fiberboard cartons (cases) acceptable by common or other carriers for safe transportation to destinations. Flaps, gaps, and other openings may not exceed 1 inch and must be fully glued or sealed with tape.

If tape is used in lieu of glue, it must be clear and of commercially acceptable width and strength. The tape must extend at least two inches down the sides or ends.

Cases must be marked in such a manner that they contain all the required symbols, statements and information contained in Exhibits 1.1, 1.2, or 2 as applicable.

Cases may be marked by printing or stenciling or by preprinted, self-adhesive stickers. Self-adhesive stickers must be affixed to the case in such a manner that they cannot be removed intact.

Exact arrangement and adherence to font size is not required. The case markings must be clearly marked, easily read, and substantially the same as specified in Exhibit 1.1, 1.2, or 2 as applicable.

Exhibit 2 shows an alternative placard that may be applied to a non-commercial, new, corrugated fiberboard case acceptable by common or other carriers for safe transportation to destinations. This placard must be affixed to the case in such a manner that it cannot be removed intact.

Cases must have the recycling statement shown in Exhibit 5, “Please Recycle” Symbol and Statement or Exhibit 6, “Corrugated Recycles” Symbol and Statement.

UNIVERSAL PRODUCT CODES (UPC)

Contractor UPCs are acceptable for primary containers with commercial labels and/or secondary fiberboard cases enclosing commercially labeled product.

UPCs are not required for commercial labeling with tray pack shipping containers. Products with alternative, non-commercial labels must use the UPCs listed in Exhibit 4 on the primary and secondary containers.

PALLETIZATION REQUIREMENTS

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;** however, broken or damaged pallets may be repaired with No.1 hardwood or its equivalent in new softwood.

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.

Unitization

Each delivery unit of frozen fruit juice 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.

INDIVIDUAL COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS

Vendors must comply with all applicable state recycling regulations and are responsible for any fees to distribute product in that state.

Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice in 12/32 fluid oz containers

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1. Grade – The Grade of frozen concentrated orange juice delivered under this Announcement shall meet the description and quality requirement of U.S. Grade A, unsweetened, frozen concentrated orange juice.

Exception: The Brix-Acid Ratio shall be not less than 14.0:1 and no greater than 19.5:1.

Orange Juice in Individual Serving Sizes

Product may be made from concentrate, or pasteurized single strength juice - Not From Concentrate (NFC):

1. Grade –
 - a. From concentrate - U.S. Grade A.
 - b. Not from concentrate (NFC) - Must be U.S. Grade A for all factors and requirements except for color and Brix level. Color may be U.S. Grade B or better, with a minimum Color N Value of 33.5 or equivalent to USDA OJ color number 6. If using the USDA color number 6, then that must be determined in an approved Light Box. If using the Color Value, then it must be determined using a calibrated and approved spectrophotometer. The Brix must have minimum brix level of 10.5. And a minimum Brix-Acid Ratio of 15.0 to 1, and a maximum Brix-Acid Ratio of 20.5 to 1.
2. Primary Container Size – 4-fluid ounce individual serving cartons or cups.
3. Count – 70 cartons per case or 96 cups per case.
4. When naturally occurring Vitamin C is at least 30 milligrams per 100 milliliters, no Vitamin C fortification is required.
5. Net Weight – 17.5 pounds per case (70 count cartons), 25 pounds per case (96 count cups).
6. Inspection – USDA in-plant/on-line inspection required.
7. Shelf Life – No more than 6 months if kept frozen at zero degrees F., or ten days after thawing.

Apple Juice in Individual Serving Sizes

Product may be made from concentrate, or pasteurized single strength juice (Known as Not from Concentrate [NFC]):

1. Grade – U.S. Grade A, canned apple juice - clear.

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2. **Vitamin C Requirement – The finished product shall be fortified (if needed) to contain at least 30 milligrams of Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) per 100 milliliters of apple juice. (Label indications of Vitamin C fortification are required).**
3. **Brix – Minimum 11.0 degrees.**
4. **Primary Container Size – 4-fluid ounce individual serving cups.**
5. **Count – 96 cups per case.**
6. **Net Weight – 24 pounds per case (96 count cups).**
7. **Inspection – USDA in-plant/on-line inspection required.**
8. **Shelf Life – No more than 6 months if kept frozen at zero degrees Fahrenheit, or ten days after thawing.**

INSPECTION, CERTIFICATION, AND CHECKLOADING

Requirements

NOTE: USDA inspection shall be made during on-line production of the product.

