

SECTION CC-1 NSN/ITEM DESCRIPTION

PCR-P-0001 PASTA WITH VEGETABLES IN ALFREDO STYLE SAUCE, 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) Pasta. The pasta shall be enriched, small shell pasta. The pasta shells shall be intact, distinct, and separate. The pasta shall be off white in color.

(2) Vegetables. The vegetables shall be an evenly distributed mix of at least three of the following: peas, corn, carrots, green beans, or lima beans. The vegetables shall have a typical color and shall be diced/sliced as applicable.

(3) Sauce. The sauce shall be a cream colored, homogenous mixture sauce.

(4) General. The finished product shall be a uniform mixture of small shell pasta and mixed vegetables in a smooth, cream colored sauce. There may be evidence of herbs and spices in the mixture.

E. Odor and flavor.

(1) General. The packaged food shall have an odor and flavor characteristic of cooked pasta and vegetables in a mild, cheese flavored, "Alfredo" style sauce, lightly seasoned with herbs and spices and shall have a slight flavor of garlic.

(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) Pasta. The cooked pasta shall be slightly soft to slightly firm.
- (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 the pasta and vegetables (combined) shall be not less than 5.5 ounces. The drained weight of pasta and vegetables (combined) in an individual pouch shall be not less than 5.0 ounces.

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) Fat content. The fat content shall be not greater than 5.0 percent.
- (2) Salt content. The salt content shall be not greater than 1.1 percent.

J. Vegetarian requirements. This product shall contain no ingredients, major or trace, and/or processing aids derived from the flesh, skin, blood, entrails, or bones of animals. This includes, but is not limited to oils, fats, fatty acids and their esters (palmitic, stearic, oleic, and pelargonic acids), flavorings, gelling agents, coagulants, (rennet derived from calves or pepsin derived from swine which are used in cheese manufacture), binders, emulsifiers (mono/di-glycerides, sodium or magnesium stearate, polysorbate, sorbitans, monostearate, glycerine), fatty alcohol, aldehydes and ketones, lactones, glycerol, amino acids, hydrolyzed proteins, enzymes, and enzyme modified products. Furthermore, these products shall contain no ethyl alcohol or ingredients derived from or containing ethyl alcohol. Milk and eggs, and ingredients derived from them such as yogurt or cheese (produced without animal based rennet or pepsin), are allowed. Conformance with vegetarian requirements shall be verified by a certificate of conformance.

SECTION C CONTINUEDC-3 MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

A. Ingredients. Ingredients may be as follows: water, enriched pasta, carrots, corn, green beans, peas, lima beans, cream cheese, margarine, powdered vegetable shortening, soy protein concentrate, salt, modified food starch, natural cheddar flavor, natural flavor, onion, lecithin, spices, and garlic.

SECTION DD-1 PACKAGING

A. Product shall be filled into pouches and the pouches shall be filled into cartons. Both 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.

SECTION D CONTINUEDB. Cartons.

(1) The cartons shall be clearly printed on the largest panel 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/  
USDA approval stamp for the packers plant (applicable to meat and poultry items only).

1/ Code may be ink printed or embossed on the outside of any other 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 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.

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(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.

TABLE I. Product defects 1/ 2/ 3/

Category		Defect
Major	Minor	
		<u>Appearance</u>
101		Product not a uniform mixture of pasta and mixed vegetables in sauce as specified
	201	Pasta not an enriched, small shell type
	202	Pasta shells not intact, distinct, or separate
	203	Color of pasta not off white
	204	Color of sauce not a cream colored, homogenous mixture

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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>Appearance</u>
	205	Color or shape of vegetables not as specified
	206	Product does not contain an evenly distributed mix of at least three kinds of vegetables
		<u>Odor and flavor</u>
102		Odor or flavor not of cooked pasta and vegetables in an Alfredo style sauce
		<u>Texture</u>
	207	Pasta not slightly soft to slightly firm
	208	Vegetables not slightly soft to slightly firm
	209	Sauce not smooth or not moderately thick
		<u>Weight</u>
	210	Net weight of an individual pouch less than 7.5 ounces <u>4/</u>
	211	Drained weight of the pasta and vegetables (combined) in an individual pouch less than 5.0 ounces <u>5/</u>

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/ Product not verified by a certificate of conformance as meeting the vegetarian requirements shall be cause for rejection of the lot.

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 the pasta and vegetables (combined) is less than 5.5 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.

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(2) Shelf life. Compliance with shelf life shall be determined by incubation for 1 month at 120°F or 6 months at 100°F or 36 months at 80°F. Contractor shall provide a certificate of conformance.

(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 without breaking the pasta and vegetables. The contents shall then be poured into a U.S. Standard No. 7 sieve in a manner that will distribute the product over the sieve without breaking the pasta 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 and analyzed for 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>
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.

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 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

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

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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