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Perishable Produce and Quality Development

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**Draft UN/ECE Standard for Poultry Meat
Revisions to the General Requirements**

Transmitted by the United States of America

Note by the Secretariat : This document contains the outcome of the work at the meeting of rapporteurs on the draft amendments to the General Requirements to include provisions for poultry meat.

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
STANDARDS FOR
MEAT CARCASSES AND COMPONENT ITEMS**

0.1.0 FOREWORD

The purpose of this standard is to define and describe product identity, commercial quality, and merchandising requirements of meat carcasses and component meat items (typically referred to as “cuts” for mammalian species and “parts” for poultry species) moving into international trade as fit for human consumption. It is recognized that many other requirements of food standardization and veterinary control must be complied with to market meat across international borders. The standard does not attempt to prescribe those aspects which are covered elsewhere, and throughout the standard, such provisions are left to national or international legislation, or requirements of the importing country.

These general requirements for meat purchase specifications are recommended for use with the individual species-specific UN/ECE Standards for meat. For assurance that items comply with these detailed requirements, buyers may choose to enlist the services of an independent, unbiased third-party to ensure product compliance with a purchaser’s specified options. The species-specific standards include photographs of carcasses and component meat items to facilitate a better understanding of the provisions with a view to ensuring a wide application in international trade.

The objective of these standards is to describe all meat items commonly traded in international commerce. Trade industry members who believe additional items are needed or that existing items are inaccurate or no longer being traded are encouraged to contact:

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UN/ECE Trade Division
Palais des Nations
CH - 1211 Geneva 10
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0.2.0 SCOPE / APPLICATION

This standard applies to raw (uncooked) mammalian and poultry meat carcasses and component meat items marketed as fit for human consumption. The purpose of this document is to provide a variety of options to purchasers for meat handling, packing and packaging, and conformity assessment that conforms to good commercial practice for meat intended to be sold in international trade. Contractors are responsible for delivering products that comply with all contractual and specification requirements and are advised to set up a quality control system designed to assure compliance.

The standard may contain references to other international agreements, standards and codes of practice

which have the objective of maintaining the quality after dispatch and of providing guidance to governments on certain aspects of food hygiene, labeling and other matters which fall outside the scope of this standard. Codex Alimentarius Commission Standards, Guidelines, and Codes of Practice should be consulted as the competent international reference concerning health and sanitation requirements.

The UN/ECE has developed or is planning to develop standards for the following meat species/class categories:

1. Beef - Bovine (2000 version published)
2. Veal (to be developed)
3. Pork - Porcine (1998 version published)
4. Lamb - Ovine (under development)
5. Goat - Caprine (to be developed)
6. Other mammalian meats and processed meat products (to be developed)
7. Chicken (under development)
8. Turkey (to be developed)
9. Other poultry products (to be developed)

0.3.0 REGULATORY REQUIREMENT

All meat will originate from animals slaughtered in establishments regularly operated under the applicable regulations pertaining to food safety and inspection.

0.4.0 MAMMALIAN MEAT PROCESSING AND HANDLING

[As written.]

0.5.0 POULTRY MEAT PROCESSING AND HANDLING

0.5.1 PROVISIONS CONCERNING CONDITION

Carcasses and component meats items must be:

1. Free from any visible foreign material (e.g. glass, rubber, metal ¹).
2. Free of viscera, trachea, esophagus, mature reproductive organs, and lungs, unless otherwise specified.
3. Free of foreign odours.
4. Free of visible fecal material.
5. Free of improper bleeding.
6. Practically free of feathers ².

