



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

April 20, 2000

EOD-66

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural  
Services

## NOTICE TO THE TRADE

Farm Service  
Agency

### **VESSEL LOADING OBSERVATIONS FOR CONTAINERIZED SHIPMENTS ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

Kansas City  
Commodity Office  
P.O. Box 419205  
Kansas City,  
Missouri  
64141-6205

Effective immediately, Vessel Loading Observation (VLO) requirements for packaged commodities to be loaded into containers and shipped under foreign food assistance programs administered by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Agency for International Development are suspended. Therefore, steamship lines transporting CCC containerized cargo are no longer required to schedule VLO inspection services with the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS).

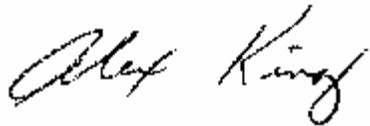
However, CCC reserves the right to conduct inspections during container stuffing operations to ensure compliance with program requirements. These inspections may be announced or unannounced. The requirement to obtain VLO services for break bulk cargoes and barge transport remain in effect. Freight containers are still subject to official FGIS stowage examinations prior to stuffing.

In accordance with applicable laws, steamship lines must load only clean, undamaged packaged commodities and execute an ocean bill of lading accurately reflecting the number of units loaded. The ocean bill of lading will reflect the quantity difference, if any, between the number of units received at the port in good condition as noted on Form KC-366, Shipment Information Log, and any damage occurring while the cargo was in an F.A.S. position or during vessel loading. The steamship line must not load bags or shipping containers deemed damaged beyond repair into any vessel hold, barge, or container. Repairing damaged bags or shipping containers is allowed in accordance with the following package-specific requirements.

1. Commodities Packaged in Multi-wall Paper Bags - Bags with all layers punctured and contents leaking or exposed are to be considered damaged beyond repair and must not be loaded. Bags with torn outer layers, but with inner liners intact, may be loaded provided they are repaired by taping. The tape must be brown in color.
2. Commodities Packaged in Textile Bags - Bags with significant punctures, permitting the commodity to flow out of the bags, must be repaired by sewing, stitching, or similarly secure means preventing further spillage. Punctured bags may also be over-slipped with sound, clean textile bags, without sewing. The commodity cannot be swept up and repackaged. Bags with rodent excrement or bird droppings are considered to be damaged beyond repair and must not be loaded.

3. Vegetable Oil Packaged in 6/4-Liter, 20-Liter, and 208-Liter Capacity Containers - Leaking vegetable oil containers and heavily stained, corrugated fiberboard shipping containers must not be loaded. Steamship lines have the following options:
- a. Leaking 20 and 208-liter capacity containers must be:
    - replaced with clean, sound containers with original markings provided by the vegetable oil supplier, or
    - not loaded.
  - b. Options for handling heavily stained shipping containers are as follows:
    - They must be replaced with unstained shipping containers with original markings provided by the vegetable oil supplier, or
    - the stained shipping containers may be opened and the sound, undamaged oil containers removed and repackaged into clean, sound regular slotted container-style corrugated fiberboard shipping containers sealed with tape or glue, or
    - not loaded.
  - c. When packages are not loaded, the bill of lading must be amended to reflect same.

Please direct questions concerning this Notice or VLO procedures to the Kansas City Commodity Office at (816) 926-6045.



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