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FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FISHERY FOOD PRODUCTS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE U. S. BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

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ABSTRACT

THIS ARTICLE IS INTENDED FOR THOSE WHO BID TO SUPPLY FISHERY PRODUCTS TO FEDERAL AGENCIES OR WHO OTHERWISE ARE INTERESTED IN THE SPECIFICATION PROGRAM. IT DISCUSSES HOW FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS SERVE BOTH INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT, THE PART THE U. S. BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES PLAYS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FISHERY FOOD PRODUCTS, WHAT A FEDERAL SPECIFICATION IS, WHAT ONE LOOKS LIKE, HOW A SPECIFICATION IS DEVELOPED, AND WHAT THE BUREAU'S SPECIFICATION PROGRAM IS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1958.

BACKGROUND

Federal specifications serve both industry and government in the following ways:

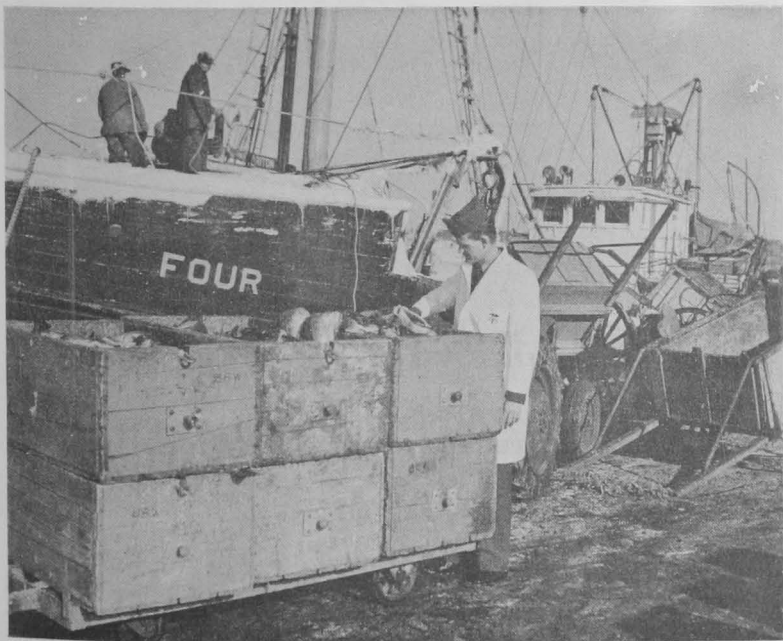


FIG. 1 - U. S. VETERINARY CORPS INSPECTOR CHECKING QUALITY OF FISH WHEN LANDED FROM THE VESSEL. INSPECTION MAY BE MADE BY THE PROCURING AGENCY AT ANY TIME OR PLACE DESIGNATED BY THE PROCURING AGENCY.

1. Standardize the items used by the Federal Government.
2. Reduce the number of sizes, kinds, and types of items.
3. Standardize packing, packaging, and method of preservation.
4. Provide a means by which buyer and seller can reach an agreement.
5. Become legal documents when used as a basis for contracts.
6. Enable bidders to compete on an equal basis.

Accordingly, the specification must give a clear, accurate description of the

item. This type of specification can be obtained only by wholehearted participation of industry in the specification program.

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The U. S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries is responsible for the research and development needed to prepare Federal specifications for fishery food products. Carrying out this responsibility entails:

1. Determination of the fish product needs of Federal agencies.
2. Evaluation of the products.
3. Conduct of any research needed.
4. Preparation of the specifications in cooperation with the fishing industry and other Federal agencies involved.

Primary responsibility for development of specifications within the Bureau is delegated to the Fishery Technological Laboratory in East Boston, Mass. This work is done in cooperation with the Quartermaster Food and Container Institute for the Armed Forces, Chicago, Ill. The Quartermaster Food and Container Institute is responsible for the packing and packaging sections of Federal Specifications. The purpose of this report is to describe the fishery product specification program.

WHAT IS A FEDERAL SPECIFICATION?

A Federal specification is a clear, accurate description of the technical requirements for a material, a product, or a service, including the procedure to determine that the requirements have been met.

