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French position on mixtures of varieties

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Note by the secretariat

This document sets out the French position on mixtures of varieties in the Standard Layout.

The document is submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the terms of reference of the Working Party.

I. Notion of mixtures of varieties in the UNECE Standard Layout

1. Families all come down on the same side: they are not in favour of mixtures of varieties or commercial types of the same product. This market segment should be “standardized” to avoid abuse. Mixtures of varieties already exist, such as assorted apples of the same category, origin and grade in packages of no more than 5 kg. Following this example, some lists of products that could be mixed, that should not be mixed, or that may be mixed under certain conditions have been drawn up in table form.

This opinion constitutes a common response for the upstream and downstream activities of the industry.

II. Produce for which the mixture of varieties is conceivable

2. Mixtures of varieties or commercial types (of the same product) imply that they are easily recognizable by their shape and/or colour (an example of purple, green or yellow cauliflower is provided by the Union Nationale du Commerce de Gros en Fruits et Légumes).

<i>Produce</i>	<i>Possibility of the mixture of varieties or commercial types</i>
Aubergines	Mixture of globus aubergines with elongated aubergines or of different-coloured globus aubergines: purple and white.
Witloof chicory	Already done for Carmine and Chicon.
Headed cabbages	Yes: red cabbages and white cabbages.
Cauliflower	Yes: mixture of purple, orange-yellow and green cauliflowers.
Peppers and sweet peppers	Yes, with different colours. Already done on 1 kg bags (with orange, green, red and others).

III. Produce for which the mixture of varieties should be prohibited

3. To avoid misleading the buyer, mixtures of unduly similar varieties should be banned.

<i>Produce</i>	<i>Prohibition of the mixture of varieties or commercial types</i>
Apricots	Mixture of Bergeron, Jumbo Cot, Bergarouge, etc. With apricots of the same size, making distinctions is not easy.
Garlic	Difficult to distinguish between pink and purple garlic.
Cultivated mushrooms	Light gold and cream-coloured mixture. Will consumers distinguish between a white and a blond mushroom? They may think that the product has evolved in disparate ways in

<i>Produce</i>	<i>Prohibition of the mixture of varieties or commercial types</i>
	the packaging.
Shallots	Contrary to the wishes of producers, who call for a distinction to be made between seed shallots and “traditional” shallots. The same goes for differentiating between a shallot of medium length and an elongated shallot and between a round shallot and shallot of medium length. Problem related to the uniformity of the package with a mixture of grey (small) shallots and long (large) shallots.
Citrus fruit (oranges, mandarins, clementines, lemons)	Impossible to distinguish between varieties that are too close, with the exception of lemons.
Plums	Distinguishing between different greengages is difficult (Bavay, Golden, Oullins and “Reine-Claude Vraie”). The same applies to blue plum varieties: between Monsieur, President and Quetsche and between Allo, Angeleno, Fortune and Black Amber.
Melons	The mixture of smooth and netted Charentais melons and yellow and green Charentais melons is entirely contrary to the wishes of the industry. The packaging and the store display (mass marketing) must clearly show the commercial type called for by the product.
Artichokes	Distinguishing between Camus, Castel and Calico is difficult.
Avocado	Appearance (thin skin) and colour (green) similar in the case of: Fuerte, Bacon (not yet ripe) and Ettinger. Too little difference between Hass (rough, pebbled skin that turns purplish when ripe) and a thin-skinned, green variety (Fuerte, Ettinger).
Asparagus	For the mixture of asparagus, the product chosen must have reached the ripening stage unique to each of the varieties: white, purple and purple-green.
Kiwis	Do not mix “green” varieties such as Summerkiwi™ and Hayward. And do not mix overly similar yellow varieties (like Zespri™ Gold (hairless kiwis)) and Hayward.
Pineapples	Varieties too similar; difficult to distinguish between them: Smooth Cayenne, Extra Sweet, Super Sweet, Gold.

IV. Produce for which the mixture of varieties is conceivable subject to certain conditions

4. The reasons for which varieties or commercial types may not be mixed are as follows:

- The produce has varieties that greatly resemble one another (appearance or colour).
- Certain varieties refer to a registered trademark (Summerkiwi horticultural varieties Nos. 3373 and 4605) or to an appellation of controlled origin (AOC) (Grenoble walnuts and Perigord walnuts, apples, apricots, etc.).
- Lack of uniformity of size and origin. By way of counter-example, assortments of apples layered in 5 kg trays require uniformity of category and size and the same origin of mixed varieties in the package.

