

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Division
Processed Products Standardization and
Inspection Branch

: FOR USE OF USDA :
: PROCESSED PRODUCTS INSPECTORS :

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June 1975

TO: All Processed Products Inspectors
FROM: E. C. Williams, Chief of the Branch *E.C.W.*
SUBJECT: Harmless Extraneous Material (H.E.M.) in Canned Asparagus

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Currently, there are no provisions in the grade standards for H.E.M. in canned asparagus. Although the occasions of material such as grass, weeds, leaves, etc., in canned asparagus are infrequent, there are times when such material is present.

This memo sets forth administrative interim guideline limits for harmless extraneous material in canned asparagus.

Separate allowances for harmless extraneous vegetable material for the different grade classification (U. S. Grade A or C) are not provided because the occurrences should be minimal and varying amount(s) depending on the grade are not intended.

The sample will either meet or fail the H.E.M. allowances (as applicable) that are provided. If the total sample average meets, the grade of the lot will be limited by the other factors set forth in the grade standards (along with any deviant rate that may apply). The amount of H.E.M. present would not be considered in assigning such grade to sample units in which H.E.M. was found.

If the total sample average fails (exceeds the amount of allowable H.E.M.), the grade of the lot will be "Substandard, account excessive harmless extraneous material."

(over)

MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE HARMLESS
EXTRANEIOUS MATERIAL IN
CANNED ASPARAGUS

Type of Harmless Extraneous Material	Allowable in Total Sample
(1) Grass, weeds, stems, leaves, and similar types that have a linear measurement.	(1) One (1) piece or an average of one (1) piece per 100 ounces (2.835 Kg.) net weight.
(2) Leaves or portions thereof or other flat pieces of H.E.M. that have an area measurement; for example, a leaf portion measuring 1/2 inch by 3/4 inch (12.7 mm. X 19.0 mm.).	(2) One (1) piece or an average of 1/4 square inch (1/2 inch by 1/2 inch or equivalent; or 12.7 mm. by 12.7 mm. or equivalent) per 100 ounces (2.835 Kg.) net weight.
(3) Partially dried or excessively fibrous asparagus stalks or other stalks that would be considered <u>harmless</u> , and/or piece(s) of peat 1/4 inch (6.35 mm.) or less in greatest dimension.	(3) One (1) piece or an average of one (1) piece per 200 ounces (5.67 Kg.) net weight.
(4) Dried asparagus stalks or any other dried stalks that are woody or that would be considered deleterious and/or piece(s) of peat exceeding 1/4 inch (6.35 mm.) in greatest dimension.	(4) One (1) piece per 21 sample units or 42 pounds (18.3 Kg.) net weight, whichever is greater.

NOTES:

Grit, sand and silt are not considered H.E.M.; thus, they are not listed above. This type of material is specified in the grade standards and is considered on the basis of the effect upon individual sample units.

In Grade A, there may be no grit or silt that affects the edibility or appearance and in Grade C, not more than a trace of grit or silt may be present. Obviously, a "trace" could be varying amounts, depending on container size.

Although the amount of grit or silt present in individual sample units must be judged subjectively and in relation to container size, the following guide will provide a uniform, objective limit for allowable grit and silt for Grade C in a total accumulated sample, if applicable.

<u>Type of Defect</u>	<u>Allowable Limit for Grade C</u>
(1) Grit, silt or other particle of earthy material such as sand; <u>DO NOT</u> include peat.	(1) Aggregate of a circle 1/4 inch (6.35 mm.) in diameter per 300 ounces (8.505 Kg.) net weight.

An amount in excess of above would result in assigning a lot grade of "Substandard."

Interim Guidelines
Processed Products Standardization
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