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(j) *Commodity specifications.* Distributing agencies shall make summaries of commodity specifications available to recipient agencies upon request.

(k) *Commodity acceptability reports.* To ensure that the Department is kept apprised of the commodities and packaging that are preferred by recipients and participating agencies, information shall be collected as follows:

(1) *Information collection.* Distributing agencies shall obtain information from recipient agencies which reflects:

(i) The types and forms of donated foods that are most useful to recipients;

(ii) Commodity specification recommendations; and

(iii) Requests for options regarding package sizes and forms of commodities.

(2) *Samples and representation.* The distributing agency shall collect information from recipient agencies from each of the following program categories: The National School Lunch Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Nutrition Program for the Elderly, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. At a minimum, distributing agencies shall obtain this information from a sample of at least 10 percent or 100 recipient agencies in each program category, whichever is less. To ensure that the sample is representative of all recipient agencies, distributing agencies shall consider the size and geographic location of all recipient agencies within the State and alternate among them so that over time each recipient agency is provided an opportunity to express its views. Distributing agencies are encouraged to extract information regarding commodity acceptability from all available sources.

(3) *Timeframes for submission.* Distributing agencies shall submit commodity acceptability reports to the appropriate FNSRO by April 30th of each year on form FNS-663.

[53 FR 20426, June 3, 1988, as amended at 53 FR 22469, June 16, 1988; 53 FR 27475, July 21, 1988; 58 FR 39120, July 22, 1993; 62 FR 53730, Oct. 16, 1997; 64 FR 72902, Dec. 29, 1999]

§ 250.14 Warehousing, distribution and storage of donated foods.

(a) *Standards for Warehousing and Distribution Systems—(1) Use of cost efficient and effective facilities.* Distributing agencies shall use the most cost effective and efficient system for providing warehousing and distribution services to recipient agencies. For the purpose of this part, commercial facilities are defined as enterprises that provide commercial warehousing services or commercial delivery services, or those commercial enterprises that provide both warehousing and delivery services.

(2) *Timeframes for evaluation.* All distributing agencies shall evaluate their current warehousing and distribution systems. Initial evaluations shall be submitted to the FNSRO by June 30, 1990. Subsequent evaluations of non-commercial systems shall, at a minimum, be submitted to FNS every three years by March 31.

(3) *Evaluation of current systems.* The evaluation of the system in place shall, at a minimum, include the following information:

(i) A description of the principal warehousing/delivery techniques used by the distributing agency. The description should include:

(A) The frequency of delivery available;

(B) The timeframes for making deliveries;

(C) The type of delivery service offered (to the loading dock or placement in the storeroom); and

(D) The system for recipient agencies to order specific amounts of food from available inventory; and

(ii) An estimate of all costs that will be incurred in administering the Food Distribution Program for the upcoming school year. These costs include transportation, storage and handling of donated foods (if the current distributing agency system does not include delivery to recipient agencies, identification of costs incurred by recipient agencies to pick up commodities at a warehouse and to deliver the food to a centralized storage facility or the individual preparation sites), salaries of persons directly connected with the administration of the program and other

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program related expenses. These expenses shall include fringe benefits, travel expenses, rent, utilities, accounting/auditing services to recipient agencies such as the costs for administering and monitoring the State's processing program, and technical assistance workshops.

(4) *Comparison of existing system with commercial systems.* All distributing agencies which do not use commercial facilities for a basic level of warehousing and distribution services shall compare the cost of warehousing and distributing commodities under their current system with the cost of comparable services under a commercial system for the upcoming school year.

(i) The cost comparison shall be made between the cost of providing a basic level of service under its current system and the cost of obtaining an equivalent level of service from commercial facilities. This basic level of service shall consist of the transportation, storage and handling of donated food from the time of delivery by the Department to a distributing agency until delivery to a recipient agency's centralized storage facility or individual preparation sites and shall include monthly deliveries of donated food to all recipient agencies except those that have agreed to less frequent deliveries.

(ii) A distributing agency may base its cost comparison on a level of service in excess of the basic level and/or on services not currently provided. In all cases, the comparison must be made on the costs of providing a comparable level of service under the existing system (as identified in §250.14(a)(2)) versus a commercial system.

