



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

**Agricultural
Marketing
Service**

**Fruit and
Vegetable
Division**

**Processed
Products
Branch**

United States Standards for Grades of Dates

Effective date August 26, 1955

This is the third issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Dates. This issue contains all of the requirements of the second issue, effective October 20, 1949. The third issue was published in the **FEDERAL REGISTER** of August 10, 1955 (20 FR 5755) to become effective August 26, 1955.

Voluntary U.S. grade standards are issued under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, which provides for the development of official U.S. grades to designate different levels of quality. These grade standards are available for use by producers, suppliers, buyers, and consumers. As in the case of other standards for grades of processed fruits and vegetables, these standards are designed to facilitate orderly marketing by providing a convenient basis for buying and selling, for establishing quality control programs, and for determining loan values.

The standards also serve as a basis for the inspection and grading of commodities by the Federal inspection service, the only activity authorized to approve the designation of U.S. grades as referenced in the standards, as provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. This service, available as on-line (in-plant) or lot inspection and grading of all processed fruit and vegetable products, is offered to interested parties, upon application, on a fee-for-service basis. The verification of some specific recommendations, requirements, or tolerances contained in the standards can be accomplished only by the use of on-line inspection procedures. In all instances, a grade can be assigned based on final product factors or characteristics.

In addition to the U.S. grade standards, grading manuals or instructions for inspection of several processed fruits and vegetables are available upon request for a nominal fee. These manuals or instructions contain detailed interpretations of the grade standards and provide step-by-step procedures for grading the product.

Grade standards are issues by the Department after careful consideration of all data and views submitted, and the Department welcomes suggestions which might aid in improving the standards in future revisions. Comments may be submitted to, and copies of standards and grading manuals obtained from:

Chief, Processed Products Branch
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United States Standards for Grades of Dates

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Authority:	Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, Secs. 203, 205, 60 Stat. 1087, as amended, 1090, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1622, 1624).

Note: Compliance with the provisions of these standards shall not excuse failure to comply with the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, or with applicable State laws and regulations.

§52.1001 Product description.

Dates are the properly cured fresh fruit of the date tree (*Phoenix dactylifera*) which may or may not be softened by hydration. For the purposes of the standards in this subpart, dates, when referred to as **dry dates for processing**, means that the dates are dry and have not been softened by hydration.

§52.1002 Styles of dates.

- (a) **Whole or whole dates** means whole unpitted dates from which the pits have not been removed and which may be slit longitudinally.
- (b) **Pitted or pitted dates** means whole dates from which the pits have been removed.
- (c) **Pieces or date pieces** means dates that have been cut or sliced into small pieces and that can be handled as individual units.
- (d) **Macerated or macerated dates** means dates that have been ground, chopped, mashed, or broken or that have been cut or sliced into small pieces and that cannot be handled as individual units.

§52.1003 Grades of dates.

- (a) **U.S. Grade A or U.S. Fancy** is the quality of whole or pitted dates that are of one variety, that possess a good color, that are practically uniform in size, that are practically free from defects, that possess a good character, and that score not less than 90 points when scored in accordance with the scoring system outlined in this subpart.
- (b) **U.S. Grade B or U.S. Choice** is the quality of whole or pitted dates, other than whole dry dates for processing that are of one variety, that possess a reasonably good color, that are reasonably uniform in size, that are reasonably free from defects, that possess a reasonably good character, and that score not less than 80 points when scored in accordance with the scoring system outlined in this subpart.
- (c) **U.S. Grade B (Dry) or U.S. Choice (Dry)** is the quality of whole dry dates for processing that are of one variety, that possess a reasonably good color, that are reasonably uniform in size, that are reasonably free from defects, that possess a reasonably good character, and that score not less than 80 points when scored in accordance with the scoring system outlined in this subpart.

- (d) **U.S. Grade C or U.S. Standard** is the quality of whole or pitted dates other than whole dry dates for processing that are of one variety or of date pieces or macerated dates that possess a fairly good color, that are fairly uniform in size except for date pieces or macerated dates, that are fairly free from defects, that possess a fairly good character, and that score not less than 70 points when scored in accordance with the scoring system outlined in this subpart.
- (e) **U.S. Grade C (Dry) or U.S. Standard (Dry)** is the quality of whole dry dates for processing that are of one variety, that possess a fairly good color, that are fairly uniform in size, that are fairly free from defects, that possess a fairly good character, and that score not less than 70 points when scored in accordance with the scoring system outlined in this subpart.
- (f) **Substandard** is the quality of dates that fail to meet the requirements of U.S. Grade C or U.S. Standard or U.S. Grade C (Dry) or U.S. Standard (Dry), whichever is applicable.

