



PROCESS CONTROL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to set forth policies and procedures for the certification of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated red meats and poultry under the Process Control Certification Program (PCCP).

2 Scope

The PCCP offers further processors an alternative to traditional USDA certification. This program is intended to add value to further processed donated red meat commodities through audit based process control. One Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) agent per shift will be required to monitor the PCCP operations of the entire production facility. The PCCP emblem may be used in advertising and promotional literature for finished goods distributed to States or State school systems, as well as commercial products produced with AMS Verification.

3 References

The following referenced documents are used for the application of this document. The latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

[7 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Part 250, Donation of Foods for Use in the United States, its Territories and Possessions and Areas Under its Jurisdiction, Section 30, State Processing of Donated Foods](#)

End Product Data Schedule (EPDS)

GVD 638A Form Process Control Certification Program

GVD 638B Form Process Control Certification Program Nonconformance Report

MGC 44 Form Daily USDA Donated Meat Product Production Information

MGC 640 Instruction Certification of Further Processed Commodity Meat Products

[National Institute of Standards and Technology \(NIST\), Handbook 44, Specifications, Tolerances, and Other Technical Requirements for Weighing and Measuring Devices](#)

State Monthly Performance Report (MPR)

State Processing Program Handbook.

4 Policies

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regulations (*7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 250, Donation of Foods for Use in the United States, its Territories and Possessions and Areas Under its Jurisdiction, Section 30, State Processing of Donated Foods*) require that all processing of donated meat products be performed by the AMS Verification service in plants operating under Federal Inspection (or State equivalent). Additionally, the AMS policy is to ensure USDA donated product is properly handled, processed according to specification, and traceable from school district to raw product supplier.

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5 Submission of Proposals

- 5.1 Prospective processors are required to submit a written proposal prior to the commencement of production, addressing each requirement area and outlining specific procedures used to ensure that these requirements are met while processing products under the PCCP. Processors shall submit proposals to:

Verification Services Branch Chief
USDA, AMS, LPSP, GVD
13952 Denver West Parkway
Suite 350, Building 53
Lakewood, CO 80401-9978

- 5.2 Each processor shall submit one paper copy and one additional copy on a compact disk (CD) in either Microsoft Office Word format or Portable Document Format (PDF). The Verification Services Branch Chief and the Processing Review Team shall review proposals for compliance with this Procedure, notify processors of proposal status within 20 working days of receipt, schedule and conduct in-plant reviews, and issue a written letter indicating PCCP approval or denial.

6 Amendments to Programs

Amendments to approved PCCPs shall be submitted to the Verification Services Branch Chief for review and approval prior to implementation. The Verification Services Branch Chief or designee shall notify processors of amendment status within 10 working days of receipt and shall issue a written letter to the further processor indicating amendment approval or denial.

7 Definitions

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)	The USDA agency responsible for purchasing surplus commodities such as meat, poultry, fruits and vegetables. AMS also provides end product certification that, at a minimum, certifies against non-diversion and non-substitution and provides for metal detection of donated food.
Backhaul	Commodities that are physically picked up from a distributing agency (DA) or recipient agency (RA) for processing.
Batching	The process of combining the same kind of non-substitutable donated food from more than one State RA during a production run. Batching between States/RAs may only be done with written concurrence of each State/RA prior to processing. Batching is only permitted with diverted raw material, not backhauled product.
Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program	A voluntary program administered by FNS that evaluates formulations to determine the contribution toward the meal pattern requirements. It also protects the school from exaggerated product claims and provides a warranty against audit claims, if used according to manufacturer directions.



Commodity Equivalent	End product that is made using commercial meat which is equal to or better than the USDA commodities.
Commingling	The act of storing, combining, or blending commercial food and substitutable donated food together into a single inventory at a processor's plant. Processors must receive approval from FNS to commingle foods on a national level. Commingling is only permitted with diverted raw material, not backhauled product.
Corrective Action	Action to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity (NC) or other undesirable situation.
Distributing Agency (DA)	The agency, usually an agency of State government, which enters into an agreement with FNS for the distribution of donated food to eligible recipient agencies.
Diverted Product	Commodities that are sent directly to the processor by the USDA.
End Product	A finished product containing any amount of donated foods that have been commercially processed.
End Product Data Schedule (EPDS)	A standard form that describes the finished end product being produced. Information detailed on this form includes formulation, quantity of donated food needed to produce a specific number of units of end product, packaging and yield information.
First In First Out (FIFO)	An inventory control system based on the date of delivery from USDA to the processor's designated delivery point; or for finished product, an inventory control system based the date of production.
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)	The agency responsible for administering domestic food assistance programs.
Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)	The USDA agency whose primary mission is to inspect the wholesomeness of meat and poultry products.
National Processing Agreement (NPA)	A contract between the further processor and FNS to produce finished products.
Non-conformance (NC)	A deviation from program requirements.
PCCP	Process Control Certification Program.
Recipient Agency (RA)	Any organizations within a State eligible to receive USDA donated foods.
Record Check	The AMS agent shall review processor's documentation to determine if the specific examination was performed, accurately documented and within the specified tolerances as required by the PCCP.
Rework	Wholesome, salvageable product generated during a production run that is not acceptable as the specified product. Product such as broken patties or nuggets, or other defects such as missing breading, lumps, and ridges would be classified as rework product.



