



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2009/6
28 August 2009

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Sixty-fifth session

Geneva, 5–6 November 2009

Item 5(b)(iv) of the provisional agenda

**SPECIALIZED SECTION ON STANDARDIZATION
OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

Texts for adoption as revised/new UNECE standards

Sweet Peppers

Note by the secretariat

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

The document is prepared in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Working Party's Terms of Reference.

STANDARD FFV-28
concerning the marketing and commercial
quality control of

SWEET PEPPERS

I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to sweet peppers of varieties¹ (cultivars) grown from *Capsicum annuum L.* to be supplied fresh to the consumer, sweet peppers for industrial processing being excluded.

II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for sweet peppers 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 sweet peppers 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
- firm
- practically free from pests
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- free of damage caused by low temperature or frost
- with peduncles attached; the peduncle must be neatly cut and the calyx be intact
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

¹ Some of the sweet pepper varieties may have a hot taste.

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

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

B. Classification

Sweet peppers are classified in three classes, defined below:

(i) “Extra Class”

Sweet peppers in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

They must be free from defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the fruit, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

(ii) Class I

Sweet peppers 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 silvering covering not more than 1/3 of the total surface area
- slight skin defects:

such as pitting, scratching, sunburn, pressure marks covering in total not more than 2cm for defects of elongated shape, and 1cm² for other defects;
or

dry superficial cracks covering in total not more than 1/8 of the total surface area

- slightly damaged peduncle.

(iii) Class II

This class includes sweet peppers which do not qualify for inclusion in Class I but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

The following defects are allowed provided the sweet peppers retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape
- silvering covering not more than 2/3 of the total surface area

- skin defect:
 - such as pitting, scratching, sunburn, bruising, and healed injuries covering in total not more than 4 cm in length for defects of elongated shape and 2.5 cm² of the total area for other defects; or
 - dry superficial cracks covering in total not more than 1/4 of the total surface area
- blossom end deterioration not more than 1 cm²
- shrivelling not exceeding 1/3 of the surface
- damaged peduncle and calyx, provided the surrounding flesh remains intact.

III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is determined by the maximum equatorial diameter or by weight of the sweet peppers.

To ensure uniformity in size:

(a) the difference in diameter between the largest and the smallest sweet peppers in the same package shall be limited to 20 mm

(b) the difference in weight between the lightest and the heaviest sweet peppers in the same package should be limited to:

- 30 g where the heaviest piece weighs 180 g or less
- 40 g where the smallest piece weighs 180 g or more

Elongated sweet peppers should be sufficiently uniform in length.

Uniformity in size is not compulsory for Class II.

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

(i) *“Extra” Class*

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of sweet peppers 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 or weight, of sweet peppers 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 fruits satisfying neither the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements or of fruit affected by rotting or any other serious flesh defects.

(ii) ***Class II***

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of sweet peppers satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 2 per cent in total may consist of fruit affected by rotting or any other serious flesh defects.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes (if sized): a total of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of sweet peppers not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing but excluding sweet peppers having a diameter of 10 mm greater or less than the size marked.

V. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only sweet peppers of the same origin, quality and size (if sized) and, in the case of Classes “Extra” and I, of appreciably the same degree of ripeness and colouring.

However, a mixture of sweet peppers of distinctly different colours and/or commercial types may be packed together in a sales unit², provided they are uniform in quality and, for each colour and/or commercial type concerned, in origin.

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

B. Packaging

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

² The sales unit should be designed to be purchased in its entirety.

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 package³ 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, if
and/or) different from the country of origin, the country) or
Dispatcher/shipper) a code mark officially recognized by the national authority⁴.

B. Nature of produce

- “Sweet peppers”, if the contents are not visible from the outside.
- “Mixture of sweet peppers”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of sales units containing a mixture of distinctly different colours and/or commercial types of sweet peppers. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the colours or commercial types of the sales unit must be indicated.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.
- In the case of sales units containing a mixture of distinctly different colours and/or commercial types of sweet peppers of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the colour and/or commercial type concerned.

³ 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”.

⁴ 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 as minimum and maximum diameters or minimum and maximum weight
- Number of units (optional).
- “Hot” or equivalent denomination, where appropriate.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1969

Last revised 2009

The UNECE Standard for Sweet Peppers
has led to an explanatory brochure published by the UNECE