1 When specified by the purchaser, meat items will be subject to metal particle detection.

2 Feathers allowed will be as permitted for the quality or grade selected.

0.5.2 PROVISIONS CONCERNING REFRIGERATION

Poultry meats may be presented chilled, chilled with ice packed in the container, chilled with dry ice packed in the container, frozen, deep frozen, individually deep frozen without ice glazing, or individually deep frozen with ice glazing. Ambient temperatures should be such throughout the supply chain to ensure uniform internal product temperatures as follows:

- (A) **Chilled:** product maintained at not less than $-2.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ or more than $+4.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at all times following the post-slaughter chilling process.
- (B) **Chilled, with Ice Added:** product maintained at not less than $-2.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ or more than $+4.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at all times following the post-slaughter chilling process and packed in a container with ice (frozen water, not dry ice) placed on top of product.
- (C) **Chilled, with Dry Ice (CO₂) Added:** product maintained at not less than $-2.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ or more than $+4.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at all times following the post-slaughter chilling process and packed in a container with dry ice (CO₂) placed on top of packaged product.
- (D) **Deep Chilled:** product maintained at not less than $-12.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ or more than $-2.0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at all times after freezing.
- (E) **Frozen:** product maintained at not more than $-12\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at all times after freezing.
- (F) **Deep Frozen:** product maintained at not more than $-18\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at all times after freezing.
- (G) **Individually Deep Frozen, without Ice Glazing:** product is individually frozen before packaging and maintained at $-18\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ or less at all times after freezing.
- (H) **Individually Deep Frozen, with Ice Glazing:** product is individually frozen and glazed with water to protect against freezer burn before packaging and maintained at $-18\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ or less at all times after freezing.

0.5.3 PROVISIONS CONCERNING PACKING, STORAGE, AND TRANSPORT

The packaging (prepacking/individual packaging) is the primary covering of a product and must be of food grade materials. The packing is the secondary covering containing the packaged products.

The conditions of storage before dispatch and the equipment used for transportation shall be appropriate to the physical and in particular the thermal condition of the meat (chilled or frozen) and shall be in accordance with the requirements of the importing country. Attention is drawn to the provisions of the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for Such Carriage (ATP).

0.5.3.1 Packaging containers

Packaging materials may be specified as follows:

- (A) **Plastic Bag:** container made from flexible, plastic film or other polyethylene material to enclose product that closed by commercial methods. A plastic-film liner in a box is considered part of the shipping container and not an internal package.
- (B) **Plastic Bag, Vacuum packaged:** a plastic bag or other similar material that adheres to the product through the removal of air by vacuum and a heat-sealing closure.
- (C) **Plastic Bag, Resealable:** a plastic bag or other similar material that has an interlocking seal that can be repeatedly opened and closed.
- (D) **Plastic Bag, with Modified Atmosphere:** a plastic bag or other similar material that is filled with a gas and sealed to assist in maintaining product quality.
- (E) **Bubble Pack, Portion Control:** a plastic bag or other similar material that is used to enclose individual servings of product.
- (F) **Tray Pack:** a shallow, flat bottom container made of polystyrene or other similar plastic material. Product is placed in the tray and then over-wrapped with a plastic film that encloses the tray and the product. A moisture-absorbing pad may be placed in the tray under the product to absorb excess moisture.
- (G) **Tray Pack, with Modified Atmosphere:** a shallow, flat bottom container made of polystyrene or other similar plastic material. Product is placed in the tray over a moisture-absorbing pad, then over-wrapped with a plastic film that encloses the tray and the product, and gas is added and the package sealed to assist in maintaining product quality.
- (H) **Cup/Tub:** container made of paper, plastic, or other rigid, waterproof material with a flat bottom and a lid closure.
- (I) **Carton:** a paper container that holds product and is packed inside a packing container . The carton may: (1) have an impregnated and/or coated wax surface, or (2) be lined with a plastic-film or other polyethylene bag. The carton is closed using commercial methods. If selected, the purchaser must also specify the type of packing container into which the carton is placed.
- (J)**Chub:** a flexible plastic tube that is filled with product (typically ground meat) and sealed with metal or plastic clips at each end of the tube.
- (K)**No Internal Package:** product is *not* individually packaged (e.g., product is packed directly in a packing container such as a returnable plastic container, lined box, or bulk bin).

