
UNECE STANDARD FFV-56

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

SHALLOTS

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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 Shallots is based on document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2013/19, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-ninth session.

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UNECE standard FFV-56 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of shallots

I. Definition of produce

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

The standard covers the following commercial types:

- Round
- Demi-long
- Long.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for shallots 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 shallots 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 damage caused by frost or sun
- without hollow or tough stems
- free from traces of mould
- free of externally visible shoot growth
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The roots must be neatly trimmed. The stems must be neatly trimmed, except for shallots presented in strings that must be braided with their own stems and tied with string, raffia or any other appropriate material.

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

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

B. Classification

Shallots are classified in two classes, as defined below:

(i) Class I

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

The bulbs must be:

- firm and compact
- practically free of root tufts. However, for grey shallots, root tufts shall be allowed.

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 colouring
- superficial cracks in and partial absence of the outer skins, provided the flesh is protected.

(ii) Class II

This class includes shallots that 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 mechanical damage
- slight bruising
- slight marking caused by pests or diseases
- cracks in the outer skins and partial absence of the skins over a maximum of one third of the bulb's surface, provided the flesh is not damaged
- root tufts.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

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

The minimum diameter shall be:

- 10 mm for grey shallots and
- 15 mm for other shallots.

The maximum diameter shall be:

- 55 mm for round shallots and
- 60 mm for demi-long and long shallots.

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

- 10 mm where the diameter of the smallest bulb is 10 mm and over but under 15 mm;
- 15 mm where the diameter of the smallest bulb is 15 mm and over but under 20 mm;
- 20 mm where the diameter of the smallest bulb is 20 mm or over.

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 shallots 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.

In addition, 4 per cent, by weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth.

(ii) Class II

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

In addition, 10 per cent, by weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes: a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number weight, of shallots 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 shallots of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size.

However, a mixture of shallots of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours may be packed together in a package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each

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.

commercial type and/or colour concerned, in origin and method of production. 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

Shallots 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 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 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 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

- “Shallots” or “Grey shallots” if the contents are not visible from the outside
- Commercial type: “long”, “demi-long” or “round”
- “Mixture of shallots”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of shallots. 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

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.

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.

- Method of production (e.g. “Seed-grown”, for shallots grown from seed, or “Traditional”, for bulb-grown shallots) optional.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁶ 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 shallots of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the commercial type and/or colour concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size expressed by minimum and maximum diameters.

E. Official control mark (optional)

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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 the application of this standard. The publication may be obtained from the OECD bookshop at: www.oecdbookshop.org.

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