

SECTION CC-1 NSN/ITEM DESCRIPTION

PCR-C-0006 CHICKEN STEW, PACKAGED IN A FLEXIBLE POUCH, SHELF STABLE

Each component is consumed by combat personnel under worldwide environmental extremes as part of an operational ration, and is a source of nutritional intake. It is essential that this item be produced in accordance with good commercial practice to attain high standards of appearance, odor, flavor, and texture so that high levels of troop acceptance are achieved.

C-2 PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

A. First article. A sample shall be subjected to first article inspection in accordance with the tests and inspections of Section E of this Performance-based Contract Requirements.

B. Commercial sterility. The packaged food shall be processed until commercially sterile.

C. Shelf life. The packaged food shall meet the minimum shelf life requirement of 36 months at 80°F.

D. Appearance.

(1) Chicken. The chicken shall be piece sizes typically produced by a 3/4 inch dicer setting, and the chicken shall be from natural proportions. The cooked chicken shall be free of skin, cartilage, coarse connective tissue, section of tendons or ligaments, and discolored meat. The chicken pieces shall have a characteristic cooked, chicken color.

(2) Vegetables. The vegetables shall consist of the following kinds: diced potatoes, diced carrots, sliced celery, chopped onions, and green peas. The vegetables shall be discernible pieces and shall have a characteristic color.

(3) Sauce. The sauce shall have a cream color and may contain visible flecks of herbs and spices.

(4) General. The finished product shall be a uniform mixture of chicken pieces and vegetables in sauce. There shall be no bone, bone fragment, feathers or feather parts in the packaged food.

E. Odor and flavor.

(1) General. The packaged food shall have an odor and flavor characteristic of cooked chicken with potatoes, carrots, celery, onions, and peas in a well blended sauce which has a poultry flavor with mild spices.

(2) Foreign. The packaged food shall be free from foreign odors and flavors such as, but not limited to, burnt, scorched, rancid, sour, or stale.

SECTION C CONTINUEDF. Texture.

- (1) Chicken. The chicken pieces shall be moist and tender.
- (2) Vegetables. The vegetables shall be slightly soft to slightly firm.
- (3) Sauce. The sauce shall be smooth and moderately thick.

G. Weight.

- (1) Net weight. The average net weight shall be not less than 8.0 ounces. No individual pouch shall contain less than 7.5 ounces.
- (2) Drained weight. The average drained weight of chicken pieces and vegetables (combined) shall be not less than 4.0 ounces. The drained weight of chicken pieces and vegetables (combined) in an individual pouch shall be not less than 3.5 ounces. Of the individual pouch drained weight of chicken pieces and vegetables (combined), not less than 1.0 ounces shall be chicken pieces.

H. Palatability. The finished product shall be equal to or better than the approved first article, when applicable, or other approved model in palatability and overall appearance.

I. Nutrient content.

- (1) Protein content. The protein content shall be not less than 9.8 percent.
- (2) Fat content. The fat content shall be not greater than 5.4 percent.
- (3) Salt content. The salt content shall be not greater than 1.0 percent.

C-3 MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

A. Ingredients and formulation. Ingredients and formulation percentages may be as follows:

(1) <u>Sauce</u>	<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>Percent by weight</u>
	Chicken broth (3.0 to 3.5 % solids)	86.037
	Starch, waxy maize, modified	5.000
	Chicken fat	4.000
	Salt	1.750
	Flavoring, chicken	1.600
	Onions, chopped, dehydrated	1.000
	Celery, sliced, dehydrated	0.450
	Pepper, white, ground	0.120
	Sage, ground	0.020
	Thyme, ground	0.010

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	<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>Percent by weight</u>
	Basil, ground	0.010
	Annatto color	0.003
(2) <u>Product</u>	<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>Percent by weight</u>
	Sauce	47.40
	Chicken, diced	28.00
	Potatoes, dehydrofrozen <u>1/</u>	7.30
	Water	7.30
	Carrots, diced	7.00
	Peas, green	3.00

1/ When fresh potatoes were used, the percent by weight was calculated to be 14.60 and the water was deleted.

SECTION DD-1 PACKAGING

A. Product shall be filled into pouches and pouches shall be filled into cartons, both of which shall meet the requirements of Section 3 and Figures 1 and 2 of MIL-PRF-44073. Verification testing and inspection of pouch and carton conformance to the requirements shall be by the testing and inspections of Section 4 of MIL-PRF-44073 and the Quality Assurance Provisions of Section E of this Performance-based Contract Requirements.

D-2 LABELING

A. Pouches. Each pouch shall be clearly printed or stamped, in a manner that does not damage the pouch, with permanent black ink or any other contrasting color, which is free of carcinogenic elements or ingredients. To avoid erroneous marking of pouches, the product name, lot number and filling equipment number shall be applied prior to thermal processing. All other marking may be applied before or after thermal processing.