Substitution	The act of replacing USDA donated commodities with commercially purchased materials of the same generic identity, and of equal or better quality to the donated food provided by USDA.
USDA Verification Check	The AMS agent shall observe designated processor's employee perform and document the specific task as required by the PCCP.

NOTE: Additional definitions are available from the *State Processing Program Handbook*

8 Program Requirements– Further Processors

8.1 General Requirements

Further Processors shall:

- 8.1.1 Operate under an FNS approved substitution agreement.
- 8.1.2 Develop and maintain individual programs that address each requirement area outlined in the PCCP using the Deming cycle of Plan, Do, Check, Act. Programs, at a minimum, shall include requirements specified in this Procedure. Further processors may include additional programs and requirements not listed in this program, which may be monitored and verified by AMS agents.
- 8.1.3 Provide AMS agents copies of applicable NPA and EPDS, including applicable amendments, addendums, waivers, contact information (name, title, phone numbers, etc.) for all processing areas and any other programs used in conjunction with the PCCP.
- 8.1.4 Facility management shall appoint, in writing, a member of the organization's management who shall ensure that the processes needed for the quality management system are established, implemented and maintained in accordance with the procedures outlined in this document. This management representative shall also serve as a liaison with AMS on matters relating to the quality management system. Additionally, facility management must provide the AMS agent with a letter certifying that all personnel performing authorized grading activities have been provided with training to achieve the necessary competence so that they are aware of the relevance and importance of their activities and how they contribute to the achievement of the quality objectives under the Grading and Verification Division (GVD) program.
- 8.1.5 The organization shall establish, document, implement and maintain a quality management system which lists the duties of each employee/position as they relate to the quality management system. Duties may include, but not be limited to, product sampling, weighing, temperature verification, formulation verification, fabrication, packing and packaging, product control and monitoring reworking of retained product. This quality management system shall be submitted to:

Verification Services Branch Chief
USDA, AMS, LPSP, GVD
13952 Denver West Parkway
Suite 350, Building 53
Lakewood, CO 80401-9978



8.2 National Processing Agreements (NPA)

Further processors shall:

8.2.1 Secure an approved NPA with the FNS.

8.2.2 Ensure that all state participation agreements are signed and dated by the state representative and the further processor and that all EPDS are signed by the further processor as well as the Verification Services Branch Chief or designee.

8.3 Traceability

Further processors shall:

8.3.1 Develop and maintain a traceability program, capable of tracking product from raw product supplier to end item recipient and vice versa on a per case basis. Manually operated programs will be accepted although electronic programs (those using bar coding and scanning devices) are preferred.

8.3.2 Identify donated food clearly, through all stages of production, storage and shipment.

8.3.3 Ensure that the information contained on the State Monthly Performance Report (MPR) form is traceable to production records, per product.

8.4 Equipment

Further processors shall:

8.4.1 Scales

- a. Develop and maintain a scale calibration program that is certified by state or local government officials or an equivalently registered or licensed technician.
- b. Ensure that scales are calibrated in accordance with the *National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Handbook 44, Specifications, Tolerances, and Other Technical Requirements for Weighing and Measuring Devices*.
- c. Ensure that scales are calibrated daily prior to the start of production.
- d. Ensure that a licensed technician calibrates, initials, and dates scales monthly.
- e. Maintain copies of licenses or certificates of all in-house technicians and a scale calibration log for review by AMS agents.

8.4.2 Grinders and Blenders

- a. Ensure that the grinding and blending systems are free of non-program materials (i.e. uncertified commercial meat).



- b. Perform a complete “clean-up” prior to re-introducing program materials for certification in the PCCP, if non-program materials are introduced into grinders or any other equipment used in the processing of products for the PCCP.

8.4.3 Extruder/Elimination Systems

- a. Ensure that extruder/elimination systems are attached to grinder heads and function in accordance with manufacturer specifications. Manufacturer specifications shall be available to AMS agents upon request.
- b. Ensure that all extruded material is clearly identified and disposed of properly.

