



United States
Department of
Agriculture

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Farm and Foreign
Agricultural
Services

NOTICE TO THE TRADE

Farm Service
Agency

RECOOPERING PACKAGED COMMODITIES FOR FOOD AID PROGRAMS

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

In accordance with applicable laws, steamship companies must load only clean, undamaged packaged commodities and execute an ocean bill of lading accurately reflecting the number of units loaded. The steamship line must not load bags or shipping containers deemed damaged beyond repair into any vessel hold, barge, or container. **Any commodities that have been subject to detrimental or unsanitary conditions will not be accepted for loading. Examples of detrimental or unsanitary conditions include, but are not limited to, bags or cartons soiled with hydraulic fluid, paint, grease, rodent or bird excrement, or dust/dirt.**

Damaged bags or corrugated fiberboard shipping containers may be recovered according to the following package-specific requirements:

1. Flour Packaged in Woven Polypropylene Bags
 - a. Bags containing flour are considered “damaged beyond repair” if there is any tear or hole that allows the flour to flow from the bag.
 - b. Bags that contain flour may not be sewn or over-slipped with another bag.
 - c. Flour cannot be swept up and repackaged.
2. Bulgur, Rice, or Peas Beans and Lentils (PBL) Packaged in Woven Polypropylene Bags - Damaged bags that contain bulgur, rice, or PBLs must be rejected or recovered under the following conditions:
 - a. Bags with small punctures that permit the commodity to flow from the bag may be recovered by sewing or stitching if, after being repaired, the bagged product weighs at least 100 pounds. **The repaired bag must be weighed in the presence of the Vessel Loading Observation (VLO) observer.**
 - b. Bulgur, rice or PBLs in bags with a significant tear or hole must be rejected or re-bagged under the following conditions:

- (1) Replacement bags must meet the construction standards of the bag being replaced.
 - (2) Replacement bag markings must be identical to the bag being replaced including contract number, lot number and program markings.
 - (3) Gross weight after re-bagging must be 50 kilograms (110 pounds).
 - (4) The VLO observers must witness re-bagging and weighing of bulgur, rice or PBLs.
- c. Bags that contain bulgur, rice, or PBLs may not be over-slipped with another bag.
 - d. Bulgur, rice or PBLs cannot be swept up and repackaged.

3. Bagged Whole Grains Packaged in Woven Polypropylene Bags

- a. Bags with small punctures permitting the commodity to flow from the bag must be rejected or recoopered. A bag may be recoopered by sewing or stitching, if after being repaired, the bag weighs at least 100 pounds.
- b. Bags with a significant tear or hole must be rejected. The commodity may be re-bagged if the:
 - (1) Replacement bags meet the construction standards of the bag being replaced.
 - (2) Replacement bag markings are identical to the bag being replaced including the same contract number, lot number and program markings.
 - (3) Gross weight after re-bagging must be 50 kilograms (110 pounds).
- c. Bags that contain whole grains may not be over-slipped with another bag.
- d. Whole grains cannot be swept up and repackaged.

4. Commodities Packaged in Multi-wall Paper Bags

- a. Bags with all layers punctured and contents leaking or exposed are to be considered damaged beyond repair and must not be loaded.

- b. Bags with torn outer layers, but with inner liners intact, may be loaded if they are repaired by taping with brown tape. The tape must be brown in color.
5. Vegetable Oil Packaged in 6/4-, 20-, and 208-Liter Capacity Containers
Leaking vegetable oil containers and stained, corrugated fiberboard shipping containers must not be loaded. Steamship lines have the following options:
- a. Leaking 20-liter pails and 208-liter drums must be replaced with clean, sound pails or drums with original markings provided by the vegetable oil supplier.
 - b. Options for handling heavily stained shipping containers for 6/4 liter containers are as follows:
 - (1) The shipping container and its contents must be replaced with a shipping container with identical markings provided by the vegetable oil supplier, or
 - (2) The stained shipping container may be opened and the sound, undamaged primary containers removed and repackaged into clean, sound shipping containers sealed with glue. The replacement shipping container must have identical markings as the original shipping container.
 - c. Vegetable oil that is packaged in damaged shipping containers that cannot be replaced or reworked as outlined in paragraphs 5a and b is considered damaged beyond repair and must not be loaded.

Any commodities not loaded must be destroyed or disposed of in accordance with applicable health and sanitation laws and regulations. The cost for removing the commodity shall be for the account of the steamship company.

The steamship company shall take the necessary action to prevent the appearance in commercial or other channels, of primary containers, shipping containers and container materials bearing US Government markings. The following actions with respect to all inner and outer containers, shipping containers and container materials will constitute compliance with this requirement:

- 1. Complete obliteration of all markings with permanent opaque paint, or removal of labels which bear such markings, and overlaying or replacing such markings so obliterated, or

2. Placing a transparent pressure-sensitive sticker on all primary containers, shipping containers and container materials bearing USDA markings which states in prominent-sized lettering, "Salvage By (insert firm's name)" directly on the "NOT TO BE SOLD OR EXCHANGED" legend, wherever it appears on the primary containers, shipping containers and container materials, or
3. Drawing one or more "Xs" completely through all markings and adding a permanent stamp conspicuously placing thereon the following legend: "This container has not been used and shall not be used for shipment of Government commodities," or
4. Any other actions approved by the CCC contracting officer that accomplishes the intent of the foregoing.

Please direct questions concerning this Notice to the Kansas City Commodity Office at (816) 926-6552.

/s/
George W. Aldaya
Director



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