3066 - What should be done with samples left over from quality-control testing?

the question

Various samples of cheeses, juices, nuts, meats, perfumes, dairy products etc. come to our laboratory. In some cases the samples are more than is required for testing. For example, a carton of juice holds 30 boxes, and the tests require only 5 boxes. There are many similar examples. Is it permissible for the lab technicians to take them or give them to some deserving people? Knowing that leaving them until all the lab and customs procedures are completed would mean that they may go off and have to be thrown out, and, moreover, many of the traders never come and ask about the rest of their samples.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly: those who are responsible for requesting samples for quality-control testing must ask for the amount that is usually sufficient for testing, and not ask for or accept more than what is needed.

Secondly: in cases where only some of the amount given is sufficient, whatever is left over must be handed back to its owner. His address should be written down on the sample, and an appointment should be made to give back whatever is left over from the tests. A name of a contact person and an address should also be obtained, so that the goods may be returned.

Thirdly: in the event that the owner of the goods or his representative does not keep the appointment, and there is the fear that the samples may go off, then they may be sold and the money raised should be given to Bayt al-maal al-Muslimeen (the treasury of the Islamic state). If they cannot be sold, they should be given away to the people who are usually taken care of by the bayt al-maal.