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Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Revised standard for courgettes

Submitted by the secretariat

Summary

The following document is submitted to the Working Party for adoption as a revised United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) standard FFV-41 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of courgettes.

The document is based on the document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2010/INF.43, adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-sixth session in 2010. It incorporates revisions to the provisions on sizing discussed at the seventy-second session of Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1) on 6–8 May 2024 and agreed through intersessional approval.



UNECE standard FFV-41 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of courgettes

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to courgettes, harvested young and tender, before their seeds have become firm, of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Cucurbita pepo* L. Zucchini Group to be supplied fresh to the consumer, courgettes for industrial processing being excluded.

This standard also covers courgettes presented with the flower.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for courgettes after preparation and packaging.

However, if applied at stages following export/dispatch, products may show in relation to the requirements of the standard:

- a slight lack of freshness and turgidity
- for products graded in classes other than the “Extra” Class, 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/seller 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 courgettes and courgettes with the flower must be:

- intact with stalk, which may be slightly damaged
- 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
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

In addition the fruit must be:

- firm
- free of cavities
- free of splits
- sufficiently developed, without over-development of the seeds.

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

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

B. Classification

Courgettes are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

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

They must be:

- well developed
- well formed
- with the stalk neatly cut and of a maximum length of 3 cm.

They must be free from defects, 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

Courgettes in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

The courgettes must include a stalk of a maximum length of 3 cm.

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 defects in colouring
- slight skin defects
- very slight defects due to diseases provided that they are not progressive and do not affect the flesh.

(iii) Class II

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

The following defects may be allowed, provided the courgettes retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape
- defects in colouring
- slight sun-scorching
- skin defects
- slight defects due to diseases provided that they are not progressive and do not affect the flesh.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined either by length measured between the junction of the stalk and the end of the fruit tip, or by weight of the unit.

(a) For sizing by length:

The minimum length shall be 7 cm.

To ensure uniformity in size, the difference in size between the courgettes in a package shall not exceed 7 cm when the shortest courgette is 21 cm or shorter, and 14 cm if the shortest courgette is longer than 21 cm. Uniformity is not required when the shortest courgette is 35 cm or longer.

(b) For sizing by weight:

The minimum weight shall be 50 g.

To ensure uniformity in size, the difference in size between the courgettes in a package shall not exceed 50 g when the lightest courgette is 225 g or less, and 100 g if the lightest courgette weighs more than 225 g. Uniformity is not required when the lightest courgette weighs 450 g or more.

Uniformity in size is compulsory for Classes “Extra” and I.

The size requirements shall apply neither to miniature produce¹ nor to courgettes presented with the flower.

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 requirements of the class indicated.²

A. Quality tolerances

(i) “Extra” Class

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of courgettes 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 courgettes 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 produce satisfying neither the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements, or of produce affected by decay.

(iii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of courgettes 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 produce affected by decay.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes (if sized): a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of courgettes not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed.

¹ Miniature product means a variety or cultivar of vegetable, obtained by plant breeding and/or special cultivation techniques. All other requirements of the standard must be met.

² A conformity check shall be made by assessing primary or composite samples. It is based on the principle of presumption that the quality of the randomly taken samples is representative of the quality of the lot. The OECD Operating Rules for Conformity Checks are recommended for application – also by operators – at the stages of dispatch as well as in wholesale and distribution centres and storerooms of food retail.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only courgettes of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized), and appreciably the same degree of development and colouring.

However, a mixture of courgettes of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours may be packed together in a package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each commercial type and/or colour concerned, in origin. However, in case of those mixtures uniformity in size is not required.

Miniature courgettes and courgettes with the flower must be reasonably uniform in size. Miniature courgettes may be mixed with other miniature products of a different type and origin.

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

B. Packaging

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

Stickers individually affixed to the produce shall be such that, when removed, they neither leave visible traces of glue, nor lead to skin defects. Information lasered on single fruit should not lead to flesh or 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 and/or dispatcher/exporter:

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 authority⁴ if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry.⁵ In the case where there is no street address available, the physical address can be made up of the name of the farm or facility, the nearest village, town, region, and postal code; or GPS

³ These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages bearing these particulars. However, they do apply to sales packages (pre-packages) presented individually.

⁴ 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)” must be indicated in close connection with the code mark, and the code mark should be preceded with the ISO 3166 (alpha-2) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

⁵ See <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/codemarkregistry.html>.

coordinates and a PO Box address together with nearest town, region and country shall be accepted as a physical address.⁶

B. Nature of produce

- “Courgettes”, “Courgettes with the flower” or equivalent denomination if the contents are not visible from the outside.
- “Mixture of courgettes”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of courgettes. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the commercial types and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁷ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.
- In the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of courgettes of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the commercial type and/or colour concerned.
- In the case of a mixture of miniature produce of different species of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the species concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size (if sized) expressed as:
 - minimum and maximum lengths or
 - minimum and maximum weights.
- Mini courgettes, baby courgettes, or equivalent denomination for miniature produce.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1988

Last revised 2024

Aligned with the Standard Layout 2023

⁶ Reservation by the United States of America on the use of a PO Box address, as it may not allow facility inspections or rapid intervention in case of recalls, and is not part of its national labelling requirement related to packer and/or dispatcher/exporter.

⁷ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.