

# Position Classification Standard for Agricultural Commodity Grading Series, GS-1980

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## SERIES DEFINITION

This series includes positions that administer, supervise, or perform work concerned with examining and evaluating agricultural products to determine their official U.S. grade and/or their acceptability in terms of quality or condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations. The work often includes the inspection or monitoring of the conditions under which the product is processed, stored, or transported insofar as these factors affect product quality.

This standard supersedes the standard for the Agricultural Commodity Grading Series, GS-1980, issued in December 1957.

This standard covers nonsupervisory positions in the series. Supervisory positions are evaluated by reference to the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#).

## EXCLUSIONS

Excluded from this series are the following:

1. Positions which primarily involve the development or revision of official grade or class standards for agricultural commodities and similar positions which typically involve the evaluation or modification of specific governmental marketing, regulatory, or standardization programs. (See the [Agricultural Marketing Series, GS-1146](#).)
2. Positions which primarily involve the enforcement of and compliance with laws and regulations related to the wholesomeness and purity of food products, but which do not involve substantial responsibility for product grading. Such positions are classified according to the specific type of inspection or enforcement involved. (See for example, the [Food Inspection Series, GS-1863](#); the [Consumer Safety Inspection Series, GS-1862](#); and the [Consumer Safety Series, GS-0696](#).)
3. Professional positions which primarily involve the study and analysis of problems related to the development, improvement, and evaluation of food products and their production, utilization, processing, and preservation. (See the [Food Technology Series, GS-1382](#).)
4. Positions which primarily involve the examination of storage facilities licensed or contracted to the Government for storing agricultural products. (See the [Agricultural Commodity Warehouse Examining Series, GS-1850](#).)
5. Positions which primarily involve performing chemical or physical tests, procedures, or analyses of products when the paramount required knowledge is of the principles and/or techniques of chemistry or physical science, rather than the standards, regulations, and procedures related to grading and certifying the product. (See the [Chemistry Series, GS-1320](#), and the [Physical Science Technician Series, GS-1311](#).)

6. Positions which primarily involve performing the subordinate technical work related to grading a product, such as gathering samples, recording identification or similar data, performing specified procedures to determine product characteristics preliminary to the final determination of the official grade of the product, or monitoring grain weighing operations. (See the [Agricultural Commodity Aid Series, GS-1981](#). Note: In some instances, trainee Agricultural Commodity Graders, GS-1980, may perform assignments similar to those of Agricultural Commodity Aids, GS-1981. However, such training assignments are designed to develop and prepare the employee for assignments that involve higher level duties and responsibilities.)

## TITLE SPECIALIZATIONS

For all nonsupervisory positions, the basic title is *Agricultural Commodity Grader*. For positions that meet the criteria of the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#), the basic title is *Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader*. The appropriate parenthetical addition to the basic title is authorized for the following specializations:

- Cotton
- Dairy
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable
- Grain
- Meat
- Poultry
- Processed Fruit and Vegetable
- Tobacco

The basic title without a parenthetical addition should be used when the position involves two or more specializations, none of which is paramount or when the position is so unusual that it would be clearly inappropriate to include it within one of the authorized specializations.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Commodity grading is one of several Federal Government services made available to buyers and sellers within the various agricultural marketing systems. Like other agricultural marketing services, such as market news reporting, the general purpose of commodity grading is to facilitate the orderly marketing and distribution of food and farm products.

Agricultural commodity grading and inspection services are designed to establish and certify the quality and/or condition of a product within the marketing channels. These services are available to anyone having a financial interest in the product, typically growers, processors, wholesalers, or retailers. With these grading services available, traders are able to deal with greater confidence, even from distant points, without having to personally inspect each commodity lot.

Commodity grading and inspection systems differ from commodity to commodity because of wide variations in the nature of the products, production and processing methods, and marketing practices for each commodity. Separate programs and organizational entities to manage them have been established for each commodity group (e.g., grain, tobacco, cotton, dairy products, etc). Therefore, commodity graders specialize along commodity group lines. Their work varies according to the commodity graded and the types of Federal grading services made available to that commodity market.

A basic difference in their work involves the grade standards which the grader applies to the products. Each commodity group has a separate set of standards which define and specify quality grades in terms of the factors and characteristics appropriate to the particular products involved. Given the diverse nature of the commodities the specific grading factors differ significantly across commodity groups in most cases. Grading techniques used for evaluating these factors also vary. For example, cotton is classed primarily through an evaluation based on visual inspection while most processed fruits and vegetables require the measurement of grading factors through mechanical and other laboratory testing in addition to visual inspection. Also, the work varies by the type of inspection, grading, or related services available to a commodity group's market. Depending upon the group, a grader may provide continuous inspection at a plant while the product is being processed, grade a specific lot being held in storage, grade samples delivered to a centralized grading office, or inspect a plant for compliance with related sanitation requirements.

### *Knowledge, Skills, and Work Environments.*

Agricultural commodity graders apply a thorough knowledge of the quality characteristics and grading standards for products in a commodity group. This knowledge is reinforced by familiarity with the production methods and marketing practices pertaining to these products. Many graders apply a thorough knowledge of the processing, packing, packaging, storage, and transportation methods and wholesomeness requirements related to the products being graded and inspected. In many cases, graders must determine if products meet the provisions of contracts in addition to grading the product.

Agricultural commodity grading requires skill in applying grading principles, procedures, and regulations to identify, describe, and evaluate relevant quality characteristics such as color, taste, smell, physical shape, or type and origin of defect, and to compare the product characteristics with the standard. Graders also apply various manual skills in handling, testing, or evaluating products. Often they must possess the physical ability to reach and obtain samples of products from hard-to-reach places such as tractor trailers, ship holds, railroad cars, stacked crates or boxes, or moving conveyors.

Agricultural commodity graders work under the pressure of producing consistently accurate grading and inspection results at a pace set by the processing or marketing requirements for the commodity. In some cases, grading judgments must be made in rapid succession and almost instantaneously (e.g., grading beef carcasses on a high speed line). In other cases a large number of grading determinations must be performed rapidly to meet market requirements (e.g., grading hundreds of cotton samples daily). The pace of grading or inspection work is related to

conditions or events such as production lines in food processing plants or dairies, or the arrival or departure of product shipments.

Grading and inspection is performed under widely varying working conditions depending on the kind of product and the points in the marketing process at which it is graded or inspected. However often graders are exposed to unpleasant working conditions and potential hazards. Graders must know their work environments and safety practices and regulations to protect themselves from hazards and to minimize unpleasant conditions. Grading and inspection work is frequently performed outdoors under adverse weather conditions, inside coolers or freezers, on docks, in railroad cars, in tractor trailers, or in dairies or food processing plants. Graders may be exposed to hazards found in industrial settings such as wet and slippery floors, moving carts, machinery, airborne fibers or dusts, or the explosive potential of grain dust.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Cotton).* Cotton classing requires manual dexterity, exacting sensory discrimination, thorough knowledge of cotton standards and cotton characteristics, and thoroughly developed skill in determining staple length and grade. Cotton graders determine the average staple length of cotton by making a "pull" of the tuft of fibers. The "pull" involves a process of manually lapping, pulling, "breaking," and discarding to obtain a typical portion of paralleled fibers. The grader determines the average length of the fiber to within 1/32 of an inch by sight and by the feel of the fiber as it is pulled apart. The grade of the product is determined by identifying the color (hue, lightness, and chroma), amount of leaf or trash, and preparation (smoothness), and by combining these factors. Cotton classification requires skill developed through considerable practice and training because of the fine distinctions that must be made based on feel and sight, the range of combinations of grade qualities within a sample, the many combinations of fiber distribution patterns that occur among samples, the very large number of possible combinations of grades and staples, and the frequent occurrence of difficult borderline situations. The grader must apply a combination of manual skills, product knowledge, judgment, and stamina to consistently produce accurate determinations and class a high volume of samples.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Dairy).* Dairy product grading and inspection positions require a thorough knowledge of grading standards, quality characteristics, and processing requirements and procedures for various dairy products including butter and cheese. Dairy grading requires skill in applying standards which are expressed in very general terms and are largely based on such subjective factors as flavor, body or texture, color, or salt. By tasting, smelling, feeling, and viewing the sample, the grader conclusively determines the grade by rating each factor against the official standard. The interpretation and application of the official standards depends primarily on the technical skill and expert personal judgment of the grader. The grader also draws upon knowledge of raw materials, manufacturing methods, equipment used, and packaging.

In addition to certifying the grade, the grader must continually exercise a high degree of technical knowledge of dairy processing operations involving a variety of different processing methods and types of equipment to identify the cause of a defect which has thrown a sample off grade or out of condition. On the basis of such information supplied by the grader corrective action is taken at the source in the processing plant to improve the quality of the product. Routinely, the dairy grader makes determinations as to whether damage to a product is the result

of delay in transit, overheating, improper packing, or other shipping or processing conditions. For all these reasons, the grader must identify and weigh the effects of subtle variations in the different quality and condition factors upon the ultimate grade and upon the edible, shipping, or storage qualities of dairy products. As required, graders may be assigned to conduct surveys of dairy manufacturing or processing plants to determine quality of raw material supply; condition of facilities, equipment, and machinery; methods employed; and plant sanitation. The grader is constantly in touch with members of the trade or plant management which requires tact, discretion, and the use of judgment in meeting unusual situations.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Fresh Fruit and Vegetable).* Graders must apply knowledge and skill to grade fresh fruit and vegetable commodities according to official standards and regulations. Grades are defined in terms of such factors as consistency in the variety of the product, conformation, size, amount and intensity of color, disease, and similar factors which vary considerably from commodity to commodity. In addition to becoming thoroughly familiar with the quality factors described in each individual grade for the fruit and vegetable product, the grader must be able to recognize and identify different types and varieties of individual products. Grading a particular product involves (1) making fine distinctions in color gradation, surface amount of color, shape, and degree of firmness; (2) the recognition of disease defects as well as the identification of the causative agent which brought about the defect; (3) the recognition of various kinds of transit, storage, or handling damage and their causes, and (4) the use of judgment in weighing the effect of variations in different quality and condition factors upon the ultimate grade and upon the edible, shipping, or storage quality of the product. Many terms used in official standards with respect to certain factors do not have exact meanings, cannot be scientifically measured, and are susceptible to some variation in their interpretation by individual graders. Likewise, some of the quality and condition factors of grade are based on defect tolerances which are compensatory to the extent that several examples of any one grade of any one product may differ widely in the degree to which any given factor is present, provided certain minimum tolerances are met. The grader must deal tactfully with financially interested persons in the trade, especially in settling controversies or arbitrating disputed points in particular grading determinations.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Grain).* Graders apply a thorough knowledge of the standards, regulations, and characteristics of the products being graded. Official standards cover diverse products such as grain, beans, peas, hay, straw, and rice.

A sample of the particular commodity is taken from a car, truck, barge, ship, bin, or warehouse at which time the lot, as a whole, is carefully examined for such factors as heating, odor, insect infestation, contamination, and overall consistency in quality and kind. The samples are brought to a laboratory where certain objective tests are made by the grader with mechanical devices to measure such factors as dockage, weight-per-bushel, and moisture content. Other determinations cannot be adapted to mechanical means of measurement including determinations of kind (e.g., wheat, oats, corn, beans, hay, etc.), class (e.g., Hard Red Winter, Hard Red Spring, Soft Red Winter, Durum, Red Durum, White, and Mixed Wheat), and subclass (e.g., Dark Hard Winter, Dark Northern Spring, and Soft White Wheat) which are based, in part, upon variations in color, kernel texture, and type characteristics. Additional tests must be made by visual inspection

where the recognition and evaluation of differentiations depend upon the grader's judgment and overall knowledge of grain.