0.5.3.2 Packing containers

Packing containers may be specified as follows:

- (A) **Box, Unlined and Unwaxed:** container made from corrugated paper. Closed using tape, straps, or other commercially acceptable methods.
- (B) **Box, Lined and Unwaxed:** corrugated paper container that has a plastic-film bag lining the inside of the container. Closed using tape, straps, or other commercially acceptable methods.
- (C) **Box, Unlined and Waxed:** corrugated paper box impregnated and/or coated with wax to waterproof the container. Closed using tape, straps, or other commercially acceptable methods.
- (D) **Plastic Container, Returnable:** a plastic container or “tote” that is recovered by the processor after delivery.
- (E) **Bulk Bin, Non-Returnable:** a large corrugated paper container that is not recovered by the processor after delivery, which may or may not be wax impregnated or lined with a plastic-film bag.
- (F) **Bulk Bin, Returnable:** a large plastic container that is recovered by the processor after delivery.

0.5.3.3 Pack style options

Pack style indicates the arrangement of product in a package or packing container and may be specified as follows:

- (A) **Bulk Pack:** product is placed in the container in no particular order.
- (B) **Layer Pack, Regular:** product is placed in a container in discernable layers, one on top of the other. Plastic film or other material may be used to separate product layers.
- (C) **Layer Pack, Honeycomb:** product is layered and neatly intertwined in the container by rotating adjacent product pieces 180 degrees. This style differs from regular layer pack in that the honeycomb packed product intertwines or nests product from adjacent layers.
- (D) **Soldier Pack:** product, typically wings, that are tightly arranged in an interlocking position to form discrete rows in the container.

0.5.3.4 Poultry Meat Packaging and Packing EAN/UCC Coding Format

The following tables demonstrate the general application of the EAN/UCC coding format for describing packaging and packing for poultry species:

<i>Data Field</i>	<i>Code Range</i>	<i>Specified Use</i>	<i>Data Field Ref.</i>
Packing Designations: OPTIONAL			
Packaging	00 – 99	00 – 10 and 99	1
Package Labeling	0 – 9	0, 1, and 9	2
Pack Style	0 – 9	0 – 4 and 9	3
Package Weight	0000 – 9999	0000 – 9999	4
<i>Data Field</i>	<i>Code Range</i>	<i>Specified Use</i>	<i>Data Field Ref.</i>
Shipping Container	0 – 9	0 – 6	5
Country of Destination	000 – 999	000 – 999	6
Shipping Container Weight	00000 – 99999	00000 – 99999	7
Packing Options	0 – 9	0 – 1	8
Reserved Code	00 – 99	0	9

0.5.3.5 Use codes for packaging and packing poultry meat

Specified Code Description
Use Code

Field 1. Packaging

00 = Not Specified
01 = Plastic Bag
02 = Plastic Bag, Vacuum Package
03 = Plastic Bag, Resealable
04 = Bubble Pack, Portion Control
05 = Plastic Bag, Modified Atmosphere
06 = Tray Pack
07 = Tray Pack, Modified Atmosphere
08 = Cup/Tub
09 = Carton (shipping container required)
10 = Chub
99 = No Internal Package

Field 2. Package Labeling

0 = Not Specified
1 = Labeled (for sale in country specified in Country Of Destination)

9 = Not Labeled

Field 3. Pack Style

0 = Not Specified
1 = Bulk Pack
2 = Layer Pack, Regular
3 = Layer Pack, Honeycomb
4 = Soldier Pack
9 = Other - any other pack style must be specified by seller/buyer

Field 4. Package Weight

0000 = Not Specified
XXXX = Specify four-digit package weight (00.00) in kilograms

Field 5. Shipping Container

0 = Not Specified
1 = Box, Unlined and Unwaxed
2 = Box, Lined and Unwaxed
3 = Box, Unlined and Waxed
4 = Plastic Container, Returnable
5 = Bulk Bin, Non-Returnable
6 = Bulk Bin, Returnable

Field 6. Country of Destination

000 = Not Specified
XXX = Specify three-digit ISO country code

Field 7. Shipping Container Weight

00000 = Not Specified
XXXXX = Specify five-digit shipping container weight (000.00) in kilograms

Field 8. Packing Options

0 = Not Specified
1 = Contractual modifications as specified by buyer

0.5.3.6 Codification example for packaging and packing poultry meat:

Individually labeled plastic bag packages with a 1.14 Kg net weight for sale in Italy and packed in 18.16 Kg net weight lined boxes would be characterized by the EAN/UCC poultry species packing code 01100114-

