



# Dairy, Grains & Oilseeds

## Questions and Answers from 2016 Industry Meeting

Trevor J. Wilson,  
Contract Specialist

October 24, 2017





# Question 1

What is USDA doing to address the unbalanced orders/delivery periods between first-half second-half of the month? As well as addressing large volumes of cheese being ordered during first 4 months of school's year in the fall, when loads could be rationed and delivered in the January-March periods.





# Answer 1

FNS will continue to provide education to the States and emphasize the importance of spreading out orders, and AMS and FNS will work to stabilize the quantities of orders on solicitations.

This will also be addressed through the BMI effort.





## Question 2

When USDA issues a solicitation for barrel cheese, how is that cheese used?





## Answer 2

Barrels are further processed into many products for delivery to school cafeterias (e.g., grilled cheese sandwiches, whole grain macaroni and cheese).





## Question 3

Dairy – IDIQ contracts are a challenge.  
There are unknown variables  
(quantities) that make it difficult to  
bid.





## Answer 3

The estimated needs (sales orders) are available on the FNS website at

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/delivery-order-status-reports>. This report is updated every month in the first week of the month.





## Question 4

Ready-to-Eat Cereal - New product specifications are making it hard to provide a tasty product. (USDA is no longer buying a commercial product; vendors are making products solely for USDA use).







## Answer 4

In some cases, specifications are different from commercial to reduce variability or assist with nutrition program goals. It is important to recipients that products are consistent among manufacturers. Recipients rely on a similar taste, texture, and other attributes when they receive USDA Foods from different vendors. Companies can contact AMS with specific concerns about specification requirements.

Additionally, when appropriate, we are considering alternate contracting methods to ensure consistent product (i.e., long-term contracts with only one supplier)





## Question 5

Concerned about the proposed change for maximum age of barrels at time of delivery.





## Answer 5

Based on industry feedback on the draft specification, AMS did not change the maximum age for barrel cheese and will revisit this matter at a later date.





## Question 6

Cheese – provide more clarity on testing frequency. There doesn't appear to be a testing consistency for the cheese that comes to a further processor from other cheese manufacturers. Maybe some test every vat, or every third vat, or some other interval. Their (further processor) company standards require stricter intervals. So, for cheese that does not come directly from themselves, they may have to perform additional tests before they can use it.





## Answer 6

The cheese manufacturer will follow its particular production facility-line testing intervals to ensure proper quality controls processes, analysis outcomes, and requirements are met for product delivered under its contract with AMS.





## Question 7

Cracker suppliers do not like the USDA 9-month shelf-life requirement for crackers. They stated the industry standard is 7 months; they follow the industry standard which ensures quality and freshness of the product. The USDA 9-month requirement is a barrier to their participation.





## Answer 7

AMS is considering reducing the shelf-life requirement for crackers. Currently, however, the majority of vendors are able to meet the 9-month requirement. The two extra months is necessary to allow for distribution from the National Warehouses to end recipients.





## Question 8

Are new requirements for delivery appointments 7 days prior to delivery versus previous (24-48 hours)? These 7-day limitations will be difficult to follow.







## Answer 8

Delivery appointments shall be made as far in advance of delivery as possible, but not less than 72 hours prior to delivery. ASN's must be created not less than 24 hours before delivery.





# Wrap Up

## Questions, Comments, Concerns

Presenter: Trevor J. Wilson  
[Trevor.Wilson@ams.usda.gov](mailto:Trevor.Wilson@ams.usda.gov)