To arrive at conclusive grade determinations, the grader applies judgment in interpreting the standards as to whether certain elements are present in excess of minimum or maximum amounts prescribed. Examples of such items cover (1) variations in color, kernel texture, varietal characteristics, plumpness, soundness, cleanliness, damaged kernels, and odor; (2) the presence or absence of smut, live weevils, rodent pellets, garlic, ergot, and inseparable stones; and (3) evidence of staining, weathering, liming, washing, or bleaching. At ports, graders have responsibility for grading grain being loaded into the holds of vessels which involves (1) making determinations of the quality and condition of samples cut from the stream to insure uniform loading and to prevent the admixture of inferior grains; (2) halting the loading when, in the grader's judgment, a significant portion of grain being delivered to the vessel is below the grade specified, and requiring that it either be removed or graded separately; (3) issuing appropriate certificates; and (4) certifying the accuracy of weighing. Graders also may oversee the work performed by licensed inspectors or inspection organizations and they also exercise authority for taking corrective action where necessary. Graders must also be able to deal tactfully with grain industry personnel and licensees.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Meat).* Meat graders apply thorough knowledge of the quality characteristics and official standards pertaining to carcasses and certain wholesale cuts of meat. Graders examine the meat to determine adherence to or deviation from the standards which define the various grades in terms of such factors as the apparent maturity and sex of the animal prior to slaughter; the conformation; the distribution and character of finish; color, texture, and firmness of lean; and the degree and character of marbling. Since a high percentage of meat is graded in the form of carcasses and sides important interior grade-determining factors must be evaluated indirectly on the basis of certain exterior indications which are associated with the hidden factors. The indirect evaluation of grade factors is highly technical in nature requiring ability to detect and appraise combinations of factors encountered as they deviate from those described in the standards. Most of the terms used are not susceptible of exact definition, nor can they be adapted to objective measurements. Consistency and uniformity in the interpretation of the standards depends on the individual grader's exercise of technical skill and substantive judgment in evaluating the grade factors, and in extrapolating the intent of standards to situations not specifically covered by the grade descriptions. Graders must be able to defend grading determinations by explaining the reasons for the decision.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Poultry).* Graders possess thorough knowledge and skill for grading and certifying a variety of poultry and poultry products including shell, liquid, dried, and frozen eggs, live-dressed, drawn or eviscerated chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, and other species of birds in accordance with grades defined in the official standards and regulations. The grading of these products involves recognizing slight differences in quality, condition, size, and pack; determining the degree of adherence to or deviations from grade factors which vary from product to product; and making allowances for the relative weight of compensatory factors. Grade differences, for example, in shell eggs depend on the existence of narrow limits in such factors as color, shell texture, shape, centering and outline of the yolk, and clarity and firmness of the white. In addition, the assignment of a grade based on subjective measurements is further

conditioned by the influence of variations in character from lot to lot arising from differences in breeding characteristics, environmental conditions under which the product was grown or held, type of feed consumed by the poultry, seasons of the year, and the treatment given the product in processing. In making these determinations, the grader continually exercises a considerable degree of independent judgment and must apply technical proficiency to consistently maintain uniformity in the application of grading factors which are necessarily susceptible to varying interpretations by individuals and which cannot be scientifically measured. Graders must be able to deal effectively with plant managers and certified non-Federal graders. The grader oversees the work of these graders, providing training and guidance, reviewing their work for accuracy, and, when necessary, recommending to higher authority the suspension or withdrawal of their license to grade.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Processed Fruit and Vegetable).* Graders apply a thorough knowledge of the products, their quality characteristics, official standards, and other quality characteristics defined in purchase agreements, processing plant procedures, sanitation requirements, and laboratory analysis to grade and inspect processed fruits and vegetables. Graders examine processed fruits and vegetables for condition and quality to ascertain their adherence to or deviation from official standards which define the various grades in terms of factors which differ considerably from product to product. Differences in quality depend on variations in such factors as tenderness, texture, color, flavor, odor, defects, consistency in size, trueness to variety or type, mold filaments, insect fragments, larvae, and other foreign material. Objective measurements using mechanical equipment, chemical analyses, microscopic methods, and testing devices are available for making some of these determinations.

A large variety of measurements are employed. Determinations made with respect to factors of this type require care and skill in the application of laboratory methods and equipment. On the other hand, measurements of variations on certain basic grade factors are almost entirely subjective in nature and require highly skilled and refined discriminations based on judgment in interpreting and applying the standards and on technical knowledge of the characteristics of the product, these factors include color, maturity, shape, texture, tenderness, flavor, and odor. It is necessary not only to evaluate subtle differences in these intangible elements, but also to make allowances for tolerances and to appraise and balance the relative weight of compensatory factors.

Some graders are assigned responsibility for certifying the grade and condition of products packed in a plant and for inspecting operations to determine that plant facilities, operating methods, and processing equipment are maintained according to regulations and standards governing sanitation. These graders apply an intensive knowledge of plant operations and sanitary requirements and skill in dealing with plant management in addition to grading knowledge and skill. Some graders are assigned responsibility for certifying individual lots (at the request of members of the trade or other financially interested parties) at processing plants, warehouses, freight cars, trucks, vessels, and similar locations. These graders must be able to grade and inspect a broad range of products, be skilled in applying a thorough knowledge of regulations governing wholesomeness and sanitation for these products, and be skilled in dealing with financially interested parties. In some cases graders perform in-plant grading and inspection, as well as grading and inspection at a wide variety of sites.

*Agricultural Commodity Grader (Tobacco)*. Graders apply a thorough knowledge of tobacco standards, quality characteristics, production methods, and marketing practices. Tobacco graders certify the official grade of tobacco offered on a market within a particular district by determining and recording its type, grade, and condition on an official certificate. Most graders move with the market from district to district so they must be able to grade tobacco grown in a variety of geographical areas.

Tobacco grades are established by division and subdivision of a given type of tobacco until a point is reached at which further subdivision is neither essential, nor desirable. Each grade is based on a combination of three main factors: group, quality, and color, plus certain special factors. Group is determined by the shape of leaf, body, percentage of injury, and other characteristics. Quality has degrees of Choice, Fine, Good, Fair, Low, and Common, each being based on a further combination of elements of smoothness, oil, maturity, body, width, porosity, finish, or uniformity. The third factor is Color under which each quality of the several groups is divided into different elements. There are also special factors which are added to the grade designation in order to describe tobacco having some unusual characteristics. By a rapid visual inspection of a representative sample drawn from a lot of tobacco, the grader must determine the degree to which each element of each factor is present and combine these to yield the grade to be assigned to the lot as a whole. Almost all of the terms indicative of a degree of quality are defined only in a very general way in the standards. For example the color "orange" is defined as "tobacco which is chiefly orange in color and which is not crude, green, mixed, or variegated." Borderline cases are common, and they may be especial difficult because a lot of tobacco can be borderline in respect to any or all of the constituent factors of the grade.

As a result, the performance of tobacco grading work requires a high degree of technical proficiency and practical judgment in rendering grade determinations which must be based on very small and subtle increments of difference. Tobacco sales are conducted rapidly and, because the grading must be completed before a sale can be consummated, the grader must accomplish the work with dispatch. Furthermore, in most instances the grading of a lot of tobacco takes place in the presence of the farmer who produced it. Since the price received for the product depends primarily upon the grade assigned, the producer takes a very close interest in the grading process. Having such a financial stake in the outcome of the decision, the producer will frequently question the grade and attempt to persuade the grader to render a more liberal interpretation of the standards. In these situations, the grader must be able to maintain impartiality in the face of pressure and present a reasonable justification for the assigned grade.

## GRADING OF POSITIONS

Positions should be evaluated on a factor-by-factor basis, using one or more of the comparable Office of Personnel Management (OPM) benchmarks, or Factor Level Descriptions for the Agricultural Commodity Grading Series, or both. Only the designated point values may be used. More complete instructions for evaluating positions are contained in the [Introduction to the Position Classification Standards](#). The absence of a benchmark position at a particular grade level or in a particular specialization does not preclude classification of a position at that grade or in that specialization.

## GRADE CONVERSION TABLE

Total points on all evaluation factors are converted to GS grade as follows:

GS Grade	Point Range
5	855-1100
6	1105-1350
7	1355-1600
8	1605-1850
9	1855-2100
10	2105-2350
11	2355-2750

## FACTOR LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

### FACTOR 1, KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts which agricultural commodity graders must understand to do acceptable work (e.g., steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts) and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply these knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, a knowledge must be required and applied.

Agricultural commodity graders apply the following broad and interrelated knowledge and skills:

- (a) Knowledge of the products in the commodity group in terms of the properties and characteristics essential to determining their grade, acceptability, or condition, and the necessary corresponding knowledge of the pertinent official grade standards and related regulations. This knowledge is generally supported by knowledge of the production (e.g., growing), transportation, storage, and marketing cycle of products to enable the grader to identify the nature and cause of various defects.

## AND

- (b) Skill in grading products or determining their acceptability. This involves recognition and description of color, taste, smell, shape, size, or other characteristics, and comparison of these characteristics with written or physical standards. This skill may involve visual inspection and handling of the product, or it may involve laboratory testing and measuring with instruments.

## AND (FOR CERTAIN SPECIALIZATIONS)

- (c) Knowledge and skill in inspecting facilities to evaluate processing, storage, or transportation methods affecting sanitation or wholesomeness.

Levels 1-4, 1-5, and 1-6 of Factor 1 describe a typical pattern of assignments and a common progression of acquisition and development of knowledge and skills during a grader's career. Level 1 describes a more unusual, "expert" level. Positions which do not follow the typical pattern must be analyzed very carefully to determine if they are fully equivalent to the intent of the level described in this standard. The four levels described are:

- Level 1-4: trainee level;
- Level 1-5: developmental level or a level restricted to unusually limited or routine assignments;
- Level 1-6: full performance level applying the full range of grading and/or inspection knowledge and skill typical of the commodity group specialization; and
- Level 1-7: "expert" level.

*Level 1-4 -- 550 points* -- A fundamental knowledge of the primary types and general characteristics of products of the relevant commodity group to perform grading, sampling and/or inspection assignments of a simple and routine nature and to further develop grading knowledge and skills through formal training courses and on-the-job training. At this level the scope, variety, and difficulty of assignments gradually increase. The grader learns each successive part of the work and displays greater knowledge of grading principles, standards, and regulations, increased skill in identifying and describing product defects, and/or skill and knowledge in inspecting facilities. Trainee positions typically are found at this level. Trainees usually have had no previous on-the-job training in commodity grading.

**Illustration:**

A trainee grain grader working at an export grain elevator draws samples of corn and wheat, performs mechanical tests, attends formal training courses in grading corn, and grades samples of corn which are regraded by a more experienced grader before the sample is certified.

*Level 1-5 -- 750 points* -- Moderate overall knowledge and skill in grading products and/or inspecting, storing, packaging, transporting, and processing conditions to perform developmental

assignments of limited variety or complexity designed to further expand the grader's knowledge and skill. Assignments typically include grading and inspection of distinct products for comparison with clear standards and common contract specifications to grade products and identify and describe common product defects or diseases and to establish their causes. In situations where the products graded or inspected are unusual, or in borderline cases, the grader generally requires technical assistance to make a determination. At this level, knowledge and skill typically includes:

- (a) *Product knowledge* -- Thorough knowledge of the quality characteristics of some (but usually not all) of the primary products or types of products in the commodity group. Knowledge of production, storage, and transportation processes to a sufficient degree to identify and determine the cause of common defects and diseases of these products or product types. Knowledge of the commodity standards and/or common contract specifications of products being graded and knowledge of grading and inspection principles, methods, and practices to independently grade or inspect products.

AND

- (b) *Grading skill* -- Skill in recognizing, identifying, and describing common product characteristics relevant to the products graded, such as taste, smell, color, size, shape, or texture, and skill in comparing the characteristics to standards or contract specifications to make consistent determinations. Applies skill in performing laboratory tests (applicable to certain commodity specializations).

AND (FOR CERTAIN SPECIALIZATIONS)

- (c) *Knowledge and skill to inspect the product's processing, conditions of storage and transportation, and related sanitation requirements.* At this level, the knowledge required is limited in range or depth. Such limited knowledge is typical of assignments of the following types:
  - Assignments which are limited to the inspection or grading one or two distinct product types and which require knowledge of processing procedures that are relatively uncomplicated and of plant sanitation requirements that are technically limited, such as is possible in assignments limited to a rice mill or shell egg plant having one or two low volume lines.
  - Assignments which require *limited* knowledge of relatively more complicated processing procedures, sanitation requirements, and storage or transportation conditions, such as assignments which require performing only partial inspections and evaluations or inspections and evaluations performed with technical assistance.
  - Typically at this level graders have completed approximately one year or more of on-the-job training in commodity grading.