§52.1004 Ascertaining the grade.

In addition to considering other requirements outlined in the standards, the following quality factors are evaluated:

- (a) **Factor not rated by score points.**
 - (1) Varietal requirement.
- (b) **Factors rated by score points.** The relative importance of each factor which is scored is expressed numerically on the scale of 100. The maximum number of points that may be given such factors are:

Factors	Points
Color	20
Uniformity of size	10
Absence of defects	30
Character	<u>40</u>
Total Score	100

§52.1005 Ascertaining the rating for the factors which are scored.

The essential variations within each factor which is scored are so described that the value may be ascertained for each factor and expressed numerically. The numerical range within each factor which is scored is inclusive (for example, **18 to 20 points** means 18, 19, or 20 points).

§52.1006 Color.

- (a) **"A" classification.** Whole or pitted dates that possess a good color may be given a score of 18 to 20 points. **Good color** means that the color of the dates is practically uniform; and, with respect to dates that are predominantly light amber in color, there may be not more than 5 percent by count of dates that are dark amber in color; and, with respect to dates that are predominantly dark amber in color, there may be not more than 5 percent by count of dates that are light amber in color.
- (b) **"B" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing possess a reasonably good color, a score of 16 or 17 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade B or U.S. Choice or U.S. Grade B (Dry) or U.S. Choice (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule). **Reasonably good color** means that the color of the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing is reasonably uniform for the type; and, with respect to dates that are predominantly light amber in color, there may be not more than 10 percent by count of dates that are dark amber in color; and with respect to dates that are predominantly dark amber in color, there may not be more than 10 percent by count of dates that are light amber in color.
- (c) **"C" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates, whole dry dates for processing, date pieces, or macerated dates possess a fairly good color, a score of 14 or 15 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade C or U.S. Standard or U.S. Grade C (Dry) or U.S. Standard (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule). **Fairly good color** has the following meanings with respect to the following styles:
- (1) **Whole; pitted.** The color of the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing is fairly uniform for the type; and, with respect to dates that are predominantly light amber in color, there may be not more than 20 percent by count of dates that are dark amber in color; and, with respect to dates that are predominantly dark amber in color, there may be not more than 20 percent by count of dates that are light amber in color.
- (2) **Pieces; macerated.** The color may be variable throughout the units or mass, may be slightly dull but not off-color, and is typical of properly prepared dates of these styles.

- (d) **"SStd" classification.** Dates that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section may be given a score of 0 to 13 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

§52.1007 Uniformity of size.

- (a) **General.** The factor of uniformity of size applies only to whole and pitted styles. The factor of uniformity of size in the styles of date pieces and macerated dates is not based on any detailed requirements and is not scored; the other three factors (color, absence of defects, and character as applicable) are scored and the total is multiplied by 100 and divided by 90, dropping any fractions to determine the total score.
- (b) **"A" classification.** Whole or pitted dates that are practically uniform in size may be given a score of 9 or 10 points. **Practically uniform in size** means that not more than a total of 10 percent, by weight, of the whole or pitted dates may be conspicuously larger or smaller than the approximate average size of the dates in the container.
- (c) **"B" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing are reasonably uniform in size, a score of 8 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade B or U.S. Choice or U.S. Grade B (Dry) or U.S. Choice (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule). **Reasonably uniform in size** means that not more than a total of 15 percent, by weight, of the whole or pitted dates may be conspicuously larger or smaller than the approximate average size of the dates in the container.
- (d) **"C" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing are fairly uniform in size, a score of 7 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade C or U.S. Standard or U.S. Grade C (Dry) or U.S. Standard (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule). **Fairly uniform in size** means that not more than a total of 20 percent, by weight, of the whole or pitted dates may be conspicuously larger or smaller than the approximate average size of the dates in the container.
- (e) **"SStd" classification.** Whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section may be given a score of 0 to 6 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

§52.1008 Absence of defects.

