

USDA Amends Classification Policy for Hard White Wheat

Washington, DC (May 1, 2006) - The USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) is amending the United States Standards for Wheat and modifying the classification policy for Hard White wheat effective May 1, 2006.

"The revised wheat standards and new policy will ensure the purity of both the Hard White and the Hard Red classes," said GIPSA Administrator James Link. "This will help American wheat producers market Hard White wheat to those making high-quality wheat products for consumers around the world."

GIPSA is amending the wheat standards to change the definition of contrasting classes so that Hard White wheat is no longer a contrasting class in Hard Red Winter and Hard Red Spring wheat. Rather, all Hard White wheat will be counted as wheat of other classes (WOCL) when found in predominantly Hard Red Winter or Hard Red Spring wheat. Two grading factors measure the purity of various wheat classes in the standards. The factor "contrasting classes" has tight tolerances to limit the commingling of classes that has a detrimental impact on processing. The second factor, "wheat of other classes," has less restrictive tolerances and includes all classes of wheat other than the intended class being marketed. GIPSA is also restoring to the standards the sample size used to determine sample grade factors.

On May 1, 2006, the effective date of the standards change, GIPSA also is implementing a new policy to classify Hard White Wheat. Under the policy, all Hard White wheat kernels will be classified as Hard White wheat, regardless of seed coat color and whether they are in a predominantly Hard White or Hard Red wheat sample. Previously, wheat would be classified as Hard White wheat only if kernels were clearly lighter in color than the predominant Hard Red wheat. GIPSA will use both visual inspection, and, if necessary, an alkali test developed by the USDA Agricultural Research Service to distinguish Hard White kernels.

The Official U.S. Standards for Wheat are on GIPSA's web site at: <http://archive.gipsa.usda.gov/reference-library/standards/810wheat.pdf>. The new Hard White wheat classification policy appears in the Grain Inspection Handbook, Book II, "Wheat": <http://archive.gipsa.usda.gov/reference-library/handbooks/grain-insp/grbook2/wheat.pdf>.

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