

TECHNICAL REPORT

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AD

STUDIES ON REVERSIBLE COMPRESSION OF DEHYDRATED VEGETABLES

by

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George R. Taylor

Donald E. Westcott

November 1969

UNITED STATES ARMY
NATICK LABORATORIES
Natick, Massachusetts 01760



Food Laboratory

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FOREWORD

Compressed dehydrated foods offer significant reduction in volume and weight. Therefore, such foods are of significant value in the Armed Forces in reducing storage and transportation requirements. It is particularly important for military operations where a food supply must be carried by the soldier. Another important application for compressed dehydrated foods is in space missions. This report covers developmental studies of the reversible compression of vegetables, i.e., those which can be compressed and subsequently restored to their normal appearance and texture by rehydration.

The work was conducted under Project No. 1J6-62708-D553, Food Processing and Preservation Techniques.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Abstract	vi
Introduction	1
Experimental Procedures	2
Results and Discussion	4
References	5

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Peas as Affected by Compression	6
2 Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Corn as Affected by Compression	7
3 Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Onions as Affected by Compression	8
4 Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Spinach as Affected by Compression	9
5 Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Carrots as Affected by Compression	10
6 Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Green Beans as Affected by Compression	11
7 Bulk Densities of Air Dried and Freeze Dried Vegetables before and after Compression	12

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Freeze Dried Peas Obtained from 4 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.	13
2	Freeze Dried Corn Obtained from 4 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.	14
3	Air Dried Sliced Onions Obtained from 5 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.	15
4	Freeze Dried Spinach Obtained from 11 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.	16
5	Freeze Dried Carrots Obtained from 14 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.	17
6	Freeze Dried Green Beans Obtained from 16 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.	18

ABSTRACT

Compressed bars approximately 3 x 1 x 1/2 inches have been developed from freeze dried, peas, corn, spinach, carrots, green beans, as well as air dried sliced onions. Rehydration ratio and texture as measured by shear press were not significantly affected by compression. Compression ratios obtained were: peas 1:4, corn 1:4, sliced onions 1:5, spinach 1:11, carrots 1:14 and green beans 1:16.

Introduction

Dehydration is a highly acceptable process for the preservation and reduction of weight of foods. However, there is minimal reduction in volume (or increase in density) from dehydration. For military usage, it has become increasingly important to compact such foods to reduce handling, storage and transportation costs.

Various fruits and vegetables have been compressed and subsequently restored to their normal appearance and texture through rehydration. Hamdy (1961) indicated that obtaining acceptable products from compression of foods varies. Gooding and Rolfe (1957) reported that reduction in volume of up to 8-fold was obtained by compressing dehydrated vegetables. During World War II, the United Kingdom produced dehydrated cabbage and carrots in compressed blocks. Fairbrother (1968) reported on the compression of potato granules at a low moisture content and the compression of an instant bread mix.

Hamdy (1962) found that acceptable compressed freeze-dried spinach could be obtained by increasing the plasticizing moisture content to 9 percent. Ishler (1962) reported that spraying the dehydrated food with water, glycerine or propylene glycol before compression produced bars with excellent rehydration characteristics. He also found that successful compressed food can be achieved by spraying freeze-dried cellular foods to 5-13 percent moisture, compressing, and redrying to less than 3 percent moisture. Lampi (1963) indicated that high pressures during compression resulted in high density food disks which were hard and/or were difficult to rehydrate. The moisture level of the food prior to compression also affected rehydration. Brockmann (1966) reported that freeze-dried foods, properly preconditioned, can be compressed with little or no fragmentation and that most foods so compressed can be restored to their pre-compression characteristics. This work was initiated in order to determine the effect of compression on the texture of dehydrated vegetables. Furthermore, to determine their compression ratios as criteria for possible savings in cost of packaging materials, handling, storage and transportation.

Experimental Procedures

Product Preparation

All products were locally purchased. Compression was accomplished on a Carver press using compression forces of 500, 1000, 1500, 2000, and 2500 pounds per square inch (p.s.i.).

