

I. INTRODUCTION

This position is located in an Area Office of the Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs. The Office carries out the inspection and grading programs for processed fruits, vegetables, and miscellaneous assigned commodities for a designated geographical area.

The incumbent, an Agricultural Commodity Technician, assists Agricultural Commodity Graders in performing inspection and grading work on processed products at a variety of locations and facilities. The employee performs duties designed primarily to provide knowledge of grading and inspection concepts, methods, and practices as well as to acquaint the employee with Division and Branch inspection, grading, and administrative procedures. Training involves formal and on-the-job instruction. Assignments may involve a temporary assignment or permanent reassignment to a different geographical area, as determined by management.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Selects and draws official samples of processed fruits, vegetables, and miscellaneous commodities stored in warehouses, plants, freezers, freight cars, trucks, vessels, public conveyances, and similar locations, in accordance with Branch representative sampling guidelines. Determines appropriate sample size.

Performs case stamping duties, checkloading and examinations for condition of container.

Performs limited inspections of air and product temperatures, physical characteristics of the storage, etc.; records any deviations or non compliances and reports such to an Agricultural Commodity Grader.

Studies official grading and inspection standards and performs limited inspections and grading of processed fruits, vegetables, and miscellaneous commodities, including objective and subjective analyses and determinations. This includes mold counts; filth analyses; color comparisons; size and count determinations; recording grading results, as directed; separating ingredients in multi-component products; determining percentage of major and minor defects; analyzing samples for inspection; taking and recording weights; determining and recording data such as code marks, label nomenclature, and score points; and maintaining equipment.

Studies regulations and procedures regarding plant sanitation and makes limited observations to determine if plant facilities, processing equipment, and personnel are in compliance with requirements and regulations. Reports non compliances to an Agricultural Commodity Grader.

III. FACTORS

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Knowledge of fruits, vegetables, and miscellaneous commodities and their characteristics and of established official standards and regulations relating to their grading and inspection.

Familiarity with regulations and requirements relating to plant sanitation.

Skill in observing environmental conditions of the processing and storage areas.

Ability to apply established Agency methods and procedures relating to the sampling of processed products including lot size, sampling plans, etc.

Ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with industry personnel.

2. Supervisory Controls

The supervisor or employee of higher grade provides the assignments and sets priorities. Regular and recurring assignments are carried out independently. Problems relating to other than recurring work are brought to the attention of an employee of higher grade. New or unusual assignments are performed under close supervision. Completed work is reviewed for accuracy and conformance to instructions.

3. Guidelines

Written guidelines include official grading and inspection regulations and procedures as promulgated by the Branch and Division, visual aids, classroom training material, technical manuals. Deviations from the guidelines are permitted on the regular and recurring assignments and with the consent of the supervisor; otherwise, the employee consults with the supervisor or employee of higher grade on any matter not specifically covered by the guides.

4. Complexity

The work involves following methods and procedures that are closely related. The technical factors necessary to consider are usually made relatively apparent and are readily verified. Variations in the work stem primarily from the particular type of fruit or vegetable being sampled, and it may be necessary for the employee to make procedural adjustments.

5. Scope and Effect

The employee performs sampling, case stamping and checkloading, and similar duties on a regular basis. The employee also performs limited grading and inspection duties and plant sanitation inspections. These duties affect the accuracy and reliability of the final determinations made by Agricultural Commodity Graders.

6. Personal Contacts

Contacts are primarily with other employees of the Branch and Division; however, they may extend to brokers, retailers, and other industry and plant personnel.

7. Purpose of the Contacts

Contacts with industry personnel are primarily for the purpose of obtaining cooperation to facilitate the sampling, checkloading, case stamping, grading and inspection, and plant sanitation inspection work.

8. Physical Demands

The work may require periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of product often weighing up to 50 pounds. There are prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, and bending. The employee must be able to detect abnormalities in the commodity and non-compliances in plant operations through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye, for distance, depth perception, and color.

9. Work Environment

The work environment includes exposure to freezing temperatures, slippery surfaces, moving materials, handling equipment, high noise level, high temperatures and humidity, and similar risks typical of processed fruit and vegetable processing plants and storage areas.