(iii) If a distributing agency is unable to locate any commercial facilities expressing interest in providing the basic level of warehousing and distribution services, the distributing agency shall indicate this in its cost comparison submission, together with documentation of its efforts to obtain cost estimates from commercial facilities.

(iv) All initial data regarding the cost of the current warehousing and distribution system and the cost for comparable commercial facilities shall be submitted to the FNSRO by June 30,

1990. Subsequent cost comparisons shall, at a minimum, be submitted to FNS once every three years by March 31.

(5) *Approval to use other systems.* Distributing agencies that do not implement a commercial warehousing and distribution system shall apply to the FNSRO for approval to use other facilities and must demonstrate that other facilities are more cost effective and efficient. All requests for a waiver shall be accompanied with a full evaluation of the existing system complete with cost comparison data. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. Initial requests for approval of alternative systems shall be submitted to the FNSRO by June 30, 1990. Subsequent requests shall, at a minimum, be submitted to the FNSRO once every three years by March 31.

(6) *System implementation.* (i) Distributing agencies shall implement the most cost effective and efficient system for warehousing and distribution services to recipient agencies by July 1, 1991. Unless otherwise approved by the FNSRO, subsequent to July 1, 1991, a distributing agency shall convert to a commercial system within six months of:

(A) The date of submission of evaluation and cost comparison data indicating that a commercial system is more cost effective and efficient (if no request for approval of an alternate system is made); or

(B) The date of the denial of a request to use an alternative system.

(ii) If at any time FNS determines that the warehousing and distribution system in place is not cost effective or efficient, the distributing agency will be required to reevaluate its system (including a cost comparison and request for continued approval to use an alternative system) in accordance with this subsection within 90 days of notification by the FNSRO.

(7) *Revisions in system.* All distributing agencies (using either commercial or noncommercial systems) shall request approval from the FNSRO at least 90 days in advance of any planned reduction in the level of service provided or any increase in distribution charges beyond normal inflation. If FNS determines the proposed changes

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are inappropriate, FNS may require the distributing agency to submit additional justification, deny the request, or request a reevaluation of the system in accordance with paragraph (a)(6)(ii) of this section.

(b) *Standards for storage facilities.* Distributing agencies, subdistributing agencies and recipient agencies shall provide facilities for the handling, storage and distribution of donated foods which:

- (1) Are sanitary and free from rodent, bird, insect and other animal infestation;
- (2) Safeguard against theft, spoilage and other loss;
- (3) Maintain foods at proper storage temperatures;
- (4) Stock and space foods in a manner so that USDA-donated foods are readily identified;
- (5) Store donated food off the floor in a manner to allow for adequate ventilation; and
- (6) Take other protective measures as may be necessary.

Distributing agencies, subdistributing agencies and recipient agencies shall ensure that storage facilities have obtained all required Federal, State and/or local health inspections and/or approvals and that such inspection/approvals are current.

(c) *Reviews.* All distributing agency-level storage facilities shall be reviewed annually. Distributing agencies shall ensure that subdistributing and recipient agencies. Conduct annual reviews of their respective storage facilities. Documentation shall be maintained on file at the distributing agency or local level as appropriate to reflect compliance with this section, including documentation of corrective action in cases of noncompliance. Corrective action must be taken immediately on all deficiencies identified in the review and the result of the corrective action must be forwarded to the distributing agency. Where applicable, the distributing agency shall determine and pursue claims in accordance with § 250.15(c).

(d) *Contracts.* When contracting for storage facilities, distributing agencies and subdistributing agencies shall enter into written contracts to be effective for no longer than five years,

including option years extending a contract. Before the exercise of option years, the storage facility shall update all pertinent information and demonstrate that all donated foods received during the previous contract period have been accounted for. The contract shall, at a minimum, contain the following:

- (1) Assurance that the storage facilities will be maintained in accordance with the standards specified in paragraph (b) of this section;
- (2) Evidence that donated food shall be clearly identified;
- (3) Assurance that an inventory system shall be maintained and an annual physical inventory will be conducted; and reconciled with the inventory records;
- (4) Beginning and ending dates of the contract;
- (5) A provision for immediate termination of the contract due to non-compliance on the part of the warehouse management;
- (6) A provision allowing for termination of the contract for cause by either party upon 30 days written notification;
- (7) The amount of any insurance coverage, which has been purchased to protect the value of food items which are being stored; and
- (8) Express written consent for inspection and inventory by the distributing agency, subdistributing agency, recipient agency, the Comptroller General, the Department or any of their duly authorized representatives.