Accordingly, fishery product specifications are used in invitation for bids and serve as a basis for contracts in the purchase of fishery products for Federal agencies. The specifications include packing and marking requirements and prescribed methods of inspection and testing to determine if the requirements have been met by the supplier.

TYPES OF SPECIFICATIONS FOR FOOD PRODUCTS

Food-product specifications are of three types: (1) Federal, (2) Interim Federal, and (3) Departmental.

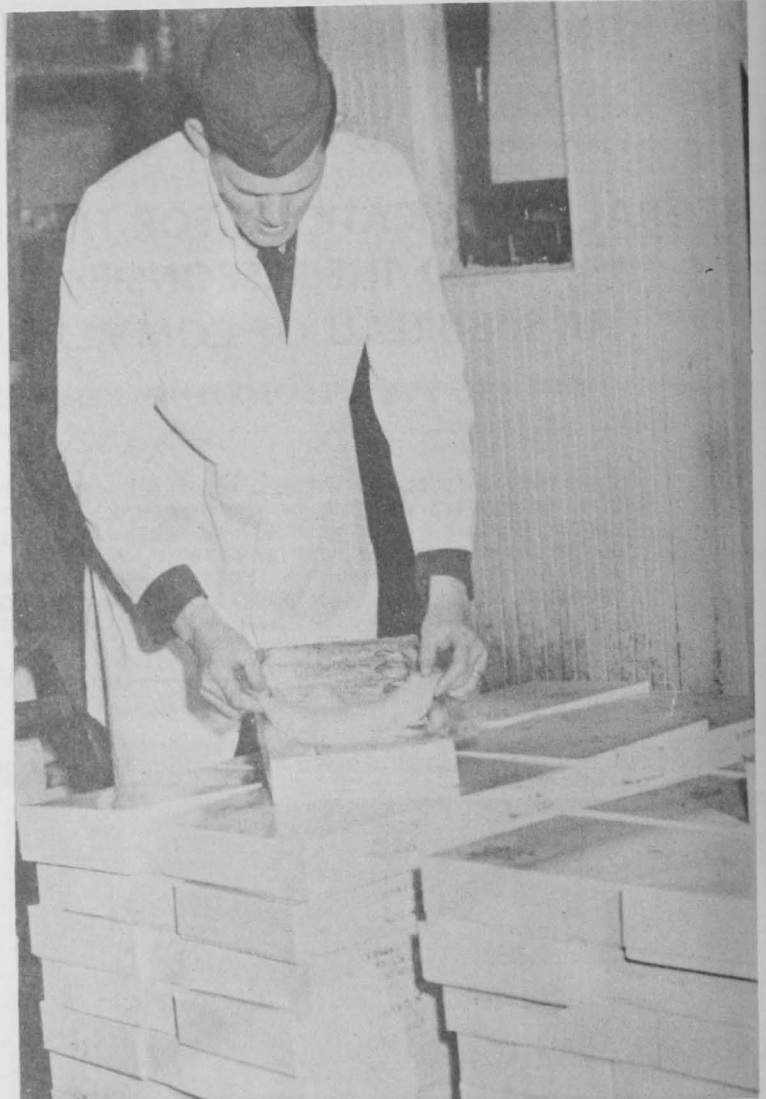


FIG. 2 - U. S. ARMY VETERINARY CORPS INSPECTOR CHECKING PACKAGED FILLETS BEFORE PACKAGES ARE PLACED IN THE QUICK FREEZER.

The Federal specification is prepared to meet the requirements of two or more Governmental agencies. It is issued by the Commissioner, Federal Supply Service, General Services Administration, for use by all Federal agencies.



FIG. 3 - U. S. ARMY VETERINARY CORPS INSPECTOR STAMPING FINAL PACKAGES OF FROZEN FISH FILLETS.

The Interim Federal specification is issued by the same agency and is intended to cover the immediate procurement needs of one agency, but it may be used by other agencies. It is intended for final processing as either a new or a revised Federal specification.