8.4.4 Thermometers

- a. Ensure that thermometers are calibrated daily prior to the start of production.
- b. Maintain thermometer calibration logs for review by AMS agents.

8.4.5 Metal Detectors

- a. Ensure that finished product passes through a functioning, in-line metal detector prior to initial placement into shipping containers.
- b. Ensure that metal detectors are calibrated in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
- c. Ensure that metal detectors are capable of detecting stainless steel, ferrous and non-ferrous metals.
- d. Declare the type of equipment, location, detection procedure, sensitivity levels, frequency of validating the equipment, and demonstrate how the product with metal contamination is excluded from complying product.

8.5 Raw Materials

Further processors shall:

- 8.5.1 Provide the AMS agent with a Certificate of Analysis (COA) prior to the use of Fresh Boneless Beef (combos) for further processing. Processors should assure their suppliers fax the COA to arrive at delivery and provide the AMS agent evidence that fat analysis has been conducted and is within the acceptable range. This evidence may be provided from the supplier or an outside laboratory. A COA is not required for frozen coarse ground beef as the microbiological analysis is known before shipment.
- 8.5.2 Conduct a product examination at the time of processing. The examination shall include, at a minimum, the following requirements:
 - a. Condition - Product must not show any evidence of mishandling, such as defrosting and refreezing, excessive purge, sticky surface slime, freezer burn, odor and/or discoloration.
 - b. Age - Beef and pork product with production dates up to 12 months old may be processed. Product exceeding the age limit will be considered non-substitutable and may only be processed under the provisions of, *MGC 640 Instruction Certification of Further Processed Commodity Meat Products*.



- c. Damaged Cases - Cases with exposed product shall be identified and reviewed by the quality control personnel and the AMS agent. If both parties agree that acceptable product may be recovered from the damaged case(s), then reconditioning is permissible.
- d. Continuous Process - Every effort shall be made to complete the processing of product from raw state to finished cases in continuous production. Processors may carry over product as long as the following requirements are met:
 - 1. Product is held in clean containers. (Containers that have been washed and are free of any non-program materials.)
 - 2. Containers are properly identified in accordance with the traceability program.
 - 3. Product is held no longer than 72 hours.
 - 4. Product temperatures do not exceed 40°F.
 - 5. Product is processed prior to newly ground/formulated product of the same item.
 - 6. Exceptions for equipment failure will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

8.5.3 Record the weight of raw materials received on the State MPR.

8.5.4 Record the weight and number of raw cases used for each production run per item on the State MPR.

8.5.5 Process diverted meat on a FIFO basis.

8.5.6 Ensure that all backhaul commodities are isolated, run separately from diverted commodities, and are identified with a specific backhaul code and State RA specific designation.

8.6 Formulation

Further processors shall:

8.6.1 Ensure that all products are formulated in accordance with the appropriate EPDS.

8.6.2 Ensure that all ingredients are identified and recorded on each formulation sheet per product per batch.

8.6.3 Ensure that water is formulated by weight rather than by volume.

8.7 Batter/Breading

Further processors shall:

8.7.1 Conduct batter/breading/glazing percentage examinations in accordance with the appropriate product specification.

8.7.2 Ensure that batter/breading/glazing percentage is within tolerances stated in the NPA and/or the CN labeling quality control plan.



8.8 Product Temperature

Further processors shall:

8.8.1 Develop and maintain programs that address the following stages of production:

- a. Ensure that raw (preprocessed, ground and formulated) product does not exceed 40°F.
- b. Ensure that cooked product meets the temperature requirement as indicated in the appropriate product specification.
- c. Ensure that frozen product meets appropriate contract and product specifications.

8.9 Portion Weights

Further processors shall:

8.9.1 Ensure that portion weights meet the minimum requirements specified on the appropriate EPDS.

8.10 Portion Counts

Further processors shall:

8.10.1 Ensure that portion counts meet the minimum requirements specified on the appropriate EPDS.

8.11 Product Defects

Further processors shall:

8.11.1 Conduct product defect examinations in accordance with the appropriate product specification.

8.12 Case Net Weights

Further processors shall:

8.12.1 Ensure that marked case net weights on the container label meet the minimum requirements specified on the appropriate EPDS.

8.13 Packaging and Labeling

Further processors shall:

8.13.1 Ensure that product is identified in accordance with the traceability program.

8.13.2 Ensure that product is packaged in accordance with the appropriate EPDS.

8.13.3 Ensure that the label is legible, contains the PCCP emblem and is located on the front panel.

8.13.4 Ensure that the PCCP emblem measures at least 1 inch wide by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch high.



