

Agricultural Marketing Service
Office of the Deputy Administrator, Marketing Programs
Dairy Division
Dairy Grading Branch
Office of the Chief
National Field Office
GS-1980-9
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Dairy)

SJ 298

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Field Office is responsible for administrating the nationwide inspection and grading of nonfat dry milk, cheese, butter and other dairy and related products at terminal markets, shipping points, assembling and packaging plants, and inspection of dairy processing, packaging and manufacturing plant facilities and equipment.

The incumbent serves as an Agricultural Commodity Grader responsible for performing inspection and grading work on butter, cheese, and other dairy and related products at terminal markets, shipping points, production areas, and cold storage warehouses. The employee may also participate, as required, in conducting in-depth inspection of processing facilities and equipment.

Independently inspects individual lots of products for the purpose of determining lot identification, type and condition of package, condition of product, and to select representative samples from the lot for grading purposes. Prepares official samples, when necessary, for shipment and testing at a designated laboratory; the laboratory submits results to the National Field Office where the observations of the Grader are reviewed in conjunction with the laboratory results for a determination of the final grade and preparation of the grading certificate.

Interprets and applies official standards and regulations in the grading and certification of butter, cheese and other dairy and related products according to degree and intensity of such factors as flavor, body, texture, color, finish, and appearance. Determines the US grade or degree of adherence to other contract specifications (e.g., test weighing) for each lot and unit thereof, prepares graders' memoranda, and issues official certificates for products inspected.

Performs condition inspections of products and/or packaging to determine kind and extent of defects and whether defects in products were caused by transit delays, improper packing, faulty loading, improper storage, other damage, or by inherent product instability.

As assigned, performs limited inspections of processing, manufacturing, and packaging plants for such factors as Sanitation, condition, and adequacy of facilities, equipment, methods and procedures, and to determine compliance with regulations, minimum specifications, and other applicable specifications.

Advises plant management and receivers on the effects of characteristics of the raw products on quality factors in the finished product, and recommends changes to improve quality and stability of the processed product.

As assigned, performs check grading and appeal gradings on dairy products and instructs subordinate graders in proper grading and sampling techniques.

May take representative samples of related dairy products (e.g., evaporated milk and butter oil) to assure proper labeling and condition of container requirements, correct weight, and transmission of samples, as required, to a designated laboratory for chemical/bacteriological analysis.

Checks accuracy of scales for weighing and establishes an accurate tare weight of packaging material, weighs samples of product (recording the weights converted from ounces to decimals for easier computation) and computes and certifies the tare and net weight for the lot tested.

As required, inspects products at time of loading in order to identify the commodity as that which was previously inspected and found to meet quality requirements of the contract or specification; examines the lot at time of loading for condition of containers and for compliance with labeling and case marking requirements; ascertains and records number of cases per car or truck; seals or supervises sealing of loaded cars or trucks, and performs any other examination necessary to determine compliance with the applicable inspection request specifications or contract.

May participate in and/or independently conduct methodical checks and evaluation of facilities, processing equipment, processing and packaging methods, sanitation procedures, and quality improvement program at dairy plants from beginning to end of the processing/production cycle. Prepares detailed reports covering a large number of carefully examined items in each inspection to determine plant compliance with the specifications and overall program requirements. Meets with plant management to explain plant evaluation findings and makes recommendations for correction of conditions that are not in compliance with specifications and to improve quality and stability of raw materials and finished product.

Adheres to Civil Rights policies, goals and objectives in performing the duties of this position. Assures that oral and written communications are bias-free and that differences of other employees and clients are respected and valued.

III. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-6 950pts.

Knowledge of the official grade standards, regulations, and specifications of dairy products, and knowledge of related product characteristics, factors, and conditions necessary to grade and inspect the products and to identify defects and their causes.

Thorough knowledge of a variety of dairy processing methods, procedures, equipment and related storage and shipping practices to inspect plants for compliance with required specifications.

Thorough skill and ability in grading a variety of dairy products, inspecting facilities, and maintaining proper relationships with industry personnel.

2. Supervisory Controls Level 2-3 275 pts.

The supervisor makes the assignments and provides general coordination of the work. The employee independently performs the procedures required by the specific assignment, resolving nearly all technical problems independently. The employee explains findings to plant management. The employee's work is occasionally reviewed (either through paperwork or face to-face meeting) to assure proper interpretation and application of grading/inspection regulations and procedures. The supervisor performs comparative testing with the employee to assure consistent application of the official standards.

3. Guidelines Level 3-3 275 pts.

The guides consist of the official grade standards for dairy products; the regulations pertaining to plant requirements for sanitation and processing; contract or purchase specifications; the instructional manuals for grading and conducting inspections; and supplemental written and oral instructions.

The employee independently selects and applies the appropriate guides to a variety of situations and is required to use extensive judgment in interpretation of the standards and regulations in such cases as independently making borderline grade determinations; independently explaining or advising industry management on USDA requirements or policies as they apply in ambiguous situations; and analyzing technically complex processing methods and advising plant management on their effect on product quality.

4. Complexity Level 4-3 150 pts.

The work consists primarily of grading and inspecting a wide variety of dairy products, processing equipment, and storage and sanitation conditions at various locations which collectively requires considering different factors and applying different procedures according to the specific product or phase of work being performed.

5. Scope & Effect Level 5-3 150 pts.

The work involves carrying out a full range of activities at a plant location, which collectively result in determining the grade and/or acceptability of dairy products based on analysis/review of a multitude of factors as well as application of official standards and specifications. The certificates issued by the employee represent the seal of approval by the government as to the wholesomeness of dairy products for human consumption. Also, the determinations by the employee directly affect the financial interests of buyers and sellers, often serving as the basis of settlement between them.

6. Personal Contacts Level 6-2 25 pts.

Contacts include the employees and managers of dairy plants, as well as other agricultural commodity graders.

7. Purpose of the Contacts Level 7-3 120 pts.

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of plant management and industry employees and resolve conflicts; to explain grade determinations and related agency policies and regulations; and to advise on or exchange information related to technical matters.

8. Physical Demands Level 8-3 50 pts.

Commodity grading work requires periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of products often weighing over 50 pounds-, prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, bending, and climbing; physical coordination and finger dexterity in both hands to perform digital examinations of commodities; ability to detect abnormalities in the commodity through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye for distance, depth perception, and color; the ability to assure safety in a highly mechanized and/or noisy environment through adequate or correctable hearing; and, the ability to determine product quality through sensory perception (taste, smell, etc.)

9. Work Environment Level 9-2 20 pts.

The work environment includes exposure to freezing temperatures, slippery surfaces, moving materials, handling equipment, and similar risks typical of dairy processing plants and storage areas.

Total points = 2015 = GS-9