
UNECE STANDARD FFV-21

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

LEEKS

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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.

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The present revised Standard for Leeks is based on document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2016/16, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its seventy-second session.

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UNECE standard FFV-21 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of leeks

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to leeks of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Allium ampeloprasum* L. Leek Group to be supplied fresh to the consumer, leeks for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for leeks 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
- 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 leeks must be:

- intact (this requirement does not apply, however, to roots and ends of leaves which may be cut)
- 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; however, the roots may have remnants of soil adhering to them and traces of soiling within the sheathed part are allowed
- fresh in appearance, with wilted or withered leaves removed
- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- not running to seed
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

When the leaves are cut, they must be neatly cut.

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

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

B. Classification

Leeks are classified in two classes, as defined below:

(i) Class I

Leeks in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

The white to greenish white part of the leeks must represent at least one-third of the total length of the sheathed part.

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:

- slight superficial and dry damage on not more than two leaves
- slight bruising on the leaves
- slight damage caused by thrips on the leaves

(ii) Class II

This class includes leeks that do not qualify for inclusion in Class I but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

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

- slight superficial and dry damage
- slight bruising
- damage caused by thrips
- slight traces of rust on the leaves
- slight brownish discoloration due to low temperatures
- a tender flowering stem, provided that it is enclosed within the sheathed part

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by the diameter measured at right angles to the longitudinal axis in the middle of the sheathed part.

To ensure uniformity in size, the diameter of the largest leek in the same bundle or package must not be more than twice the diameter of the smallest leek.

Uniformity in size is compulsory for Class I.

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.¹

A. Quality tolerances**(i) Class I**

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of leeks not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 1

¹ 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.

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.

(ii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of leeks 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 (if sized): a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of leeks not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package, or each bundle in the same package must be uniform and contain only leeks of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized), and appreciably the same degree of development and colouring.

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

B. Packaging

The leeks 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 stamps bearing trade specifications, is allowed, provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Stickers individually affixed to the produce shall be such that, when removed, they neither leave visible traces of glue nor lead to skin defects.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package² or each bundle presented in bulk 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 authority³

² 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.

³ 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.

if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry⁴. 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.⁵

B. Nature of produce

- “Leeks” if the contents are not visible from the outside

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁶ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Number of bundles (for leeks packed in bundles and presented in a package).

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1970

Last revised 2016

Aligned with the Standard Layout 2023

⁴ See <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/codemarkregistry.html>.

⁵ 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.

⁶ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.