8.13.5 Ensure that the labels are placed on the face panel. They must contain, at a minimum, the production date, product name, product code, case net weight, donated commodity statement "Contains Commodities Donated by the USDA," and "This Product Shall Be Sold Only to Eligible Recipient Agencies."

8.14 Production Records

Further processors shall:

8.14.1 Provide AMS agents with a daily production schedule prior to start up.

8.14.2 Ensure that AMS agents are notified in advance of any production schedule changes.

8.14.3 Record the weight and number of raw cases used to produce each product.

8.14.4 Record the weight and number of finished cases produced per product.

8.14.5 Record the weight of rework generated per product.

8.14.6 Record the weight of rework used per product (rework generated and re-introduced during the same production run shall not be recorded).

8.14.7 Record the weight of loss from other than normal production loss.

8.15 Rework

Further processors shall:

8.15.1 Label rework in accordance with the traceability program.

8.15.2 Process rework in accordance with appropriate specifications.

8.15.3 Process rework within 90 days of production.

8.16 Storage/Shipment

Further processors shall:

8.16.1 Ensure product maintains temperature in accordance with product and/or contract specifications.

8.16.2 Store and ship product using the FIFO principle.

8.17 Meetings

Further Processors shall:

8.17.1 Schedule and participate in PCCP meetings, a minimum of once a month.

8.17.2 Discuss program developments, proposed amendments, etc.

8.17.3 Record meeting minutes and provide copies to AMS agent.



8.17.4 Forward copies of meeting minutes to USDA, PCCP Coordinator, local supervisor, and all participants at the meeting.

9 Program Requirements – AMS Agents

9.1 General Requirements

AMS agents shall:

- 9.1.1 Familiarize themselves with all programs, (inclusive of EPDS), product specifications, amendments and waivers used in the PCCP.
- 9.1.2 Maintain copies of all programs, (inclusive of EPDS), amendments and waivers used in the PCCP.
- 9.1.3 Monitor each PCCP requirement a minimum of two times per shift.
- 9.1.4 Verify each requirement according to the requirements set forth on the PCCP Form.

Please note that these are minimum requirements and that an AMS agent may conduct more frequent verifications, as deemed necessary.

9.2 Production Records

AMS agents shall:

- 9.2.1 Organize the following records in binders for each product:
 - a. EPDS
 - b. Written waivers
- 9.2.2 Organize completed copies of the following in a secure file/folder:
 - a. *MGC 44 Form Daily USDA Donated Meat Product Production Information*
 - b. *GVD 638A Form Process Control Certification Program*
 - c. *GVD 638B Form Process Control Certification Program Nonconformance Report*
 - d. *GVD 638B Form Process Control Certification Program Nonconformance Report with Further Processor Responses*
- 9.2.3 Place a copy of the minutes from monthly meetings in a secure file folder.

9.3 Meetings

AMS agents shall:

- 9.3.1 Attend PCCP meetings.
- 9.3.2 Discuss program developments, proposed amendments, etc.



10 Program Requirements - Non-Conformances

10.1 Non-conformances (NC)

AMS agents shall:

10.1.1 Issue NCs for program deviations and/or deficiencies.

10.1.2 Require a written response to each NC within 3 business days of receipt of NC. The response shall include action taken to correct as well as prevent reoccurrences.

10.1.3 Forward copies of NC and responses to the GVD Office for evaluation via email to AMS - GradingInfo@ams.usda.gov.

10.2 Penalties

Further Processors that:

10.2.1 Fail to provide AMS agents with a written response to a NC within three production days of occurrence, shall cause the GVD to initiate 100% monitoring of the PCCP.

10.2.2 Receive three NCs in the same program area (traceability, metal detection, etc.), over a 30 day period, may cause 100% monitoring of the affected areas within the PCCP for up to two weeks.

10.2.3 Receive five NCs throughout the entire PCCP, over a 30 day period, may cause suspension of PCCP for a minimum of 30 days.

10.3 Suspension

10.3.1 Further processors that fail to address or take corrective action on a NC and/or have systematic problems with their PCCP may have their programs suspended by the GVD and shall:

- a. Discontinue the use of the "USDA Process Control Certification Program" Shield.
- b. Only process products in accordance with *MGC 640 Instruction Certification of Further Processed Commodity Meat Products*.
- c. Bear all expenses incurred in providing certification services in accordance with *MGC 640 Instruction Certification of Further Processed Commodity Meat Products*.
- d. Adjust production schedules to coincide with availability of GVD staff.

11 CHANGE ORDERS

The following changes were made to GVD 638 Procedure, Process Control Certification Program version 04/01/12.

- a. Format updated.
- b. References to documents updated.
- c. Contact title and information updated.