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# **UNECE STANDARD FFV-23**

concerning the marketing and  
commercial quality control of

## **MELONS**

**2023 EDITION**



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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.

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 Standard for Melons is based on documents ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2010/13 and ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2012/8, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-sixth and sixty-eighth sessions.

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# UNECE standard FFV-23 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of melons

## I. Definition of produce

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

## II. Provisions concerning quality

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

- intact<sup>1</sup>
- 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
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- firm
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The development and condition of the melons 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 melons must be sufficiently developed and display satisfactory maturity and/or ripeness. In order to satisfy this requirement the refractometric index of the flesh measured at the

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<sup>1</sup> However, a small healed scar caused by automatic measurement of the refractometric index is not regarded as a defect.

middle point of the fruit flesh and at the equatorial section must be equal to or greater than 10° Brix for Charentais type melons and 8° Brix for other melons.

### C. Classification

Melons are classified in two classes, as defined below:

#### (i) Class I

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

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
- slight defects in colouring (a pale colouring of the rind at the point where the fruit touched the ground while growing is not regarded as a defect)
- slight skin defects due to rubbing or handling
- slight healed cracks around the peduncle of less than 2 cm in length that do not reach the flesh.

Fruits harvested with their peduncle attached shall present a length of peduncle of less than 2 cm.

#### (ii) Class II

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

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

- defects in shape
- defects in colouring (a pale colouring of the rind at the point where the fruit touched the ground while growing is not regarded as a defect)
- skin defects due to rubbing or handling
- slight cracks or deep scratches that do not affect the flesh of the fruit and are dry
- slight bruising.

## III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by the weight of one unit or by the diameter of the equatorial section.

The minimum sizes are as follows:

Sizing by weight:

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|--|-------|
| • Charentais, Galia and Ogen type melons | 250 g |
| • other melons                           | 300 g |

Sizing by diameter:

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| • Charentais, Galia and Ogen type melons | 7.5 cm |
| • other melons                           | 8.0 cm |

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

- 50 per cent (30 per cent for the Charentais type melons) more than the weight of the smallest
- 20 per cent (10 per cent for Charentais type melons) more than the diameter of the smallest.

## **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.<sup>2</sup>

### **A. Quality tolerances**

#### **(i) Class I**

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

## **V. Provisions concerning presentation**

### **A. Uniformity**

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only melons of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size, and which have reached appreciably the same degree of development and ripeness and are of appreciably the same colour.

However, a mixture of melons of distinctly different varieties and/or commercial types may be packed together in a package provided they are uniform in quality and, for each variety or commercial type concerned, in origin. However, in case of those mixtures uniformity in size is not required.

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

### **B. Packaging**

Melons 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

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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. Information lasered on single fruit should not lead to flesh or skin defects.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

## **VI. Provisions concerning marking**

Each package<sup>3</sup> 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 authority<sup>4</sup> if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry<sup>5</sup>. 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.<sup>6</sup>

### **B. Nature of produce**

- “Melons” if the contents are not visible from the outside
- “Mixture of melons”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties or commercial types of melons. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the varieties and/or commercial types and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated
- Name of the commercial type
- Name of the variety (optional).

### **C. Origin of produce**

- Country of origin<sup>7</sup> and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.
- In the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties and/or commercial types of melons of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the variety or commercial type concerned.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.

**D. Commercial specifications**

- Class
- Size expressed in minimum and maximum weight or minimum and maximum diameter
- Number of units (optional).

**E. Official control mark (optional)**

Adopted 1975

Last revised 2012

Aligned with the Standard Layout 2023

The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables has published an explanatory illustrated brochure on commercial types. The publication may be obtained from the OECD bookshop at: [www.oecdbookshop.org](http://www.oecdbookshop.org).

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