Peas: Individually quick frozen (IQF) peas were partially thawed and the seed coat was mechanically slit at several points in order to facilitate the removal of water during freeze-drying. The peas were sulfited by dipping in solution of sodium metabisulfite to yield approximately 400 ppm. They were frozen at -20°F. and then freeze dried at a platen temperature of 120°F. to a final moisture content of less than 2 percent. The freeze dried peas were subjected to live steam for 5 minutes. Approximately 20 grams of peas were compressed to bars approximately 3 x 1 x 1/2 inches.

Corn: Corn was freeze dried with a platen temperature of 120°F. to a final moisture content of less than 2 percent. The freeze dried corn was sprayed with water until weight was increased by 12 percent. The sprayed corn was then heated in a closed container for 10 minutes at 200°F. to equilibrate the moisture in the corn. The corn was then compressed.

Spinach: Frozen spinach was thawed and sulfited by dipping in a solution of metabisulfite to yield approximately 500 ppm. It was then freeze dried with a platen temperature of 120°F. for 16 hours. The freeze dried spinach was subjected to live steam for 5 minutes and then compressed. Each bar weighed approximately 10 grams.

Onions: Sliced onions were air dried in accordance with Specification JJJ-O-533. They were subjected to live steam for 5 minutes and then compressed.

Green beans: Cross cut frozen green beans were freeze dried and compressed following the procedure used for the spinach.

Carrots: Fresh carrots were lye peeled and cut into dice 3/8 x 3/8 x 1/16 inches. The carrots were steam blanched for 10 minutes in order to inactivate the enzyme, peroxidase. The carrots were then sulfited by dipping in a solution of metabisulfite to yield approximately 400 ppm. They were then frozen at -20°F. and freeze dried with a platen temperature of 120°F. for 16 hours. They were then compressed following the procedure used for the spinach.

All the compressed bars were redried using a vacuum oven to reduce the final moisture content to approximately 2 percent.

Rehydration Ratio: Rehydration ratio was determined by dividing the rehydrated weight by the dry weight. The following rehydration procedures were used.

Corn and peas: Each bar was placed in approximately 500 ml of 210°F. water, held for 12 minutes and then drained for 5 minutes.

Carrots: Each bar was placed in approximately 500 ml of boiling water, boiled for 1 minute and soaked for another minute and then drained for 5 minutes.

Onions: Each bar was placed in approximately 500 ml of boiling water, boiled for 5 minutes, and then drained for 5 minutes.

Spinach: Each bar was placed in approximately 500 ml of water at 210°F., held for 3 minutes, and then drained for 5 minutes.

Green beans: Each bar was placed in approximately 500 ml of water at 210°F., held for 15 minutes and then drained for 5 minutes.

Compression ratio: To determine compression ratios, the dehydrated vegetables were compressed into discs approximately of 4" diameter, so that they would fit a No. 2-1/2 can. The compression force for each product was selected in accordance of their physical appearances, shedding time, and rehydration ratio; for example the following forces (pounds per square inch) were applied, 1500 for peas, corn, carrots and onions, and 1000 for spinach. The compressed discs required to fill a No. 2-1/2 can, leaving approximately 1/4" headspace, were weighed. Uncompressed freeze dried or air dried product of equivalent weight to that of the compressed was packed loosely in No. 2-1/2 cans leaving approximately 1/4" headspace. The number of cans utilized to pack the loose product gave the compression or packaging ratio.

Bulk density was measured by dividing the weight of the loose or compressed product by its respective volume to yield grams per cubic centimeter. Calculated compression ratio was then determined by dividing the bulk density of the compressed product by that of the uncompressed.

Shedding time was measured by placing the compressed product in hot water approximately 210°F., and then reporting the time at which all the individual pieces separate from the compressed product. Texture of rehydrated product was measured immediately after rehydration with the Lee-Kramer shear press using the 5000-pound ring with 30 seconds downstroke.

Results and Discussion

Tables 1 through 6 give the texture and rehydration ratio for each of the compressed vegetables. There data indicate that compression forces used did not produce significant differences in rehydration ratio or texture as measured by the shear press. However shedding time increased somewhat as the compression force increased. This suggests that shedding time may reflect the degree of cohesiveness as a criterion for the ability of compressed products to withstand abuse during handling, storage and transportation.

