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Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

UNECE Standard FFV-50 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of apples

The following document is submitted to the Working Party for adoption as the revised UNECE Standard for Apples. Given the complexity of the comments received on the list of varieties, that part of the standard (annex) is not included in this document.

The present document contains new provisions proposed and agreed by consensus at the session in April 2016 as well as during 2 subsequent rounds of consultations (see p. 8 - underlined).

Note: In case of non-agreement, the present text will be resubmitted to the Specialized Section on Standardization for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in May 2017.

UNECE Standard FFV-50 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of apples

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to apples of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Malus domestica* Borkh. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, apples for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for apples at the export-control stage after preparation and packaging.

However, if applied at stages following export, 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 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
- practically free from pests
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- free from serious watercore, with the exception of Fuji and their mutants
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The development and condition of the apples 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 apples must be sufficiently developed, and display satisfactory ripeness.

The development and state of maturity of the apples must be such as to enable them to continue their ripening process and to reach the degree of ripeness required in relation to the varietal characteristics.

In order to verify the minimum maturity requirements, several parameters can be considered (e.g. morphological aspect, taste, firmness and refractometric index).

C. Classification

Apples are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

Apples in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety¹ and the stalk must be intact.

Apples must express the following minimum surface colour characteristic of the variety²:

- 3/4 of total surface red coloured in case of colour group A
- 1/2 of total surface mixed red coloured in case of colour group B
- 1/3 of total surface slightly red coloured, blushed or striped in case of colour group C
- no minimum colour requirement in case of colour group D.

The flesh must be perfectly sound.

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:

- very slight skin defects
- very slight russeting³, such as
 - brown patches that may not go outside the stem cavity and may not be rough and/or
 - slight isolated traces of russeting.

(ii) Class I

Apples in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety¹.

Apples must express the following minimum surface colour characteristic of the variety²:

- 1/2 of total surface red coloured in case of colour group A
- 1/3 of total surface mixed red coloured in case of colour group B

¹ A non-exhaustive list of varieties providing a classification on colouring and russeting is set out in the annex to this standard.

² Reservation by the United States: For “Extra” Class and Class I, due to differences in its national legislation that allow different colour requirements.

³ Varieties marked with “R” in the annex are exempt from the provisions on russeting.

- 1/10 of total surface slightly red coloured, blushed or striped in case of colour group C
- no minimum colour requirement in case of colour group D.

The flesh must be perfectly sound.

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
- a slight defect in development
- slight defects in colouring
- slight bruising not exceeding 1 cm² in area and not discoloured
- slight skin defects, which must not extend over more than:
 - 2 cm in length for defects of elongated shape
 - 1 cm² of the total surface area for other defects, with the exception of scab (*Venturia inaequalis*), which must not extend over more than 0.25 cm², cumulative, in area
- slight russeting³, such as
 - brown patches that may go slightly beyond the stem or pistil cavities but may not be rough and/or
 - thin net-like russeting not exceeding 1/5 of the total fruit surface and not contrasting strongly with the general colouring of the fruit and/or
 - dense russeting not exceeding 1/20 of the total fruit surface, while
 - thin net-like russeting and dense russeting taken together may not exceed a maximum of 1/5 of the total surface of the fruit.

The stalk may be missing, provided the break is clean and the adjacent skin is not damaged.

(iii) Class II

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

The flesh must be free from major defects.

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

- defects in shape
- defects in development
- defects in colouring
- slight bruising not exceeding 1.5 cm² in area which may be slightly discoloured

- skin defects, which must not extend over more than:
 - 4 cm in length for defects of elongated shape
 - 2.5 cm² total surface area for other defects, with the exception of scab (*Venturia inaequalis*), which must not extend over more than 1 cm², cumulative, in area.
- slight russetting³, such as
 - brown patches that may go beyond the stem or pistil cavities and may be slightly rough and/or
 - thin net-like russetting not exceeding 1/2 of the total fruit surface and not contrasting strongly with the general colouring of the fruit and/or
 - dense russetting not exceeding 1/3 of the total fruit surface while
 - thin net-like russetting and dense russetting taken together may not exceed a maximum of 1/2 of the total surface of the fruit.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined either by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section or by weight.

