

Agricultural Marketing Service
Deputy Administrator, Marketing Programs
Tobacco Programs
Raleigh, NC, or Lexington, KY, Regional Office
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Tobacco)
GS-1980-11
Grader In Charge

SJ TB-1

Introduction

This position functions as the grader in charge at a tobacco redrying plant which blends and processes tobacco pledged as collateral for funds borrowed from Commodity Credit Corporations. A grader in charge may also be responsible for grading imported tobacco at a point of entry, which is the place where imported tobacco is initially unloaded in the United States from a container or carrier for warehousing.

Duties

Inspects, regrades, and grades (as necessary) two or more types of tobacco coming in from the auction floor, considering all 10 controlling factors. Applies the official standards (over 252 grades) and makes on-the-spot decisions as to the accuracy of grades assigned on the auction market. Grades incoming tobacco not previously graded. Determinations are final. Responsible for several million pounds of tobacco annually.

Assures proper packing of incoming tobacco and investigates any irregularities and takes action as required.

Reviews and supervises the blending of tobacco into "plant grades" not included in U.S. Official Standards. Closely related grades must be properly and uniformly blended to assure a product desirable to prospective buyers.

Assures the proper packing of the tobacco into uniform hogsheads and certifies all tobacco leaving the plant. No tobacco is processed or packed without incumbent's approval. Assures that remnants known as "picking" (non-official) grades are properly blended into containers of uniform weights with strict adherence to quality control.

Arranges with the plant manager for displaying tobacco in proper light, the scheduling of work to minimize night and overtime duty, the hiring of competent ticket markers, who assist in the inspection work, and the elimination of safety hazards.

Serves as official contact at the plant with full responsibility for grading and blending program at the plant, and explains grading decisions to manufacturers, dealers, buyers, and representatives of cooperative associations.

When assigned to grade imported tobacco, monitors the unloading of imported tobacco except cigar and oriental tobacco, from a container or carrier and randomly selects packages to be inspected. Inspects a sufficient number of packages to assure an accurate determination of the type and official standard grade. Secures a copy of the invoice and packing list from the importer, and checks all package markings and the number of packages against the packing list to assure that the tobacco inspected is the same tobacco as represented on the invoice and packing list.

This position is subject to rotation as a Set Work Leader and the incumbent is expected to perform those duties as required.

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Knowledge of two or more types of tobacco, the controlling elements to quality, the methods of curing tobacco and the effects curing has on tobacco, the Official U.S. Standards for the 252 grades of tobacco, plant (non-official) grades, "picking" grades (grades which are assigned to tobacco too mixed in quality for official grades) in order to assure uniform grading and blending of tobacco processed in the plant.

Must have knowledge of every possible grade/quality range of tobacco as determinations are final.

Knowledge of floor grading, tobacco packing, blending operations, packing of blended tobacco (hogshead). Must report on inaccuracies or lack of uniformity in grading as well as false packing of tobacco received from auction. Must assure uniform grading and packing of blended tobacco leaving plant.

Knowledge of plant operations and environment.

Skill in dealing with plant management, plant personnel, industry personnel, and importers.

2. Supervisory Controls

The grader serves as the grader in charge at a plant or point of entry. Makes decisions on the full range of technical situations as they relate to the work, and the incumbent's determinations are final.

The grader has sole responsibility for dealing with plant management on matters affecting the grading program at the plant, which includes plant personnel and tours of duty. Is responsible for proper packing and grading of all tobacco coming into and leaving the plant. Also supervises and coordinates the work of other graders assigned temporarily to the plant.

The grader's work is reviewed for an overall evaluation of its effectiveness in achieving results compatible with the program objectives.

3. Guidelines

Guides are composed of the Official U.S. Standards which include 252 or more grades, plant grades (non-standard) and "picking" grades (nonstandard) as well as applicable laws and regulations pertaining to packing. Knowledge of blending tobacco.

The incumbent must be able to apply official and non-standard grades to all tobacco processed in the plant. Must be able to apply official standard grades to imported tobacco.

The incumbent has full responsibility for developing and maintaining overall onsite relations with plant management for achieving program objectives as well as working with operating employees to resolve specific problems. This includes responsibility for uniform grading and blending and uniform packing. Incumbent certifies all tobacco processed.

4. Complexity

Applies expertise and judgment in calling standard grades, plant" grades (non- standard, used only for blended tobacco) and "picking" (non-official, used for low quality tobacco) grades in all tobacco. Responsible for correct grades on incoming tobacco at a plant as well as grading blended and processed tobacco.

Responsible for proper packing and investigates any possible false packing of incoming tobacco.

Responsible for uniform packing of processed tobacco leaving the plant.

Has full responsibility for on-site relations and maintaining grading programs at the plant. Advises Cooperative field supervisors of conditions at plant. Must explain grading decisions to manufacturers, dealers, buyers, and representatives of cooperative associations.

5. Scope and Effect

The grader is responsible for the uniform regrading, blending, and packing of hogsheads of tobacco in redrying plants, according to U.S. Official Standard Grades.

Normally, from 10 to 20 percent of tobacco sold on auction markets is taken in by associations under the Commodity Credit Corporation price support loan program and is conditioned, processed, and packaged in the redrying plants. A very large volume of tobacco thus enters the program, and as a consequence, the incumbent is responsible for reinspection of millions of pounds of tobacco annually and several hundred individual lots daily.

The U.S. Standard grades are accepted worldwide as a universal language. Domestic companies buy tobacco based on these grades, and foreign countries place orders with dealers based on official U.S. government grades.

Errors in judgment in confirming or applying the proper U.S. Official Standard Grades on lots of tobacco would result in a substantial number of mixed hogsheads of tobacco, thus affecting the sale and resulting in a loss in dollars and cents to the cooperative associations. Improper interpreting of regulation instructions and procedures would result in significant loss of money and time to the associations. Improper labeling and identification by grade of the tobacco contained in the hogshead would result in substantial expense, inconvenience, and embarrassment to the association. Anything less than continuous expert judgment in any of these areas would result in a loss of Government money, which in turn would jeopardize all Department tobacco programs.

The price support loan program uses the standards to establish support levels by grade. The effects of this program in general has a stabilizing influence on such agriculture factors as energy use, resource use, technology, productivity, employment market structures and systems, and credit supply in local communities. Accurate and authoritative determinations in inspecting, grading and uniformity of grade of tobacco packed in hogsheads are essential to accomplish these purposes.

Tobacco offered for importation into the United States must be inspected and graded to comply with the Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983. This tobacco enters the United States from various foreign countries and has unique characteristics. The grader must possess an exceptional knowledge of the U.S. Standards in order to accurately grade tobacco from the different countries. Must be able to work harmoniously with industry people and, to the extent possible, arrange schedule to the convenience of the industry.

6. Personal Contacts

Contacts include other Agricultural Commodity Graders and Supervisors, plant workers, plant management, cooperative field supervisors, manufacturers, dealers, buyers, and importers.

7. Purpose of Contacts

The purpose is to develop and maintain cooperation of industry personnel; to promote and explain the grading program and standards; to explain and defend grade determinations to plant management and other financially interested persons; and to arrange for timely grading work. Also to alert set and circuit supervisors to any potential problems with tobacco graded on the floor. The importers are required to notify the Division, at least 5 days prior to unloading, of the time and place that imported tobacco will be initially unloaded in the United States for warehousing, manipulation or manufacturing.

8. Physical Demands

The work requires constant standing in hot temperatures (sometimes over 100 degrees) to observe the tobacco being processed.

9. Work Environment

The work environment involves working in extremely hot temperatures and exposure to tobacco-dusted air.