Table 7 indicates that compression ratio, as determined by actual filling of the cans, is slightly lower than that calculated from the bulk densities. This is due to the allowances given to headspace, the space between the compressed discs and the can wall needed to facilitate packing and unpacking of the product, and space between the discs due to uneven surface caused by relaxation of the product after compression.

Figures 1 through 6 show the practical compression ratios of 1:4, 1:4, 1:5, 1:11, 1:14 and 1:16 for peas, corn, onions, spinach, carrots and green beans respectively.

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Table 1. Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Peas as Affected by Compression

Compression Pressure PSI (Pounds sq. inch)	Rehydration Ratio Rehydrated weight/dry weight*	Shear Press Value after Rehydration Pounds*	Shedding Time Minutes
500	4.26	279	1
1000	4.46	283	3
1500	4.24	287	3
2000	4.30	309	4
2500	4.69	309	4-1/4

* No significant difference at 1% level.

Table 2. Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Corn as Affected by Compression

Compression Pressure PSI (Pounds sq. inch)	Rehydration Ratio Rehydrated weight/dry weight*	Shear Press Value after Rehydration Pounds*	Shedding Time Minutes
500	2.8	277	4
1000	2.7	270	4
1500	2.7	307	4
2000	2.8	282	4-1/2
2500	2.9	330	5

* No significant difference at 5% level.

Table 3. Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Onions as Affected by Compression

Compression Pressure PSI (pounds sq. inch)	Rehydration Ratio Rehydrated weight/dry weight*	Shear Press Value after Rehydration Pounds*	Shedding Time Minutes
500	4.8	175	30
1000	4.7	186	40
1500	4.9	174	60
2000	4.9	172	70
2500	4.8	141	90

* No significant difference at 5% level.

Table 4. Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Spinach as Affected by Compression

Compression Pressure PSI (Pounds sq. inch)	Rehydration Ratio Rehydrated weight/dry weight*	Shear Press Value after Rehydration Pounds*	Shedding Time Minutes
500	8.9	105	10
1000	8.8	116	10
1500	7.9	120	25
2000	7.4	102	30
2500	7.6	117	30

* No significant difference at 5% level.

Table 5. Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Carrots as Affected by Compression

Compression Pressure PSI (Pounds sq. inch)	Rehydration Ratio Rehydrated weight/dry weight*	Shear Press Value after Rehydration Pounds*	Shedding Time Minutes
500	15.2	195	1/2
1000	15.8	175	1/2
1500	15.4	195	3/4
2000	15.2	165	3/4
2500	14.0	182	1

* No significant difference at 5% level.

Table 6. Texture and Rehydration Ratio of Dehydrated Green Beans as Affected by Compression

Compression Pressure PSI (Pounds sq. inch)	Rehydration Ratio Rehydrated weight/dry weight*	Shear Press Value after Rehydration Pounds*	Shedding Time Minutes
500	10.9	141	2
1000	11.4	114	3
1500	11.0	142	3
2000	11.7	180	3-1/2
2500	11.8	149	3-1/2

* No significant difference at 5% level.

Table 7. Bulk Densities of Air Dried and Freeze Dried Vegetables before and after Compression

Product	gms/cc Freeze Dried	gms/cc Compressed	Compression Ratio	
			Calculated from Bulk Densities	Measured by Actual Fill of Cans
Peas	0.216	.889	4.1	4
Corn	0.192	0.810	4.2	4
Onions	0.190	1.010	5.3	5
Spinach	0.038	0.419	11.3	11
Carrots	0.036	0.530	14.7	14
Green Beans	0.038	0.615	16.3	16

