



USDA INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP) FRESH PRODUCE PACKAGES

Background

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. Through TEFAP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchases a variety of nutritious, high-quality USDA Foods, and makes those foods available to State Distributing Agencies. The types of foods USDA purchases for TEFAP vary depending on the preferences of States and on agricultural market conditions but nutritious, high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables are prevalent.

Fresh fruits and vegetables will comprise the TEEFAP fresh produce packages distributed. These fresh produce packages will contain a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables produced and grown domestically.

Overview

The Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division will inspect and certify that the fresh fruits and vegetables used within TEFAP meet the applicable grade and produce quality requirements stated in TEFAP Fresh Produce Package Specification and Amendment 1. Inspections may occur at either the Vendor Box Assembly Facility (VBAF) or at TEFAP destination with a goal of 33% occurring at the TEFAP destination when and where possible. USDA certification will consist of a SC-301, or FV-E301 or FV-301 certificate.

Determination of Inspection

Number of Inspections

The number of inspections performed will be based on the number of boxes delivered per vendor with an established minimum number of inspections and a maximum number of additional inspections (see Table 1 below). Additional inspections will be determined by AMS Commodity Procurement Program (CPP) based on:

- Vendor risk factors based on previous non-compliance.
- Vendor failures of the established TEFAP Fresh Produce Package Specification Grade and Quality and Amendment 1 specification requirements as reported on a SCI inspection certificate.

- Verifiable complaints received by CPP from a destination recipient.
- Poor performance at the discretion of CPP.
- Subcontractors are used to supply products in other parts of the country.

Table 1: Inspections required per vendor

Number of Boxes Delivered	Minimum Number of Inspections	Maximum Number of Additional Inspections
1 – 1000	1	1
1001 – 5,000	1	2
5001 – 10,000	1	3
10,001 – 20,000	1	4
20,001 – 30,000	1	5
30,001 – 45,000	1	6
45,001 – 60,000	2	7
60,001 – 90,000	2	8
90,001 – 120,000	2	9
121,000 – 160,000	2	10
160,001 – 200,000	2	11
200,001 – 240,000	3	12
240,001 – 280,000	3	13
280,001 - 320,000	3	14
320,001 – 360,000	3	15

Location of Inspection

Inspections will be performed at either the Vendor Box Assembly Facility (VBAF) or the TEFAP destination facility with a goal of 33% occurring at the TEFAP destination facility when and where possible.

Determination

CPP will provide SCI National Programs Mission Support, Commodity Procurement Support (CPS) the Purchase Orders (POs) awarded for the program. From the POs CPS will:

- Determine which shipments will be inspected for each vendor for minimum number of inspections.
- Determine the location of inspection for each selected shipment.
- Determine, based upon CPP request, which additional shipments will be inspected for each vendor.
- Forward to CPP the determined location of inspections per PO.

Vendor Notification

CPP will inform the TEFAP vendor of their determined inspection location and provide the following request for inspection information:

- The vendor must provide the appropriate SCI inspection office a complete SC-237 Specialty Crops Inspection Division Request For Inspection form within 72 hours of the requested start of the inspection. The SC-237 form can be found at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/SC237.pdf>.
- The appropriate SCI inspection office will be the USDA/AMS Federal Fresh inspection office nearest to the inspection site. See "USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection Division, Federal Fresh Inspection" locations only. Listing can be found at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/sci-contacts/field-inspection-offices>.
- Include the Solicitation number, Solicitation Sales Order number, Purchase Order number and Purchase Line Item number in the Remarks/ Special Instructions section of the SC-237.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable TEFAP Requirements

The TEFAP fresh produce package requirements are as follows:

- Grade Requirements: U.S. No. 1 or better. 90% free from defects for product with no established U.S. Grade Standard.
- Produce Quality: Fresh produce items shall be sound and wholesome, and in suitable shipping condition to arrive at the contract destination without abnormal deterioration. Product will not be packed in ice. No fresh cut fruit or vegetables.