The minimum size shall be 60 mm, if measured by diameter, or 90 g, if measured by weight. Fruit of smaller sizes may be accepted if the Brix level of the produce is equal to or greater than 10.5° Brix and the size is not smaller than 50 mm or 70 g.

To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed⁴:

- (a) For fruit sized by diameter:
- 5 mm for “Extra” Class fruit and for Classes I and II fruit packed in rows and layers⁵
 - 10 mm for Class I fruit packed in sales packages or loose in the package.⁶
- (b) For fruit sized by weight:
- For “Extra” Class and Class I and II fruit packed in rows and layers:

<i>Range (g)</i>	<i>Weight difference (g)</i>
70-90	15
91-135	20
136-200	30
201-300	40
> 300	50

⁴ Reservation by the United States: Due to differences in the national legislation that allows the uniformity by diameter up to 12.5 mm for all apples irrespective of their size and/or class.

⁵ However, for apples of the varieties Bramley's Seedling (Bramley, Triomphe de Kiel) and Horneburger, the difference in diameter may amount to 10 mm.

⁶ However, for apples of the varieties Bramley's Seedling (Bramley, Triomphe de Kiel) and Horneburger, the difference in diameter may amount to 20 mm.

- For Class I fruit packed in sales packages or loose in the package:

<i>Range (g)</i>	<i>Weight difference (g)</i>
70-135	35
136-300	70
> 300	100

There is no sizing uniformity requirement for Class II fruit packed loose in the package or in sales packages.

Varieties of miniature apples, marked with an “M” in the Annex to this standard, are exempted from the sizing provisions. These miniature varieties must have a minimum Brix level of 12°.

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.

A. Quality tolerances

(i) *“Extra” Class*

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of apples 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 neither the requirements of Class II quality.

(ii) *Class I*

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of apples not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 1 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 apples 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 apples not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed. This tolerance may not be extended to include produce with a size:

- 5 mm below the minimum diameter
- 10 g below the minimum weight.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only apples of the same origin, variety, quality, and size (if sized) and the same degree of ripeness.

In the case of the “Extra” Class, uniformity also applies to colouring.

However, a mixture of apples of distinctly different varieties may be packed together in a sales package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each variety concerned, in origin.

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

B. Packaging

The apples must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly. In particular, sales packages of a net weight exceeding 3 kg shall be sufficiently rigid to ensure proper protection of the produce.

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 package⁷ 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/shipper:

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 authority⁸.

⁷ These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages.

⁸ 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) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

B. Nature of produce

- "Apples" if the contents are not visible from the outside.
- Name of the variety. In the case of a mixture of apples of distinctly different varieties, names of the different varieties.

The name of the variety can be replaced by a synonym. A trade name⁹ can only be given in addition to the variety or the synonym.

- "Miniature variety", where appropriate.

In the case of mutants with varietal protection, this variety name can replace the basic variety name. In case of mutants without varietal protection, this mutant name can only be indicated in addition to the basic variety name

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin¹⁰ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name. In the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties of apples of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the variety concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size, or for fruit packed in rows and layers, number of units.

If identification is by the size, this should be expressed:

- (a) for produce subject to the uniformity rules, as minimum and maximum diameters or minimum and maximum weight;
- (b) for produce not subject to the uniformity rules, as the diameter or weight of the smallest fruit in the package followed by "and over" or equivalent denomination or, if appropriate, the diameter or weight of the largest fruit in the package.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1960

Last revised 2016

⁹ A trade name can be a trademark for which protection has been sought or obtained or any other commercial denomination.

¹⁰ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.

Annex

Non-exhaustive list of apple varieties

Note: The new list of apple varieties will be issued separately.
