



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2006/10/Add.2  
23 August 2006

Original: ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce

Fifty-third session  
Geneva, 13-16 June 2006

**REPORT OF THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION**

Addendum 2

**Revised UNECE Standard for Dates**

Note by the secretariat

This document is based on the document INF.2 prepared by Germany and presented for discussion at the 53rd session of the GE.2, Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce. The Specialized Section decided to discuss this proposal to amend the standard in 2007.

New text has been underlined and text to be deleted has been struck-out.

**UNECE STANDARD ~~DDP~~DF-08**  
concerning the marketing and commercial  
quality control of

**~~WHOLE~~-DATES**

**I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE**

This standard applies to whole unpitted dates in their natural state or washed, ~~processed dried,~~ re-hydrated, dried, washed and/or coated and/or pasteurised<sup>+</sup> from varieties (cultivars) grown from *Phoenix dactylifera* L. intended for direct consumption. It does not apply to dates for industrial processing, ~~pressed dates, or frozen dates~~.

**II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY**

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements of dates at the export control stage, after preparation and packaging.

**A. Minimum requirements<sup>2</sup>**

In all classes subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the dates must be:

- Dried in accordance with Section B. Moisture content
- intact; ~~dates fruit~~ affected by mashing, tearing, breaking of the skin, leaving the kernel visible so that the appearance of the fruit is noticeably affected is excluded.
- sound, produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- ~~—ripe, plump and plastic where applicable;~~
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter; excluding fruit having organic or inorganic material such as dirt or sand embedded in it and affecting an area greater than 3 mm in diameter; coating ingredients such as glucose syrup, etc., are not considered as foreign material<sup>3</sup>
- free from living live insects or ~~any living parasites~~ mites whatever their stage of development;
- free from visible damage caused by insects, mites or other parasites pests, including the presence of dead insects, insect debris or excreta;

<sup>1</sup> *Processed dates: dates prepared from fruit in its natural state by drying, hydration, washing or pasteurization.*

<sup>2</sup> *Definitions of terms and defects are listed in Annex III of the Standard Layout – Recommended Terms and Definition of Defects for Standards of Dry Fruits (Inshell Nuts and Nut Kernels) and Dried Fruits ([http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout\\_e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout_e.pdf)).*

<sup>3</sup> ~~—Coating ingredients such as glucose syrup, etc., are not considered as foreign material provided they are not prohibited by the, The legislation of the importing country must be respected with regard to the coating material.~~

- free from mould filaments visible to the naked eye;
  - free of sour fruit fermentation; i. e. fruit in which there has been a breakdown of the sugars into alcohol and acetic acid by the action of yeast and bacteria. Detected by a characteristic sour taste. Fruit with incipient fermentation but with only a very slight sour taste is not considered as defective;
  - free of unripe fruit, i. e. fruit light in weight, stunted or distinctly rubbery in texture;
  - free of unpollinated fruit; i. e. fruit not pollinated, as indicated by stunted growth, immature characteristics and absence of pit.
  - free of blemished fruit; i. e. fruit scarred, discoloured or sunburnt, or having blacknose (noticeable darkening of the head, generally accompanied by severe checking or cracking of the flesh) or side-spot (a very dark patch extending into the flesh) or similar abnormalities affecting an area at least as large as a circle of 7 mm diameter.
  - free of abnormal external moisture;
  - free from foreign smell and/or taste.
- ~~free from fermentation.~~

The condition ~~and development~~ of the dates must be such as to enable them

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

(ii) Moisture content

The dates shall have a moisture content<sup>4</sup> ~~of not greater than~~ exceeding 26.0 per cent for cane sugar varieties ~~or and~~ 30.0 per cent for invert sugar varieties<sup>5</sup>. In their natural state, however, for the variety ~~Daeglaet Noour~~ the maximum moisture content shall be 30.0 per cent.

## B. Classification

In accordance with the defects allowed in Section IV. Provisions Concerning Tolerances, dates are classified into the following three classes:

Extra class  
Class I and  
Class II.

The defects allowed must not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality,

<sup>4</sup> *The moisture content is determined by placing 50 g of shredded pitted dates in a drier for four hours at 100°C ± 2°C, using as adjuvants 90° alcohol and sand washed in hydrochloric acid and then dried. The moisture content is determined by one of the methods given in Annex I of the Standard Layout – Determination of Moisture content for dried fruits ([http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout/laydry\\_e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout/laydry_e.pdf)). The laboratory reference method shall be used in cases of dispute.*

<sup>5</sup> *A list of varieties classified by the nature of their principal sugar component is given in the Annex of this standard.*

keeping quality and presentation in the package.

Dates are classified in three classes defined below:

(i) ~~—~~ ***"Extra" Class***

~~—~~ Dates in this class must be of superior quality and uniform in shape and appearance.

