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**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-eighth session**

Geneva, 16—18 June 2021

Item 5(a) of the provisional agenda

**Review of existing standards****Proposed revised Recommendation for prunes \*****Submitted by the secretariat**

The following proposals (highlighted) were submitted by the delegations of France, Germany, Kyrgyz Republic, United States and Uzbekistan for consideration by the Specialized Section. The Specialized Section is invited to continue discussions on the outstanding items and the proposals elaborated by the Rapporteur (France).

This document is submitted according to ECE/CTCS/2019/10 section IV, ECE/CTCS/2019/2 Decision 2019-8.6, and A/75/6 (Sect.20) and supplementary information.

**I. Definition of produce**

This standard applies to dried ripe plums (prunes<sup>1</sup>) 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:

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

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\* Submitted late due to secretariat resource constraints.

<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.

## 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>

*Comment by France:* Footnote for foreign matter to maintain.

- 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

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

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

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<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.]

<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/>

*Comment by the United States:* recommends replacing 35.0 with 25.0 per cent.

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

*Comment by the United States:* recommends replacing 35.0 with 25.0 per cent.

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). These stated designations are not correlated.

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

*Comment by the United States:* replacing “before” with “after”.

*Comment by Germany:* This sentence is taken from the original version but it is strange. When the size is indicated on the package, this information is taken to check whether it is true. But if the basis for the indication is something that has disappeared (unpitted prunes) – what does this information mean to an inspector or a consumer or a trader who is not familiar with this sizing method? Traditional habits are nice but are they still relevant today? Wouldn't it be better to require the indication of size for pitted prunes?

*Comment by France:* There is no tool to size the product after pitting. The only possibility is to control and sort fruits after pitting, though the production will have an extra cost.

Also the production countries could agree on a new size nomenclature for pitted prunes. This will need time.

#### a. [Size nomenclature]

*Designation per 500 g (European designations)*

*Comment by France:* If only one of the sizing designations from 2003 standard may be maintained, FR wants to keep the sizing named “European designation”. We think the number of prunes per pound have to be consistent with the number of prunes per 500g. If there is no agreement found, FR suggests to keep both designations: European designation and American designation as in 2003 standard.

*Comment by the United States:* US recommends “Designation per 500 g” and “Designation per pound”.

*Comment by Germany:* In an international standard, we should avoid terms like “European” or “American designation”. It should be appropriate to allow both systems “designation by 500 g” and “designation by pound”. Knowing that there is no simple conversion from one system to the other. The designations are independent.

*Comment by France:* If we should avoid using “European” or “American” designation, it is necessary to indicate in the A section: “The two following designations are independent.”

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Number of prunes per 500 g</i>
Super giant	not more than <u>33</u> 32 prunes
Giant	from 33 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

*Comment by France (March 2021)* We propose a new table below for sizing, after pitting, for 500 g,

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Number of prunes per 500 g</i>
Super giant	from 34 to 50 prunes
Giant	from 40 to 56 prunes
Very large	from 58 to 74 prunes
Large	from 72 to 88 prunes
Medium	from 88 to 104 prunes
Small	from 104 to 120 prunes
Very small	more than 120 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 <i>Comment by United States:</i> Replace “from [36] to” with “not more than”
Large	from [43] to [53] prunes <i>Comment by United States:</i> Replace “43” with “44”
Medium	from [53] to [67] prunes <i>Comment by United States:</i> Replace “53” with “54”
Small	from [67] to [85] prunes <i>Comment by United States:</i> Replace “67” with “68”

**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

*Comment by United States:* Remove “unless they are sold in packages intended for the consumer” - not necessary.

*Comment by Kyrgyzstan:* Regarding, not having Pressure pitted, agree that uniformity of size should be for all types of pitted prunes.

**d. Uniformity of size**

*Comment by France:* Missing title added: d. ‘Uniformity of size’. Without that title, it can be confusing because it looks like the text about uniformity of size is related to c. ‘pressure pitted prunes’

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

*Comment by United States:* Agree that uniformity is for all prunes.

*Comment by Kyrgyzstan:* Regarding not having pressure pitted, agree that uniformity of size should be for all types of pitted prunes.

*Comment by Uzbekistan:* Support uniformity of sizing with regards to pressure pitted prunes and not pressure pitted prunes.

Actually, there should be no difference with regard to method of pitting, mechanical or electrical as long as outlook of prunes is commercially acceptable. Actually, we better remove this C section.

Otherwise, lets return to 2003 edition DDP 07 where there are only Pitted Prunes with 2 cuts (Class I) and Pressure Pitted Prunes (Class II). I think in this case, runes from Central Asian countries have more chances be classified as Class I.

*Comment by France:* The quality of the pressure pitted prunes is not the same as the classic ones. So we want to maintain section C. Otherwise we agree to maintain the 2003 edition DDP 07.

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 by United States:* delete sentence above “The difference ...”

*Comment by France:* To maintain; the deletion was an error because this is a part of the calculation procedure for the uniformity of size.

*Comment by 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>Comment by France: It is important to maintain the weight only because having both could be misleading in business relationship between the buyer and the seller.</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
<i>Comment by United States:</i>	6[8]	8[10]	6[8]	8[10]
Rotten, deterioration*	1	2	0.5	2
Mould *	0.5	1	0.5	1
Skin or flesh damage, calluses, heat injury				
<i>Comment by United States:</i>	[6 [2	10 4	2	4]
Pest damage	2	4	2	4
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
<i>Comment by France: The tolerance is already integrated in the method described in section D.</i>				
(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, by number <i>Comment by United States:</i>			[0.5] [2] 1 recommends 0.5% for both Classes, as there should be no effect of pitting for safety due to quality differences between Class I and II.	[2.0] [4] 1 recommen ds 0.5% for both

\*The national legislation of France does not permit tolerances for produce affected by mould or rot or the presence of dead or living insects.

## V. Provisions concerning presentation

### A. Uniformity

The contents of each package<sup>5</sup> must be uniform and contain only prunes of the same origin, quality and size (if sized), and variety of 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>6</sup> must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:

<sup>5</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>6</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>7</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”
- Name of the variety (optional)

*Comment by France:* The plum variety used has a real impact on the quality of the prunes. And so on the price. Thus this information is very important for the traders and the customer.

- [For prunes with a high moisture content, indicated by "Maximum moisture content [XX] per cent"]

## C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin<sup>8</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” “X/Y prunes per pound”; 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)

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<sup>7</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>8</sup> The full name or commonly used name should be given.