Representatives of the AMS, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division (USDA Inspector) must perform the inspection and checkloading. See 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 fruit juice products must be performed not more than 60 days prior to shipment. Whether each lot offered meets the product and container requirements of the contract 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 Canned Fruits and 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 invitation.

Temperature – All frozen foods shall be held, stored, and transported at an air temperature of 0 degrees F, or lower. The internal product temperature of the frozen fruit juices shall be maintained at 0 degrees F, and at time of loading may not exceed 10 degrees F. Carrier temperature shall be determined after the product is loaded.

Certification

Subject to (See the Master Solicitation) the acceptability of the quality, weight, packaging, and checkloading (if requested) of the product must be evidenced by Certificates of Quality and Condition 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 contract shall constitute rejection of such lot.

Contractors may request in writing that the USDA accept delivery of a lot shipped without certification. The USDA, at its option, may accept delivery, provided that the lot passes inspection by a USDA Inspector at the point of destination. If the USDA exercises this option, the contractor will be assessed a 10 percent liquidated damages and cost of inspection.

Checkloading

As a result of the Mandatory Checkloading Phase Out Program, the requirements for checkloading Frozen Fruit Juice Products, by USDA inspectors, will be eliminated for contracts announced after January 1, 2021. Note: Checkloading may still be performed on all, or part of the deliveries at the request and expense of the contractor. Also, SCI may conduct periodic verifications of the vendors' commercial practices to ensure they meet the contractual requirements.

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.

Laboratory Tests

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

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 fruit juices fails to meet the product or packaging requirement, the Contractor may request in writing that USDA accept delivery of the lot. USDA may, at its option, accept delivery, provided that the purchase price is the contract price less a discount, to be determined by the Contracting Officer.

REFERENCE LINKS

The product must comply with the below references/requirements that are effective on the date of the Solicitation/IFB announcement (published separately.)

AMS Master Solicitation:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/MSCP.pdf>

U.S. Grades and Standards:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards>

Commercial Item Descriptions:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cids>

National Science Laboratory:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/lab-testing/nsl>

FDA Food Labeling Guide

<https://www.fda.gov/media/81606/download>

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EXHIBITS**Exhibit 1.1 - Required Markings for Non-Commercial Shipping Containers**

The printing on the containers must be arranged substantially as indicated in the exhibit shown below. The wording is restricted to that shown in the exhibit. All words must be printed in sufficient size to show prominently on the container.

ALL PRINTING TO BE IN BLACK INK

FRONT PANEL	BACK PANEL
(PRODUCT NAME) (Product style or pack if applicable)	(PRODUCT NAME) (Product style or pack if applicable) (Packing media if applicable)
	INGREDIENTS 1/
	KEEP FROZEN AT 0°F OR LOWER
	PACKED BY _____ 3/ 4/
NET WEIGHT _____ 2/ 5/	

- 1/ Ingredients must be listed in descending order of predominance.
- 2/ Insert the net weight (net weight must be expressed in metric as well as avoirdupois units).
- 3/ Insert month and year packed (the first month of packing season is acceptable).
- 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 "5").

Exhibit 1.2 - Required Markings for Non-Commercial Shipping Containers
(Individual Serving Sizes)

The printing on the containers must be arranged substantially as indicated in the exhibit shown below. The wording is restricted to that shown in the exhibit. All words must be printed in sufficient size to show prominently on the container.