~~They must have the shape, development and colour characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type. They must be amber coloured to brown and the flesh must be abundant, fat or semi-fat, and greasy. The epicarp must be translucent and, according to the variety, adhere to the flesh.~~

~~They must be practically free from defects with the exception of very slight superficial defects provided that these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality or its presentation in the package. The defects allowed in Section IV: PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES must not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, keeping quality and presentation in the package.~~

(ii) ~~—~~ ***Class I***

Dates in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type. The flesh must be sufficiently abundant, fat or semi-fat, according to the variety.

The following slight defects may be allowed provided that these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality or its presentation in the package.

- ~~—~~ a slight flaw in the epicarp which does not affect the pulp;
- ~~—~~ a slight defect in form or development;
- ~~—~~ slight wrinkles.

~~The defects allowed in Section IV: PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES must not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, keeping quality and presentation in the package.~~

(iii) ~~—~~ ***Class II***

This class includes dates which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes but which satisfy the minimum quality requirements specified above. Dates in this class must be of marketable quality.

- ~~—~~ defects of the epicarp not affecting the pulp;
- ~~—~~ defects in form or development
- ~~—~~ defects of colouration.

~~The defects allowed in Section IV: PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES must not affect the essential characteristics of the produce as regards the quality, keeping quality and~~

~~presentation.~~

### III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

~~Sizing~~ Size is determined by the unit weight of the fruit.

~~Irrespective of the variety, the~~ The minimum weight of dates shall be ~~4.75-0~~ g.

### IV. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each package for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.

#### A. Quality tolerances

<del>Permitted defect</del> <u>Defects allowed</u> <sup>a</sup>	Tolerances allowed ( <del>per centage of defective produce</del> by number or weight)		
	Extra	Class I	Class II
<del>a) Total tolerance</del> <u>Tolerances for produce not satisfying the minimum requirements</u>	5	<del>10</del> <u>12</u>	20
<b>Specific defect tolerances</b> <del>Within the limits of total tolerances, the following maximum tolerances are allowed:</del> <u>of which no more than</u>			
<u>Immature or unpollinated fruit</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
<del>— (a) Sour, decayed or mouldy fruit</del> <sup>6</sup>	0	<del>0</del> <u>1</u>	<del>1</del> <u>2</u>
<del>— (b) Dirty fruit, or fruit contaminated by insects or mites</del> <u>Damaged by pests</u> <sup>7</sup>	3	<del>5</del> <u>8</u>	<del>8</del> <u>12</u>
<del>— (c) Damaged, immature or unpollinated fruit</del>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>

<sup>6</sup> ~~The national legislations of Germany and~~ Switzerland do not permit tolerances for produce affected by mould or decay or the presence of dead or living insects.

<sup>7</sup> Reservations of ~~Germany, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom~~, which wish to retain the former tolerances: Extra, 2 per cent; Class I, 4 per cent; Class II, 6 per cent.

<del>—</del> (d) Blemished fruit	<del>3</del>	<del>5</del>	<del>7</del>
- <u>living insects (by count number)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b><u>b) Tolerances for other defects (not included in total tolerances)</u></b>			
- <u>foreign matter (by weight)</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>
- <u>dates belonging to other varieties {or commercial types} than that indicated on the package (by count)</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>c) Size tolerances</u> <del>For dates weighing between 4.75 g and 4.0 g</del> <u>For dates not conforming to the minimum size</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>

~~“—— Standard definitions of terms and defects are listed in the Annex of this document.~~

### ~~B.—— Mineral impurities~~

~~Not greater than 1g/kg. However, for whole dates in a natural state, not more than 2 g/kg.~~

### ~~C.—— Size tolerances~~

~~For all classes, 10 per cent by weight of dates being less than 4.75 g, minimum weight, but not less than 4 g.~~

## V. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

### A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only fruit dates of the same origin, ~~and~~ quality and variety (if indicated).

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents. ~~For "Extra" Class and Class I the fruit must be of the same variety and/or commercial type, and for Class II, of the same commercial type.~~

### B. Packaging

Dates must be packed in such a way so as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be new, 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 and

stamps bearing trade specifications is allowed provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

~~In wooden packages the fruit must be separated from the wall of the package by paper or other means of protection.~~

~~Clusters must be protected individually by a strong bag, preferably transparent, and must be placed inside firm packaging material to prevent their deformation during transport.~~

~~Stickers individually affixed on 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 ~~with the exception of that used to complete the presentation (rachis, stems, plastic forks, etc.).~~

### C. Presentation

Dates ~~must~~ may be presented ~~as specified below~~:

- ~~In~~ in clusters (consisting mainly of the rachis and the stems to which the fruit is attached naturally).
- ~~In~~ in stems (stems which are separated from the rachis and to which the fruit is attached naturally).
- ~~Separately~~ separated in individual fruit, arranged in layers, or ~~in bulk~~ loose in the package.

Stems presented in clusters or separated from the rachis must be at least 10 cm in length and carry an average of four fruits per 10 cm of length.

Where the dates are presented in stems or clusters, there may be a maximum of 10 per cent of loose dates.

The ends of the stems must be cleanly cut.

