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**PROPOSALS TO REVISE THE UNECE STANDARD FOR CUCUMBERS**

Note by the Secretariat

The following document contains proposals for the amendment of the UNECE Standard FFV-15 for Cucumbers.

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

**CUCUMBERS**  
moving in international trade between and to  
UNECE member countries

**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.

**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
- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- firm
- 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 transport and handling, and
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

**B. Classification**

Cucumbers are classified in three classes 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 arc: 10 mm per 10 cm of length of the cucumber).

They must be free of 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:

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

The following 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 deformation, but excluding that caused by seed formation
- a slight defect in colouring, especially the light coloured part of the cucumber where it touched the ground during growth
- slight skin blemishes due to rubbing and handling or low temperature, providing that such blemishes have healed and do not affect the keeping quality.

(iii) **Class II**

This class includes cucumbers which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

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

- deformation other than serious seed development
- defects in colouring up to one-third of the surface (in the case of cucumbers grown under protection, considerable defects in colouring in the affected part are not allowed)

- healed cracks
- slight damage caused by rubbing and handling which does not seriously affect the keeping quality and appearance.

The defects listed above are allowed for straight and slight crooked cucumbers.

On the other hand, crooked cucumbers are allowed only if they have no more than slight defects in colouring and have no defects or deformation other than crookedness.

Slightly crooked cucumbers may have a maximum height of the arc of 20 mm per 10 cm of length.

Crooked cucumbers may have a greater arc and must be packed separately.

### **III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING**

Size is determined by the weight of the cucumbers.

- (i) The minimum weight of cucumbers grown in the open is set at 180 g; the minimum weight of cucumbers grown under protection is set at 250 g.
- (ii) Moreover, "Extra" Class and Class I cucumbers grown under protection weighing:
  - 500 g or more must be not less than 30 cm long
  - between 250 and 500 g must be not less than 25 cm long.
- (iii) Sizing is compulsory for classes "Extra" and I.

The differences in weight between the heaviest and lightest cucumbers in the same package must not exceed:

- 100 g where the lightest piece weighs between 180 and 400 g
  - 150 g where the lightest piece weighs 400 g or more.
- (iv) The provisions concerning sizing are not applicable to "short cucumbers" or "mini cucumbers".

### **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*

5 per cent by number of cucumbers not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class I, or exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

*(ii) Class I*

10 per cent by number of cucumbers not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class II, or exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

*(iii) Class II*

10 per cent by number of cucumbers satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements, with the exception of produce affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption. Within this tolerance, a maximum of 2 per cent by number of fruit may have tips with a bitter taste.

**B. Size tolerances**

For all classes: 10 per cent by number of cucumbers not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing. However, this tolerance is applicable only to produce which 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 transport.

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 or 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.

## VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING

Each package<sup>1</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              |
| and/or     | ) | officially issued or             |
| Dispatcher | ) | accepted code mark. <sup>2</sup> |

### B. Nature of produce

- "Cucumbers" if the contents are not visible from the outside
- "under protection", where appropriate, or an equivalent expression
- "short cucumbers" or "mini cucumbers" as appropriate.

### C. Origin of produce

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

### D. Commercial specifications

- Class, followed where appropriate by the words "crooked cucumbers" in the case of Class II
- Size (if sized) expressed in minimum and maximum weight
- Number of units (optional).

### E. Official control mark (optional)

Published 1964  
Last revised 1989  
The UNECE Standard for Cucumbers  
has led to an explanatory brochure published by the OECD

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</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)" has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.