

Lidu Black Powder
made in
Peoples Republic of China

In early 1999 Chinese black powder became available to U.S. black powder shooters.

Imported as fireworks lifting charge powder.

Fireworks company sells some of this powder to Corman Sporting Goods, Stanford, KY.

Marketed as 2f and 3f small-arms black powder.

In 1999, sold to shooters for about \$4 per pound in case lots.

Screen analyses (grain sizing).

When the cans of 2F and 3F were opened it was clear that the grain size indicated on the can was not accurate.

Lidu 2Fg.

Normally 2Fg powder is screened; pass 16 mesh, stop 30 mesh.

Results:

52.8% retained on the 10 mesh screen.

44.5% retained on the 16 mesh screen.

2.7% thru the 16 mesh.

This so-called 2Fg is actually larger than our normal 1Fg powder.

Lidu 3Fg.

Normally 3Fg is screened; pass 20 mesh, stop on 50 mesh.

Trace on the 10 mesh screen.

84.8% retained on the 16 mesh screen.

15.2% retained on the 20 mesh screen.

0.0% thru the 20 mesh screen.

This so-called 3Fg is larger than our normal 2Fg.

Loading density.

Lidu 2Fg, 1.02 g/cc.

Lidu 3Fg, 1.05 g/cc.



Lidu 3Fg at a magnification of 60X.

The grains are well polished with very hard surfaces and well rounded edges. However, once the grains are fractured, the center portions of the grains simply crumble into dust.

Ballistics.

Test Rifle: Lyman (Investarms) Trade Rifle, .50 caliber, percussion ignition.
.490 Speer balls, .020" #40 cotton drill patches.
Lehigh Valley Shooting Patch Lubricant.
CCI #11 Magnum percussion caps.
Pact Professional Chronograph, 15 feet from muzzle.
Charges by volume measure. 80 volume charges.

1228 fps. ave., Lidu 2Fg, as received.

1364 fps. ave., Lidu 3Fg, as received.

These powders could not be ignited with the magnum percussion caps. It was necessary to "prime" the breech with 10 grains of Elephant 3Fg to act as an intermediate primer. This lack of ignition being a function of grain size and heavy glazing of the powder grains.

By way of comparison.

1228 fps, Lidu 2Fg.

1364 fps, Lidu 3Fg.

1482 fps, Elephant 3Fg, 009/98, Lot 406 (pre-1999 musket powder burn rate powder.)

The question then arose. What would be the results if Corman were to sell Lidu in the normal grain sizes? How would such a powder compare to other available powders at that time?

Some Lidu "3Fg" was screened using a 16 mesh screen to collect the "fines" from the Lidu 3Fg that would be the large end of our 2F range. GOEX 2Fg and Elephant 2Fg were also screen with a 16 mesh and 20 mesh screen to give nearly identical grain sizes for the 3 brands of powder. To look at basic burn rate differences when grain sizes are nearly equal.

1449 fps., GOEX 98NO04C

1366 fps., Elephant, 1998, Lot 391

1370 fps., Lidu (from the 3F).

The GOEX powder has a rifle powder burn rate (ballistic strength).

The Elephant powder of 1998 had a musket powder burn rate (ballistic strength) which is 10% "slower" than a rifle type powder.

The Lidu powder exhibits what is basically a musket powder burn rate.

Of the three powders, GOEX gave the cleanest burn in the gun with Elephant 2nd to the GOEX. Lidu burned dirtier than either of the other two brands.

Corman Sporting Goods closed in late 1999. Sold and now known as Cedar Creek Outdoors. Who found a source for Lidu in smaller grain sizes which they are presently marketing at a price around \$6 to \$7 per pound. Black powder comes in from China at a price of about \$1 per pound.

Lidu address:

Jiangxi Province

Jinxian County Lidu

Export Fireworks Factory

Importer:

Victory Fireworks, Inc.

Ellsworth, Wisconsin

When Corman's Sporting Goods first began to ship their repackaged Lidu fireworks powder as a small-arms powder there were a few comments that this activity was illegal since black powder is on "The United States Munitions List".

Both Goex and the Elephant Black Powder Company complained to the ATF. Their complaints being totally ignored.

As Cedar Creek expands their distribution of the Lidu the question of the legality of this was investigated.

A letter was sent to the ATF requesting clarification on importing articles, which were manufactured in, or coming from China.

The response.

Department Of The Treasury

Bureau Of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

"On May 26, 1994, the President announced sanctions against China that include a ban on the importation of munitions and defense articles from China. The Department of State's International Traffic in Arms Regulations (22 C.F.R. 126.1(a)) and the Treasury Department's Regulations on the Importation of Arms, Ammunition and Implements of War (27 C.F.R. 47.52 (a)) both state that it is the policy of the United States to prohibit imports of defense articles from countries that are subject to a U.S. arms export embargo."

