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TEXTS FOR ADOPTION AS REVISED UNECE STANDARDS

Cucumbers

Note by the secretariat

This text is submitted to the Working Party for approval as a revised Standard for Cucumbers.

It is based on document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/10, the text of which was revised at the May 2008 session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.

UNECE STANDARD FFV-15
concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

CUCUMBERS

I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to cucumbers of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Cucumis sativus* L. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, cucumbers for processing and gherkins being excluded.

II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for cucumbers 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,
- for products graded in classes other than the “Extra” Class, 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 cucumbers must be:

- intact
- 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
- fresh in appearance, and firm
- practically free from pests
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- free of bitter taste (subject to the special provision for Class II under the heading “IV. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES”)
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

Cucumbers must be sufficiently developed but their seeds must be soft.

The development and condition of the cucumbers must be such as to enable them:

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

B. Classification

Cucumbers are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

Cucumbers in this class must be of superior quality. They must have all the typical characteristics and colouring of the variety.

They must be:

- well developed
- well shaped and practically straight (maximum height of the inner arc: 10 mm per 10 cm of length of the cucumber).

They must be free from defects, including all deformations and particularly those caused by seed formation, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

(ii) Class I

Cucumbers in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety.

They must be:

- reasonably developed
- reasonably well-shaped and practically straight (maximum height of the inner arc: 10 mm per 10 cm of length of the cucumber).

The following defects, however, may be allowed, provided they do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- a slight defect in shape, but excluding that caused by seed development
- slight defects in colouring, but the light-coloured part of the cucumber, where it touched the ground during growth, is not considered a defect
- slight skin defects, provided they are not progressive.

(iii) Class II

This class includes cucumbers 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 cucumbers retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape, but excluding those by serious seed development; slightly crooked cucumbers having a maximum height of the inner arc of 20 mm per 10 cm of length are allowed
- defects in colouring up to one-third of the surface, but the light-coloured part of the cucumber, where it touched the ground during growth, is not considered a defect
- skin defects, provided they are not progressive.

Crooked cucumbers having a height of the inner arc of more than 20 mm per 10 cm of length are allowed, provided they have no more than slight defects in colouring and have no defects or deformation other than crookedness, and they are separately packed.

III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is determined by either weight or by a combination of diameter and length.

Uniformity in size is compulsory for Classes "Extra" and I.

To ensure uniformity, one of the following two options should be applied:

(a) Cucumbers sized by weight

The range in weight of cucumbers in the same package must not exceed:

- 150 g where the smallest piece weighs 400 g or more
- 100 g where the smallest piece weighs between 180 and less than 400 g
- cucumbers below 180 g should be reasonably uniform in size.

(b) Cucumbers sized by length and diameter

The range in length of cucumbers in the same package must not exceed 5 cm in length between the longest and the shortest cucumber in the same package, and cucumbers should be reasonably uniform in diameter.

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) “Extra” Class

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number, of cucumbers not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class I is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 0.5 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying the requirements of Class II quality.

(ii) Class I

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number, of cucumbers 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 satisfying neither 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.

(iii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number, of cucumbers 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 (if sized): a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number, of cucumbers not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed. However, this tolerance is applicable only to produce that differs by no more than 10 per cent from the size and weight limits specified.

V. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only cucumbers of the same origin, variety or type, quality and size (if sized).

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

B. Packaging

The cucumbers must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly.
The cucumbers must be packed sufficiently tightly so as to avoid damage during transportation.

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:

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)	a code mark officially recognized by the national authority. ²

B. Nature of produce

- "Cucumbers" if the contents are not visible from the outside
- "Crooked cucumbers", where appropriate.

C. Origin of produce

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

¹ 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.

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.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size (if sized) expressed in minimum and maximum weight
- Number of units (optional).

E. Official control mark (optional)

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The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables has published an explanatory illustrated brochure on the application of this standard. The publication may be obtained from the OECD bookshop at: www.oecdbookshop.org.