## Illustrations:

- Knowledge and skills to make preliminary and tentative determinations of the grade and staple length of samples of cotton which are reviewed by higher level graders.
- Knowledge and skills to make grade determinations limited to one major dairy product with tentative, closely reviewed determinations on other products.
- Knowledge and skill to inspect dairy plant operations and make routine determinations referring unusual problems to a higher level grader.
- Knowledge and skill to make grade determinations on a limited number of varieties or types of fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g., about 10) and to make less difficult determinations concerning the adequacy of plant facilities. (Plant assignments typically are under the guidance of a higher level grader.)
- Knowledge and skill to independently grade one or two kinds of grain such as corn or soy beans and to make preliminary determinations of the grade of wheat.
- Knowledge and skill to independently make meat grade determinations concerning those carcasses or cuts clearly within the grade (referring to a higher level grader borderline decisions at the extremes of the grade).

*Level 1-6 -- 950 points* -- Extensive overall knowledge which would enable the grader to perform assignments involving a wide range of duties and requiring the ability to resolve a wide variety of problems. Knowledge and skill is developed to the extent that the grader independently grades and/or inspects primary products in the commodity group and performs difficult assignments such as:

- grading and/or inspecting rare or unusual products or product types;
- regularly making borderline grading decisions on a variety of products or product types; or
- applying the full range of grading skills and knowledge at an extremely fast pace requiring instant determinations (e.g., grading beef carcasses on high speed lines or grading cotton samples at a rapid pace).

This level typically covers graders who are responsible for performing the full range of grading and/or inspection tasks involved in directly supplying grading services to producers or members of the trade with respect to the primary agricultural products in the commodity specialization. At this level, knowledge and skill typically include:

(a) *Knowledge of product, official grade standards, and supplemental regulations.* The knowledge essential to grade or inspect products (or product formulations) within the relevant commodity group. This includes the knowledge required to inspect these products for compliance with all types of contract specifications, to recognize all but the extremely rare product defects or diseases, and to establish their causes. At this level, the grader is able to make, explain, or defend nearly all grade or inspection determinations, only rarely requiring technical assistance in borderline cases. Also, the grader may perform appeal grading, if required. The grader typically applies:

- A thorough knowledge of product characteristics related to grade or acceptability (e.g., recognizes whether product condition is caused by newly developed product strains or caused by climate conditions, production methods, handling, or disease);
- A thorough knowledge of grade standards and a variety of contract specifications (e.g., applies standards rapidly and consistently and can, after brief study, apply standards to any products within the relevant commodity group); and
- A thorough knowledge of grading and inspection principles, methods, and regulations (e.g., makes authoritative determinations in borderline cases).

AND

- (b) *Grading skill* -- Applies highly developed skill in observing and describing product characteristics, such as taste, smell, color, size, shape, or texture, to consistently grade products by making fine distinctions on quality factors to resolve borderline cases. Compares product quality characteristics to standards (usually combining several factors) to arrive at an authoritative grade determination. Applies skill in performing a full range of laboratory tests (applicable to certain commodity specializations).

AND (FOR CERTAIN SPECIALIZATIONS)

- (c) *Knowledge of the product's processing, conditions of storage and transportation, and related sanitation requirements* at this level, the knowledge required in this area is moderate to extensive in range and depth. Such knowledge is typical of assignments of the following types:
- Assignments which require the knowledge necessary to inspect or evaluate more complicated processing equipment and procedures, and conditions of storage or transportation, such as is typical of most processed fruit and vegetable or dairy products' production. Normally, such assignments include duties related to advising industry employees on product quality control methods.
  - Assignments which are limited to the inspection or grading of distinct products which, however, require knowledge necessary to inspect or evaluate processing procedures and sanitation conditions that are technically very complex as is typical of egg products' production or high volume shell egg plants.

**Illustrations:**

- Knowledge and skills to independently grade and certify wheat and corn at an export elevator.
- Knowledge and skill to independently grade and certify various kinds of rice at an interior grading office.
- Knowledge and skill to independently grade and certify a variety (e.g., 15 or more) of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Knowledge and skill to technically supervise (oversee and review) non-Federal licensed grain graders.
- Knowledge and skill to technically supervise (provide review and guidance as a grader-in-charge) grading of whole chickens and various combinations of packages of chicken parts by non-Federal graders.

*Level 1-7 -- 1250 points* -- Advanced technical knowledge of the quality characteristics or features of products in a commodity group; grading principles, techniques, regulations, and standards; and production, transportation, storage and processing operations; and extensive skill in uniformly and accurately applying grading standards and/or inspection regulations to make difficult, controversial, and borderline determinations and to recognize and identify extremely rare commodity defects and diseases. At this level graders regularly serve as technical experts performing final grading on reviews, making appeal determinations, resolving controversies, or providing broad technical guidance on difficult and controversial grading inspection problems. Agricultural commodity graders at this level typically have had considerable experience and advanced training in grading and/or inspecting major types of products and rare or unusual products in the relevant commodity group.

**Illustration:**

- Knowledge and skill to serve as a grader-in-charge at a tobacco redrying plant. Applies knowledge of every grade/quality range of tobacco (252 official grades, non-official plant grades, and "picking" grades too low in quality for official grades), and knowledge of floor grading, tobacco packing, blending operations, packing of blended tobacco (hogshead) to make final grading determinations (and also to report non-uniform grading and false packing of tobacco received from auction).

**FACTOR 2, SUPERVISORY CONTROLS**

"Supervisory Controls" covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work. Controls are exercised by the supervisor in the way assignments are made, instructions are given to the

employee, priorities and deadlines are set, and objectives and boundaries are defined. Responsibility of the employee depends upon the extent to which the employee is expected to develop the sequence and timing of various aspects of the work, to modify or recommend modification of instructions, and to participate in establishing priorities and defining objectives. The degree of review of completed work depends upon the nature and extent of the review, e. g., close and detailed review of each phase of the assignment; detailed review of the finished assignment; spot check of finished work for accuracy; or review only for adherence to policy.

The principal considerations in determining the level of Supervisory Controls are (1) the amount of responsibility for planning and independence in carrying out daily assignments; (2) the range and type of problems the Agricultural Commodity Grader is required to solve independently; and (3) the depth of the technical/ administrative review of the grader's work by the supervisor, officer-in-charge, or senior grader.

As applied to particular Agricultural Commodity Grader positions, these elements are influenced to some extent by the organizational circumstances of the particular work situation. For example, a sole grader in a remote processing plant is likely to plan and execute the daily work independently. The level descriptions below refer in part to work situations where it would be reasonable to expect to find the supervisory pattern being described. However, it should not be assumed that a particular work situation necessarily includes a particular level of supervisory controls.

*Level 2-1 -- 25 points* -- The supervisor provides specific assignments, detailing each phase of the work to be done. The employee is also given detailed instructions concerning the methods and procedures to be used in carrying out the assignment.

The employee works in strict adherence to the instructions and consults the supervisor (or senior employee) on all matters not covered by the original assignment instructions. Also, technical assistance is readily available while the work is being performed, and the employee receives assistance with any problems or difficulties encountered in applying the work methods and procedures. In addition, any problems related to plant practices or procedures are routinely referred to the supervisor (or senior employee) for resolution.

The work is closely reviewed. The employee's technical proficiency is checked frequently while the work is in progress. Upon the completion of an assignment, the results are evaluated in detail for accuracy and adequacy.

This level is typical of trainee positions.

*Level 2-2 -- 125 points* -- At this level, the grader typically receives the assignment from the office supervisor, officer-in-charge, or senior grader who is responsible for coordinating the work. In many instances, the assignment is continual. The supervisor adjusts the assignment when necessary to accommodate variations in volume, workload, or plant production schedules.

Recurring assignments are performed without specific instructions. However, technical assistance is readily available while assignments are being carried out. The grader normally

refers the more difficult technical decisions and problems or unusual situations to the supervisor or senior grader. Typical duties for which the grader receives assistance include making borderline grade determination, applying standards or regulations to new or unusual situations, grading or inspecting products that are new or unusual to the employee, or similar situations. In addition, at this level, the grader may deal with minor difficulties related to plant practices and procedures. However, the employee is not primarily responsible for resolving major problems. Typically, these major problems are referred to the supervisor, officer-in-charge, or senior grader for resolution with plant management.

The work is normally reviewed through spot checks of the grading/ inspection while the work is being done, or through frequent review of worksheets or certificates.

This supervisory pattern is most typical for graders who work primarily in an office where product samples from various locations are delivered for grading; or graders who are assigned to a plant, mill, or other facility and work under the guidance of a designated officer-in-charge, shift leader, or other recognized work leader. Some "fee graders" may be at this level depending primarily on their independence in making grade determinations, the range of problems they are responsible for resolving with industry personnel, and the type of review their work receives (see Level 2-3).

*Level 2-3 -- 275 points* -- The grader receives the daily assignment from the supervisor, officer-in-charge, or senior grader who defines the assignment objectives and determines work priorities. In cases where the assignment is continual, the work objectives have been previously well-defined, and the grader refers only unusual deviations from the general assignment to the supervisor for assistance. When two or more graders are assigned to the same industry facility, the employees may share responsibility for coordinating the work.

The grader independently completes the successive operational steps to accomplish the work, adjusting specific work procedures to varying situations. During the assignment, technical assistance is normally not required (and usually is not readily available). The grader resolves nearly all technical problems relating to grading or inspection determinations, application of standards, and similar regulations, only rarely referring problems concerning these aspects of the work to a supervisor. At this level, the grader normally has responsibility for resolving most operating problems with industry employees and has at least partial responsibility for dealing with plant management on major problems.

The work receives a general review for conformity to usual policies and procedures. Specific work products may be reviewed through occasional checks of worksheets or certificates, or an informal comparison of grade determinations to expected results. Technical proficiency may be spot checked, but generally the technical procedures used by the grader are not reviewed in detail.

This supervisory pattern may also include a grader who acts as a shift leader; a grader who is assigned to a processing facility where the general on-site program responsibility and coordination is shared; or a grader who has basically independent program responsibility for a large section or department of a plant or facility. (In some cases, a grader assigned as the only

grader at a plant or facility will be at this level, depending on the difficulty of the problems he or she is required to solve independently.)

"Fee graders" or other Agricultural Commodity Graders who have rotational assignments may be at this level depending on their independence in making grade determinations, the range of problems they are responsible for resolving with industry personnel, and the type of review their work receives (see Level 2-2).

*Level 2-4 -- 450 points* -- The assignment is defined in terms of the overall program objectives as they apply to a particular plant or facility.

The grader is responsible for applying general policies as they relate to the facility, for determining and adjusting the specific methods used to achieve the established objectives, and for independently planning, coordinating, and executing the day-to-day work. Normally, the assignment includes coordinating the work of other graders by setting priorities, scheduling work coverage, providing technical assistance, or performing similar duties.

At this level, the grader independently makes decisions on a full range of technical situations related to the work, such as making borderline grading determinations, applying grade standards in unusual situations, applying standards to unusual products, and/or determining compliance with sanitation requirements. Only in very rare cases are problems concerning these aspects of the work referred to a supervisor for assistance. In addition, at this level, the grader has the primary responsibility for dealing with plant management on matters affecting the grading program at the plant or facility and is responsible for resolving any major problems involving sanitation, quality control, or general plant procedures or practices, referring only very controversial matters to the field supervisor.

Work is reviewed primarily by an overall evaluation of its effectiveness in achieving results compatible with the program objectives.