Inspection Procedure

Inspections will be performed by SCI Agricultural Commodity Graders (ACGs) or Fed-State Market Licensees to determine compliance with the TEFAP fresh produce package requirements. Inspections will occur either at the vendor box assembly facility or the TEFAP destination facility. Regardless of inspection location the following inspection procedure will be performed.

Sampling

Sample 1% of the number of TEFAP produce packages present in the lot at time of inspection. Follow representative sampling guidelines as established within the General Market Manual. Examine all fruit and vegetable contents within the TEFAP produce package.

Product Assessment

A. Grade Requirements

Verify TEFAP grade requirements by examining each commodity within the sample. TEFAP grade requirements are met if quality and condition defects present are within the destination lot tolerance established for the commodity or not more than 10% for product with no established U.S. Grade Standard. The following grade requirements are not applicable:

- Size (e.g. undersize, oversize)
- Minimum soluble solids (e.g., grapes or kiwifruit)
- One Color (e.g., red sweet peppers and green sweet peppers)
- One Type (e.g., Green Apples and Red Apples)
- Similar Varietal Characteristics (e.g., red Northern onions and Vidalia onions)
- Minimum Sample Size Requirements (e.g., minimum 20 pound sample for potatoes), including cut sample requirements.
- Application of Tolerances (i.e. sample tolerances) per commodity

B. Produce Quality Requirements

Verify TEFAP Produce Quality requirements by determining if all product per sample is sound and wholesome, and in suitable shipping condition to arrive at the contract destination without abnormal deterioration, is not packed in ice and is not fresh cut.

1. Products are considered sound and wholesome if via organoleptic assessment (i.e. sight, smell, and touch) if:
 - They are generally free from condition defects
 - Fruits are generally firm or firm ripe
 - Vegetables are generally fresh and firm, crisp, or tender
 - They have normal color and odor characteristic for the product
 - They are practically free of soft, flabby, overripe, decay or rot
 - There is no apparent evidence product has been adulterated
2. Product is considered in suitable shipping containers if the TEFAP produce packages (boxes) are fiberboard containers of such size to pack the commodities without slack filling or bulging. Product that is: Tight, Well Filled, Fairly Tight, Fairly Well Filled, or Level Fill will meet the suitable shipping containers requirement. Slack pack will be reported in fractions of inches on the certificate. Refer to the General Market Manual for additional guidance on slack pack and bulge.
3. Product will not be packed in ice.

4. No fresh cut fruit or vegetables allowed.

If either the TEFAP Grade or Produce Quality requirements are not met as listed above the lot will not meet the requirements of the solicitation.

C. Digital Photos

Whenever possible include digital photos of TEFAP packages, brands (product inside and/or the TEFAP master package), codes (all visible codes from product inside and/or the TEFAP master package). For failing lots include 1-5 digital photos to demonstrate the reason for the failure (i.e. account slack pack, or account condition).

Certification

A Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Certificate of Miscellaneous Inspection Services (SC-301, FV-E301 or FV-301) will be issued that documents compliance of TEFAP grade and produce quality requirements.

See [Appendix I](#) for example:

- For FEIRS FV-E301 select “Commodity Procurement Branch” under Purpose.
- Complete Applicant, Receiver, Inspection Site, Market Office, Carrier ID/Order Number as applicable.
- Contractor will be the shipper.
- List all products inspected under Product as separate lines. Enter “See Below” for Number and Type of Container for each product listed.
- Under Description of Product enter all markings for products and master TEFAP produce package. This includes brands, varieties, and all visible codes
- Under Grade enter Meets/Fails TEFAP Requirements for each product.
- Under Number and Type of Container enter the total number and type of master TEFAP produce packages inspected below the listed products. Include markings located on the master TEFAP produce packages where applicable.
 - Enter a remark if the number of containers inspected is less than the original quantity listed on the PO and/or SC-237: “Applicant States Lot Originally Manifested/Received as 1000 Cartons.”
- Enter CWT or Total Weight of total number of packages as applicable.
- Enter “See Remarks” under Above Products Meet Specifications Of.
- Enter “Meets (Fails to Meet) the **Requirements of Solicitation** ____, **Solicitation Sales Order number** ____, **Purchase order number** ____, and **Purchase Line Item number**” under Remarks.
 - If the Grade and Produce Quality requirements are not met, an additional statement of “**account** ____” will be added to clarify the factor that caused the failure, such as “...**account** fruits not generally firm or firm ripe” or “...**account** slack pack”
- Enter estimated fee.