(1) Product name (1/8 to 7/16 inch block letters). Commonly used abbreviations may be used when authorized by the inspection agency.

- (2) Pouch code includes: 1/
Lot Number
Filling equipment identification number
Official establishment number (for example, EST-38) (applicable to class 1 and 3 only)
Retort identification number
Retort cook number

1/ Shall be code marked as follows: The lot number shall be expressed as a four digit Julian code. The first digit shall indicate the year of production and the next three digits shall indicate the day of the year (Example, July 1, 1997 would be coded as 7182). The Julian code shall represent the day the product was packaged into the pouch and processed. Sub-lotting (when used) shall be represented by an alpha character immediately following the four digit Julian code. Following the four digit Julian code and the alpha character (when used), the other required code information shall be printed in the sequence as listed above. For food products that do not require an establishment number, the Julian code shall be preceded by three capital letters, which represent the packer's name.

B. Cartons.

(1) The cartons shall be clearly printed on one of the largest panels with permanent black ink as follows:

- Product name (7/32 to 9/32 inch block letters).
Ingredients.
Net weight.
Name and address of packer.
Code (same as pouch code, see pouches). 1/ 2/

SECTION D CONTINUED

USDA approval stamp for the packers plant (applicable to meat and poultry items only).

"Nutrition Facts" label in accordance with the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) and all applicable FDA/USDA regulations.

1/ Code may be embossed on the outside of any panel except the largest panels of the carton.

2/ Official establishment number not required in carton code.

(2) Military nutrition information entitled "Military Rations Are Good Performance Meals" shall be printed on the large carton panel opposite to the panel printed with the data in D-2, B.(1). The information, provided by the contracting officer, shall be clearly printed with permanent black ink in an area no smaller than 4-1/4 inches by 6-3/4 inches.

D-3 PACKING

A. Packing for shipment to ration assembler. Seventy-two pouches (of the same product) in cartons shall be packed flat or on edge in a snug-fitting fiberboard shipping container conforming to style RSC, type CF, class domestic, grade 200 of ASTM D 5118, Standard Practice for Fabrication of Fiberboard Shipping Boxes. Each container shall be securely closed in accordance with ASTM D 1974, Standard Practice for Methods of Closing, Sealing, and Reinforcing Fiberboard Shipping Containers.

D-4 MARKING

A. Shipping containers. Shipping containers shall be marked in accordance with DPSC Form 3556, Marking Instructions for Shipping Cases, Sacks and Palletized/Containerized Loads of Perishable and Semiperishable Subsistence.

SECTION E INSPECTION AND ACCEPTANCEE-6 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONSDefinitions.

(1) Critical defect. A critical defect is a defect that judgment and experience indicate would result in hazardous or unsafe conditions for individuals using, maintaining, or depending on the item; or a defect that judgment and experience indicate is likely to prevent the performance of the major end item, i.e., the consumption of the ration.

(2) Major defect. A major defect is a defect, other than critical, that is likely to result in failure, or to reduce materially the usability of the unit of product for its intended purpose.

(3) Minor defect. A minor defect is a defect that is not likely to reduce materially the usability of the unit of product for its intended purpose, or is a departure from established standards having little bearing on the effective use or operation of the unit.

Quality Assurance Provisions.

The following quality assurance criteria, utilizing ANSI/ASQC Z1.4-1993, Sampling Procedures and Tables for Inspection by Attributes, are recommended.

A. Classification of inspections. The inspection requirements specified herein are classified as follows:

(1) First article inspection. The first article shall be inspected in accordance with the provisions of this Performance-based Contract Requirements and evaluated for overall appearance and palatability. Any failure to conform to the performance requirements or any appearance or palatability failure shall be cause for rejection of the first article.

(2) Conformance inspection. Conformance inspection shall include the product examination and the methods of inspection cited in this section.

* B. Product examination. The finished product shall be examined for compliance with the performance requirements specified in Section C of this Performance-based Contract Requirements utilizing the double sampling plans indicated in ANSI/ASQC Z1.4 - 1993. The lot size shall be expressed in pouches. The sample unit shall be the contents of one pouch. The inspection level shall be S-3 and the acceptable quality level (AQL), expressed in terms of defects per hundred units, shall be 1.5 for major defects and 4.0 for minor defects. Defects and defect classifications are listed in Table I. For drained weight inspection, a separate set of pouches shall be selected from the lot using the same sampling criteria as above. The pouches shall be immersed in 140°F to 190°F water for 10 minutes prior to the drained weight inspection.