The Departmental specification is developed and prepared by, and is of interest to, a particular Federal agency. One such specification of much interest to fishery industries is the Military specification. This specification is prepared to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces. It is drafted by the Quartermaster Food and Container Institute and published under the direction of the Munitions Board Standards Agency. This specification is primarily used by the Department of Defense but may be used by other agencies. It describes food and ration items that are not covered by a federal specification or items that have been modified to provide military characteristics not covered in the Federal specification requirements.

SPECIFICATION FORMAT

Product specifications contain six numbered sections as follows:

Section 1. Scope and classification. This section gives the extent to which the specification applies to the product and, if necessary, gives a detailed description.

Section 2. Applicable specifications and publications. This section lists all the documents that form a part of the specification.

Section 3. Requirements. This section states all essential requirements and descriptions applying to the product and refers, as applicable, to the character or quality of the raw materials, formula, product characteristics, product marking, and workmanship. The section indicates the standard of quality and workmanship that the commodity must meet to be acceptable.

Section 4. Sampling, inspection, and test procedures. This section contains detailed information on the methods and frequency of sampling, inspection, and applicable test methods to determine whether the product conforms to the specification requirements.

Section 5. Preparation for delivery. This section covers the requirements for the preservation, packaging, packing, and marking of packages and containers.

Federal Specification	Specification Number ^{1/}	Date Specification Became Effective	Action Required on Specification
Clams: Canned	-	-	Proposed Federal Specification.
Clams, Raw, Shucked; Fresh (Chilled) and Frozen	PP-C-401a	April 25, 1952	Amend to include new market products and practices.
Crab Meat: Canned	PP-C-651a	Sept. 25, 1956	Appears adequate.
Crab Meat, Cooked; Chilled and Frozen	PP-C-656a	March 6, 1956	Appears adequate.
Fish: Fresh (Chilled) and Frozen	PP-F-381d	Sept. 3, 1954	Amend to include additional Species.
Lobsters: Live; Chilled and Frozen Meat	-	-	Proposed Federal Specification.
Oysters: Canned	PP-0-951	March 3, 1931	Revise to reflect present-day products and packaging and to include new standards of identity.
Oysters: Raw, Shucked (Fresh and Frozen)	PP-0-956	July 27, 1950	Appears adequate.
Salmon: Canned	PP-S-31b	Aug. 8, 1951	Appears adequate.
Sardines: Canned	PP-S-51d	April 11, 1957	Revise to include re-evaluation of certain counts, reclassification of defects, and possible new types and styles.
Scallops: Fresh (Chilled) and Frozen	-	-	Convert Departmental (Military) to Federal Specification.
Shrimp: Canned	PP-S-311a	Sept. 8, 1955	Appears adequate.
Shrimp, Frozen, Raw; Breaded	PP-S-315	(New)	Convert proposed Departmental (Military) to Fed. Specification.
Shrimp, Raw and Cooked; Chilled and Frozen	PP-S-316a	June 20, 1955	Amend or revise to include possible new methods of packing and re-evaluation of defects classifications.
Tuna Fish: Canned	PP-T-771	March 31, 1931	Revise to reflect present-day products and packaging.

^{1/} COPIES OF FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS MAY BE OBTAINED AS OUTLINED UNDER "GENERAL INFORMATION" IN THE INDEX OF FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS AND AT THE PRICES INDICATED IN THE INDEX. THE INDEX, WHICH INCLUDES CUMULATIVE MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTS AS ISSUED, IS FOR SALE ON A SUBSCRIPTION BASIS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IF YOU NEED SINGLE COPIES OF SPECIFICATIONS FOR BIDDING OR OTHER PURPOSES, THEY ARE AVAILABLE WITHOUT CHARGE AT THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REGIONAL OFFICES IN BOSTON, NEW YORK, ATLANTA, CHICAGO, KANSAS CITY, MO.; DALLAS, DENVER, SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES, SEATTLE, AND WASHINGTON, D. C.

Section 6. Notes. This section contains information of a general or explanatory nature.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SPECIFICATION

The following requirements are observed in the development of a specification:

(1) The needs of all government agencies having an interest in the items must be considered.

(2) The number, types, grades, and varieties shall be held to a minimum consistent with the economy of the operation.

