



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2003/18
8 April 2003

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
Forty-ninth session, 17-20 June 2003, Geneva

Item 5 (a) of the Provisional Agenda

DRAFT UNECE STANDARD FOR SHALLOTS

Note by the secretariat : The secretariat has reproduced herewith the results of the Working Group on Shallots consisting of the report of the meeting and a new draft proposal for a UNECE Standard for Shallots.

**Ad-hoc meeting on the draft UNECE standard for shallots
27 March 2003**

Summary of discussions

Participants : France (B. Cauquil, P. Sartre, T. Lunn), Netherlands (R. Tans, C. van Leeuwen), Sweden (K. Mattson), United Kingdom (D. Holliday, G. Friend), European Commission (F. Santini, F. Vital)

The Dutch (Nov 2002) and the French (Interprofession) one (March 2003) have been reviewed and discussed on their whole and a new document has been prepared with a view to be sent to the UNECE before 8 April 2003 for discussion at the next meeting of the specialized section (June 2003).

I. Definition of produce:

The latin name to be used for shallots will be the one used in the USDA's GRIN database (*Allium cepa* L., group *aggregatum*) (French proposal) and not the one used in the EC's Common Catalogue (*Allium ascalonicum*) (Netherlands proposal), as is the case for other UNECE standards (Tomatoes for example), the denomination used in the Common Catalogue being apparently an old one.

The definition of 3 commercial types (long, semi-long, round) is retained as proposed by Netherlands.

The paragraph proposed by France about the minimum number of vegetative point has been widely discussed. It has been agreed that there should be a paragraph in the definition of produce allowing a clear distinction between onions and shallots, relying on the number of vegetative points per bulb. This paragraph could have been located in the minimum requirements (as proposed by the Netherlands), but it has been agreed that because of its links with the definition of shallots, this paragraph would be located under definition of produce (French proposal).

The principle of different criteria for seed shallots and for planted shallots has been agreed. The Netherlands accepted that a scar at the root plate would be required for planted and gray shallots (French proposal).

France accepted that planted and gray shallots would also have to meet the same criteria as seed shallots as regards minimum number of vegetative points (Netherlands proposal).

The Netherlands drew attention on several issues: onions under certain growing conditions do split; checking the number of vegetative points is difficult especially because you don't find the same number of vegetative points whether you cut the bulb in the middle or in its lower part; 6 to 9 vegetative points per bulb is too high, even for planted shallots.

With regards to the cut of the bulb, it has been agreed that a cut on the lower third could be the solution (French proposal).

It has been confirmed that there is an approval for laying down a minimum number of vegetative points of 3 per bulb for sizes below 30 mm.

Both the Netherlands and France were not in position at this stage to make further proposals for sizes over 30 mm. It has been agreed that, for sizes over 30 mm, both delegations would review their positions in order to take into account the various arguments expressed and the fact that the cut would be done in the lower third of the bulb and not in the equatorial section. Sweden and the United Kingdom suggested investigating the possibility of simplifying the French proposal by only laying down one single criterion for sizes larger than 30 mm (and not two as proposed by France : 6 for 30-40 mm and 9 over 40 mm).

It has been agreed that the document sent to the UNECE would include into square brackets both the French and the Netherlands proposals. Another ad-hoc meeting could be organized (end of May, beginning of June) before the UNECE specialized section in order to try to further approximate both positions or to find a compromise between them, either in Brussels or in a shallot growing area.

II. Provisions concerning quality:

It has been agreed to include a minimum dry matter content criterion in the minimum requirements (French proposal). The level proposed by France has been agreed (14%), although the Netherlands could have accepted a higher level of 15%.

France explained that for shallots dry matter content and Brix level were highly correlated and therefore that the dry matter could be measured by refractometer. France will provide the Brix value equivalent to 14% of dry matter and this equivalence will be included in the minimum requirements.

The French proposal to include an Extra Class (as for garlic) has been accepted. Sweden however expressed its discontent about this proposal but accepted it. The second subparagraph of the French proposal for Extra Class has been however deleted because referring to minimum requirements applicable to all classes.

In Class I, the wording proposed by France has been preferred to the one proposed by the Netherlands, with regards to sprouting and shoots. In Class II, the Netherlands wording has been preferred on the same issue.

In Class II, the indent referring to "healed damages" proposed by the Netherlands has been accepted, with a clarification suggested by the United Kingdom ('unlikely to impair keeping qualities').

III. Provisions concerning sizing:

Sweden proposed that the size would be determined by the maximum width of shallots (rather than maximum diameter proposed by the Netherlands and France, supported by the United Kingdom). Both options ("diameter / width") will be included in the document. The reference to a square screen (French proposal) has been deleted.

The French proposal of simplification of the sizing scales has been approved.

The French proposal of a maximum diameter has been rejected by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden and deleted from the document.

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances:

Quality tolerances for Extra Class have been introduced in the document, as proposed by France.

V. Provisions concerning presentation:

In A (Uniformity), uniformity of variety and/or commercial type will be required as proposed by France.

In C (Presentation), the Netherlands wording for the second and the third indent has been preferred to the French wording.

The last paragraph proposed by France (prohibition of shallots loose in the package in extra Class) has not been retained.

VI. Provisions concerning marking:

An extra sentence concerning shallots in strings or bunches transported in bulk has been included in the document as proposed by the Netherlands.

As regards the labelling of the name of the produce, it has been agreed to impose such labelling for all packages (as proposed by France), and not only for those where the contents were not visible from the outside (Netherlands proposal), because for this produce there could be confusion with other types of bulbs (elongated onions, etc...).