Effective Date: June 2021


Page 6 of 8

The certificate will be sent to the applicant with a copy sent to the NPMS Commodity Procurement Support staff (CPS) via SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov.

Fees

Fees are based on the time spent on-site performing the inspection and must be charged on an Hourly Based Inspection Services basis with a ½ hour minimum for work performed during the grader's regularly scheduled work week. All applicable premium time and travel charges will also be charged.

APPENDIX I – FV E301 CERTIFICATE EXAMPLE

	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE http://FPBInspections.ams.usda.gov	MISC INSPECTION EXAMPLE PAGE 1 of 1	D-027-0XXX-00573
CONTRACTOR: SHIPPER: SAME AS APPLICANT		APPLICANT: (000000000)TESLA PRODUCE WASHINGTON, DC	
CARRIER ID / ORDER NUM: B/L 12358		RECEIVER: GREAT PLAINS FOOD BANK FARGO, ND	
INSP SITE: APPLICANT WAREHOUSE, DALLAS, TX		MARKET OFFICE: DALLAS, TX	
REMARKS: MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SOLICITATION 2000007680, SOLICITATION SALES ORDER NUMBER 5000715492 PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER 4100023127, AND PURCHASE LINE ITEM NUMBER 100.		ESTIMATED FEE: \$235.00	
STARTED: 6/14/2021 11:44 AM		COMPLETED: 6/14/2021 1:52 PM	
PASSWORD FOR ONLINE ACCESS XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX			

PRODUCT	NUMBER AND TYPE OF CONTAINER	DESCRIPTION OF PRODUCT / SERVICE (BRAND, VARIETY, SIZE, ORIGIN, etc.)	GRADE	TOTAL WT
EGGPLANT	SEE BELOW	STICKERED "BOB'S BEST", 3 LOOSE IN BOX	MEETS TEFAP REQUIREMENTS	
BGG ONIONS	SEE BELOW	BLUE BABY, 3 LBS. NET WT. US NO 1, PRODUCE OF USA	MEETS TEFAP REQUIREMENTS	
CASABA MELONS	SEE BELOW	STICKERED "FLORIDA MAGIC", 2 LOOSE IN BOX	MEETS TEFAP REQUIREMENTS	
TANGERINES	SEE BELOW	NO BRAND, NO MARKINGS, IN MESH BAG (10 TANGERINES PER BAG)	MEETS TEFAP REQUIREMENTS	
	350 TOTAL CARTONS	NO BRAND", BOX TEFAP PRODUCE COMBO, ITEM# 06968, 1 CT, 002827731 - 01DFLT		4200
ABOVE PRODUCTS MEET SPECIFICATIONS OF		SEE REMARKS.		

I, the undersigned, a duly authorized Inspector of the United States Department of Agriculture, do hereby certify that samples of the herein described product were inspected and the grades as shown by said samples were as herein stated.		
Warning: Any person who knowingly shall falsely make, issue, alter, forge, or counterfeit this certificate or participate in any such actions, is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.	Signature: 0XXX - INSPECTOR, IRVING, M <i>G.M. INSPECTOR</i>	Date: 6/14/2021
FORM FV-E301 (1.0.15.1)		

“SCI moving forward in the 21st Century using technology, innovation, and old fashioned hard work”

Non-Discrimination Policy: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.