(3) Wherever practical, functional or performance requirements rather than compositional requirements shall be specified.

(4) Nationally-recognized industry commercial specifications and standards shall be used and adopted to the maximum extent practicable.

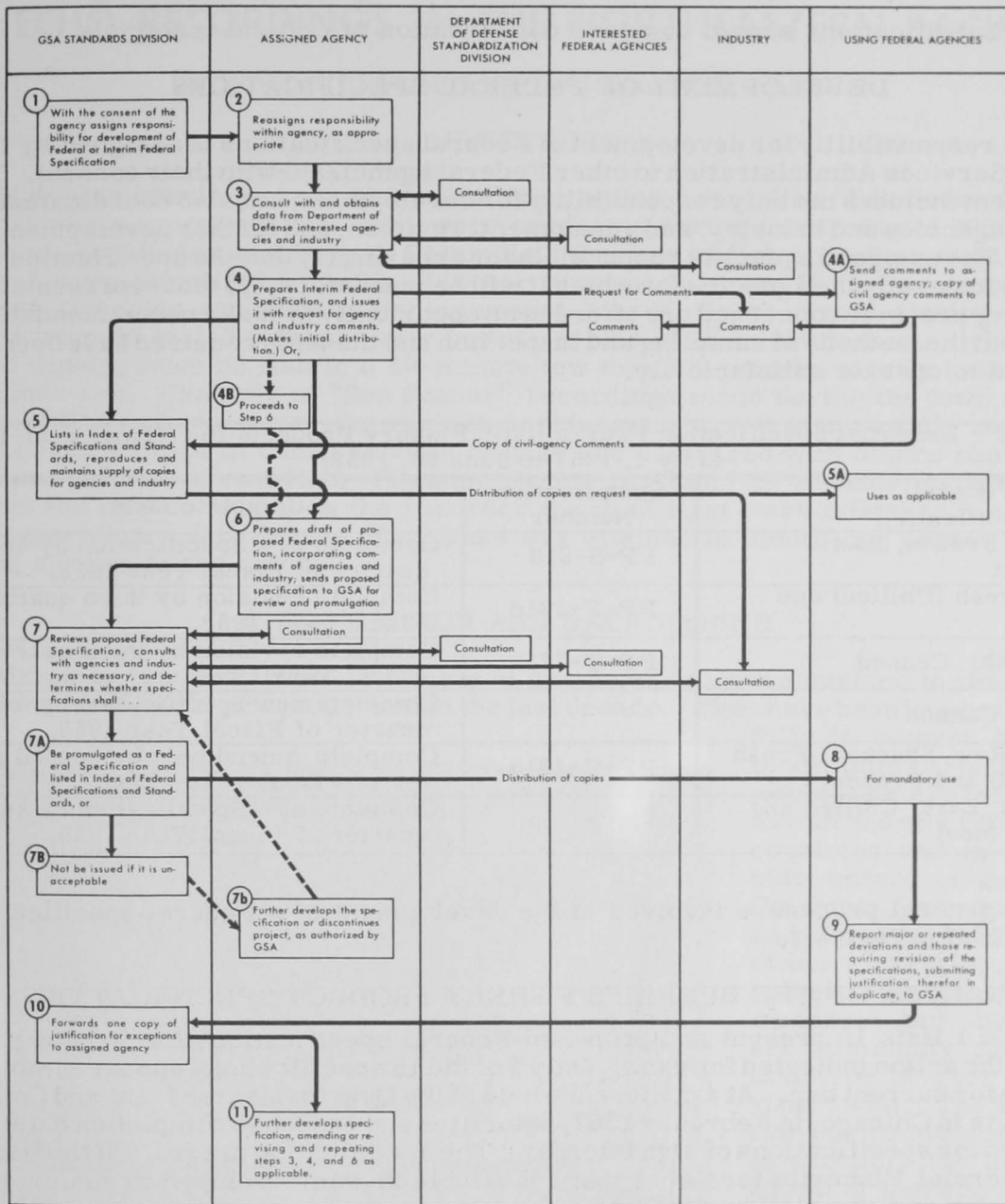


FIG. 1 - FLOW CHART FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL AND INTERIM FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS.

