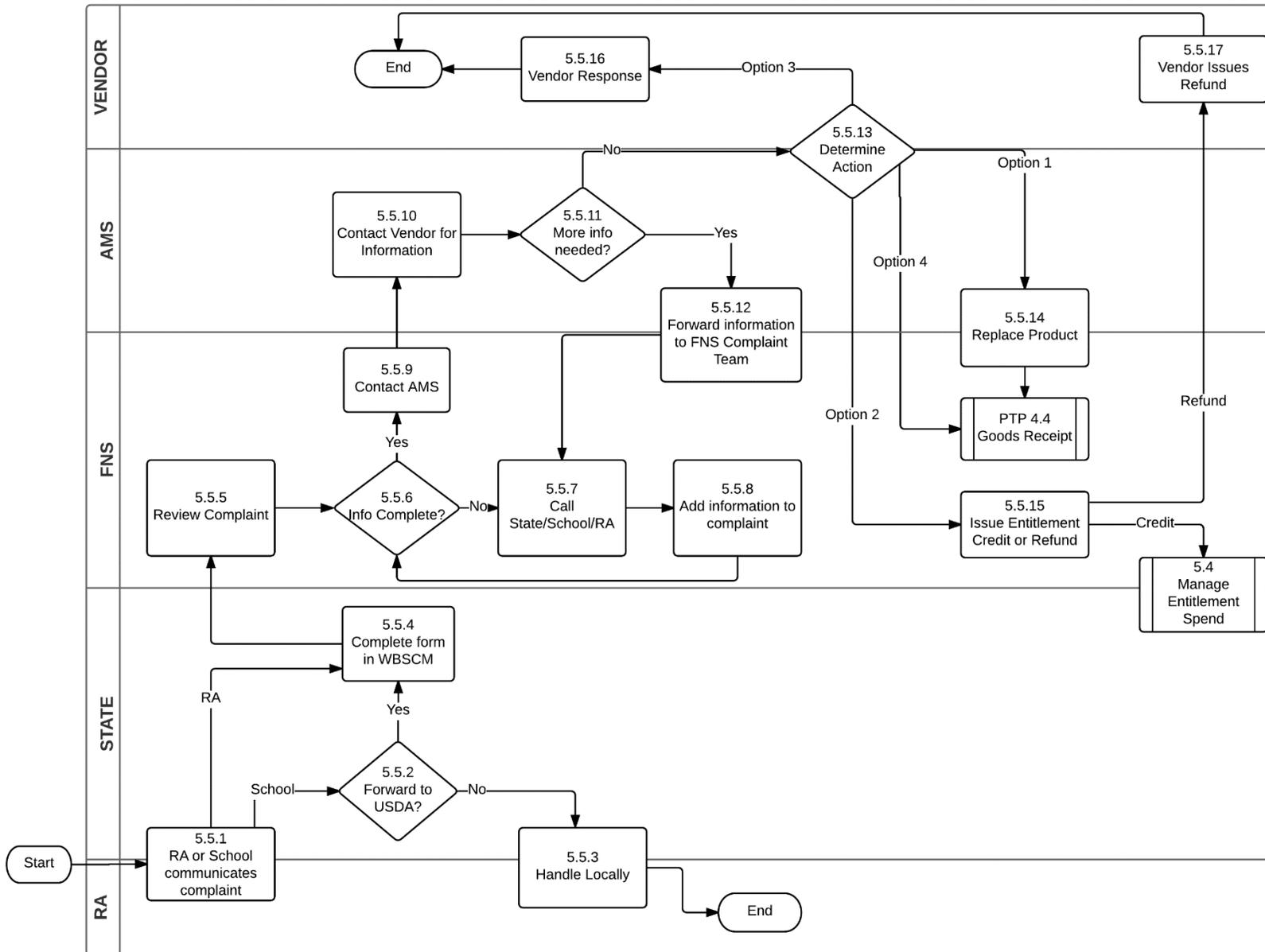


5.5 COMPLAINTS



5.5.1 RA or School Communicates Complaint

- Schools and districts do not enter complaints directly into WBSCM; these funneled through state offices who enter on their behalf
- Policy dictates rejection of a shipment if:
 - More than 50% of the shipment is damaged or out of condition
 - Security seal is missing
 - Temperature issues obvious
 - Infestation by pests

5.5.2 Forward to USDA?

- State reviews the complaint to determine if the issue justifies entry of a complaint into WBSCM for the USDA to handle
- May reach back out to school/district to gather further info prior to submitting complaint
- Anecdotal evidence indicates up to 90% of damaged deliveries are not reported
- Also issues with chain of custody – supply chain continues after delivery to the FOB Destination. Damage may have occurred between the State/Distributor and the School after delivery in good condition to the intermediary
- Items in storage for several months also complicate determination of liability for product out of condition

5.5.3 Handle Locally

- If the state determines the issue is not relevant to the USDA Foods program, the process is handled locally