~~Dates in clusters and stems may only be presented in "Extra" Class and Class I.~~

~~Dates must be packed in strong new packaging and in accordance with the following provisions. Other packages not conforming to these weights may, however, be used at the request of the importer:~~

~~— For all classes:~~

~~— compartmented cardboard, wood, metal, or plastic packing, or packaging under cellulose film into packages weighing 0.125, 0.25, 0.5 and 1 kg, or in the avoirdupois system 0.5 lb and multiples thereof; or~~

~~— packages of 1 to 20 kg net.~~

## VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING

Each package<sup>8</sup> must bear the following particulars in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked and visible from the outside. ~~Each package<sup>9</sup> or compartmented package must bear the following particulars in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked and visible from the outside:~~

### A. Identification

Packer ) Name and address or officially issued or  
and/or ) accepted code mark<sup>10</sup>  
Dispatcher ) ———

### B. Nature of the produce

- ~~"**DATES**Dates"~~, when the contents are not visible from the outside~~de~~
- A. - Name of the variety (optional)~~or the word "common" when the variety is not defined or cannot be guaranteed. The name of the variety must be given for "Extra" Class and Class I. If the variety is not specified or is not one of those listed in annex I, the words "cane sugar variety(ies)" or "invert sugar variety(ies)".~~
- ~~The word "cluster" or "stems", where appropriate for dates packed in those forms.~~

### C. Origin of the produce

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

### D. Commercial specifications

- ~~class~~Class;
- ~~crop~~Crop year(optional);

---

<sup>8</sup> Package units of produce prepacked for direct sale to the consumer shall not be subject to these marking provisions but shall conform to national requirements. However, the markings referred to shall in any event be shown on the transport packaging containing such package units.

~~<sup>9</sup> Sales packages for direct sale to the consumer shall not be subject to these marking provisions but shall conform to national requirements. However, the markings referred to shall in any event be shown on the transport packaging containing such sales packages.~~

<sup>10</sup> The national legislation of a number of European countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. 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.



- ~~—— net weight, or the number of package units, followed by the unit weight in the case of packages containing such units;~~
- "Best before" followed by the date (optional)

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

Adopted 1987

## ANNEX: PARTIAL LIST OF CANE SUGAR AND INVERT SUGAR VARIETIES OF DATES

### A. Cane sugar varieties :

Varieties which contain mainly sucrose, including :

Name of the variety
<del>Deglet Nour</del> <del>Daglat Noor</del>
<del>Deglet Beidha</del> <del>Daglat Beidha</del>
<del>Kenta</del>

### B. Invert sugar varieties

Varieties which contain mainly invert sugar (glucose and fructose), including :

Name of the variety
Barhi
Saiidi
Khadhraawi
Hallaawi
Zahdi
Sayir
Amri
Deri
Alig
<del>Maedj</del> <del>houl</del>
<del>Ak</del> <del>Kho</del> <del>ouet</del> Alig
<del>Kenta</del>

~~ANNEX: DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND DEFECTS FOR WHOLE DATES~~

---

~~(a) Sour fruit:~~

~~Fruit in which there has been a breakdown of the sugars into alcohol and acetic acid by the action of yeasts and bacteria. Detected by a characteristic sour taste. Fruit with incipient fermentation but with only a very slight sour taste is not considered as defective.~~

~~(b) Decayed fruit:~~

~~—Fruit in a state of decomposition and quite unacceptable in appearance.~~

~~(c) Mould fruit (mould):~~

~~—Fruit with visible mould filaments.~~

~~(d) Dirty fruit:~~

~~Fruit having organic or inorganic material such as dirt or sand embedded in it and affecting an area greater than 3 mm in diameter.~~

~~(e) Damage or contamination by insects or mites:~~

~~Fruit with insect or mite damage which can be seen by the naked eye, or fruit contaminated with dead insects or mites, fragments of insects or mites, or their excreta.~~

~~(f) Unripe fruit:~~

~~—Fruit light in weight, stunted or distinctly rubbery in texture.~~

~~(g) Unpollinated fruit:~~

~~—Fruit not pollinated, as indicated by stunted growth, immature characteristics and absence of pit.~~

~~(h) Damaged fruit:~~

~~Fruit affected by mashing, tearing, breaking of the skin, leaving the kernel visible so that the appearance of the fruit is noticeably affected.~~

~~(i) Blemished fruit:~~

~~Fruit scarred, discoloured or sunburnt, or having blacknose or side-spot or similar abnormalities affecting an area at least as large as a circle of 7 mm diameter.~~

~~(j) **Blacknose:**~~

~~— Noticeable darkening of the head, generally accompanied by severe checking or cracking of the flesh.~~

~~(k) **Side spot:**~~

~~— A very dark patch extending into the flesh and having an area at least as large as a circle of 5 mm diameter.~~

~~(l) **Sunburnt fruit:**~~

~~— Fruit which has very evident blemishes, at least 7 mm in the shortest dimension.~~

~~(m) **Mineral impurities:**~~

~~— Acid insoluble ash.~~