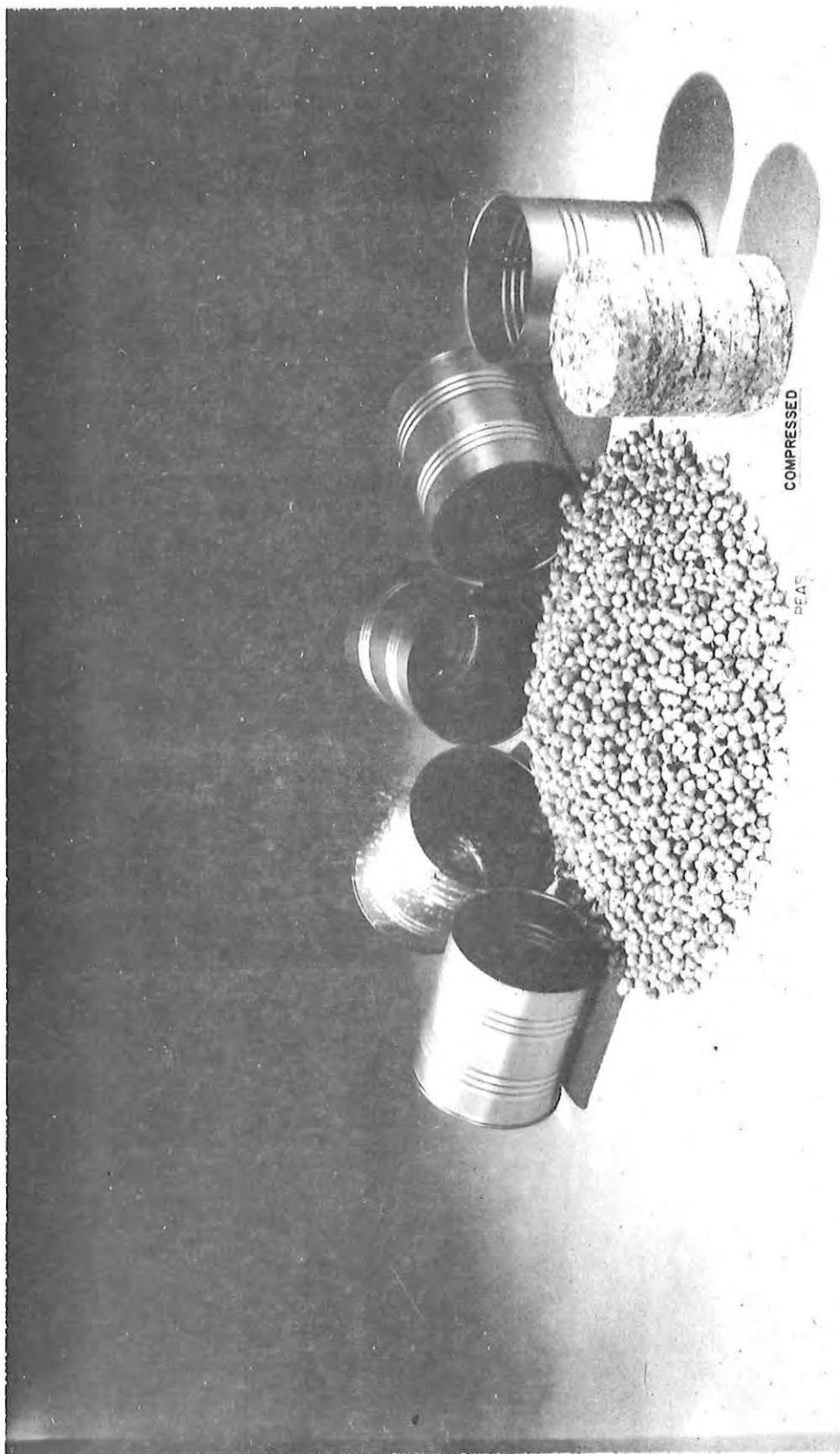


Figure 1. Freeze Dried Peas Obtained from 4 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.