5.5.4 Complete Form in WBSCM

- State or RA completes the form on WBSCM
- Template form has information required varies by type of complaint (e.g. food safety, appearance, foreign material) and to whom the complaint is routed
- **Pain Point:** Complaint is supposed to be tied to a SO line, but the information on the BOL is the PO or there may be more than one SO of a particular item shipped in the same time frame. Recipients do not have access to WBSCM to find the connecting information between one or more POs and SOs. Complaint entered by created or GR date. The complaint form itself does have all the information required; the complaint has to search for additional details to address the complaint properly.
- **Pain Point:** FNS can create complaints on behalf of a customer, but OFS and AMS do not have the same capability. Creates some delays and potential for miscommunication. If FNS creates the complaint on behalf of an SDA/RA, the SDA/RA cannot see the complaint.
- **Pain Point:** Schools/Districts cannot see SO changes on their requisition report unless WBSCM is rolled down from the state – may see email threads but not real time via WBSCM reports

5.5.5 Review Complaint

- FNS Complaint Team reviews the complaint, sometimes in partnership with the OFS
- FNS Complaint Team updates the complaint status to “Complaint Team” to reflect as work-in-progress
- **Pain Point:** Many complaints are tagged as food safety issues by the complainant since these tend to get a more immediate response

5.5.6 Info Complete?

- FNS team member reviews the submitted complaint to verify all pertinent information is included
- **Pain Point:** Constant turnover on front lines requires constant training efforts

5.5.7 Call State/School/RA

- FNS Complaint Team contacts complainant to obtain more information if form is incomplete

5.5.8 Add Information to Complaint

- FNS updates the complaint with info obtained from the complainant
- System allows attachment of documents to the complaint
 - **Pain Point:** State cannot add attachments after the complaint is submitted
 - **Pain Point:** File name are limited to 35 characters
 - **Pain Point:** File size is limited to 10MB

5.5.9 Contact AMS

- If complaint is related to a vendor, FNS assigns the complaint to AMS
- AMS owns the vendor relationship and is responsible for coordinating the problem resolution with the vendor

5.5.10 Contact the Vendor for Information

- AMS contacts the vendor representative to review the complaint and gather additional information if necessary
- **Pain Point:** Communication chain is long and may have 8 actors involved by this point
 - School -> District -> State -> FNS -> AMS -> Supplier/Processor/Distributor
 - Reverse of information flows through same number of channels, creates a time lag and a disincentive for schools to report
- AMS may request reinspection of product prior to reshipment as part of the complaint resolution

5.5.11 More info needed from SDA/RA?

- If AMS and the vendor determine additional information is required from the complainant, AMS contacts the FNS Complaint Team to call the appropriate party
- If information is complete, the process proceeds to complaint resolution pathway chosen

5.5.12 Forward Information to FNS Complaint Team

- AMS emails information received from the supplier to FNS
- FNS can attach correspondence received from AMS to the complaint
- Notes can be added to the complaint as External (viewable by all) or Internal (viewable only by FNS)
- FNS tracks trends of complaints and view data by supplier
- **Pain Point:** No single source of data for all stakeholders to report against and with role-based capabilities (e.g. read only, edit, close, etc.).
- **Pain Point:** AMS cannot update notes since they are not the primary responsible party in handling the complaint. AMS can only see complaints assigned to AMS, not all open complaints
- **Pain Point:** States do not know how to view notes, however there will be training on this at the ACDA Conference

5.5.13 Determine Action

- One of four remediation options follow on the resolution of a complaint, product replacement, supplier credit/refund, vendor response or a specification adjustment

5.5.14 Replace Product

- Replacement of product is the most common resolution
- AMS contacts the vendor and arranges for replacement shipment
- AMS sends shipment information to FNS who confirms POC and sends back to AMS
 - **Pain Point:** SDA may not receive full details of the replacement delivery
- Upon receipt of replacement product, the recipient enters a GR in same fashion as standard delivery if short shipment against open PO
- When OS&D happens after PO received in full (GR against PO), replacement tracking happens outside the WBSCM system
 - Opportunity: Leverage SAP functions to track in system when replacement subsequent to GR in full

5.5.15 Issue Entitlement Credit or Refund

- Less frequent, happens <20x per year

- Two outcomes, Issue Entitlement Credit which flows to the “Manage Entitlement Spend” process, or the vendor issues a refund to the State/recipient
- For credits, FNS/PIMB calculates value per case from SO and provides State with entitlement credit

5.5.16 Vendor Response

- This is the case where vendor disputes responsibility for remediating the complaint or the State/Recipient has requested a mitigation plan for future deliveries
- Standard process and forms for the vendor to complete and submit to AMS

5.5.17 Vendor Issues Refund

- FNS provides recipient info to the vendor, who in turn cuts a check directly to the recipient
- Issue that the funds do not always go back to food service when a cash reimbursement is made