"Propellant, smokeless and black powders are articles enumerated on the U.S. Munitions Import List and are subject to the importation controls of the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 and the regulations issued pursuant thereto (27 CFR Part 47). Accordingly, we have no authority to approve the importation of these articles from China."

David D. Johansen

Chief, Firearms and Explosives Imports Branch

The response indicates that it is illegal to import black powder into the U.S. from China as it violates the 1994 embargo signed by then President William Clinton.

Arms Export Control Act of 1976, Sec. 38, as Amended

Title 22, United States Code S 2778

Editor's Note:

With respect to Section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 (22 U.S.C. S2778), only the importation provisions are administered by ATF. Export provisions are administered by the Department of State. Regulations issued under this law are in Part 47 of 27 CFR, and are included in this publication.

Criminal violations; punishment

Any person who willfully violates any provision of this section or section 2779 of this title, or any rule or regulation issued under either section, or who willfully, in a registration or license application or required report, makes any untrue statement of a material fact or omits to state a material fact required to be stated therein or necessary to make the statements therein not misleading, shall upon conviction be fined for each violation not more than \$1,000,000 or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

**PART 47-IMPORTATION OF ARMS, AMMUNITION AND
IMPLEMENTS OF WAR**

Subpart A-Scope

Subpart C-The U.S. Munitions Import List

47.21 The U.S. Munitions Import List

The letter from the Chief, Firearms and Explosives Imports Branch cites the Department of State's International Traffic in Arms Regulations.

International Traffic In Arms Regulations

Part 121-The United States Munitions List

Enumeration of Articles

121.1 General. The United States Munitions List.

Category V-Explosives, Propellants, Incendiary Agents, and Their Constituents

(a) Military explosives. (See 121.12)

(c) Propellants for the articles in Categories III and IV of this section. (See 121.14)

121.2 Interpretations of the United States Munitions List and the Missile Technology Control Regime

121.12 Military explosives.

121.14 Propellants.

121.12 – Military explosives.

(A) Military Explosives in Category V are military explosives or energetic materials consisting of high explosives, propellants or low explosives, pyrotechnics and high energy solid or liquid fuels, including aircraft fuels specially formulated for military purposes. Military explosives are solid, liquid or gaseous substances or mixtures of substances which, in their application as primary, booster or main charges in warheads, demolition and other military applications, are required to detonate.

121.14 – Propellants.

Propellants in Category V include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Propellant powders, including smokeless shotgun powder.

Under 121.9 – Firearms, there is a specific exemption that excludes “BB, pellet and muzzle loading (black powder) firearms” from the embargo. There is no exemption for the black powder that could be used in these muzzle loading (black powder) firearms. So while you could import black powder firearms from China into the U.S. you could not legally import the black powder that would be used in them.

As of Sept., 2002, Cedar Creek Outdoors was selling the Lidu black powder at \$175 per case. A case being 25 one pound cans.

Black powder is normally imported into the U.S. using a propellant powder import classification code.

HTS - 3601: PROPELLANT POWDERS
First Unit of Quantity by First Unit of Quantity
For China

U.S. Imports For Consumption

Annual Data

Quantity Description	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Percent Change 1994 - 1995
	<i>In Actual Units of Quantity</i>							
kilograms	0	54,248	28,394	83,586	63,302	100,059	0	-100.0%

Quantity Description	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Percent Change 2000 - 2001
	<i>In Actual Units of Quantity</i>						

Sources: Data on this site have been compiled from tariff and trade data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Treasury, and the U.S. International Trade Commission.

The ITC DataWeb provides information on U.S. imports and exports. In this data we see that when Bill Clinton's embargo went into the effect it effectively all imports of propellant powders from the Peoples Republic of China (PRC).

The question then begs. Why have we seen Chinese-made black powder being sold to black powder shooters? DOT regulations allow black powder for use in small-arms to be shipped via common carrier. For the purposes of limited shipments to black powder shooters the powder is shipped marked for small-arms use.

What we have with this importation of Chinese-made black powder is in a way a form of smuggling.

The importation of black powder from China is permitted only if the black powder is a part of an assembled fireworks. Aerial fireworks that are fired from mortar tubes will have a bag of black powder attached that forms the lifting charge for the display item. But one cannot import bulk black powder, from China, to assemble aerial shells in the U.S.

The only way that it would be possible to get boxes of loose black powder through customs is to have the boxes marked as fireworks.

By bringing the powder in marked as fireworks it will carry a lower hazard rating. Shipping charges and shipping insurance is not as costly as when one ships explosives.