- (a) **Definitions of defects.** Unless otherwise stated specifically, the following definitions of defects or defective units apply only to whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing, as applicable for the type:
- (1) **Damaged by discoloration** is the presence of a dark area in the flesh of the date, which the dark area is visible through the skin and is more than one-fourth (1/4) inch in width and extends more than the equivalent of half the length of the date, such darkening being of natural origin and not caused by mold or other organisms.
 - (2) **Damaged by broken skin** is any rupture of the skin in a manner to expose the flesh of the date, the shortest dimension of such exposed area being not less than three-sixteenths (3/16) inch.
 - (3) **Damaged by checking** is the presence of fine lines, resulting from water injury, affecting the surface of the skin over an area not less than one-fourth of the total surface of the date.
 - (4) **Seriously damaged by checking** is the presence of heavy lines, resulting from water injury, seriously affecting the surface of the skin over an area not less than one-fourth of the total surface of the date.
 - (5) **Damaged by deformity** is any abnormal shape sufficient to produce an appearance discernibly at variance with the normal shape that is typical of the variety.
 - (6) **Damaged by puffiness** is the condition of a date of which the skin is soft and pliable and from which the skin is separated from the flesh in a balloon-like fashion, over an area not less than one-half of the total surface of the date. Soft skins which have returned and adhere to the flesh of the date are not considered **damaged by puffiness**.
 - (7) **Seriously damaged by puffiness** is the condition of a date of which the skin is dry, hard, and brittle and from which the skin is separated from the flesh over an area not less than one-half of the total surface of the date.
 - (8) **Damaged by scars** are any blemishes that affect the exterior of the date and which are not less than three-sixteenths (3/16) inch in the shortest dimension.

- (9) **Damaged by sunburn** is an area, usually light in color, scarred by the heat of the sun, such area being not less than three-sixteenths (3/16) inch in the shortest dimension.
- (10) **Damaged by insect injury** is any blemish, resulting from the activity of insects or mites, distributed over an area of not less than one-fourth of the total surface of the date or any similar blemish that materially affects the appearance or edibility of the unit, regardless of the area affected.
- (11) **Damaged by improper hydrating** means that the date has been injured by excessive heat or that the hydrating process is incomplete.
- (12) **Damaged by mashing** means any physical injury to the flesh and skin of the date leaving the date partially mangled but otherwise whole.
- (13) **Damaged by mechanical injury** means excessive trimming or similar injury that damages the appearance or that damages or affects the eating quality of the whole date.
- (14) **Damaged by lack of pollination** means, with respect to whole dates, that pollination of the date was not accomplished, such condition being manifested by the absence of a pit in the whole dates or by thin, immature appearance of the date.
- (15) **Damaged by blacknose** is severe checking in which the flesh becomes dark, crusty, and dry and which severe checking affects an area greater than one-eighth of the total surface of the date.
- (16) **Damaged by side spot** means a very dark area, which generally is circular in appearance, extending into the flesh of the date, and when decayed tissue or mold is not present, affecting in the aggregate an area not less than the area of a circle three-sixteenth (3/16) inch in diameter.
- (17) **Damaged by black scald** means the collapse, death, and blackening of the flesh along the side of the date, usually accompanied by a bitter taste in the affected area.
- (18) **Damage by improper ripening** means pronounced evidence of **green shrivel** of the date or that the date possesses a puffy flesh or a decidedly rubbery texture resulting from failure of the tissue of the date to reach a desirable state of maturity due to climatic or cultural injury, or both.

- (19) **Damaged by other defects** means any injury or defect or group of defects not defined in this section (such as, but not limited to, heavy sugaring, and excessive scars not described in the definition **damaged by scars**,) which materially affect the appearance, edibility, or keeping quality of the dates.
- (20) **Affected by souring** is evidenced by the breakdown of the sugars into alcohol and acetic acid by yeasts and bacteria.
- (21) **Affected by mold** is the presence of visible mold.
- (22) **Affected by dirt** is the presence of any quantity of such substance.
- (23) **Affected by insect infestation** is the presence of dead insects, insect parts, or excreta. (No live insects are permitted.)
- (24) **Affected by foreign material** is the presence of any quantity of such substance.
- (25) **Affected by decay** is the state of decomposition.
- (b) **"A" classification.** Whole or pitted dates that are practically free from defects may be given a score of 27 to 30 points. **Practically free from defects** means that in pitted dates there may be present not more than one whole pit or two pit fragments for each 25 ounces of pitted dates; and that the whole or pitted dates do not exceed the total allowances and limitations shown in Chart I of this subpart.
- (c) **"B" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing are reasonably free from defects, a score of 24 to 26 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade B or U.S. Choice or U.S. Grade B (Dry) or U.S. Choice (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule). **Reasonably free from defects** means that in pitted dates there may be present not more than one whole pit or two pit fragments for each 25 ounces of pitted dates; and that the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing do not exceed the total allowances and limitations shown in Chart II of this subpart.

