

Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Fifty-fifth session

Geneva, 4 - 8 May 2009

Item 6(j) of the provisional agenda

NEW UNECE STANDARDS

Stalk and Stalk-Leaf Vegetables

This document, submitted by Germany, contains draft text for a new UNECE standard for stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables.

UNECE STANDARD FFV-No
concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of

STALK AND STALK-LEAF VEGETABLES

I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables of varieties (cultivars) grown from the following species to be supplied fresh to the consumer, stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables for industrial processing being excluded:

- chard (*Beta vulgaris* ssp. *cicla* (L.) Alef. var. *flavescens* DC.),
- pak-choi (*Brassica rapa* L. (chinensis-groupe)),
- ribbed celery (*Apium graveolens* L. var. *dulce* (Mill.) Pers.),
- catalogna (*Cichorium intybus* (L.) var. *foliosum* Hegi),
- cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus* L.),
- dandelion (*Taraxacum* sect. *Ruderales* Kirschner),
- turnip tops or turnip greens (*Brassica rapa* L. (Rapa-Gruppe)),
- broccoli raab or ruvo kale (*Brassica rapa* L. (Broccoletto-Gruppe)),
- rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum* L.).

II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables 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 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 stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables must be:

- intact; in case of stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables presented in bunches the outer stalks may be removed
- 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
- fresh in appearance and turgid
- smooth and not excessively fibrous (rhubarb)
- not running to seed
- free of bruises
- free of damage caused by frost
- free of cavities
- free of suckers
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables are presented in bunches or in case of rhubarb as single stalks, with or without leaves. In case of rhubarb, the stalks may be cut at one end.

The bunches must be neatly cut shortly below the insertion of the stalks. The cut may be slightly discoloured.

The development and condition of the stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables must be such as to enable them:

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

B. Classification

Stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables are classified in two classes, as defined below:

(i) Class I

Stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables 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
- slight superficial damages.

(ii) Class II

This class includes stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables that do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

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

- defects in shape
- defects in colouring
- traces of rust removable by normal peeling
- slight bruises or broken ribs or in case of stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables presented in bunch, not more than two leaf stalks per bunch that are broken, crushed or split
- damaged leaves in case of presentation with leaves.

III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is determined

- by weight of the bunch or
- by length and diameter measured in the middle of the stalk, in case of presentation as single stalk

Sizing is mandatory for Class I ribbed celery only.

Ribbed celery is graded into three groups:

- | | | |
|-------|---------|--------------|
| (i) | large: | over 800 g. |
| (ii) | medium: | 500 - 800 g. |
| (iii) | small: | 150 - 500 g. |

The difference in size in the same package may not exceed 200, 150 and 100 g respectively.

IV. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

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 stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables 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 neither satisfying the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements. Produce affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption is excluded.

(ii) *Class II*

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements is allowed.

Produce affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption is excluded.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes: A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables 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 stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized).

Stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables of Class I must be uniform in colour.

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

B. Packaging

Stalk and stalk-leaf vegetables 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 must be free of all foreign matter.

VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING

Each package¹ must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:

¹ According to the Geneva Protocol, footnote 2, "Package units of produce prepacked for direct sale to the consumer shall not be subject to these marking provisions but shall conform to the national requirements. However, the markings referred to shall in any event be shown on the transport packaging containing such package units".

A. Identification

Packer) Name and physical address (e.g. street/city/region/postal code and,
and/or) if different from the country of origin, the country) or
Dispatcher/shipper) a code mark officially recognized by the national authority².

B. Nature of produce

- "Chard", "Pak choi", "ribbed celery", "catalogna", "cardoon", dandelion", "turnip tops", "broccoli raab", "rhubarb" or synonym denominations, if the contents are not visible from the outside.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- size (if sized) expressed as minimum and maximum weight in g
- number of bunches or sales packages, where appropriate and if the contents are not visible from the outside.

E. Official control mark (optional)

² 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.