

UNECE STANDARD FFV-09

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

HEADED CABBAGES

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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 Headed Cabbages is based on document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2010/INF.39, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-sixth session.

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UNECE standard FFV-09 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of headed cabbages

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to headed cabbages of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata* L. (including red cabbages and pointed cabbages) and from *Brassica oleracea* var. *sabauda* L. (savoy cabbages) to be supplied fresh to the consumer, headed cabbages for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for headed cabbages 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
- 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 headed cabbages 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
- fresh in appearance
- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- free of bruises and injury
- free of damage due to frost
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The stem should be cut slightly below the lowest point of leaf growth; the leaves should remain firmly attached, and the cut should be clean.

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

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

B. Classification

The headed cabbages are classified in two classes, as defined below:

(i) Class I

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

According to the variety and/or commercial type, they must be compact and have firmly attached leaves.

Stored headed cabbages may have some of their outer leaves removed. Green Savoy cabbages and early cabbages must be properly trimmed, but a number of outer leaves may be left for protection.

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:

- small cracks in the outer leaves
- slight bruising and light trimming of the outer leaves
- slight discolouration due to frost in case of green headed cabbages.

The total length of the floral stem should not exceed one-quarter of the length of the head.

(ii) Class II

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

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

- cracks in the outer leaves
- outer leaves may be removed
- larger bruises and the outer leaves may be more extensively trimmed
- less compact
- discolouration due to frost in case of green headed cabbages.

The total length of the floral stem should not exceed two-thirds of the length of the head.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by weight of the unit.

The minimum weight shall be 350 g per unit for early cabbages and 500 g per unit for other headed cabbages.

To ensure uniformity in size for produce in the same package, the weight of the heaviest head must not be more than double the weight of the lightest head. When the weight of the heaviest head is equal to or less than 2 kg the difference between the heaviest and the lightest head may be up to 1 kg.

Uniformity in size is compulsory for headed cabbages presented in packages.

The size requirements shall not apply to miniature produce.¹

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) Class I

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of headed cabbages 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.

(ii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of headed cabbages 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 headed cabbages not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed.

However, no head may weigh less than 300 g in the case of early cabbages and 400 g in the case of other cabbages.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package (or lot for produce presented in bulk in the transport vehicle), must be uniform and contain only headed cabbages of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality, and size (if sized).

Headed cabbages in Class I must be uniform in shape and colour.

¹ Miniature product means a variety or cultivar of vegetable, obtained by plant breeding and/or special cultivation techniques, excluding specimens of non-miniature varieties which have not fully developed or are of inadequate size. All other requirements of the standard must be met.

However, a mixture of headed cabbages of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours may be packed together in a package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each commercial type and/or colour concerned, in origin.

Miniature headed cabbages must be reasonably uniform in size. They may be mixed with other miniature products of different species and origin.

The visible part of the contents of the package (or lot for produce presented in bulk in the transport vehicle) must be representative of the entire contents.

B. Packaging

Headed cabbages 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 (or lots for produce presented in bulk in the transport vehicle) must be free of all foreign matter.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package² must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside.

For headed cabbages transported in bulk (direct loading into a transport vehicle) these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the goods, and attached in a visible position inside the transport vehicle.

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 authority³.

B. Nature of produce

- “White cabbage” etc., if the contents are not visible from the outside

² These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages.

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)” must be indicated in close connection with the code mark, and the code mark should be preceded with the ISO 3166 (alpha) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

- “Mixture of headed cabbages”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of headed cabbages. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the commercial types and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated
- “Mini headed cabbages”, “baby headed cabbages”, or equivalent denomination, where appropriate.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁴ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name
- In the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of headed cabbages of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the commercial type and/or colour concerned
- In the case of a mixture of miniature produce of different species of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the species concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Number of units.

E. Official control mark (optional)

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⁴ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.