



United States
Department of
Agriculture

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EOD-74

Farm and
Foreign
Agricultural
Services

NOTICE TO THE TRADE
ALL WOVEN POLYPROPYLENE BAG SUPPLIERS
TOTAL QUALITY SYSTEMS AUDIT

Farm Service
Agency

Kansas City
Commodity Office
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The Farm Service Agency (FSA), Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), is implementing its Total Quality Systems Audit (TQSA) program as a method of verification of suppliers' established quality management systems for the purchases of bags under Commodity Procurement Announcements KC-P-BAGS-306, Purchase of Bags and Twine for Use in Export Programs and/or Announcement BGGR4, Bagging CCC-Owned Grain for Use in Export Programs and applicable amendments. Under TQSA, auditors will review and assess a firm's documented quality management system addressing all aspects of production.

TQSA is a quality control concept that uses the combined features of the International Standards Organization (ISO), Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point, and Quality Control Analysis systems. TQSA requirements are aimed primarily at fostering continuous product improvement and preventing noncompliance at all critical points in the manufacturing process. Auditors will review documents and records and conduct on-site audits based upon TQSA to confirm that the supplier is following its quality management system. A numerical rating of the supplier's quality management system will be assigned by the auditors. An initial minimum TQSA score of 80 will be required for bid consideration. Product reviews will also be performed both at point of production and at final destinations.

Suppliers are required to maintain documented quality verification, including independent analytical test results, verifying that the packaging meets the requirements in the purchase announcement and will be held responsible for any packaging that does not comply with contract requirements.

The proposed TQSA implementation will be phased in over the next 5 months, by April 1, 2001, at which time suppliers wishing to bid on contracts must have received a full TQSA audit and attained a score of at least 80. Suppliers are reminded that they are responsible for ensuring and certifying that all packaging meets requirements and specifications as outlined in the announcements (reference the Notice to the Trade EOD-69, dated June 5, 2000). For additional information or comments, please contact James Riva at (202) 720-3774 or Dean Jensen at (202) 720-2115, or please refer to the Supplier Guidelines website located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/daco/TQSA/tqsa.htm>.

George Aldaya, Director



