



TESTING OF FINISHED PRODUCTS FEATHER AND DOWN BULK MATERIAL

A finished product QA program must begin with testing the bulk down and fabric components.

Testing of down and feather products requires on-going frequent testing because the raw material is a **natural product** and very **non-homogeneous**. Each shipment can vary in a number of factors.

Testing is time-consuming because the acceptable methods require tedious work by hand. Machines cannot perform the separation task for specie and content analysis.

Testing of Bulk Down and Feather Material by Feather Processors.

1. Testing of every raw shipment of down from an exporter or farmers cooperative is usually required to make sure that the material meets specifications. Each bale of raw product can contain different mixes of down and feather. A small amount of material is taken from 10-20% of randomly selected bags, then mixed and sent to a laboratory such as IDFL for testing.
2. After the material is washed and sorted -- testing is again required. The sorting machines are adjusted continually. The washing and sorting process can change the down and fiber mix of material. Some feather processors will test every single lot of down that is processed. Others perform random spot checks to make sure material meets expected values.

Testing of Down and Feather Material by the Finished Product Manufacturers.

1. The incoming washed down & feathers should be evaluated.
 - a. Some manufactures require a certification with each shipment.
 - b. Some manufacturers test every shipment.
 - c. Other manufacturers perform random tests on every type of material received. (Some material will come in multiple shipments from a feather processor.)
2. Testing should also be completed after the finished products are manufactured. This will ensure that the correct fill material was used and that the manufacturing process did not adversely affect the fill material.

This finished product testing will also replicate tests that the retailer or government enforcement agencies will perform.