- (d) **"C" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates, whole dry dates for processing, date pieces, or macerated dates are fairly free from defects, a score of 21 to 23 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade C or U.S. Standard or U.S. Grade C (Dry) or U.S. Standard (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule). **Fairly free from defects** has the following meanings with respect to the following styles:
- (1) **Whole.** The defects or defective units in whole dates or whole dry dates for processing do not exceed the total allowances and limitations shown in Chart III of this subpart.
 - (2) **Pitted.** Not more than one whole pit or two pit fragments for each 25 ounces of pitted dates may be present; and the defects or defective units in pitted dates do not exceed the total allowances and limitations shown in Chart III of this subpart.
 - (3) **Pieces; macerated.** Not more than one whole pit or two pit fragments for each 25 ounces of pitted dates may be present; and the units or mass consists of clean and sound date material, fairly free from defects that seriously affect the appearance, edibility, or keeping quality of the product.
- (e) **"SStd" classification.** Dates that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section may be given a score of 0 to 20 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

Chart No. I-Allowances and Limitations for Defects in Whole and Pitted Dates (Other than Whole Dry Dates for Processing); U.S. Grade A or U.S. Fancy.

Total Allowance	Limitations
Not more than a total of 10 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:	Not more than 3/5 of the total allowance, or 6 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:
Damaged by:	Damaged by:
Discoloration.	Side spot.
Broken skin.	Black scald.
Checking.	Improper ripening.
Deformity.	Other defects.
Puffiness.	
Scars.	Affected by:
Sunburn.	Souring.
Insect injury.	Mold.
Improper hydrating.	Dirt.
Mashing.	Insect Infestation.
Mechanical injury.	Foreign material.
Lack of pollination.	Decay.
Blacknose.	
Side spot.	
Black scald.	
Improper ripening.	
Other defects.	
Seriously damaged by checking.	Not more than 2/5 of the total allowance, or 4 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:
Seriously damaged by puffiness.	
Affected by:	Damaged by:
Souring.	Improper ripening.
Mold.	Other defects.
Dirt.	
Insect Infestation.	Affected by:
Foreign material.	Souring.
Decay.	Mold.
	Dirt.
	Insect infestation.
	Foreign material.
	Decay.
	Not more than 1/10 of the total allowance, or 1 percent, by weight of the dates, may be:
	Affected by decay.

Chart No. II-Allowances and Limitations for Defects in Whole and Pitted Dates or in Whole Dry Dates for Processing; U.S. Grade B or U.S. Choice and U.S. Grade B (Dry) or U.S. Choice (Dry)

Limitations	
Not more than 15 percent, by weight of the dates, may be seriously damaged by checking. Not more than 20 percent, by weight of the dates, may be damaged by broken skin.	Not more than 2/3 of the additional allowance, or 10 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:
Additional Allowance	Damaged by:
Not more than a total of 15 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following: Damaged by: - Deformity. - Puffiness. - Scars. - Sunburn. - Insect injury. - Improper hydrating. - Mashing. - Mechanical injury. - Lack of pollination. - Blacknose. - Side spot. - Black scald. - Improper ripening. - Other defects. Seriously damaged by puffiness.	Lack of pollination. Blacknose. Side spot. Black scald. Improper ripening. Other defects.
Affected by:	Affected by:
- Souring. - Mold. - Dirt. - Insect Infestation. - Foreign material. - Decay.	- Souring. - Mold. - Dirt. - Insect Infestation. - Foreign material. - Decay.
	Not more than 1/3 of the additional allowance, or 5 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:
	Damaged by: - Improper ripening. - Other defects.
	Affected by: - Souring. - Mold. - Dirt. - Insect infestation. - Foreign material. - Decay.
	Not more than 1/15 of the additional allowance, or 1 percent, by weight of the dates, may be:
	Affected by decay.

**Chart No. III-Allowances and Limitations for Defects in Whole and Pitted Dates
or in Whole Dry Dates for Processing; U.S. Grade C or U.S. Standard and
U.S. Grade C (Dry) or U.S. Standard (Dry)**

Total Allowance	Limitations
Not more than a total of 20 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:	Not more than 1/2 of the total allowance, or 10 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:
Damaged by:	Damaged by:
Deformity.	Lack of pollination.
Scars.	Blacknose.
Sunburn.	Side spot.
Insect injury.	Black scald.
Improper hydrating.	Improper ripening.
Mashing.	Other defects.
Mechanical injury.	
Lack of pollination.	Affected by:
Blacknose.	Souring.
Side spot.	Mold.
Black scald.	Dirt.
Improper ripening.	Insect infestation.
Other defects.	Foreign material.
	Decay.
Seriously damaged by puffiness.	Not more than 1/4 of the total allowance, or 5 percent, by weight of the dates, may be the following:
Affected by:	Affected by:
Souring.	Souring.
Mold.	Mold.
Dirt.	Dirt.
Insect Infestation.	Insect infestation.
Foreign material.	Foreign material.
Decay.	Decay.
	Not more than 1/10 of the total allowance, or 2 percent, by weight of the dates, may be:
	Affected by decay.