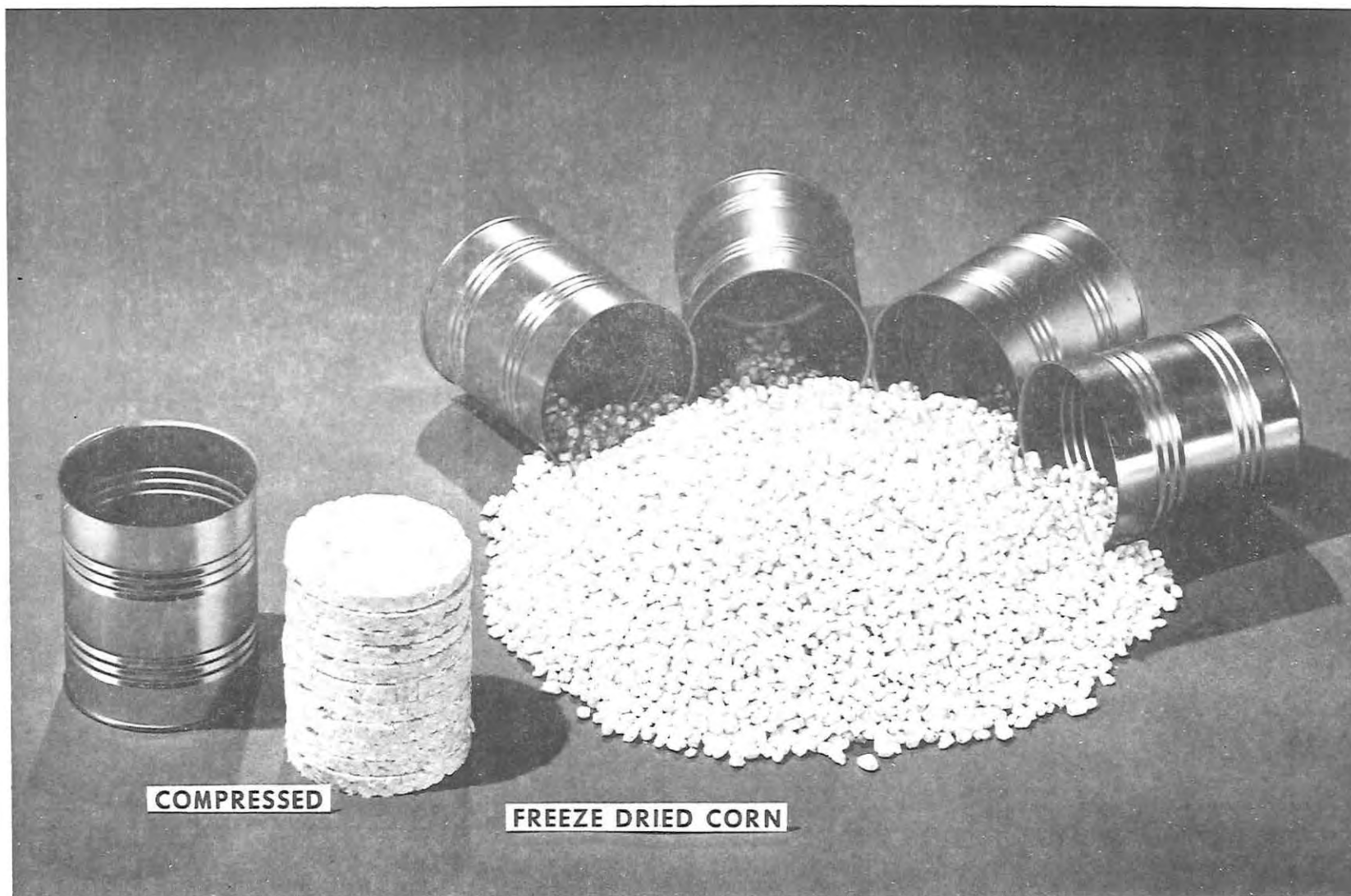


Figure 2. Freeze Dried Corn Obtained from 4 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.

