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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

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Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce

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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-08  
concerning the marketing and commercial  
quality control of

**DATES**

**I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE**

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

**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>1</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 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;
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter; excluding coating ingredients
- free from live insects or mites whatever their stage of development;
- free from damage caused by pests, including the presence of dead insects, insect debris or excreta;
- free from mould filaments visible to the naked eye;
- free from fermentation;
- 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

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<sup>1</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 <[www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout/layout.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout/layout.htm)>.

(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.

The condition 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.

## **B. Moisture content**

The dates shall have a moisture content<sup>2</sup> not exceeding 26.0 per cent for cane sugar varieties and 30.0 per cent for invert sugar varieties<sup>3</sup>. In their natural state, however, for the variety Deglet Nour the maximum moisture content shall be 30.0 per cent.

## **C. 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, keeping quality and presentation in the package.

## **III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING**

Size is determined by the unit weight of the fruit.

The minimum weight of dates shall be 4.0 g.

## **IV. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES**

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<sup>2</sup> 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 <[www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout/layout.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/info/layout/layout.htm)>. The laboratory reference method shall be used in cases of dispute.

<sup>3</sup> A list of varieties classified by the nature of their principal sugar component is given in the Annex of this standard.

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

Defects allowed <sup>a</sup>	Tolerances allowed per cent of defective produce by number or weight		
	Extra	Class I	Class II
<b>a) Tolerances for produce not satisfying the minimum requirements of which no more than</b>	5	12	20
- Immature or unpollinated fruit	2	4	6
- Sour, decayed or mouldy fruit <sup>4</sup>	0	1	2
- Damaged by pests <sup>5</sup>	3	8	12
- live insects (by number)	0	0	0
<b>b) Tolerances for other defects (not included in total tolerances)</b>			
- foreign matter (by weight)	1	1	1
- dates belonging to other varieties {or commercial types} than that indicated on the package (by count)	10	10	10
<b>c) Size tolerances</b>			
For dates not conforming to the minimum size	10	10	10

#### V. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

##### A. Uniformity

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

<sup>4</sup> The national legislations of Switzerland do not permit tolerances for produce affected by mould or decay or the presence of dead or living insects.

<sup>5</sup> Reservations of 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.

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

## **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.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter

## **C. Presentation**

Dates may be presented:

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

## **VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING**

Each package <sup>6</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 ) Name and address or officially issued or  
and/or ) accepted code mark <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</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>7</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)"

Dispatcher )

**B. Nature of the produce**

- "Dates", when the contents are not visible from the outside
- Name of the variety (optional)
- "cluster" or "stems", where appropriate

**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;
- Crop year(optional);
- "Best before" followed by the date (optional)

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

Adopted 1987

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has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.

**ANNEX: PARTIAL LIST OF CANE SUGAR AND INVERT SUGAR VARIETIES OF  
DATESA. Cane sugar varieties :**

Varieties which contain mainly sucrose, including:

<b>Name of the variety</b>
Deglet Nour
Deglet Beidha

**B. Invert sugar varieties**

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

<b>Name of the variety</b>
Barhi
Saiidi
Khadhraawi
Hallaawi
Zahdi
Sayir
Amri
Deri
Alig
Medjoul
Khouet Alig
Kenta