



---

**Economic Commission for Europe****Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards****Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards****Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce****Sixty-seventh session**

Geneva, 15—17 June 2020

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**Review of existing UNECE standards****Recommendation for Prunes \*****Submitted by the secretariat**

The following document is submitted by the delegation from France and contains amendments included at the 2019 session of the Specialized Section and new proposals. The Recommendation was extended for another 1-year trial period by the Working Party at its 2019 session.

Provisions placed in square brackets indicate text for consultation during the trial period. Provisions on sizing parameters and the table of tolerances are under review and the delegation from France, the leader of the working group, will present revised proposals.

This document is submitted according to ECE/CTCS/2019/10 section IV, ECE/CTCS/2019/2 Decision 2019-8.6, and A/74/6 (Sect.20) and supplementary information.

**Prunes <sup>1</sup>****I. Definition of produce**

This standard applies to dried ripe plums (prunes) of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Prunus domestica* L. intended for direct consumption or for food when intended to be mixed with other products for direct consumption without further processing. This standard does not apply to prunes that are processed by salting, sugaring, flavouring or roasting or for industrial processing.

Prunes may be presented in one of the following styles:

---

\* Submitted on the above date to allow for comments on the proposed amendments.

<sup>1</sup> In some countries “prunes” is used interchangeably with “dried plums”. For ease of reading, the word “prunes” is used throughout the text. Anywhere it appears in the standard, the words “dried plums” can be substituted, including in the marking provisions.

- Whole, unpitted from which pits have not been removed
- Whole, pitted; from which pits have been removed

## II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for prunes at the export-control stage, after preparation and packaging.

However, after export, the holder shall be responsible for observing the requirements of the standard. The holder/seller of products not in conformity with this standard may not display such products or offer them for sale or deliver or market them in any other manner.

### A. Minimum requirements<sup>2</sup>

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the prunes must be:

- Without peduncle;
- fleshy, the flesh being elastic and pliable
- sound, produce being affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for human consumption is excluded
- clean, practically free from any visible foreign matter<sup>3</sup>
- free from living pests, whatever their stage of development
- free from damage caused by pests, including the presence of dead insects and/or mites, their debris or excreta
- free from damage to skin and/or flesh affecting in aggregate more than 20 mm in diameter such as:
  - callous growth-cracks, occurring at the ends of prunes, scars, splits or breaks
  - Splits or breaks exposing a substantial part of the flesh and seriously affecting the appearance of the fruit
  - Cracks, splits or breaks down to the stone in unpitted prunes
- free from mould filaments visible to the naked eye
- free of fermentation
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of foreign smell and/or taste

The condition of the prunes must be such as to enable them:

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

---

<sup>2</sup> Definitions of terms and defects are listed in Annex III of the Standard Layout — Recommended terms and definition of defects for standards of dry (Inshell Nuts and Nut Kernels) and dried produce. See [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayout\\_DDP\\_e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayout_DDP_e.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> [Added ingredients are not considered as foreign material, provided they are not prohibited by the legislation of the importing country.]

**B. Moisture content<sup>4</sup>**

Prunes shall have a moisture content not exceeding 35.0 per cent.

However, prunes with a moisture content exceeding 35.0 per cent should be labelled as high moisture or equivalent denomination.

Prunes may be treated with preservatives or by other means, (e.g. pasteurization).

**C. Classification**

In accordance with the defects allowed in section “IV. Provisions concerning tolerances”, prunes are classified into the following classes:

Class I and Class II.

The defects allowed must not affect the general appearance of the produce as regards quality, keeping quality and presentation in the package.

**III. Provisions concerning sizing**

Sizing of prunes is done by the number of prunes in 500 g (or in 1 lb (453 g)),

Pitted prunes must be sized before pitting. To ensure uniformity in size, one of the following must be applied.

**a. [Size nomenclature]***Designation per 500 g (**European designations**)*

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Number of prunes per 500 g</i>
Super giant	not more than 33 prunes
Giant	from 34 to 44 prunes
Very large	from 44 to 55 prunes
Large	from 55 to 66 prunes
Medium	from 66 to 77 prunes
Small	from 77 to 99 prunes
Very small	more than 99 prunes

*Designation per pound (**American designations**)*

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Number of prunes per pound (453 g)</i>
Extra large	from [36] to [43] prunes
Large	from [43] to [53] prunes
Medium	from [53] to [67] prunes
Small	from [67] to [85] prunes

*The delegation of France proposes 2 options for sizing designations.*

<sup>4</sup> The moisture content is determined by one of the methods given in Annex I of the Standard Layout – Determination of the moisture content for dried produce. See [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayoutDDP\\_e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayoutDDP_e.pdf). The laboratory reference method shall be used in cases of dispute.

Option 1: Use the “European designations” and harmonize.

Option 2: Use both the “European designations” and “American designations” (as was done in the 2003 standard).

