



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

October 27, 2000

D&DOD-84

Farm and  
Foreign  
Agricultural  
Services

## NOTICE TO DAIRY SUPPLIERS

Farm Service  
Agency

Announcements: MCD2 Mozzarella Cheese  
PCD3 Blend of American Cheeses and Skim Milk Cheeses  
(Blended Cheese)

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

Subject: TOTAL QUALITY SYSTEMS AUDIT

Effective April 1, 2001, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) will implement Total Quality Systems Audit (TQSA) as a method of supplier verification for Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) food assistance program contracts for mozzarella cheese and blended cheese. Under TQSA, auditors will review and assess a firm's documented quality management system which addresses all aspects of production. Auditors will review documents and records and conduct on-site audits based on a TQSA report to confirm that the supplier is following its quality management system plan. Product reviews may also be performed at the point of delivery.

Individual commodity purchase announcements and the TQSA Supplier Guidelines will provide further details; however, contractors are advised of the following:

- Only suppliers who are able to demonstrate that a quality management system plan has been established and is maintained will be determined qualified to participate in CCC food assistance program contracts.
- A numerical rating of the supplier's quality management plan will be assigned by the auditors upon completion of the audit.
- The minimum score necessary for vendors to submit bids will be contained in the applicable announcement. Presently, 70 is the minimum score needed for bidding.
- Vendors are responsible for ensuring that all product meets contract specifications and requirements. Laboratory analysis of each lot may be conducted by the vendor's own laboratory. To further validate the vendor's own test results and to ensure consistent product conformance, vendors shall submit periodic product samples for comparative laboratory testing either to the USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Testing Laboratory; or to an independent, private laboratory capable of performing the tests according to Association of Official



Analytical Chemists' approved methods. The scheduled frequency of such comparative tests shall be firmly established and documented in the vendor's quality control plan.

- Records of comparative testing will be reviewed during Total Quality Systems Audits and may also be requested by the Kansas City Contracting Officer at any time. Commodity Credit Corporation reserves the right to conduct random, unannounced sampling and testing of final product to verify compliance with all product specifications.
- Under TQSA, vendors are required to establish and maintain effective quality control procedures, tests, and records that verify each production lot's compliance with the contract specifications and requirements prior to shipment. The results of analysis must be evidenced by a Certificate of Analysis (COA). The contractor must retain the COA and furnish to CCC upon request. Product found not to be in compliance in all respects with the applicable commodity procurement specification shall not be delivered to CCC without written authorization signed and executed by the Contracting Officer.
- Discount schedules will remain the same for these products as stated in the Announcements. Certificate of Analysis must be submitted with invoices for products that fall within the discount range. Discounted factors must be asterisked. Vendors will contact the Contracting Officer for guidance on product that falls outside the required commodity specifications or the discount schedule.
- Domestic Origin Compliance Reviews will be done through TQSA.

For more information, please refer to the Supplier Guidelines or contact the applicable marketing specialist. The Supplier Guidelines website location is [www.fsa.usda.gov/daco/TQSA/tqsa.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/daco/TQSA/tqsa.htm).

To request a TQSA audit for:

Mozzarella cheese, contact Susan Hull, 816-926-2546

Blended cheese, contact Kathy Wienberg, 816-926-2514

/s/

George Aldaya

Director

