



## **FURTHER PROCESSING CERTIFICATION**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Instruction is to set forth policies and procedures for the certification of further processed, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated commodity.

### **Policies**

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regulations (CFR 7, Part 250, Section 30) require that the further processing of USDA donated commodity products be certified by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) for non-diversion and non-substitution. Certified USDA donated commodity products must be produced and further processed in federally (or state equivalent) inspected plants. In addition, it is Quality Assessment Division (QAD) policy that all products shall have been properly handled, frozen, and stored.

QAD supervisors shall evaluate the processor's facilities and operations in order to establish the most efficient utilization of personnel while maintaining proper accountability and integrity of USDA donated commodity products.

The National Processing Agreement Program allows processors to create a single set of contractual documents for commodity reprocessing that is recognized in all states. This agreement contains the provisions that permit processors to receive and utilize USDA donated food as an ingredient in the production of a finished end product. In turn, the processor agrees to pass the value of the donated food through to the recipient agency in the form of a lower cost of the product. As with any contractual agreement, the processing agreement is designed to protect the interest of all parties involved. This agreement includes an End Product Data Schedule (EPDS) which details the formulation, quantity of donated food needed to produce a specific number of units, packaging, and yield information. When a processor participates in this program, only one set of AMS-approved EPDS', recognized nationwide, are required regardless of the number of states product will be processed for.

Under the National Processing Agreement Program, all EPDS's must be approved by the National Office. All EPDS' approved under this program are approved in perpetuity and will not require a new approval until it is revised. Copies of all approved EPDS' will be provided to the Regional Offices.

### **Procedures**

The QAD Series 600 Procedures referred to throughout this Instruction to cover all certification policy and procedures.

#### **I. Certification**

##### **A. Beef**

1. Provide the USDA grader with a Certificate of Analysis (COA) prior to the use of Fresh Boneless Beef (combos) for further processing. Processors should assure their suppliers fax the COA to arrive at delivery. Provide the grader evidence that fat analysis has been conducted and is within the acceptable range. This evidence may be provided from the supplier or an outside laboratory. A COA is not



required for frozen coarse ground beef as the microbiological and fat analysis is known before shipment.

2. All USDA donated commodity meat products shall be closed in accordance with the approved technical proposal of each supplier. Occasionally, straps/tapes on the containers of USDA donated commodity meat products are unintentionally broken during shipping and handling. In addition, processors may open a limited number of containers for product examinations, such as product condition, to ensure that the Distributing Agency (DA) is providing an acceptable product for processing. If there is no apparent evidence of tampering, the product shall be acceptable for further processing purposes. The addition of commercial meat or other ingredients may be allowed provided they are specifically listed on the End Product Data Schedule (EPDS) (Exhibit A) or if the processor is operating under an approved substitution plan.
3. USDA grader shall supervise processing activities to maintain proper accountability and integrity of USDA donated commodity meat products. The grader shall periodically check product and rework for acceptability prior to and during further processing to ensure that the product has been properly stored and handled.
4. Use of donated commodity meat product over 12 months of age requires a written waiver from the Recipient Agency (RA) prior to processing. Product over 12 months of age may not be commingled with any other product and must be segregated and processed separately. The finished product can only be returned to the RA from which it originated.
5. Unless otherwise specified in the National Processing Agreement (NPA) and/or End Product Data Schedule (EPDS), processors may commingle donated products that are 12 months of age or less from different States and/or RA's.
6. Rework shall be processed in accordance with Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulations.

## **B. Meat and Poultry**

1. The processor must provide the USDA grader with signed and dated copies of the EPD's prior to processing. The processor must obtain a written waiver from an authorized DA representative addressing any deviations from the certification requirements in the NPA, or EPDS.
2. All products derived from USDA donated commodity meat products shall be certified for the following requirements (as applicable).
  - a. Non-diversion, Non-substitution.
  - b. Metal Detection. Detection shall be performed in accordance with QAD 609: *Metal Detection*.
  - c. Condition Examination. The condition examination shall be performed in accordance with QAD 614: *Organoleptic Examination*.



- d. **Formulation.** Formulation shall be certified in accordance with QAD 604: *Formulation Certification*.
  - e. **Breeding Type and Percentage.** The breeding type and breeding percentage shall be performed in accordance with QAD 605: *Certification of Breeding Percentage*.
  - f. **Portion Size.** The desired portion size, applicable tolerances and sampling criteria shall be conducted in accordance with QAD 607: *Portion Control and Weight Range Certification*.
  - g. **Packing/Packaging.** The examination of shipping containers shall be conducted in accordance with QAD 617: *Packaging and Packing*.
  - h. **Other.** Any additional requirements, including related quality assurance provisions such as certification in accordance with a specification, must be specified. If designated, the NPA or EPDS shall list the specification name and date of issue.
- 3. Processors operating under an FNS approved substitution plan may substitute commercial meat for USDA donated commodity meat, as long as the commercial product conforms to all the requirements of the USDA donated commodity.
  - 4. Boxes containing certified end products shall be closed and sealed in accordance with QAD 616: *Sealing and Stamping*. The stamp shall be applied using one of the methods outlined below.
    - a. **USDA Stamp:**  
The USDA “Accepted as Specified” or “USDA Contract Compliance” stamp shall be placed on all boxes certified for additional requirements.
    - b. **Alternative Stamping Methods:**  
Processors are encouraged to develop alternative labeling and printing methods that incorporate the “USDA Stamp”.

Richard H. Lawson, National Poultry Supervisor  
Quality Assessment Division  
Livestock and Poultry Program

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Quality Assessment Division  
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 0249  
Washington, DC 20250

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