<i>Produce</i>	<i>Possibility of the mixture of varieties or commercial types</i>	<i>Prohibition of the mixture of varieties or commercial types</i>
Apples	Already done for assortments of varieties of different colour but identical size (two-tone with red and Granny Smith varieties).	Mixtures of two-tone varieties, differentiation difficult: Fuji, Gala, Jonagold, Melrose. Mixture of yellow types: freshly produced early varieties Early Gold and Primgold with Golden Delicious after storage (bottom of the refrigerator).
Pears	Yes, for varieties that differ from one another such as Comice with Beurré Hardy (two autumn varieties). However, for Comice with Conference it is necessary to “think” about adequate packaging (the shape of Comice pears is rather round and that of Conference pears long and conical).	No, for varieties that resemble one another such as Williams pears and Packham’s Triumph.
Peaches nectarines	Already done for assortments of peaches and nectarines and assortments of yellow and white peaches or nectarines (in 2 kg trays).	No mixtures of white and yellow nectarines and mixtures of white and yellow peaches.
Lettuces	Mixture of broad-leaved (Batavian) endives and lettuces, of lettuces and curled-leaved endives, blond and red oak leaf, lettuce and batavia, etc.	No mixture of lettuces of the same or too close varietal type (romaine and butterhead lettuces, etc.)
Tomatoes	Yes, if they have a distinct colour and shape (cœur de bœuf, black, yellow, orange and elongated tomatoes). Already done in small packaging with cœur de pigeon and yellow cherry tomatoes.	No reason to mix cœur de bœuf tomatoes with other varietal types.
Strawberries	Mixing already done in punnets (with a separator).	Discrepancy in the development of early and seasonal varieties and ever-bearing and late varieties; taste quality varies among them. Differentiation between Garigette and Darselect?
Cherries	Mixing <i>only</i> yellow and red varieties packaged in punnets with a separator.	Shape and colour among the following are close: Summit, Van and Burlat. But their firmness and development (conservation) are different.

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Grapes	Yes, for a mixture of white and black grapes.	No, for mixtures of several white varieties (Danlas with Ora) or black varieties (prima with muscat and Lavallée with Lival or Ribol).
Onions	Yes, this is already being done (in cooperatives, where the following yellow onions are mixed: Orion Sturion, Turbo, etc.). See for red with white and yellow.	Not for AOC products (depreciation of the product and prohibited by the specifications), Roscoff onions and sweet onions of the Cevennes.
Beans	Mixture of French beans and butter beans.	Not for French beans with beans for shelling (and the AOC Coco de Paimpol).
Inshell walnuts	Only for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grenoble walnuts: it is possible to mix Franquette, Mayenne and Parisienne • Perigord walnuts: it is possible to mix Marbot and Franquette 	There are cultivated varieties that are characteristic of a region of production (Grenoble (Mayenne) or Perigord (Marbot)). In order to maintain the uniformity and status (AOC) of the product, varieties must not be mixed.

NB:

The Standard Layout for UNECE standards stipulates (cf. page 6, V., A., Uniformity):

“... *produce* of distinctly different varieties may be packed together in a sales unit, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each variety concerned, in origin.

... *produce* of distinctly different colours and/or commercial types may be packed together in a sales unit, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each colour and/or commercial type concerned, in origin. ...

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

Packing different varieties of produce of similar size in layers (even in several layers) would result in a uniform package. And the visible part of the contents would be representative of the whole. An indication of the proportion (even approximate: x per cent of a certain variety) of each variety in the package would facilitate trade (buyer-seller-consumer) and should be mandatory for mixtures of varieties.

The addition of the following notion would be desirable in the UNECE Standard Layout: “The mixture of varieties of a product in a single package may be authorized provided that the mixture does not run the risk of confusing the consumer. The contents of the mixture must be clearly identifiable through appropriate packaging and specific marking. Furthermore, the package should be sold in its entirety to the consumer or final customer.”