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TABLE I. Product defects 1/ 2/ 3/

<u>Category</u>		<u>Defect</u>
<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	
		<u>Appearance</u>
101		Bone or bone fragment measuring more than 0.3 inch in any dimension
102		Presence of feathers or feather parts
103		Product not a uniform mixture chicken pieces and vegetables in sauce
	201	Total weight of skin, cartilage, coarse connective tissue, section of tendons or ligaments, and discolored meat is more than 0.20 ounces
	202	Color of sauce not cream
	203	Vegetable pieces not discernible
	204	Color of vegetables not as specified
	205	Product does not contain the kinds of vegetables as specified
	206	Color of chicken pieces not of cooked chicken
		<u>Odor and flavor</u>
104		Odor or flavor not characteristic of cooked chicken with potatoes, carrots, celery, onions, and peas in a well blended sauce which has a poultry flavor with mild spices
		<u>Texture</u>
	207	Chicken pieces not moist or not tender
	208	Sauce not smooth or not moderately thick
	209	Vegetables not slightly soft to slightly firm

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TABLE I. Product defects 1/ 2/ 3/ (cont'd)

<u>Category</u>		<u>Defect</u>
<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Weight</u>
	210	Net weight of an individual pouch less than 7.5 ounces <u>4/</u>
	211	Drained weight of chicken pieces and vegetables (combined) in an individual pouch less than 3.5 ounces <u>5/</u>
	212	Of the individual pouch drained weight of chicken pieces and vegetables (combined), less than 1.0 ounces are chicken pieces

1/ Presence of any foreign odors and flavors such as, but not limited to burnt, scorched, rancid, sour, or stale shall be cause for rejection of the lot.

2/ Finished product not equal to or better than the approved first article, when applicable, or other approved model in palatability and overall appearance shall be cause for rejection of the lot.

3/ Dicer size requirement for chicken pieces shall be verified by certificate of conformance. Natural proportions of chicken used shall be verified by certificate of conformance.

4/ If the sample average net weight is less than 8.0 ounces, the lot shall be rejected.

5/ If the sample average drained weight of chicken pieces and vegetables (combined) is less than 4.0 ounces, the lot shall be rejected.

C. Methods of inspection.

(1) Commercial sterility. Testing for commercial sterility shall be in accordance with MIL-PRF-44073.

* (2) Shelf life. The contractor shall provide a certificate of conformance that the product has a 3 year shelf life when stored at 80°F. Government verification may include storage for 6 months at 100°F or 36 months at 80°F. Upon completion of either storage period, the product will be subjected to a sensory evaluation panel for appearance and palatability and must receive an overall score of 5 or higher based on a 9 point hedonic scale to be considered acceptable.

(3) Net weight. The net weight of the filled and sealed pouches shall be determined by weighing each sample on a suitable scale tared with a

representative empty pouch. Results shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 ounce.

(4) Drained weight. The pouch contents shall be poured into a flat-bottom container. A minimum of three times the pouch's volume of 180°F to 190°F water shall be added to the container so as to cover the contents. The contents and water shall be gently agitated so as to liquefy rendered fat without breaking the chicken pieces or vegetables. The contents shall then be

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poured into a U.S. Standard No. 7 sieve in a manner that will distribute the product over the sieve without breaking the chicken pieces or vegetables. The sieve area shall be such that the distributed product does not completely cover all the openings of the sieve. The sieve shall be tilted at approximately a 45° angle and allowed to drain for 2 minutes before determining the drained weight by subtracting the sieve tare weight from the gross weight. The drained weight shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 ounce.

(5) Nutrient content. The sample to be analyzed shall be a composite of eight filled and sealed pouches which have been selected at random from the lot. The composited sample shall be prepared (see NOTE) and analyzed for protein content, fat content, and salt content in accordance with the following methods of the Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC International:

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method Number</u>
Protein	984.13
Fat	960.39, 985.15
Salt	935.47

Test results shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 percent. Any result not conforming to the requirements specified in Section C of this Performance-based Contract Requirements shall be cause for rejection of the lot.

NOTE: The USDA will use AOAC method 983.18 for preparation of the sample.

SECTION J REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

DPSC FORM

DPSC FORM 3556 Marking Instructions for Shipping Cases, Sacks and Palletized/Containerized Loads of Perishable and Semiperishable Subsistence, May 96

FEDERAL SPECIFICATION

FED-STD-595 - Colors Used in Government Procurement

MILITARY SPECIFICATION

MIL-PRF-44073 - Packaging of Food in Flexible Pouches

NON-GOVERNMENTAL STANDARDS

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR QUALITY CONTROL (ASQC)

ANSI/ASQCZ1.4-1993 - Sampling Procedures and Tables for Inspection by Attributes

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TESTING AND MATERIALS (ASTM)

D 1974 - Standard Practice for Methods of Closing, Sealing, and Reinforcing Fiberboard Shipping Containers

D 3985 - Oxygen Gas Transmission Rate Through Plastic Film and Sheeting Using a Coulometric Sensor

D 5118 - Standard Practice for Fabrication of Fiberboard Shipping Boxes

F 372 - Standard Test Method for Water Vapor Transmission of Flexible Barrier Materials Using an Infrared Detection Technique

AOAC INTERNATIONAL

Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC International

AMSSB-RCF-FN (Valvano/4259)

8 April 2002

TO: DSCP-HRAA (LeCollier/3625)

Subject: (ES02-105) Technical Inquiry; Various MRE Documents (listing below); Clarify Carton labeling information

Ref: Quality Summit Mar 13, 2002, Industry One on One Sessions.

