

**Economic Commission for Europe**

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

**Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards**

**Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**

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Item 3 (f) of the provisional agenda

**Revision of UNECE standards**

**Revision of UNECE standards – Sweet peppers**

**Proposals by the delegation of the Netherlands**

## PROPOSAL THE NETHERLANDS

### 1. Introduction

Sweet pepper production is becoming more and more professional. Better growing techniques are combined with varieties producing fruits that are larger and have a thicker pericarp. At the same time the market share of prepackages with two or three colors of sweet peppers is still growing.

Those developments fit less well with the provisions for sizing as laid down in the UNECE Standard and EU Regulation 543/2011. Actually, these provisions reflect the situation from the past and no longer meet today's market demands. Therefore, The Netherlands propose to reconsider the current sorting provisions to create more possibilities for traders and reduce losses due to repacking of products.

### 2. Current sizing provisions

In the standard is defined that size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section or by weight. To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed:

- a) For sweet peppers sized by diameter:
  - 20 mm
- b) For sweet peppers sized by weight:
  - 30 g where the heaviest piece weighs 180 g or less,
  - 40 g where the smallest piece weighs more than 180 g

### 3. Problem

In the market is an increasing demand for sweet peppers sized by weight. Since there is no option "and more" in the current sizing provisions (comparable to tomato with 102 mm and more), there is a lot of fragmentation in logistics, (reminding that multiple colors are packed), because there are no techniques that can handle sorting by diameter and by weight at the same time.

Sizing by diameter results in a less uniform product when compared to sizing by weight. This can be seen in picture 1. When sized by diameter 80 to 100 mm, fruit weight varies between 120 and 271 g. Another example is picture 2 where the fruit weight lies between 180 and 240 g and the range for the diameter is between 90 and 100 mm.

### 4. Proposal

Broadening of the provisions for sizing by weight could take place, resulting in more uniform and homogeneous lots of sweet peppers compared to sizing by diameter.

Best option from the weight point of view would then be to eliminate the maximum difference of 40 g between fruits in the same package when the smallest fruit weighs more than 180 g. In terms of sizing by diameter this would compare to "80 mm and more", i.e. above the size of 80 mm there is no longer a limit to the maximum difference between produce in the same package. This may be a bridge too far.

Second best alternative is to increase the difference in weight between produce in the same package from 40 to 80 g. And when the smallest fruit weighs more than 260 g there is no limit at all. From uniformity point of view this would give the same result as 80 to 100 mm. (see pictures 3,4, and 5)

Both options do not effect the current provisions for sizing by diameter. However, it increases the uniformity when sizing by weight. And that is fulfilling market demands.

### 5. Summary proposal

For sweet peppers sized by weight:

- 30 g where the heaviest piece weighs 180 g or less,
- 80 g where the lightest piece weighs 180 g but less than 260 g
- For more than 260 g no limit



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5