



## RETAILER TESTING of DOWN PRODUCTS FINISHED PRODUCTS vs. BULK MATERIAL

Retailers must make decisions on what and when to test down-filled products.

Some retailers require manufacturers to test bulk down. These retailers require manufacturers to submit such testing certificates or have such records available in case of problems.

Other retailers complete random testing of finished products by either:

1. Requiring manufacturer to submit samples of finished products before shipment.
2. Testing random products after receipt (either in warehouse or actual stores).

Many require both bulk and finished product testing.

Retailers who test products have higher rates of compliance with labeling and packaging claims.

### **Why is finished product testing required if manufacturers test bulk down?**

1. Down is a natural product. To produce a large volume of finished products many lots/containers of down are used. Down content and specie can vary with each lot.
2. Down is mixed and resorted before final assembly. If a certain down lot only has 80% goose, it might be mixed with a lot containing 100% goose. Hopefully, the outcome will be 90% goose.
3. If down is in short supply, manufactures will be required to buy additional down from the open market.
4. Several tests cannot be determined from the initial results of the bulk down.
  - A. General product characteristics such as odor, dust, etc. might appear after production due to shipping or storage problems.
  - B. Fabric Testing such as downproofness, etc.
  - C. Net Fill Weight of down filling.

### **Regulatory and competitive testing is only done on finished products**

1. State/Federal regulatory agencies will only test finished products. The State of Connecticut recently pulled down bedding and clothing products from the shelves of major retailers and tested the filling material for compliance.
2. The American Down Association (ADFS) began a compliance program in 2004. Member companies can bring complaints against manufacturers whose down and feather products do not meet packaging and labeling claims.
3. Several companies have completed comprehensive testing of competitors finished down products for adherence to labeling and packaging claims.