238001816-0, indicating the following:

- Field 1 Packaging = 01 (Plastic Bag)
- Field 2 Package Labeling = 1 (Labeled)
- Field 3 Pack Style = 0 (Unspecified)
- Field 4 Package Weight = 0114 (1.14 Kg)
- Field 5 Shipping Container = 2 (Lined box)
- Field 6 Country of Destination = 380 (ISO country code for Italy)
- Field 7 Shipping Container Weight = 01816 (18.16 Kg)
- Field 8 Packing Options = 0 (Unspecified)

0.5.4 LABELING INFORMATION TO BE MENTIONED ON OR FIXED TO THE MARKETING UNITS OF POULTRY MEAT

Without prejudice to national requirements of the importing countries, the following table contains information that must be listed on product labels, as designated by an “x,” on packaged or packed poultry carcasses and parts:

LABELING INFORMATION	PACKAGED OR PACKED POULTRY CARCASSES AND PARTS
Name of the product	X
Health stamp / inspection stamp	X
Sell-by / use-by date as required by each country	X
Country of origin name	X
Storage conditions: e.g., “Keep Frozen at XX °C (XX °F)”	X
Name and address of packer or retailer	X
Net weight in Kg (and optionally Lbs.)	X
Ingredients	X

There are also several other production, processing and quality factors that may need to be listed on the product label or associated documentation, amongst which are:

- ◆ quality/grade level
- ◆ class
- ◆ processing/packaging date
- ◆ production and feeding systems
- ◆ slaughtering procedures
- ◆ method of post-slaughter chilling

0.5.4.1 Labeling product for country of destination

The standard provides for the labeling of product to satisfy the requirements of the country of destination (country labeled for) where the product will be sold or further processed. A three-digit International Organization for Standardization (ISO) country code is used to indicate the country of destination.

0.5.5 PROVISIONS CONCERNING CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The purchaser may request third-party certification of the product's quality grade/classification, purchaser-specified options of the standard, and/or animal identification as follows:

(A) **Quality Grade/Classification Certification:** a third party examines and certifies that the product meets the quality level requested. The name of the third-party certifying authority and quality grade standard to be used must be designated under "Additional product options."

(B) **Trade Description Certification:** a third party examines and certifies that the product meets the purchaser-specified options as specified in the trade description, except for quality level. The name of the third-party certifying authority must be designated under "Additional product options." Optionally, the purchaser may indicate specific purchaser specified options to be certified after the name of the third-party certifying authority.

(C) **Animal Identification Certification:** a third party certifies that the product meets specified traceability requirements. The name of the third-party certifying authority and the traceability requirements must be designated under "Additional product options."

(D) **Quality Grade/Classification and Trade Description Certification:** a third party examines and certifies that the product meets the quality level and purchaser-specified options specified in the trade description. The name of the third-party certifying authority and quality grade standard to be used must be designated under "Additional product options." Optionally, the purchaser may indicate specific purchaser specified options to be certified after the name of the third-party certifying authority.

(E) **Quality Grade/Classification and Animal Identification Certification:** a third party examines and certifies that the product meets the quality level and specified traceability requirements. The name of the third-party certifying authority, the quality grade standard to be used, and the traceability requirements must be designated under "Additional product options."

(F) **Trade Description and Animal Identification Certification:** a third party examines and certifies that the product meets the purchaser-specified options specified in the trade description and specified traceability requirements. The name of the third-party certifying authority and the traceability requirements must be designated under "Additional product options." Optionally, the purchaser may indicate specific purchaser specified options to be certified after the name of the third-party certifying authority.

(G) **Quality Grade/Classification, Trade Description, and Animal Identification Certification:** a third party examines and certifies that the product meets the specified quality level, the purchaser-specified options specified in the trade description, and specified traceability requirements. The name of the third-party certifying authority, the quality grade standard to be used, and the traceability requirements must be designated under "Additional product options." Optionally, the purchaser may indicate specific purchaser specified options to be certified after the name of the third-party certifying authority.