

Commodities Scientific Support Division  
Eastern Commodities Support Laboratory  
Aflatoxin Laboratory  
Physical Science Technician  
GS-1311-05

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Commodities Support Laboratory is responsible for performing chemical, microbiological, and physical analyses of poultry and poultry products, peanuts, processed fruits and vegetables and other food products; cotton fibers; and tobacco. These tests are conducted in support of grading, certification, acceptance, and regulatory programs.

The aflatoxin laboratories perform aflatoxin analyses on peanuts, peanut products, other nuts, corn and similar grains, and may also perform other laboratory tests.

## II. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- \* Maintains positive identification for each sample received for testing.
- \* Applies knowledge of procedures for each type of product analyzed.
- \* Conducts aflatoxin tests using standard analytical procedures.
- \* Receives incoming chemicals and stores them.
- \* Mixes chemical reagents and prepares stock solutions.
- \* Disposes of waste chemicals, using proper safety precautions.
- \* Prepares the absorbent used in thin layer chromatography.
- \* Prepares thin layer chromatography plates according to prescribed procedures.
- \* Makes sample observations for review by the laboratory supervisor.
- \* Operates testing equipment and has sufficient knowledge of the mechanical functioning of the equipment in order to make adjustments and minor repairs.

## IV. JOB CONTROLS

The employee works under the direction of the lab supervisor. Incumbent selects proper procedure for test being performed. Work methods are usually established. Employee may receive oral instruction in discussing time frames, possible technical problems and alternative guidance in unusual cases. Work is subject to periodic review for adequacy of methods employed and accuracy of end results. Incumbent applies skill, knowledge and judgment in arranging work sequences, adjusting and operating equipment and in recognizing significant deviations in results. The employee has contact with other lab workers in order to exchange information and receive instruction. There is exposure to potentially dangerous toxic chemicals.