(5) Specification requirements that can be met by products of standard commercial production shall be used to the maximum extent consistent with Government requirements.

(6) The preservation, packaging, packing, and marking requirements shall be uniform to the greatest extent possible consistent with the varying needs of Federal agencies and shall be adequate to assure delivery and storage of products in a satisfactory condition, with the greatest practicable conservation of manpower, materials, and money.

(7) Federal specifications shall be consistent with the regulatory specifications and standards of other Federal agencies.

- (8) Federal specifications shall be consistent to the maximum degree possible with the permissive specifications and standards of other regulatory Federal agencies.
- (9) Specifications should consider conservation of critical materials.

DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS

The responsibility for development of Federal specifications is assigned by the General Services Administration to other Federal agencies--with their consent. The assignment includes not only responsibility for development, but also coordination with Federal agencies and industry, and amendment, revision, and further development as needed. The assigned agency is responsible for assuring (1) that the specification is adequate for use by the agencies for which it will be mandatory, (2) that representatives of industry properly concerned are afforded an opportunity to make recommendations, and (3) that the methods of sampling and inspection and the tests required have been tried and found to operate satisfactorily.

Federal Specification	Specification Number	Complete Date
Shrimp, Frozen, Raw: Breaded	PP-S-315	Complete new Specification by second quarter of Fiscal Year 1958.
Fish: Fresh (Chilled) and Frozen	PP-F-381d	Complete revision by third quarter of Fiscal Year 1958.
Tuna Fish: Canned	PP-T-771	Complete revision by third quarter of Fiscal Year 1958.
Clams: Canned	-	Complete new Specification by fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 1958.
Clams, Raw, Shucked; Fresh (Chilled) and Frozen	PP-C-401a	Complete Amendment by second quarter of Fiscal Year 1959.
Lobster: Live; Chilled and Frozen Meat	-	Complete new Specification by second quarter of Fiscal Year 1959.

The general procedure involved in the development of a Federal specification is summarized in figure 1.

ANALYSIS OF THE BUREAU'S FISHERY PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

Table 1 lists 15 present and proposed Federal specifications for fishery products and the action indicated for each. Only 5 of the 15 specifications appear completely adequate for current use. At a conference held at the Quartermaster Food and Container Institute in Chicago, in February 1957, priorities and proposed completion dates were developed for specifications of high interest. The specification program of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries for fiscal year 1958 (table 2) was developed to conform with this priority and completion schedule.

LITERATURE CITED

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| <p>ANONYMOUS:</p> <p>1952. FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FISHERY PRODUCTS, COMMERCIAL FISHERIES REVIEW, VOL. 14, NO. 5 (MAY), PP. 14-16. (SEP. NO. 314.)</p> <p>1954. THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS, COMMERCIAL FISHERIES REVIEW, VOL. 16, NO. 9 (SEPTEMBER), PP. 24-26.</p> <p>REGULATIONS OF THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, TITLE 1, PERSONAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, PART 2, SPECIFICATIONS, STANDARDS, AND QUALIFIED PRODUCTS LISTS, GENERAL SERVICES ADMINI-</p> | <p>STRATION, WASHINGTON, D. C. (THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED ONLY FOR THE GUIDANCE OF ADMINISTRATORS AND ACCORDINGLY IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION.)</p> <p>1957. SUBSISTENCE SPECIFICATION PROGRAM, QUARTERMASTER FOOD AND CONTAINER INSTITUTE FOR THE ARMED FORCES, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL, CHICAGO, ILL. (THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED ONLY FOR THE GUIDANCE OF ADMINISTRATORS AND ACCORDINGLY IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION.)</p> |
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NOTE: FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING FEDERAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR FISHERY PRODUCTS, YOU ARE INVITED TO WRITE, TELEPHONE, OR VISIT THE FISHERY TECHNOLOGICAL LABORATORY, BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, 61 SUMNER ST., EAST BOSTON 28, MASS. (TELE.: LOGAN 7-6880.)