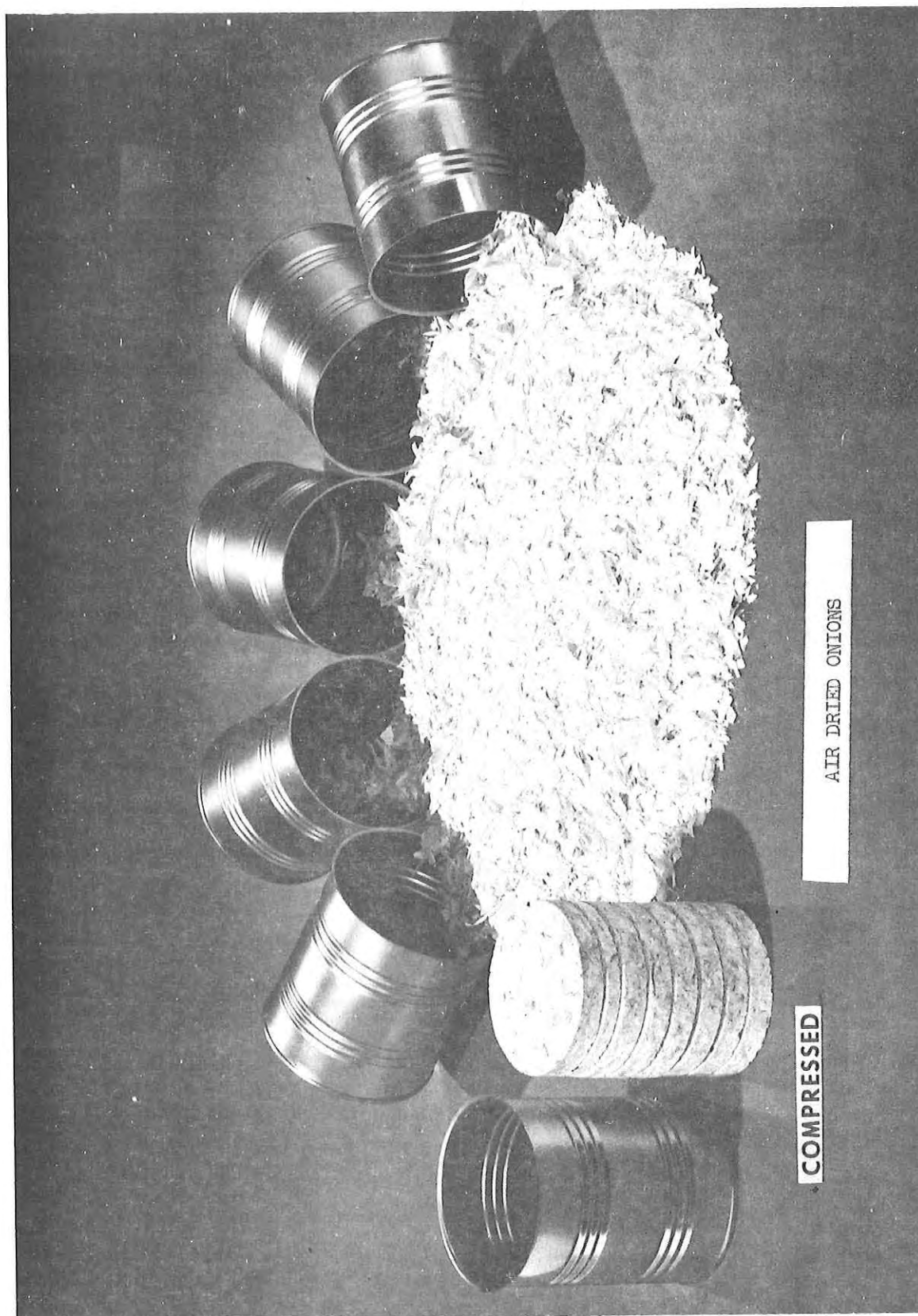


Figure 3. Air Dried Sliced Onions Obtained from 5 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.