(PRODUCT NAME)
(Product style or pack if applicable)
(Packing media if applicable)
INGREDIENTS 1/
KEEP FROZEN AT 0°F OR LOWER 3/
PACKED BY _____ 4/
NET WEIGHT _____ 2/
5/
6/

- 1/ Ingredients must be listed in descending order of predominance.
- 2/ Insert the net weight (net weight must be expressed in metric as well as avoirdupois units).
- 3/ Insert the statement “CHILLED”, “KEEP CHILLED” or “KEEP FROZEN”.
- 4/ Insert month and year packed (the first month of packing season is acceptable).
- 5/ 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.
- 6/ Insert Universal Product Code (see Exhibit “4”).

**Exhibit 2 - Alternative Label for Shipping Containers
(Includes all Required Information)**



Product Name

Size/Number per case

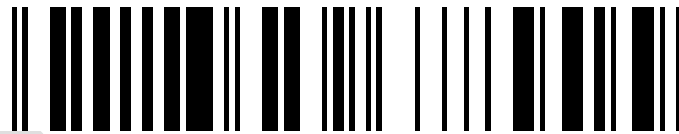
Purchase Order Number xxxxx

Packed by: ABC Growers

Any Town, CA 99999

USDA Symbol is Optional

KEEP FROZEN AT 0° OR LOWER



1234567891012345678910

Exhibit 3 - Sample Alternative Label for Shipping Containers



**FROZEN
CONCENTRATED
ORANGE JUICE**

12/32 oz. cans

Purchase Order Number xxxxx

Packed by: ABC Growers

Any Town, CA 99999

USDA Symbol is Optional

KEEP FROZEN AT 0° OR LOWER

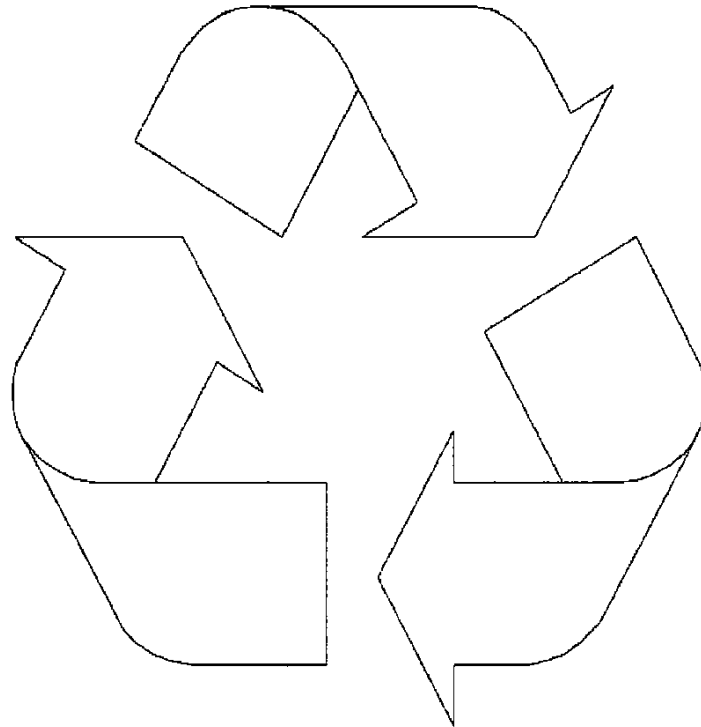


1 11 07 15001 01434 1

Exhibit 4 - Universal Product Codes

Frozen Fruit Juice	WBSCM Code	Primary Container	Secondary Container
Orange Juice Conc. FRZ Can – 12/32 oz	100276	7 15001 00276 9	1 07 15001 00276 2
Orange Juice Single FRZ Carton – 70/4 oz	100277	7 15001 00277 2	1 07 15001 00277 5
Orange Juice Single FRZ Cup – 96/4 fl. oz	110651	7 15001 10651 3	1 07 15001 10651 0
Apple Juice Single FRZ Cup – 96/4 fl. oz	111790	7 15001 11790 8	1 07 15001 11790 5

Exhibit 5 - "Please Recycle" Symbol and Statement



**PLEASE
RECYCLE**

Exhibit 6 - “Corrugated Recycles” Symbol and Statement



**Corrugated
Recycles**



Exhibit 7 - USDA Symbol

USDA Symbol is Optional