### **FACTOR 3, GUIDELINES**

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them. The guidelines used by graders consist primarily of the official grade standards and regulations (which are often supplemented by physical samples or models), administrative and technical manuals pertaining to procedures and methods, and supplemental written or oral instructions. As a guide for maintaining relationships with industry personnel and management, written and oral instructions are also provided. Although these may be less specific in many cases, they do form a set of established practices. The major distinctions among the levels of this factor are based on the degree of discretion allowed (or required of) the grader in applying the guidelines and, to a lesser extent, the number of guidelines which apply to the position's duties.

*Level 3-1 -- 25 points* -- Trainee graders are provided specific, detailed guidelines and instructions pertaining to the assigned task, such as instructions relevant to grading a particular product. The employee works strictly according to the instructions, referring unanticipated

conditions and situations requiring deviation to the supervisor or to a senior worker. Virtually no discretion in applying guidelines is required.

*Level 3-2 -- 125 points* -- Assigned duties require discretion in selecting and applying the guidelines appropriate to the particular work being performed. At this level, the guides are applied to specific cases in which the proper grading or inspection determinations are obvious or discernible by application of the guide to the situation. Borderline situations, situations not covered by the guides, or situations the worker encounters usually are referred to, or resolved by, a supervisor or senior worker.

This level is typified by duties having characteristics such as the following:

- responsibility for making borderline or difficult grading or inspection determinations, for certifying products, or for defending such determinations to industry personnel is limited by supervisory controls;
- responsibility for resolving matters related to sanitation, processing methods, storage conditions, etc., which are generally limited to less controversial, specific operating problems that normally do not require consulting plant management.

In addition, it is typical of this level that the number of guidelines applicable to the work is relatively limited, such as when grading or inspection duties apply to a restricted range of products within the commodity group; involve a limited amount of inspection of sanitation, storage, transportation, or processing conditions; and there is limited responsibility for preparing reports, maintaining records, establishing sampling procedures, or for performing similar administrative duties.

*Level 3-3 -- 275 points* -- Assignments require the grader to use discretion in selecting and applying guidelines in a wide range of situations in which the correct decision is not clearly apparent, or by which a guide must be applied to an unusual situation. This level is typified by duties having characteristics such as the following:

- Applying the grade standards and other inspection regulations in borderline cases, or adapting agency policies to unusual situations.
- Primary responsibility for developing and maintaining overall on-site relations with plant management for achieving program objectives as well as working with operating employees to resolve specific problems.
- Analyzing product sanitation or processing methods and recommending changes to plant management to improve product quality control.
- Frequently making grading decisions under extreme time pressures, for example, grading beef on a chain line operation or grading grain during rapid loading of ocean vessels.

In addition, most positions at this level require the application of a relatively extensive number of guides, such as when duties include grading and inspecting most major products within the commodity group, inspecting and evaluating the sanitation, storage, transit and processing related to products, and performing extensive support work, such as preparing reports, developing and maintaining records, preparing works schedules, time and attendance reports, and similar administrative duties.

## **FACTOR 4, COMPLEXITY**

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

For graders normally assigned to a processing facility, the work is described at various levels by reference to a set of characteristics pertaining to the assignment and the facility. It is possible that the characteristics of a particular position will correspond to more than one level. In such cases, the position should be carefully examined to determine the level to which it most closely corresponds on an overall basis. (The numerical order of the characteristics is their order of importance in an overall evaluation). To warrant the higher point value, the position should be equivalent to the overall intent and meaning of the higher level.

Parts of the described characteristics relate to the facility involved. It is intended that only those aspects of the facility which are encompassed by the grader's duties be considered. For example, if the duties of a position are confined primarily to a particular section of a larger plant, only the characteristics of that section should be considered as relevant.

*Level 4-2 -- 75 points* -- General description: The duties involve various related steps and methods. Technical factors that need to be considered are generally apparent. Typically the work procedures are constant. Variations in the work are caused by changing factual circumstances such as differences between the kinds of products being graded.

Plan assignments: Included at this level are assignments at a facility which involve grading and/or inspection duties with the following characteristics:

- (1) the number of products or product formulation changeovers or lots are few, i.e., a relatively small number of certificates are issued in comparison to an average assignment for the commodity group;
- (2) the processing operation pertinent to the grader's duties is small scale or noncomplex, for example, an assignment at a shell egg plant which operates one or two low volume lines
- (3) grading duties normally involve only one or two types of products or product Formulations. For example, a citrus plant assignment which is limited to grading primarily single strength orange juice.

In addition, at this level, duties do not require the grader to assume primary on-site responsibility for relationships with the plant's management, nor primary responsibility for performing

administrative duties, such as coordinating and scheduling other grader's work activity, maintaining statistical records on production, sanitation, or other similar reports.

Non-plant assignments. At this level, the grader's work is limited primarily to the grading of products or inspection of products for acceptability. Variations in the work are chiefly due to differences in the product types which are graded or inspected.

In addition, at this level, duties require very little direct inspection or evaluation of processing procedures, storage, transit, or sanitation conditions associated with producing the product. Consequently, the position requires little consideration of the factors involved in directly solving problems or maintaining relationships with personnel of the serviced industry.

*Level 4-3 -- 150 points* -- General description: The assignment involves a variety of duties which require applying different procedures and methods according to the phase of the assignment being performed. The pertinent factors to be considered also differ with the phase of work and the particular issue involved. Typically, these factors are technically complex. Plant assignments: Most plant-assigned grader positions are at this level. Assignments involve grading and inspection duties with the following characteristics:

- (1) The number of product or product formulation changeovers (or lots) are normal, i.e., the number of certificates that are issued is within a broadly considered average range in comparison to other assignments within the commodity group;
- (2) the processing operation pertinent to the grader's duties is of at least average scope and technical complexity. For example, a combined shell egg and egg breaking process, or a green bean canning operation, or a high volume shell egg breaking operation;
- (3) grading duties regularly encompass a variety of distinct products, product formulations, and contract specification types, for example, a meat processing plant which processes beef, mutton, and veal;
- (4) duties at this level normally involve some inspection or monitoring of general sanitation conditions, processing methods, conditions of product storage, containers, or packaging;
- (5) assignments also may include technical supervision of non-Federal licensed graders or inspectors;

or

positions whose duties have the characteristics described by Level 4-2, but which include full, on-site responsibility for relationships with the plant's management and responsibility for performing administrative duties (e.g., maintaining records, scheduling work, etc.) associated with the assignment.

Non-plant assignments: At this level, the grader's work consists chiefly of grading products, but also includes the inspection and/or evaluation of the processing procedures, storage, transit, or sanitation conditions associated with producing the product. Assignments also may include technical supervision of non-Federal licensed graders" or inspectors. Consideration must be

given to differences of product-types, to differences in the various processing methods employed, and to the maintenance of relationships with industry personnel.

*Level 4-4 -- 225 points:* The work involves varied duties requiring many different and unrelated processes and methods such as developing modified sanitation inspection procedures for a new processing plant or performing staff work to plan grading operations in a new area.

Decisions regarding what needs to be done involve the analysis of problems which are not generally defined in inspecting and grading a commodity. This generally involves resolution of grading or inspection procedural problems when data is conflicting or incomplete

The work requires many decisions concerning such matters as the adaptation or modification of grading or inspection regulations or procedures, or the modification of grading standards or procedures.

## **FACTOR 5, SCOPE AND EFFECT**

Scope and Effect covers the relationship between the nature of the work, i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of the grading and/or inspection services provided both within and outside the organization

For the Agricultural Commodity Grading Series, effect measures such things as whether the work output facilitates the work of other graders, facilitates product marketing by directly providing grading or inspection services, or impacts on a broad range of grading or inspection services. The concept of effect alone does not provide sufficient information to properly understand and evaluate the impact of the position. The scope of the work completes the picture, allowing consistent evaluations. Only the effect of properly performed work is to be considered.

*Level 5-2 -- 75 points --* The work consists of performing specific procedures to accumulate the data necessary for the eventual determination of the product's grade, or for completing an inspection report.

The work affects the accuracy and reliability of the total process and the final determinations.

*Level 5-3 -- 150 points --* The work involves applying a variety of regulations and treating a variety of problems related to determining the acceptability and/or grade of products.

The grader issues grade certificates, inspection reports, and similar work products which directly affect the financial interest producers, shippers, receivers, processors, warehousemen, or similar companies or individuals having an economic claim on the product or its production.

*Level 5-4 -- 225 points --* The assignment requires providing expertise in inspecting and grading a commodity by furnishing review or advisory services on unconventional problems or questionable characteristics. Authoritative final determinations on inspections and gradings are typical of this level.

Grading and inspecting decisions place considerable monetary significance on the grader's judgment. The results of the work affect a wide range of grading decisions on the commodity as well as on the programs of producers and operations by merchants.

## **FACTOR 6, PERSONAL CONTACTS**

This factor includes face-to-face contacts and telephone and radio contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain. (Note: Personal contacts with supervisors are covered under Factor 2, Supervisory Controls.) Levels described under this factor are based on what is required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place (e.g., the degree to which the agricultural commodity grader and those contacted recognize their relative roles and authorities).

Above the lowest level, points should be credited under this factor only for contacts which are essential for successful performance of the work and which have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the work performed.

The relationship between Factors 6 and 7 presumes that the same contacts will be evaluated for both factors. Therefore, use the personal contacts which serve as the basis for the level selected for Factor 7 as the basis for selecting a level for Factor 6.

*Level 6-1 -- 10 points* -- Contacts are limited to personnel within the immediate organizations, i.e., within the commodity division, which normally includes graders, clerical and office personnel, and supervisors. At this level, there are generally no direct working contacts with employees of the serviced industry. Should such contacts occur, they are in highly structured situations (e.g., to exchange factual information).

*Level 6-2 -- 25 points* -- Contacts at this level normally encompass those of Level 6-1, but in addition include contacts with employees within the serviced industry. Typically, these contacts involve relationships with machine or line operators, packers, sorters, lab technicians, foremen, shift supervisors, production or plant managers, or others who are employed by the firms with the industry. In settings outside of a processing operation, this level includes contacts with State employees, federally licensed agents, farmers, growers, warehousemen, etc. In some instances, the contacts will include the owners of small firms who act as the general plant manager on a routine basis. Such contacts are generally routine and well established.

## **FACTOR 7, PURPOSE OF CONTACTS**

Purpose of personal contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives. The personal contacts which serve as the basis for the level selected for this factor must be the same as the contacts which are the basis for the level selected for Factor 6.

*Level 7-1 -- 20 points* -- The purpose is limited to the relatively straight-forward exchange of technical and administrative information related to the work. At this level, the work objectives of the persons contacted are consistent with those of the grader. Consequently, this level is most likely to be present when contacts are limited to Federal employees within the immediate organization. (See Personal Contacts, Level 6-1.)

*Level 7-2 -- 50 points* -- The purpose is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts in situations where the persons contacted are working toward mutual goals. Consequently, contacts with employees of the serviced industry tend to be excluded from this level (except in the case of a trainee). The purpose of contacts with other Federal graders and State or federally licensed graders is to plan and coordinate work or provide guidance and training.

*Level 7-3 -- 120 points* -- The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of employees and managers of the serviced industry in order to assure an acceptable level of compliance with policies, regulations, and objectives of the grading program. At times, the contact's interests conflict with program objectives and the grader is required to gain cooperation in resolving problems through skillful advisement, influence, persuasion, or explanation.

## **FACTOR 8, PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

This factor covers the requirements and physical demands placed on the agricultural commodity grader by the work assignment. This includes physical characteristics and abilities (e.g., specific agility and dexterity requirements) and the physical exertion involved in the work (e.g., climbing, lifting, pushing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, or reaching). To some extent, the frequency or intensity of physical exertion must also be considered (e. g., a job requiring prolonged standing involves more physical exertion than a job requiring intermittent standing).

*Level 8-2 -- 20 points* -- The work involves long periods of standing and recurring stooping and bending, such as is typical of work in a cotton classing office. The work may also include recurrent lifting of moderately heavy objects, such as sample bags.

*Level 8-3 -- 50 points* -- The work involves periods of considerable physical exertion. This includes such activities as lifting heavy (over 23 kilograms (50 pounds)) boxes, cartons, or crates; moving livestock carcasses; crawling and crouching in restricted areas such as in boxcars; stooping, crouching, and bending to inspect processing equipment; climbing ladders into shipholds, hopper cars, and trucks; or similarly strenuous activities. Most grader positions are at this level.