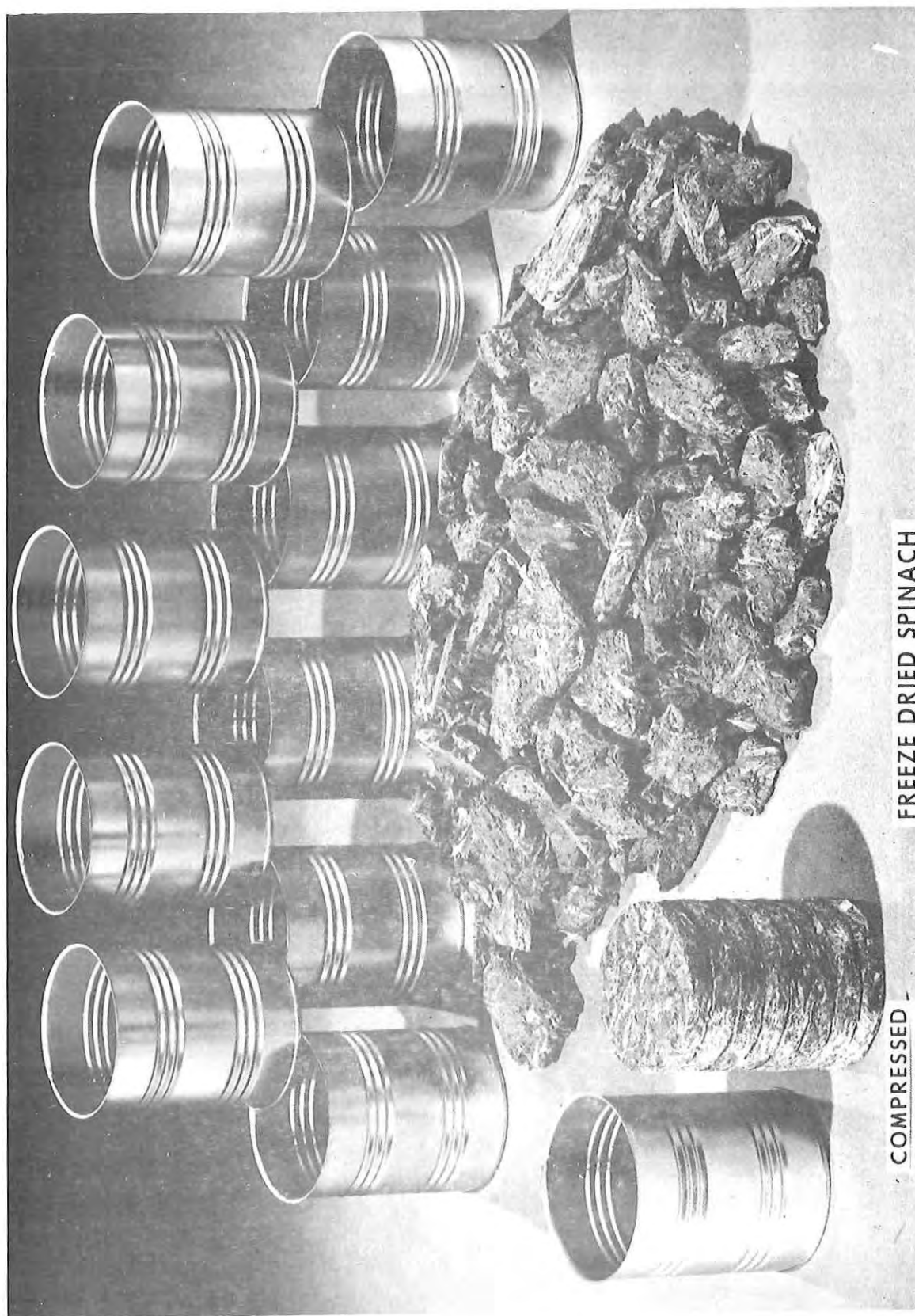
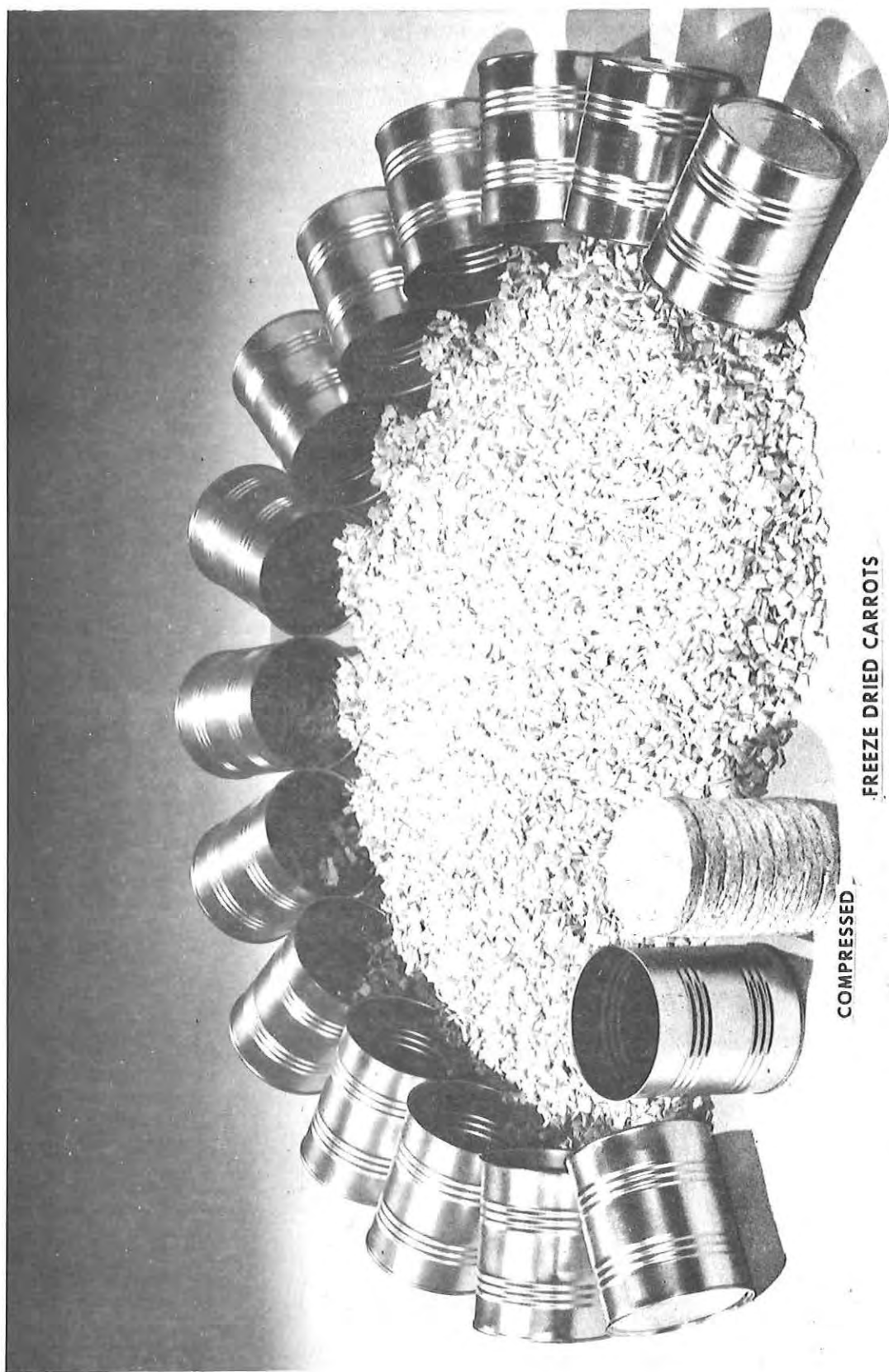


Figure 4. Freeze Dried Spinach Obtained from 11 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.



FREEZE DRIED CARROTS

COMPRESSED

Figure 5. Freeze Dried Carrots Obtained from 14 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.



Figure 6. Freeze Dried Green Beans Obtained from 16 Cans are Compressed into 1 Can.

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Development	8				8	
Fabrication	8				8	
Compressing	8		6		8	
Freeze dried foods	1		6			
Peas	1,2					
Corn	1,2					
Spinach	1,2					
Carrots	1,2					
Green beans	1,2					
Blueberries	1,2					
Cherries	1,2					
Dried foods					1,2	
Onions					1,2	
Food bars	2		7		2	

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