The labelling requirements will be different for gray shallots and for other shallots. For gray shallots, the simple mention 'gray shallots' is sufficient. For the other ones, Netherlands initially proposed the single mention 'shallots', while France initially proposed 'shallots' for planted shallots and 'seed shallots' for seed shallots. Netherlands accepted to have two different names for planted and seed shallots allowing the differentiation. France accepted that none of the two types would be simply named 'shallots'. The compromise has been reached on the two following expressions: 'bulb-grown shallots' and 'seed-grown shallots'. For these both types of shallots, the commercial type (round, semi-long and long) will also have to be labelled.

The indication of the net weight has been discussed: France was keen to have it compulsory, while the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden would rather have it optional. A possible compromise would be to have it 'on request of the importing country'. This expression will remain into square brackets in the document sent to the UNECE.

A point E (official control mark) has been introduced in the document (Netherlands proposal).

The text agreed is in the Annex.

ANNEX

Preliminary draft

STANDARD FOR SHALLOTS

I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to shallots of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Allium cepa* L., group *aggregatum* and *Allium oschaninii* O.Fedtsch (grey shallots), to be supplied fresh to the consumer, green shallots with full leaves and shallots for industrial processing being excluded.

According to their shape, shallots can be divided into three different commercial types:

- long
- semi-long
- round

Shallots differentiate themselves from onions by their "aggregatum" characteristics materialized by the following criteria:

[- each bulb shall have a minimum number of vegetative points according to their size

- **3 vegetative points for sizes below 30mm,**
- **6 vegetative points for size between 30 and 40 mm,**
- **9 vegetative points for sizes over 40 mm]** or

[- a shallot bulb must 3 or more vegetative growing points]

The transverse cut of the bulb shall be in its lower third.

- in addition, for grey shallots and shallots grown from vegetative multiplication, each bulb shall show a scar at the root plate.

II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements of shallots at the export control stage, after preparation and packaging.

A. Minimum requirements

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

- intact
- 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;
- free from damage caused by frost or sun;
- free from traces of mould
- free of externally visible sprouts
- without hollow or tough stem
- practically free from pest
- practically free from damage caused by pest
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste

Shallots must have a minimum dry matter content of 14%

Dry matter content is measured in Brix degrees by refractometer: 14% of dry matter corresponds to [...] % Brix..

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

- withstand transport and handling, and
- arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

B. Classification

Shallots are classified in three classes defined below:

i) Extra class

Shallots in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristics of the variety and/or the commercial type.

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.

Roots must be cut close to the bulb.

ii) Class I

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

The bulbs must be:

- firm and compact
- free from swelling caused by abnormal development
- free from externally visible shoots
- practically free of root tufts. However, for grey shallots, root tufts are allowed.

The following 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:

- small cracks in the outer skin of the bulb
- slight defects in shape,
- slight defects in colouring

iii) Class II

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

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

- defects in shape
- defects in colouring
- healed damage, unlikely to impair qualities
- traces of rubbing
- slight bruising, healed, unlikely to impair keeping qualities
- slight marking caused by parasites or diseases
- early signs of shoot growth visible from the outside (not more than 10% by number or weight per unit of presentation)

III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

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

The difference between the diameters of the smallest and largest shallots in the same package must not exceed 20 mm.

The minimum diameter is 10 mm for grey shallots and 15 mm for the other types.

IV. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each package (or each lot, for product presented in bulk) for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.

A. Quality tolerances

i) Extra Class

5 % by weight of shallots not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class I or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

ii) Class I

10 % by weight of shallots not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

ii) Class II

10 % by weight of shallots satisfying neither the requirements of the class, nor the minimum requirements, with the exception of produce affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes: 10% by weight of shallots not satisfying the size identified, but with a diameter of no more than 20% below or above it.

V. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package (or each lot, for products presented in bulk) must be uniform and contain only shallots of the same origin, variety and/or commercial type, quality and size.

The visible part of the contents of the package (or each lot, for products presented in bulk) must be representative of the entire contents.

B. Packaging

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

The materials used inside the package, transport vehicle or compartment thereof, must be new, clean and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly paper or stamps, bearing trade specifications is allowed provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Packages (or lots, for products presented in bulk) must be free from all foreign matter.

C. Presentation

Shallots may be presented:

- loose in the package the length of the leaves not exceeding 3 cm.
- in bunches:
 - either of a certain number of bulbs
 - or of a certain net weight
- in strings:
 - either of a certain number of bulbs, in which case the strings must contain at least sixteen bulbs (with fully dried stems)
 - or of a certain net weight

In the case of presentation in bunches or strings, each package must have uniform characteristics (number of bulbs or net weight)

Irrespective of the type of the presentation used, the leaves and roots must cut cleanly.

VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING

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

(For shallots in bunches or strings transported in bulk (loaded directly into a vehicle), the particulars must appear on a document accompanying the goods, and be attached in a visible position inside the transport vehicle).

A. Identification:

- Packer or dispatcher (name and address or officially issued or accepted code mark).

B. Nature of produce:

- "Grey Shallots", or
- for other shallots:
 - "Bulb-grown shallots" or "seed-grown shallots", as appropriate,
 - Commercial type: "long", "semi-long", "round", as appropriate

C. Origin of produce:

Country of origin, and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name

D. Commercial specifications:

- Class
- Size expressed by minimum and maximum diameters of the bulbs;
- Net weight [**on request of the importing country**]

E. Official control mark (optional)