## **FACTOR 9, WORK ENVIRONMENT**

This factor considers the risks and discomforts in the agricultural commodity grader's physical surroundings or the nature of the work assigned and the safety regulations required. Although

the use of safety precautions can practically eliminate a certain danger or discomfort, such situations typically place additional demands upon the Agricultural Commodity Grader in carrying out safety regulations and techniques.

*Level 9-1 -- 5 points* -- The work environment involves only normal risks or discomforts such as those of a typical office setting which requires normal safety precautions. The work is accomplished in a relatively quiet, well lighted, well ventilated, and well heated area. This level is uncommon to grader positions.

*Level 9-2 -- 20 points* -- The work environment requires the grader to wear special protective clothing or gear and involves exposure to moderate discomforts due to the presence of dust, high noise levels, the cold temperature of freezers, or outdoor weather conditions; or the work requires special safety precautions due to moderate risks such as the presence of moving carts and forklifts, heavy machinery with moving carts, moving livestock carcasses, or similar risks typical of an industrial setting.

*Level 9-3 -- 50 points* -- The work environment involves regular and recurring exposure to high risks such as work in grain elevators subject to potentially explosive concentrations of grain dust or work at great heights in grain elevators or aboard ships. The work requires knowledge and application of safety regulations and precautions to avoid hazards.

## **OPM BENCHMARK DESCRIPTIONS**

### **AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (PROCESSED FRUIT AND VEGETABLE), GS-1980-05, BMK# 1**

#### *Duties*

This is a trainee position. As such, the duties are designed to orient the employee to grading and inspection concepts, methods, and practices as well as to familiarize the employee with the organizational procedures of the Division. The training process includes both formal instruction and on-the-job training.

- Studies instructional material, the official standards, and related regulations which govern the grading, inspection, and certification of products;
- Receives instructions at the work site on determining general product quality, on recognizing specific product defects and diseases, on performing sanitation inspections, and on the practical application of the standards and regulations in general;
- Assists higher graded Agricultural Commodity Graders by performing portions of the work under their guidance. Such tasks include selecting representative product samples, applying prescribed laboratory procedures to measure the

- quantifiable grading factors, and preparing work sheets and summary reports of gradings and inspections;
- As the trainee's familiarity with products and technical proficiency with procedures increases, the trainee may make quality determinations on a few designated products and make sanitation inspections under loose guidance and review by senior graders.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the position -- Level 1-4 -- 550 Points*

- Knowledge of the common types of fruits and vegetables and of their general characteristics;
- Familiarity with the general types of processing and storage methods pertinent to processed fruits and vegetables, as these affect general product quality;
- The ability to learn the official grade standards and regulations, and to learn the specific grading and inspection procedures;
- The ability to develop skill in applying grading techniques.

*Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-1 -- 25 Points*

The supervisor or senior employee provides the assignment giving detailed and specific instructions on the methods to be used in performing each phase of the work.

The grader works in strict adherence to the instructions. Assistance is readily available while the work is being performed, and the employee consults the supervisor or a senior employee to clarify the original instructions, product conditions, or circumstances which are new or unusual to the employee.

The work is closely reviewed. It is checked while in progress and upon completion for compliance with instructions for adherence to prescribed methods and procedures, for technical proficiency, and for the accuracy of any determination.

*Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-1 -- 25 Points*

Written guidelines include parts of the official grade standards, regulations, visual aids, instructional training material, technical manuals, and other written guidelines provided locally. However, the trainee is provided with the specific guidelines appropriate to the phase of work to be done. These guidelines are further explained to the employee before the work is performed.

The trainee adheres closely to the guidelines and instructions. Situations not directly covered by the guides (or borderline cases) are referred to a senior worker for clarification (or for determination).

*Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-2 -- 75 Points*

The work involves following methods and procedures which are closely related. The technical factors necessary to consider are made relatively apparent and are readily verified. Variations in the work stem primarily from the particular type of fruit or vegetable being graded.

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-2 -- 75 Points*

The work consists of performing specific procedures, such as laboratory tests to measure product grading factors or to obtain representative product samples which affect the final grade or condition determination. The work affects the accuracy and reliability of the final determinations and certificates issued by higher graded Agricultural Commodity Graders.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts are primarily with other graders. However, during the course of performing duties, the employee also has contacts with employees of the processing facilities, such as machine operators, packers, lab technicians, and warehouse workers.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-2 -- 50 Points*

Contacts with industry employees are for the purpose of coordinating the grader's own sampling or grading work with plant activities. Plant employees generally are cooperative in these matters. Minor difficulties raised by plant employees may be resolved by the trainee, but generally, questions and problems are routinely referred to a senior grader for resolution.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

The work includes moving and lifting heavy boxes or cartons to obtain samples, periods of crouching and bending to inspect processing equipment, and occasional climbing of ladders.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment includes exposure to the high noise level of processing equipment (often including canning operations) and involves the risks of working among machinery with moving parts and forklifts.

**TOTAL POINTS -- 895**

## **AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE), GS-1980-07, BMK# 1**

### *Duties*

Performs grading and inspection services at various terminal market sites such as warehouses, railroad sidings, packaging plants, and similar facilities.

For a limited variety of fruits and vegetables (e.g., 10 kinds):

- Selects representative samples from product lots in accordance with prescribed sampling procedures and plans;
- Inspects the product to determine its quality, condition, and/or its compliance to other stated contract specifications.

Typically, this requires considering such factors as:

- o the product's size, shape, color, degree of firmness, and similar quality factors;
- o the type, extent, and cause of any product defects or diseases;
- o the quantity, packaging, or similar conditions which are common in contract specifications;

- Prepares the inspection reports. When the assignment involves products with which the employee is thoroughly knowledgeable, applies the official standards and regulations to determine the product's grade and/or condition and directly issues the certificate;

If necessary, explains determinations to the appropriate industry employee. In difficult or unusual cases, prepares a draft certificate with tentative determination and submits it for supervisory review before issuance;

- As assigned, performs inspections and gradings of products with which the employee is unfamiliar under the guidance of a senior grader.

### *Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-5 -- 750 Points*

- Knowledge of the official standards and regulations,, or pertinent product characteristics, and of common product defects as applied to a limited variety (e.g., 10) of fresh fruits and vegetables;

- Knowledge of transportation, storage, and handling practices insofar as they may be causes of product defects, and as applied to a limited variety (e. g., 10) of products;
- Skill in inspecting and grading assigned product varieties and in maintaining interpersonal relationships with industry personnel.

### *Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-2 -- 125 Points*

The grader normally receives daily inspection and grading assignments from the supervisor who also assigns the priority of the individual assignments.

Recurring assignments (i.e., those involving products familiar to the employee) are performed without specific technical instructions. However, if unusual or difficult situations with the product arise, the supervisor is consulted for interpretation and guidance or for making the final determinations. Assignments involving a product which is new or unusual to the grader are normally performed under direct supervision and guidance.

The work is reviewed for technical accuracy and completeness through spot checks of inspection and grading while it is being performed and through review of inspection worksheets.

### *Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-2 -- 125 Points*

The primary guidelines are the official grade standards, physical models and visual aids, agency instruction manuals, and supplemental technical and administrative directives.

The employee independently selects and applies the appropriate guides that, in most cases, are familiar. Borderline grading and inspection determinations, or assignments involving products unfamiliar to the employee, are referred to the supervisor or senior grader for a decision. In addition, the number of guides applicable to the work are limited.

### *Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-2 -- 75 Points*

The work primarily involves the direct inspection and grading of products. The techniques and methods used in the inspection process are closely related, and variations in the work stem chiefly from differences among the types of products inspected. In addition, a limited variety (e.g., 10) of products are assigned to the grader. The evaluations of storage, transportation, and sanitation conditions required by the duties are not technically complicated.

### *Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

Assignments involve making some final grade and condition determinations and directly issuing certifications. Such determinations affect the product's price and/or acceptability in relation to contract specifications. Both factors affect the financial interests of buyers and sellers.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts include employees and managers of firms involved in fresh fruit and vegetable marketing such as receivers, vendors, brokers, and shippers.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to promote and maintain cooperation and suitable working relations with the persons in the industry by explaining the agency program and resolving conflicts. This includes explaining and defending grade or conditions determinations. Schedules grading and inspection services in cooperation with industry personnel.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

The work requires periods of considerable physical exertion such as lifting heavy cartons and crates (often over 23 kilograms (50 pounds)); climbing into boxcars and trucks; and moving, crouching, and crawling in cramped areas.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment includes exposure to adverse outdoor weather; working in refrigerated areas; and exposure to fumes and odors from coolants.

**TOTAL POINTS -- 1440**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (MEAT), GS-1980-07, BMK# 2**

The Agricultural Commodity Grader (Meat) is typically assigned to various plants on a rotational basis and works under the direction of a senior Agricultural Commodity Grader.

- Examines beef either in carcass or wholesale cut form to evaluate the texture, marbling, age, conformance, color, and other factors related to product quality. Applies the official standards to determine the meat's quality grade. Reserves the more difficult borderline cases for determination by a senior grader or receives technical assistance in making the determinations. (May perform grading work involving products which are new or unusual to the employee under the direct instruction and guidance of a senior grader;
- Also, for the appropriate products and cases: (a) determines the yield grade of carcasses considering such factors as carcass weight, amount of fat, and area of the ribeye; (b) upon request from a producer through the Carcass Data Service, records and forwards the evaluation data for the specific factors (conformation, maturity, etc.) which determine the final quality and yield grade of the specific carcass involved;

- For meats and meat food products with which the employee is familiar, follows prescribed procedures in selecting samples and inspecting the products for compliance to contract specifications. Contracts primarily involve Federal, State, county, municipal agency and institution purchasing programs. The inspection typically includes examining for product defects, packaging, weight, product trim, and quantity. Consults a senior grader for guidance when particular specifications are new or unusual to the employee's experience;
- Defends grade or inspection determinations to plant personnel. However, refers many plant protests to senior graders for resolution (especially when the protest involves what could be considered a borderline case). Also, explains the application of standards, rules, and regulations to plant employees or management when necessary;
- Prepares and issues certificates of acceptance and may assist in compiling summary work reports.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-5 -- 750 Points*

- Knowledge of the official standards, regulations and rules relevant to meats and meat products to grade both for quality and yield, and to examine products against common contract specifications, making most grade determinations without assistance (except for borderline or controversial determinations);
- Knowledge of the characteristics, anatomical structure, types of cuts, and processing techniques for a limited variety of meats (one class), as these factors pertain to determining the grade or acceptability of the product;
- Skill in sampling, inspecting, and grading and in maintaining interpersonal relationships with industry personnel to the extent required by the grader's responsibility in the area.

*Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-2 -- 125 Points*

The employee works under the general guidance of a senior grader who coordinates the overall grading and inspection work at the plant and who provides the assignments, usually on a daily basis.

Assignments involving products and procedures familiar to the employee are performed without specific instructions. In these situations the employee requires little technical assistance although a senior grader is normally available to aid with the more difficult problems. For assignments involving products or procedures less familiar to the employee, more complex instructions are provided, technical guidance is increased, and a senior grader assists more frequently in difficult or borderline cases. The employee resolves minor operating problems with plant employees concerning the plant's practices, procedures, or protests of gradings.

However, major or more controversial problems in this area are normally referred to a senior grader (or supervisor) for resolution.

The work is reviewed through spot checks of grading and inspection, and review of worksheets and certificates. The spot checks are more frequent when products which are less familiar to the employee are involved.

### *Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-2 -- 125 Points*

Guides include the grade standards for the products involved in the work, the contract specifications for products under various purchasing programs, technical and procedural handbooks, manuals, and bulletins, and oral instructions.

The grader selects and applies these guides in cases in which he or she has had experience. On first time assignments or unusually difficult borderline cases, the grader obtains advice and assistance from the supervisor or a senior grader. In addition, the employee's responsibility for resolving problems with plant personnel is limited to minor difficulties.