1. Based on discussions at referenced meeting, the U.S. Army Soldier and Biological Chemical Command, Soldier Systems Center (SBCCOM) has decided to clarify the carton labeling information since the requirement as written has been misinterpreted.

2. SBCCOM requests that DSCP implement the following change to the listed subject documents for all current, pending and future procurements until the documents are formally amended or revised:

In Section D, D-2 Labeling, B Cartons: Delete Footnote 1 entirely and insert:

"1/ Code may be ink printed on any outside carton panel. Code may be embossed on any outside carton panel except the largest panels of the carton."

3. The affected MRE entrée related documents are as follows:

Clam Chowder, New England style, Pouch	PCR-C-045	25 Oct 01
Pork Rib, Boneless, Imitation, Pouch	PCR-P-028	25 Oct 01
Fruits, Wet Pack, Pouch	PCR-F-002A	24 Oct 01
Vegetable Manicotti, Pouch	PCR-V-002	24 Oct 01
Beef Roast w/Vegetables, Pouch	PCR-B-035	24 Oct 01
Chili and Macaroni, Pouch	PCR-C-027	15 Nov 00
Beef Stew, Pouch	PCR-B-020	15 Nov 00
Beef Ravioli in Meat Sauce, Pouch	PCR-B-021	15 Nov 00
Beef w/Mushrooms in Sauce, Pouch	PCR-B-022	15 Nov 00
Beef Patty, Grilled, Pouch	PCR-B-029	15 Nov 00
Beefsteak, Grilled w/Mushroom Gravy, Pouch	PCR-B-030	15 Nov 00
Pork Chop, Jamaican, Pouch	PCR-P-012	15 Nov 00
Seafood Tortellini, Pouch	PCR-S-011	15 Nov 00
Turkey Breast, in Gravy w/Potatoes, Pouch	PCR-T-004	15 Nov 00
Country Captain Chicken, Pouch	PCR-C-019A	31 Jul 00
Jambalaya w/Ham & shrimp, Pouch	PCR-J-001	30 Sep 99
Beef Enchilada in Sauce, Pouch	PCR-B-010(1)	30 Sep 99
Potatoes, Mashed, Pouch	PCR-P-011	30 Sep 99
Black Bean and Rice Burrito, Pouch	PCR-B-0002	17 Dec 97

Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce, Pouch	PCR-S-0002	5 Nov 97
Pork Chow Mein, Pouch	PCR-P-0002	5 Nov 97
Chicken and Rice, Pouch	PCR-C-0005	5 Nov 97
Chicken Stew, Pouch	PCR-C-0006	5 Nov 97
Beef Frankfurters, Pouch	PCR-B-0003	5 Nov 97
Pasta w/Vegetables in Cheese Sauce, Pouch	PCR-P-0001	22 Sep 97
Noodles, Buttered, Pouch	PCR-N-0001	22 Sep 97
Meatloaf w/Gravy, Pouch	PCR-M-0001	22 Sep 97
Chicken Breast w/Salsa, Pouch	PCR-C-0002	22 Sep 97
Chicken Breast in Thai Sauce, Pouch	PCR-C-0003	22 Sep 97
Beef in Teriyaki Sauce w/Vegetables, Pouch	PCR-B-0001	22 Sep 97
Apple Slices in Spice Sauce, Pouch	PCR-A-0001	4 Apr 97

4. Several MRE related component documents, i.e. breads, cakes, cookies, do not require a carton.

5. Several MRE entrée related documents from the Oct 1998 time frame did not contain the specific labeling of pouches and cartons inclusively. They referenced MIL-PRF-44073 in the Section D requirements.

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6. Therefore, SBCCOM requests that DSCP implement the following change to the Quality Assurance Provisions and Packaging Requirements for MIL-PRF-44073E Packaging of Foods in Flexible Pouches for all current and pending procurements until the document is formally amended or revised:

In III, A, 1 Labeling and marking, b, Cartons: Delete Footnote 1 entirely and insert:

"1/ Code may be ink printed on any outside carton panel. Code may be embossed on any outside carton panel except the largest panels of the carton."

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