
UNECE STANDARD FFV-35

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

STRAWBERRIES

2023 EDITION



UNITED NATIONS
New York and Geneva, 2023

NOTE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

The commercial quality standards developed by the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) help facilitate international trade, encourage high-quality production, improve profitability and protect consumer interests. UNECE standards are used by Governments, producers, traders, importers and exporters, and other international organizations. They cover a wide range of agricultural products, including fresh fruit and vegetables, dry and dried produce, seed potatoes, meat, cut flowers, eggs and egg products.

Any member of the United Nations can participate, on an equal footing, in the activities of the Working Party. For more information on agricultural standards, please visit our website <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html>.

The present revised Standard for Strawberries is based on document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2021/17, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party in 2021 (followed by a silence procedure in line with the special procedures during the COVID-19 period).

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Mention of company names or commercial products does not imply endorsement by the United Nations.

All material may be freely quoted or reprinted, but acknowledgement is requested.

Please contact us at the following address with any comments or enquiries:

Agricultural Standards Unit
Economic Cooperation and Trade Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Email: agristandards@un.org

UNECE standard FFV-35 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of strawberries

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to strawberries of varieties (cultivars) grown from the genus *Fragaria* L. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, strawberries for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for strawberries after preparation and packaging.

However, if applied at stages following export/dispatch, products may show in relation to the requirements of the standard:

- a slight lack of freshness and turgidity
- for products graded in classes other than the “Extra” Class, a slight deterioration due to their development and their tendency to perish.

The holder/seller of products may not display such products or offer them for sale, or deliver or market them in any manner other than in conformity with this standard. The holder/seller shall be responsible for observing such conformity.

A. Minimum requirements

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the strawberries must be:

- intact, undamaged
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- fresh in appearance, but not washed
- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- with the calyx (except in the case of wood strawberries); the calyx and the stalk (if present) must be fresh
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The development and condition of the strawberries must be such as to enable them:

- to withstand transportation and handling
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

B. Maturity requirements

The strawberries must be sufficiently developed and display satisfactory maturity and/or ripeness.

C. Classification

The strawberries are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

The strawberries in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety.

They must be:

- bright in appearance, allowing for the characteristics of the variety
- free from soil.

They must be free from defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

(ii) Class I

Strawberries in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety.

The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- a slight defect in shape
- presence of a small white patch, not exceeding one tenth of the total surface area of the fruit
- slight superficial pressure marks.

They must be practically free from soil.

(iii) Class II

This class includes strawberries that do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

The following defects may be allowed, provided the strawberries retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape
- a white patch, not exceeding one fifth of the total surface area of the fruit
- slight dry bruising not likely to spread
- slight traces of soil.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section.

The minimum size shall be:

- 25 mm in “Extra” Class¹
- 18 mm in Classes I and II.

There is no minimum size for wood strawberries.

¹ Reservation by the United States of America.

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

At all marketing stages, tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.²

A. Quality tolerances

(i) “Extra” Class

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of strawberries not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class I is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 0.5 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying the requirements of Class II quality.

(ii) Class I

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of strawberries not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 2 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying neither the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements, or of produce affected by decay.

(iii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of strawberries satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 2 per cent in total may consist of produce affected by decay.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes: a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of strawberries not satisfying the requirements as regards the minimum size is allowed.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only strawberries of the same origin, variety and quality.

In Class “Extra”, strawberries, with the exception of wood strawberries, must be particularly uniform and regular with respect to degree of ripeness, colour and size. In Class I, strawberries may be less uniform in size.

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

B. Packaging

The strawberries must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be clean and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly of paper or

² A conformity check shall be made by assessing primary or composite samples. It is based on the principle of presumption that the quality of the randomly taken samples is representative of the quality of the lot. The OECD Operating Rules for Conformity Checks are recommended for application – also by operators – at the stages of dispatch as well as in wholesale and distribution centres and storerooms of food retail.

stamps bearing trade specifications, is allowed, provided the printing or labelling has been done with nontoxic ink or glue.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package³ must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:

A. Identification

Packer and/or dispatcher/exporter:

Name and physical address (e.g. street/city/region/postal code and, if different from the country of origin, the country) or a code mark officially recognized by the national authority⁴ if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry⁵. In the case where there is no street address available, the physical address can be made up of the name of the farm or facility, the nearest village, town, region, and postal code; or GPS coordinates and a PO Box address together with nearest town, region and country shall be accepted as a physical address.⁶

B. Nature of produce

- “Strawberries” if the contents of the package are not visible from the outside
- Name of the variety (optional).

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁷ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1962

Last revised 2021

Aligned with the Standard Layout 2023

³ These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages bearing these particulars. However, they do apply to sales packages (pre-packages) presented individually.

⁴ The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference “packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)” has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark, and the code mark should be preceded by the ISO 3166 (alpha-2) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

⁵ See <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/codemarkregistry.html>.

⁶ Reservation by the United States of America on the use of a PO Box address, as it may not allow facility inspections or rapid intervention in case of recalls, and is not part of its national labelling requirement related to packer and/or dispatcher/exporter.

⁷ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.

The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables has published an explanatory illustrated brochure on the application of this standard. The publication may be obtained from the OECD bookshop at: www.oecdbookshop.org.