### *Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-3 -- 150 Points*

The work consists of a variety of duties including sampling, quality grading, yield grading, inspection against varying contract specifications, compiling beef carcass data, and inspecting for general compliance to sanitation and storage requirements. The procedures and methods used vary according to the duty being performed as do the pertinent factors to be considered. The employee is typically rotated through several plants for developmental purposes. Overall (and as related to the employee's duties) the plants are within the average in terms of their scope of operational and technical complexity.

The work involves combining grade factors to arrive at an overall grade. In addition, the duties involve distinct products, product formulations, and contract acceptance programs. Duties also include monitoring aspects of the processing for compliance to sanitation and similar requirements.

### *Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves making some final determinations of carcass grades or product acceptability. These determinations directly affect the product's market value and, consequently, the economic interests of producers, processors, wholesalers, and, in some cases, governmental agencies or institutions.

### *Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts include other Agricultural Commodity Graders, company graders, production supervisors, cutters, packers, rollers, and other plant personnel.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of plant employees, to explain grade determinations and agency policies and regulations, and to exchange information to plan and schedule work activities.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

The work requires long periods of standing, the moving and shoving of suspended livestock carcasses (200-400 lbs.), and the lifting of heavy cartons. The work also includes periods of continually stamping carcasses.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment includes exposure to cold temperatures, and high noise levels, and risks from moving carts or forklifts and the operation of cutting and sawing equipment.

**TOTAL POINTS -- 1515**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (GRAIN), GS-1989-09, BMK# 1**

Determines the grade of grain and related commodities and makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs inspection services in support of grain, rice, and related commodity markets. These services include (a) the original inspection and weighing of grain; (b) the technical supervision (oversight and review) of grain inspection and weighing activities performed by licensed non-Federal inspectors; and/or (c) the permissive inspection and weighing of rice, pulses, processed grain products, and other assigned commodities.

The work is performed at an agency field office and at various locations within the area served by a field office. Work assignments are rotated between, shifts and points of inspection. Also, assignments may be performed in other field offices which involve periods of relocation to a different geographical area involving different commodities of different market services than the original field office. (In these cases a grader may be required to be certified to grade additional grains, e. g., a rice grader may have to be certified to grade wheat, or a wheat grader may have to be certified to grade rice.)

The work involves one or more of the following inspection functions:

- *Federal Export Inspection.* Performs original inspections and determines the grade of wheat, corn, soy beans, or similar products and makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs original inspections and appeals of initial grade determinations. Duties typically include:

- o *Grading:* For wheat, corn, oats, barley, and soy beans, performs both mechanical measurement and visual inspections to establish the type and general quality of the grain. Applies the official standard to determine and certify the grade of the product. Grading may be performed on an appeal basis or as an original inspection. Graders may be required to perform sampling duties.
- o *Other duties:* Samples and inspects commodities which are unusual to the normal commodity flow such as hay, straw, and hops; examines Government purchases for compliance to contract specifications such as grade, quantity, general condition, and packaging, and prepares inspection report; instructs trainees or junior graders on techniques and product characteristics; inspects sanitary condition of ship holds.
- *State Delegation and Interior Inspection.* Performs gradings to check the accuracy of licensed, non-Federal inspectors to handle appeals of initial grade determinations. Reviews grading procedures and methods used by licensees and supervises grade being assigned by licensed inspectors to samples of wheat, beans, peas, corn, oats, rice, rye, barley, lentils, soybeans, hay, sorghums, and other grains or related commodities. Instructs licensed inspectors and samplers in grading techniques. As necessary, corrects improper methods. Explains and interprets grading procedures, methods, and factors to licensed inspectors and members of the trade to maintain compliance with official standards and regulations.
- *Inspection (Processed Products).* Inspects processed products such as flour, cake mix, corn meal, and similar processed products and non-food components such as containers and strapping for compliance with specifications. Performs plant sanitation, land carrier, and shiphold examinations. Provides technical guidance and reviews work of contract samplers and State inspection personnel.
- *Equipment Supervision.* As assigned, investigates new sampling methods and equipment and inspects equipment in licensed inspector's laboratories. Generally, serves as an advisor to field office personnel on grain sampling and testing equipment.
- *Weighing (Export and State Delegation).* Oversees the weighing and transfer of products in and out of an elevator by monitoring the weighing and delivery system. Spots errors in methods and practices in weighing or malfunctions in the weighing system and determines the cause of problems. Approves and signs official weight certificates.

### *Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-6 -- 950 Points*

- A thorough and detailed knowledge of the principles, methods, official grade standards, and regulations applied in grain inspections. A thorough knowledge of the characteristics and common defects of wheat, rice, several other grains, or

grain products. Knowledge of the production, weighing, processing, storage and transportation conditions and practices that directly affect product acceptability or grade of grain, pulses, or grain products being graded.

- Thoroughly developed skill in sampling, grading, and inspecting grains to make independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. The knowledge and skill is such that after a brief period of training and study the grader is capable of rotating from one functional area to another (e.g., from original grading to overseeing non-Federal inspectors) or is capable of rotating to grade different grains or pulses (e.g., from rice grading to wheat grading).

### *Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-9 -- 275 Points*

The supervisor coordinates grading activities and assigns work to the grader on a daily or weekly basis. Assignments are given in broad terms, indicating the location and general grading/inspection work to be performed.

The employee carries out the assignments without direct supervision, adapting work procedures to accommodate the specific situation. The employee independently applies the standards and regulations, resolving nearly all technical problems in determining grades. Only highly controversial or difficult determinations are referred to the supervisor.

Inspection reports and grade certificates are periodically reviewed for adherence to normal procedures and for conformity to expected results. Occasional spot checks of actual grading are used to review technical proficiency.

### *Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-3 -- 275 Points*

The primary guides consist of the official grain standards and regulations, inspection manuals covering procedures and techniques, and supplemental instructions, both written and oral. The grader applies the standards making immediate, borderline grade determinations. The volume and speed of the loading operation (e.g., involving ocean vessels being loaded for export) requires timely grading determinations.

### *Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-3 -- 150 Points*

Assignments deal with a variety of grains and grain types (e.g., wheat, corn, soybeans, etc), and vary according to the nature of the assignment (e.g., sampling, original grading, technical oversight of non-Federal inspectors, weighing, etc.).

The employee selects appropriate methods depending on the nature of each assignment, considering the type of grain or grain product in the case of grading, or considering the configuration of the elevator or facility in the case of weighing or processed products inspection.

Various grade factors and/or contract specifications must be analyzed to make grade determinations, and a variety of processing or storage processes must be analyzed to inspect processed products or oversee weighing operations.

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves applying the standards and regulations in determining the general condition and the U.S. grade of grain. The grader issues inspection reports and grade certificates. Since grain is traded on the basis of U.S. grades, the grader's work products affect the financial interests of buyers, sellers, shippers, warehouses, and others having an economic interest in the product.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

In addition to contacts with other graders, the work includes relationships with employees and supervisors of grain elevators, shippers, licensed inspectors, and similar firms operating in the marketing chain.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of industry personnel and resolve problems and conflicts to assure compliance with program regulations. Plans and schedules work in cooperation with industry personnel.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

Phases of the work require considerable physical exertion. Obtaining samples involves climbing onto trucks, barges, hopper cars, man lifts, etc.; using probes, pelicans, and similar sampling device and moving and lifting grain bags or sacks weighing up to 5 kilograms (10 pounds). Ship inspections involve climbing into and out of the shipholds.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-3 -- 50 Points*

The work involves regular and recurring work in grain elevators subject to potentially explosive concentrations of grain dust. Works at extreme heights in grain elevators and aboard ships. Must continuously take extensive safety precautions to avoid serious accidents resulting from these hazards.

**TOTAL POINTS -- 2045**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (DAIRY), GS-1980-09, BMK# 2***Duties*

The incumbent performs inspection and grading work on butter and cheese and other dairy products at terminal markets, shipper points, production areas, and cold storage warehouses as assigned.

- Independently inspects individual lots of products for the purpose of determining lot identification, type and condition of package, any apparent deficiencies in pack factors, condition of product, and to select representative samples from the lot for grading purposes;
- Interprets and applies official standards and regulations in the grading and certification of all types of butter and cheese products according to degree and intensity of such factors as flavor, body, texture, color, finish, and appearance. Determines the U.S. grade for each lot and unit thereof, prepares grader's memoranda, and issues official certificates for products inspected;
- Performs condition inspections to determine kind and extent of defects and whether defects in products were caused by transit delays, improper packing, faulty loading, improper storage, other damage, or by inherent product instability;
- As assigned, inspects processing, manufacturing, and packaging plants for such factors as sanitation, condition, and adequacy of facilities, equipment, methods and procedures, and to determine compliance with regulations, minimum specifications, and other applicable specifications;
- Advises plant management and receivers on the effects of characteristics of the raw product on quality factors in the finished product and the feasibility of proposed change to improve quality and stability of the processed product;
- As assigned, performs check grading and appeal gradings on dairy products and instructs subordinate graders in proper grading and sampling techniques.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-6 -- 950 Points*

- Knowledge of the official grade standards, regulations, and specifications of dairy products, and knowledge of the related product characteristics, factors, and conditions necessary to grade and inspect the products and to identify defects and their causes;
- Through knowledge of a variety of dairy processing methods and procedures, and related storage and shipping practices to inspect plants for compliance with required specifications;

- Thorough skill and ability in grading products, inspecting facilities, and maintaining proper relationships with industry personnel.

### *Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-3 -- 275 Points*

The field office supervisor makes the assignments and provides general coordination of the work.

The employee independently performs the procedures required by the specific assignment, resolving nearly all technical problems independently. The employee issues certificates and reports, explaining and justifying determinations to plant management.

Occasionally the certificates or worksheets are reviewed and the grading spot-checked.

### *Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-3 -- 275 Points*

The guides consist of the official grade standards for dairy products; the regulations pertaining to plant requirements for sanitation and processing; the instructional manuals for grading and conducting inspections; and supplemental written and oral instructions.

The employee independently selects and applies the appropriate guides to a variety of situations and is required to use extensive judgment in interpretation of the standards and regulations in such cases as independently making borderline grade determinations; independently explaining or advising industry management on USDA requirements or policies as they apply in ambiguous situations; and analyzing technically complex processing methods and advising plant management of their effect on product quality.

### *Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-3 -- 150 Points*

The work consists of grading and inspecting a wide variety of dairy products, processing equipment, and storage and sanitation conditions at various locations which requires considering different factors and applying different procedures according to the specific product or phase of work being performed. The duties require evaluation of technically complex processing equipment.

### *Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves applying the U.S. Standards and Federal specifications to determine the grade of acceptability of dairy products. The certificates issued by the employee directly affect the financial interests of buyers and sellers, often serving as the basis of settlement between them. (Determinations may also indirectly affect the physical well being of the eventual consumer of the product.)

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts include the employees and managers of dairy processing and distribution firms as well as other Agricultural Commodity Graders.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of plant management and industry employees and resolve conflicts; to explain grade determinations and related agency policies and regulations; and to advise on or exchange information related to technical matters.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

The work requires moving and lifting heavy cartons and cases and crouching, bending, and stooping to inspect processing equipment.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment includes exposure to freezing temperatures, slippery surfaces, moving materials, handling equipment, and similar risks typical of dairy processing plants and storage areas.

**TOTAL POINTS- 2015**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (TOBACCO), GS-1980-09,  
BMK# 3**

*Duties*

The employee functions as a member of a team (or set) of graders who provide grading services at an auction market sale. The set travels to various locations as the market "moves" with the season. During the course of the marketing season, the employee grades a variety of types and classes of tobacco.

- Draws samples from individual lots (burdens) of tobacco to assure a proper evaluation. Inspects the product, basing the evaluation on a consideration of the characteristics of the particular type of tobacco involved. Establishes the product group, quality level, and color and applies the official standard to determine the product's grade. Certifies and records the grade on the lot's sales ticket. Normally grades several hundreds lots per sale;
- Occasionally is assigned to assist in gathering or disseminating market news information, and to arrange and conduct demonstration meetings for local farm groups to explain and interpret tobacco grade standards and regulations.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-6 -- 950 Points*

- Knowledge of the characteristics relevant to grade determination, such as characteristics of various leaf types, typical color shadings, and common types of damage. To a lesser extent, knowledge of usual harvesting, curing, and marketing practices;
- Knowledge of the official standards and rules pertinent to tobacco types;
- Skill in sampling and grading the product to make grade determinations, including most borderline cases.

*Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-3 -- 275 Points*

The set supervisor coordinates the grading at the auction site and provides the immediate assignment.

The employee independently samples, grades, and certifies the product making nearly all determinations, including most borderline cases. Only in especially difficult instances is the supervisor deferred to for decision.

The set supervisor spot checks the certificates and grades to assure uniformity and proficiency of the technical work.

*Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-3 -- 275 Points*

Guides consist of the official standards and rules, written instructions and definitions covering grading procedures, and incidental administrative instructions. The grader uses extensive judgment, especially in making borderline grading determinations, but also in making numerous and rapid grading decisions during the normal auctioning process. The rapidity of the grading makes it impractical to refer to the written standards for specific guidance.

*Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-2 -- 75 Points*

The work consists primarily in applying related grading techniques and methods of the same general nature of various types of tobacco. (Duties require little consideration or storage, transit, or processing techniques associated with the product.)

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves making final grade determinations on individual lots of tobacco. The product's grade directly affects the price the lot will bring at auction and affects the financial positions of the producers, warehouse, and buyer.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts include growers, warehousemen and their employees, other graders and office personnel, and, to a lesser extent, buyers.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to develop and maintain cooperation of industry personnel; to promote and explain the grading program and standards; to explain and defend grade determinations to growers or other financially interested persons; and to arrange for timely grading work at the auction.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

Grading at auctions requires constant bending, stooping, crouching, and standing as well as exertion of pulling samples from tobacco bundles weighing several hundred kilograms (several hundred pounds).

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment involves working in temperatures often over 100 degrees and exposure to tobacco-dusted air.

**TOTAL POINTS- 1940**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (MEAT), GS-1980-09, BMK# 4**

The position is located at a meat processing plant for which the Federal Government provides grading services for meat products. Normally there is more than one grader assigned to the plant. (The plant uses both a rail and chain operation in its processing.)

The incumbent may be temporarily assigned to another plant on a relief basis, or occasionally perform limited assignments at other locations on a fee basis.

- Independently examines meats either in carcass or wholesale cut form to evaluate the texture, marbling, age, conformance, color and other factors related to product quality. Applies the official standards to determine the meat's quality grade, independently making the determinations, including borderline cases;
- Also, for the appropriate products and cases: (a) determine the yield grade of carcasses considering such factors as carcasses weight, amount of fat, and area of the ribeye; (b) reevaluates carcasses previously identified for grade after they have been ribbed by plant employees; and (c) upon request from a producer through the Carcass Data Service, records and forwards the evaluation data for

the specific factors (conformation, maturity, etc.) which determined the final quality and yield grade of the specific carcass involved;

- Following prescribed procedures, selects samples and inspects meat food products for compliance to contract specifications. contracts primarily involve Federal, State, county, or municipal agency institutional purchasing programs, and the inspection typically includes examining for product defects, packaging, weight, product trim, and quantity;
- Independently defends grade or inspection determinations to plant personnel, resolving most protests. Also assists in maintaining relations with the plant's management by explaining applications of the standards and the related rules and regulations, by advising on plant procedures as they relate to the requirements of the grading services, and by coordinating the grading work with plant activities;
- Prepares and issues certificates, assists in maintaining records and files relating to the grading work, and performs similar administrative tasks.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-6 -- 950 Points*

- Knowledge of the standards, regulations, and rules to examine against contract specifications and/or grade (both for quality and yield) the products, making nearly all determinations independently;
- Knowledge of the characteristics, anatomical structure, types of cuts, processing techniques, and similar factors for an extensive range of meats as these factors pertain to determining the grade or acceptability of the product;
- Skill in sampling, inspecting, and grading meat products, and in maintaining appropriate relations with industry personnel.

*Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-3 -- 275 Points*

The supervisor makes the plant assignments, defining the duties in broad terms and providing general instructions. (Responsibility for coordinating the overall work at the plant is shared among the assigned graders.)

The employee carries out the daily work independently, sequencing and adjusting procedures as necessary. The employee independently performs the grading and inspection work, making nearly all determinations, including borderline cases, without technical assistance. In addition, most "protests" or similar problems raised by the plant concerning the employee's grading or inspection work are resolved by the employee. (Responsibility for general relations with plant personnel are shared by the assigned graders.) Only problems related to very unusual situations are referred to the supervisor.

The supervisor makes periodic visits, to the plant to provide instructions on new or revised policies and procedures and to review the work. Certificates, worksheets, and other records are checked for overall conformance to accepted practices. Technical proficiency of the grading or inspection is spot-checked.

*Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-3 -- 275 Points*

The guides consist of the official standards, rules, and regulations for grading; grading, sampling, and inspection manuals and procedural instructions; and administrative instructions.

The employee is responsible for properly selecting and applying the appropriate guides to a wide variety of situations and to an extensive range of products. In addition, the specific applications of the guides include a significant number of situations in which the grader makes determinations on product grade or acceptability; defends grade determinations and resolves problems with plant employees and management; and applies contract specifications under a wide variety of purchasing programs. Also, the work involves a substantial amount of carcass grading on a chain line operation which requires making rapid and continuous grading decisions.

In addition, the number of guides applicable to the work is extensive, covering nearly all types of meats, acceptance work, and including a variety of administrative tasks.

*Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves a variety of duties which require the application of different methods and the consideration of different factors depending upon the type of grading or inspection being performed, or the type of liaison or administrative problem to be solved

The plant's operation, as related to the grader's duties, is of at least average complexity, including both a chain and rail operation, as well as nearly the full scope of processing operations. The work includes grading products such as beef, lamb, veal, mutton, and hog, and inspecting several types of product or product formulations for acceptance under various purchasing programs.

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves applying the standards and regulations to determine the grade or acceptability of meat or meat-food products, and resolving problems with plant personnel concerning the determinations or related difficulties. The grade and inspection determinations directly affect the economic value of the products and the financial interests of the producer, processor, wholesaler, or receiver of the meat.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts include other Agricultural Commodity Graders and industry personnel such as company graders, department supervisors, cutters, rollers, and production managers.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to resolve disputes concerning grade/inspection determinations, to advise plant personnel on procedures or conditions, to generally maintain the cooperation of plant employees and management, and to coordinate grading services with plant production

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

The work requires long periods of standing; moving and shifting of livestock carcasses (200-400 lbs.); and lifting heavy cartons. The work involves periods of continuously stamping carcasses.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment includes exposure to the cold temperatures of coolers (25 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit) and other processing areas; the high noise levels of industrial processing equipment; the risks of moving carts, forklifts, and similar equipment; and the risks of cutting and sawing equipment.

**TOTAL POINTS- 2015**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (COTTON), GS-1989-09,  
BMK# 5**

*Duties*

The work involves examination and evaluation of cotton to determine its official U.S. class and acceptability in terms of quality and condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations.

- Examines and evaluates cotton samples to determine appropriate grade and staple length. This includes both visual and tactile methods of inspection;
- Provides certified assurance of the quality of cotton. Checks to see that certificates have been posted and that assigned classifications have been recorded;
- May process cotton classification appeals;
- Assists with preparation of reports; and
- Collects cotton samples for use in surveys, studies, demonstrations, standards, and training programs.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-6 -- 905 Points*

- Thorough and detailed knowledge of cotton grading and stapling principles, methods, and standards, and skill in interpreting and applying cotton grade and staple standards to class the full range of cotton samples handled by a classing office;
- Knowledge of cotton harvesting and processing techniques to identify their effect on grades and staple lengths of cotton;
- Skill in detecting and identifying defects in cotton samples and the causes of defects.

*Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-3 -- 275 Points*

The office supervisor makes classing assignments and provides general coordination of the work.

The grader independently determines the grade and staple of assigned cotton samples.

A higher graded supervisor spot checks the classification of a random sample (5-10 percent) of assigned cotton samples.

*Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-3 -- 275 Points*

The primary guidelines consist of official standards (physical and descriptive) for grade and standards for staple length. Written and oral instructions and definitions as well as interpretation of official grade are also used.

The employee uses extensive judgment, particularly in making borderline grade determinations. These judgments must be made rapidly (2 per minute) and generally without referring to either the physical or written descriptive standards for specific guidance.

*Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-3 -- 150 Points*

The work consists of determining the grade and staple of each sample of cotton. Grades are based on factors of color, leaf, and ginning preparation. There are 37 possible grades as well as 9 recognized reduction factors applicable to any of these grades.

These reduction factors vary from one location to another with harvesting practices and weather conditions. The classer must independently describe quality of every sample in all factors. There are also at least 15 different staple lengths which occur in American Upland Cotton. Staple length is partially a genetic quality determined by the variety of seed planted, but it is also affected by soil type, weather conditions, and, to some extent, by ginning processes. The employee must pull the staple from both sides of each sample and compare the length of fibers

with that in the standards. All of this must be done rapidly and with a very high degree of accuracy.

Classification requires three of the five human senses; sight, touch, and smell. Memory, reasoning, and close concentration are required to a high degree. The classifier sees the color, preparation, and foreign matter and also feels the foreign matter in samples. Often odors are also clues to certain reduction factors. The staple length is determined by visual and tactile evaluation. Appearance of standards boxes must be remembered. There are 37 grades and normally 15 staple lengths. Staple lengths are in gradations of 1/32 of an inch. Grade and staple length must be properly assigned to each sample classed.

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves making final classification determinations on individual samples of lint cotton.

The classification directly affects the price or value of the 216 kilogram (480-pound) bale represented by the sample. The monetary valuation of the commodity for which the certification memorandum is issued affects the financial interests of producers, handlers, and buyers.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-1 -- 10 Points*

Contacts include other Agricultural Commodity Graders and federally employed clerical and laborer employees in the laboratory. Employee works directly on a one-to-one basis with agricultural commodity aids on a rotating basis.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-1 -- 20 Points*

The purpose is limited to the exchange of technical and administrative information related to the work. Coworkers are working toward a common objective, accurate grade and staple length determination.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-2 -- 20 Points*

Classification of cotton is performed from a standing position. Stapling of cotton is extremely demanding on the hands, arms, and shoulders since it involves breaking about 1600 specimens of cotton per day. Sample containers from nine to 11 kilograms (20 to 25 pounds) are constantly moved by the employee. The classification process requires physical dexterity and mental alertness and is extremely tiring, both mentally and physically.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment exposes employee to crowded conditions. Moderate discomfort is experienced due to presence of cotton dust. Respirator masks are recommended for employees due to lint fly and dust present in the air.

**TOTAL POINTS -- 1870**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (FRESH FRUIT AND  
VEGETABLE), GS-1980-09, BMK# 6**

*Duties*

Serves as a fresh fruit and vegetable grader, grading and inspecting an extensive range of fruits and vegetables at various terminal market sites, such as, warehouses, railroad sidings, package plants, and similar facilities. The grader is responsible for the examination and evaluation of fresh fruits and vegetables to determine their official U.S. grade and acceptability in terms of quality and condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations.

- Selects representative samples from product lots in accordance with prescribed sampling procedures and plans;
- Inspects the products to determine quality, condition, and/or compliance to stated contract specifications. Typically, this requires considering such factors as:
  - o product size, shape, color, and similar quality factors;
  - o product maturity, firmness, breakdown or decay, bruising, and similar condition factors;
  - o quantity, packaging, or similar conditions which are common in contract specifications;
- Prepares inspection reports based on results of examination of product. This is done through application of official grade standards or contract specifications to determine product's grade and/or condition. Directly issues the certificate. When necessary, explains determinations to appropriate industry employees.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-6 -- 950 Points*

- Knowledge of the official standards and regulations of pertinent product characteristics, and of product defects as applied to a variety of products (e.g., 15);
- Knowledge of transportation, storage, and handling practices insofar as they may be causes of product defects, and as applied to an extensive variety of products;
- Skill in inspecting and grading an extensive range of distinct products and in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships with industry personnel.

*Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-3 -- 275 Points*

The grader normally receives assignments from the officer-in-charge or the assistant who defines the assignment objectives and determines the work priorities.

The grader completes the operational steps necessary to accomplish the work. The grader handles the wider range of products normally encountered, making all decisions relating to grade interpretation, referring only those highly unusual cases to a supervisor.

The work receives only a general review for conformity to established policies and procedures. Occasional checks on technical accuracy and completeness are performed by a supervisor while inspections are being made.

*Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-3 -- 275 Points*

The primary guidelines are the official grade standard, agency instruction manuals, and supplemental technical and administrative directives. Also available are physical models and visual aids on a great number of products.

The employee selects and applies appropriate guides independently. The grader often makes decisions under time pressures brought about by the movement of perishable items in the marketing channels. The grader applies the full range of guidelines available for use.

*Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves the direct inspection and grading of an extensive range of products. Consideration must be given to the varied types of defects which can occur and the identification of same. Compliance or noncompliance with a number of distinctly separate contract specifications is often determined.

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

Assignments involve making final grade and condition determinations and directly issuing certifications. Such determinations affect the product's price and/or acceptability in relation to contract specifications. Both factors affect the financial interests of buyers and sellers.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-1 -- 25 points*

Contacts include employees and managers of firms involved in fresh fruit and vegetable marketing such as receivers, vendors, brokers, and shippers.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to promote and maintain cooperation and suitable working relations with persons in the industry by explaining the agency program and resolving conflicts. This includes explaining grade or condition determinations. Schedules grading and inspection services in cooperation with industry personnel.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

The work requires periods of considerable physical exertion such as lifting heavy cartons and crates (often over 23 kilograms (50 pounds)); climbing into boxcars and trucks; and moving, crouching, and crawling in cramped areas.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment includes exposure to adverse, outdoor weather, working in refrigerated areas, and exposure to fumes and odors from coolants.

**TOTAL POINTS -- 2015**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (POULTRY), GS-1980-09,  
BMK# 7**

*Duties*

Serves as sole resident poultry grader. Examines and evaluates poultry and poultry products to determine their official US grade and acceptability in terms of quality and condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations.

- Grades whole turkeys, chickens, ducks, geese, etc., and poultry parts considering such factors as class, fleshing, finish, freedom from defects, age, weight, and other conditions. Applies the official standards and regulations to determine the product's grade based upon grading results;

- Determines formulation and grade conformance of further processed poultry products such as turkey rolls, roasts, etc. Inspects packing, packaging, labeling;
- Trains and authorizes selected plant personnel to grade according to U.S. standards;
- Directs and monitors the grading work of authorized plant personnel, furnishing on-the-job training;
- Examines product to determine conformance with approved contract specifications such as grade, weight, packaging and packing, and quantity for military, State, Federal, or municipal purchases. Prepares and issues certifications of products;
- Inspects plant facilities for compliance with specified sanitation, processing, and storage requirements;
- Acts as the officially designated contact and maintains relations with plant management and employees, explaining grade determinations; obtaining corrections in sanitation, processing or storage conditions; advising on quality control methods; explaining grading program activities; and coordinating the grading services with plant activities;
- Prepares and maintains a variety of reports and records related to the work such as plant production data, grading results, certificates issued, and administrative records;
- Provides technical guidance to temporarily assigned graders.

*Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-6 -- 950 Points*

- Knowledge of the standards, regulations, and product characteristics relevant to poultry products and product formulations, to inspect and/or grade the products, making nearly all determinations independently;
- Knowledge of processing, packaging, storage, and sanitation procedures as specified factors which affect the products' grade and/or conditions. Such knowledge is extensive in range and includes procedures relevant to whole birds, parts, and further processed items such as roll roasts. Knowledge also involves inspection and evaluation of technically complex formulations, processing procedures, and sanitation conditions;
- Skill in inspecting and grading products, and in developing and maintaining personal relationships with industry personnel.

*Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-3 -- 275 Points*

The assignment is defined in terms of the general grading and inspection services which are to be provided at the particular plant. The employee independently plans and performs the day-to-day work, adjusting specific procedures to meet varying situations.

The grader resolves nearly all technical problems within the range of the plant's normal activity, concerning grade and/or inspection determinations and operating problems with plant employees. Unusual situations, difficult policy interpretations, questions on grading products not normally run at the plant, or similar questions are referred to the supervisor.

The Federal-State supervisor periodically visits the plant to clarify the assignment, if necessary, to resolve particularly controversial issues with the plant's management, and to review the employee's work. The review normally involves a general evaluation to confirm conformity to usual procedures and policies, a sample review of worksheets, reports, and certificates, and a spot check of technical proficiency.

*Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 3-9 -- 275 Points*

Guides for the work include the official grade standards and regulations, the grader's instructional handbook, supplemental technical bulletins, and various written and oral guidelines concerning administrative procedures and relations with plant personnel.

The grader selects and applies the guides and instructions appropriate to the particular phase of work being performed in a variety of situations. Makes borderline grading determinations; maintains suitable on-site relationships with plant management and employees; and maintains adequate records, files, and reports on the plant's activity and the grading services being provided

*Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves grading and certifying a variety of poultry and poultry products including live-dressed, drawn, or eviscerated chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, and other species of birds in accordance with grades defined in the official standards and regulations. The grading of these products involves recognizing slight differences in quality, condition, size, and pack; determining the degree of adherence to or deviations from grade factors which vary from product to product; and making allowances for the relative weight of compensatory factors. In addition, the assignment of a grade based on subjective measurements is further conditioned by the influence of variations in character from lot to lot, arising from differences in breeding characteristics, environmental conditions under which the product was grown or held, type of feed consumed by the poultry, seasons of the year, and the treatment given the product in processing. In making these determinations, the grader exercises independent judgment and technical proficiency to consistently maintain uniformity in the application of grading factors which are susceptible to varying interpretations which cannot be scientifically measured.

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-3 -- 150 Points*

The work involves determining the grade and/or acceptability of a variety of whole birds and parts, inspecting plant facilities for sanitation, overseeing authorized plant graders, and maintaining effective relationships with plant management.

The grade and/or condition certificates and inspection reports issued by the grader affect the financial interests of the plant and/or its customers.

*Factor 6. Personnel Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts include other graders, the plant's processing line workers, authorized plant graders, foremen, and plant management.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

The purpose is to maintain the cooperation of employees and managers of the plant to assure an acceptable level of on-site compliance with program policies, to resolve operating problems, and coordinate grading services with plant production activities.

*Factor 8. Physical Demands -- Level 8-3 -- 50 Points*

The work requires periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of poultry products often weighing over 23 kilograms (50 pounds).

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment is a poultry processing plant and involves moderate discomforts and risks such as the cold temperatures of freezer storage areas, the presence of processing equipment, moving carts, and forklifts, and wet, slippery floors.

**TOTAL POINTS -- 2015**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY GRADER (COTTON), GS-1980-11 BMK***Duties*

The incumbent provides technical supervision for the activities of 5 to 10 cotton classers. Performs appeals classing and futures classing as needed. Negotiates the resolution of problems and discusses program services with industry members. Instructs cotton classer trainees. May direct the operations of a seasonal office. The position is located in a marketing service office which is responsible for the examination and evaluation of cotton to determine its official U.S. class and acceptability in terms of quality and condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations.

- Reviews and coordinates the work of full performance level classers (cotton graders) to assure that they are adhering to a common level of classing in relation to the standards;
- Serves as troubleshooter, providing technical advice to full performance level classers on unusual problems;
- Oversees checklots to assure they are being obtained in accordance with instructions;
- Assures that recorder is recording the classification called by the classer;
- Oversees operation of mike room;
- Prepares production reports;
- Reviews for adherence to specifications cotton samples collected for use in surveys, studies, demonstrations, standards, and training programs;
- Reviews local classifications upon appeal;
- Discusses program and operational problems with producers, ginner, merchants, and representatives of their organizations;
- Develops lesson plans, assembles course materials, and teaches in 6-month classer training school;
- May perform classing of cotton futures;
- May direct the operations of a seasonal office;

*Factor I. Knowledge Required by the Position -- Level 1-7 -- 1250 Points*

- Exceptionally broad and thorough knowledge of the characteristics of cotton in relation to particular areas of production; thorough knowledge of cotton grading standards, regulations, principles, and methods; and thorough knowledge of cotton harvesting and processing techniques affecting an extensive range of grades and staple lengths to make final authoritative grade and staple determinations on difficult, borderline, and controversial cotton samples and to detect and identify defects and their causes;
- Exceptional skill in interpreting and applying an extensive range of cotton grade and staple standards and manually and visually classing cotton samples to produce consistently accurate results in difficult borderline cases;

- Skill in explaining and demonstrating cotton classing techniques and principles to guide and advise full performance level graders on difficult determinations and to teach basic principles and techniques to trainee cotton graders.

### *Factor 2. Supervisory Controls -- Level 2-3 -- 275 Points*

The Area Director assigns the work group for which the classer is responsible.

The classer independently coordinates the activities of this group, including borderline grading determinations and unusual classing problems.

Overall coordination of the activities of the Marketing Service Office (MSO) is provided by the Area Director who is the official supervisor of all MSO personnel and who bears primary responsibility for industry relationships.

### *Factor 3. Guidelines -- Level 9-9 -- 275 Points*

The primary guidelines consist of official standards (physical and descriptive) for grade and standards for staple length. Written and oral instructions and definitions, as well as interpretation of official grade, are also used.

The employee uses extensive judgment, particularly in assuring a common level of classification and in evaluating unusual technical problems. Judgments must be made rapidly, based on seasoned working knowledge of cotton classification.

### *Factor 4. Complexity -- Level 4-4 -- 225 Points*

The work involves varied processes and methods such as futures and appeals grading of cotton covering an extensive range of cotton grades and staple lengths; development of lesson plans and course materials for cotton grading classes; formal classroom instruction of graders; oversight and technical guidance and review of groups of cotton graders; and oversight of cotton grading operations.

Decisions regarding what needs to be done vary according to the nature of the assignment (e. g., instruction, futures or appeals classing, or oversight of cotton classing operations) and according to the particular operating problems and kinds of cotton classed at each cotton classing station.

The work requires making many decisions concerning such things as the proper methods for handling unusual samples, identification of the causes of defects in cotton, the best approach to solving questionable variations in the level of cotton classing decisions of graders within a classing office concerning class and staple length, and methods of classroom instruction of cotton graders.

*Factor 5. Scope and Effect -- Level 5-4 -- 225 Points*

The work involves reviewing the determinations of a group of cotton classers and providing them with advice on problem cases. It includes appeals decisions, and may include classing of futures cotton. Determinations made by the employee are considered authoritative. Additionally, the employee is responsible for the training of future classers and for the overall coordination of a group of workers.

The effectiveness of the employee's judgment and coordination has a broad impact on the quantity and quality of service provided to producers, handlers, and buyers.

*Factor 6. Personal Contacts -- Level 6-2 -- 25 Points*

Contacts include other graders and Federally employed aids, clerks, and laborers in the laboratory. They also include producers, ginners, and representatives of trade organizations and producer organizations. Contacts are established on a routine basis.

*Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts -- Level 7-3 -- 120 Points*

Contacts with other laboratory employees are for the purpose of assuring adherence to policies, instructions, and standards, and for providing guidance and/or training. Contacts with industry personnel are for the purpose of investigating and explaining problem issues, obtaining information on production and marketing, and promoting Federal programs.

*Factor 8. Physical Environment -- Level 8-2 -- 20 Points*

Work requires constant standing and extensive use of fingers, hands, arms, and shoulders. The duties require physical dexterity and mental alertness, and they are extremely tiring, both mentally and physically.

*Factor 9. Work Environment -- Level 9-2 -- 20 Points*

The work environment exposes the employee to crowded conditions. Moderate discomfort is experienced due to presence of cotton dust. Respirator masks are recommended for employees due to lint fly and dust present in the air.

**TOTAL POINTS - 2435**