(e) *Physical inventory.* During the annual review required by paragraph (c) of this section, distributing agencies, subdistributing agencies and recipient agencies shall take a physical inventory of all storage facilities. Such inventory shall be reconciled annually with the storage facility's inventory records and maintained on file by the agency which contracted with or maintained the storage facility. Food items which have been lost, stolen or found to be out-of-condition shall be identified during the physical inventory and reported by the subdistributing or recipient agency to the distributing agency. Potential excessive inventory, as described in paragraph (f) of this

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section, shall be reported by the subdistributing or recipient agency to the distributing agency. Corrective action shall be taken immediately on all deficiencies and inventory discrepancies and the results of the corrective action forwarded to the distributing agency. Where applicable, the distributing agency shall determine and pursue claims in accordance with § 250.15(c).

(f) *Excessive inventories.* (1) The distributing agency shall determine if a subdistributing or recipient agency's inventories are excessive based on:

- (i) The rate of distribution;
- (ii) Anticipated distribution; and
- (iii) Other concerns such as logistical and economic considerations.

(2) In no case may the inventory level of each donated food in storage exceed a six-month supply unless sufficient justification for additional inventory has been submitted and approved. Subdistributing agencies and recipient agencies shall submit justification to the distributing agency in instances where more than a six-month inventory is needed. Justification shall be submitted by the distributing agency to the FNSRO for approval in instances where more than a six-month inventory is needed at the distributing agency level.

(3) The distributing agency shall take corrective action to ensure that excess inventories at all levels are eliminated and shall document actions taken to reduce excessive inventories.

[53 FR 20426, June 3, 1988, as amended at 54 FR 42475, Oct. 17, 1989; 62 FR 53730, Oct. 16, 1997]

§ 250.15 Financial management.

(a) *Distribution charges.* (1) Recipient agencies may be required to pay part or all of the direct costs for intrastate storage and distribution of donated food through distribution charges assessed by the distributing or subdistributing agency, except as provided in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(i) Distributing and subdistributing agencies assessing distribution charges shall submit a description of their system with all data used in calculating the rate to be used for the upcoming school year to the FNSRO for approval. The initial description and data shall be submitted by June 30, 1990. Updates

to this information shall, at a minimum, be submitted to the FNSRO for approval every three years by March 31.

(ii) At least 90 days before increasing distribution charges beyond normal inflation, the distributing/subdistributing agency shall submit to the FNSRO a description of the change together with all data used to calculate the change. FNS will take action on the proposed increase in accordance with paragraph (a)(1)(v) of this section.

(iii) Allowable costs include but are not limited to those program costs referenced in paragraph (f)(2) of this section, i.e. transportation, storage and handling of donated foods, salaries of persons directly connected with the administration of the program and other program related expenses. Examples of other program related expenses are administrative costs such as fringe benefits, travel expenses, rent, utilities, accounting/auditing services, computer services, and the costs of providing program services to recipient agencies such as the cost for administering and monitoring the State's processing program, and technical assistance workshops.

(iv) Distribution charges shall not be assessed for costs which would be unallowable under the Cost Principles in the Department's Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, 7 CFR part 3015, subpart T. In no case may distribution charges be assessed for costs which are paid for by State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds, State or local appropriated funds or any other funds available to the distributing or subdistributing agency to administer the program. Distribution charges shall not be based on a percentage of the value of the commodities distributed.

(v) FNS shall review the information and inform the distributing agency of the appropriateness of its distribution charges. If it is determined that a distributing agency's proposed distribution charges are excessive or incorporate inappropriate costs, the distributing/subdistributing agency will be required to adjust the distribution charges to reflect an appropriate level or submit further justification sufficient to satisfy the FNSRO that the