§52.1009 Character.

- (a) **"A" classification.** Whole or pitted dates that possess a good character may be given a score of 36 to 40 points. **Good character** means that not less than 75 percent, by weight, of the dates are well developed, well fleshed, and soft, or at the time of packing are in a state of ripeness that within 15 days will develop into such character; and the remainder may possess a reasonably good character including not more than a total of 2 percent, by weight, of the dates that may possess semi-dry calyx ends and none may possess dry calyx ends.
- (b) **"B" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates or whole dry dates for processing possess a reasonably good character, a score of 32 to 35 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade B or U.S. Choice or U.S. Grade B (Dry) or U.S. Choice (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).
- (1) **Reasonably good character** with respect to whole or pitted dates other than whole dry dates for processing means that the dates are pliable; that not less than 75 percent, by weight, of the dates are reasonably well developed and reasonably well fleshed, or at time of packing are in a state of ripeness that within 15 days will develop into such character and the remainder may possess a fairly good character including not more than 10 percent, by weight, of the dates that may possess semi-dry calyx ends and dry calyx ends: **Provided**, that not more than 2 percent, by weight, of the dates may possess dry calyx ends.
- (2) **Reasonably good character** with respect to whole dry dates for processing means that the dates may be firm and dry; that not less than 75 percent, by weight, of the dates are reasonably well developed and reasonably well fleshed and that the remainder are fairly well developed and fairly well fleshed.
- (c) **"C" classification.** If the whole or pitted dates, whole dry dates for processing, date pieces, or macerated dates possess a fairly good character, a score of 28 to 31 points may be given. Dates that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade C or U.S. Standard or U.S. Grade C (Dry) or U.S. Standard (Dry), whichever is applicable, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule). **Fairly good character** has the following meanings with respect to the following styles:

(1) Whole; pitted.

- (i)** In whole or pitted dates other than whole dry dates for processing the dates may be firm but are pliable; may possess semi-dry calyx ends; and not less than 80 percent, by weight, of the dates are fairly well developed and are fairly well fleshed, or at time of packing are in a state of ripeness that within 15 days will develop into such character and the remainder may fail to possess such fairly good character or may possess dry calyx ends.
- (ii)** In whole dry dates for processing the dates may be firm and dry but are fairly well developed and fairly well fleshed.

(2) Pieces; macerated. The character may be variable throughout the units or mass but not seriously affected by dry calyx end material or inedible portions of dates.

- (d) "SStd" classification.** Dates that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section may be given a score of 0 to 27 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

§52.1010 Ascertaining the grade of a lot.

The grade of a lot of processed products covered by these standards is determined by the procedures set forth in the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Fruits and Vegetables, Processed Products Thereof, and Certain Other Processed Food Products (7 CFR 52.1 through 52.83).

§52.1011 Score Sheet.

Size and kind of container			
Container marks or identification			
Label or brand			
Net weight			
Style			
Count (per lb.)			
Moisture content (if determined)			
One variety () Yes () No			
Factors		Score points	
Color	20	(A)	18 - 20
		(B) (B-Dry)	16 - 17 <u>1</u> /
		(C) (C-Dry)	14 - 15 <u>1</u> /
		(SStd)	0 - 13 <u>1</u> /
Uniformity of size	10	(A)	9 - 10
		(B) (B-Dry)	8 <u>1</u> /
		(C) (C-Dry)	7 <u>1</u> /
		(SStd)	0 - 6 <u>1</u> /
Absence of defects	30	(A)	27 - 30
		(B) (B-Dry)	24 - 26 <u>1</u> /
		(C) (C-Dry)	21 - 23 <u>1</u> /
		(SStd)	0 - 20 <u>1</u> /
Character	<u>40</u>	(A)	36 - 40
		(B) (B-Dry)	32 - 35 <u>1</u> /
		(C) (C-Dry)	28 - 31 <u>1</u> /
		(SStd)	0 - 27 <u>1</u> /
Total score	100		
Grade			

1/ Limiting rule.

The United States Standards for Grades of Dates (which is the third issue) contained in this subpart shall become effective 15 days after the date of publication hereof in the Federal Register and thereupon will supersede the United States Standards for Grades of Dates (7 CFR §52.1001 to §52.1009) which have been in effect since October 20, 1949.

Dated: August 5, 1955.

[SEAL]

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Deputy Administrator,
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