Comment: *France prefers to start with the “European designations” and proposes that the number of prunes per pound be consistent with the number of prunes per 500g.*

**b. [Numerical categories]**

Size categories may also be described numerically by the range of average count per 500 g or per pound (453g), for example: 30/40; 35/45; 90/120 etc.

**c. [“Pressure-pitted prunes”]**

Sizing of pressure-pitted prunes is optional **unless they are sold in packages intended for the consumer.**

**d. Uniformity of size**

[Comment of France: *Uniformity of size should apply to all type of prunes and not only pressure-pitted prunes.*]

Prunes packed in accordance with the sizing methods established in this standard must be reasonably uniform in size.

In a sample of 5 kg of fruit taken from a given consignment, the difference between the number of the smallest prunes and that of the largest prunes per 500 g must not exceed:

- 25 for consignments of prunes of sizes ranging from 44 to 55 prunes per 500 g;
- 35 for consignments of prunes of sizes ranging from 55 to 77 prunes per 500 g;
- 45 for consignments of prunes containing more than 77 prunes per 500 g.

**The difference is calculated by reference to 10 per cent (by weight) of the sample for the smallest prunes and 10 per cent (by weight) for the largest.** [Comment of France: *The size tolerance is in the table below.*]

## IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

At all marketing stages, tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the minimum characteristics of the class indicated.

### [A. Quality tolerances]

<i>Defects allowed (percentages by weight or number)</i>	<i>Unpitted Prunes</i>		<i>Pitted prunes</i>	
	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>
(a) Tolerance for produce not meeting the minimum requirements	10	[15]	10	15
of which no more than				
Non-characteristic colour and texture	10	15	10	15
End cracks	10	15	10	15
Rotten, deterioration <sup>5</sup> ,	1	2	0.5	2
Mould <sup>6</sup>	0.5	1		
Skin or flesh damage, calluses, heat injury	[6	10	2	4]
Pest damage	2	4	2	4

<i>Defects allowed (percentages by weight or number)</i>	<i>Unpitted Prunes</i>		<i>Pitted prunes</i>	
	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>
Fermentation	1	2	1	2
Living pests	0	0	0	0
(b) Size tolerances	10	10	10	10
For produce not conforming to the size indicated, if sized	10	10	10	10
(c) Tolerances for other defects				
Foreign matter (of vegetable origin)	1	1	1	1
Foreign matter (of mineral origin)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Among pitted prunes, whole pits and pieces of pits			[0.5] [2]	[2.0] [4]

## V. Provisions concerning presentation

### A. Uniformity

The contents of each package<sup>7</sup> must be uniform and contain only prunes of the same origin, quality and size (if sized), and variety or commercial type if indicated.

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

Prunes in Class I must be of the same variety or the same commercial type.

### B. Packaging

Prunes must be packed in such a way so as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be clean and of a quality so 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.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter in accordance with the table of tolerances in section “IV. Provisions concerning tolerances”.

## VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package<sup>8</sup> must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:

<sup>5 6</sup> **The national legislation of France do not permit tolerances for produce affected by mould or rot or the presence of dead or living insects.**

<sup>7</sup> [Proposal to include definitions in the glossary of terms:

**Package:** Individual packages conceived to facilitate handling and transport of a number of sales packages or of produce loose or arranged, in order to prevent damage caused by handling, transport, or contaminants (for example cartons, plastic bags, pallet boxes, etc.). The package may constitute a sales package. Road, rail, ship and air containers are not considered as packages.

**Sales package:** Individual packages conceived to constitute a sales unit to the final user or consumer at the point of purchase.

Pre-packages are sales packages such as the packaging enclosing the foodstuff completely or only partially, but in such a way that the contents cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging. Protective films covering a single produce are not considered as pre-packages.]

<sup>8</sup> These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages.

**A. Identification**

Packer and/or dispatcher/shipper:

Name and physical address (e.g. street/city/region/postal code and, if different from the country of origin, the country) or a code mark officially recognized by the national authority.<sup>9</sup>

**B. Nature of produce**

- Name of the produce: the words “prunes” “dried plums”, “unpitted prunes” “prunes with pits” “pitted prunes” or “pressure-pitted prunes”
- **Moisture content indicated by "Maximum moisture content XX per cent"**

**C. Origin of produce**

- Country of origin<sup>10</sup> and, optionally, the district where grown or the national, regional or local place name

**D. Commercial specifications**

- class
- size expressed in accordance with the provisions of section III, either:
  - as the minimum and maximum number of prunes contained in 500g or 1 lb (453 g), by “X/Y prunes per 500 g”; or
  - by the corresponding designation, followed by the minimum and maximum number of prunes contained in 500 g or 1 lb (453 g)
- crop year (optional)
- “Best before” followed by the date (optional)
- net weight.

**E. Official control mark (optional)**

---

---

<sup>9</sup> The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in cases 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 with the ISO 3166 (alpha) country code of the recognizing country, if it is not the country of origin.

<sup>10</sup> The full name or commonly used name should be given.