

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Trade

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

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

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Alignment of standards with 2009 Standard Layout

This document presents the position of FRESHFEL on the UNECE Standard for Citrus Fruit.

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Dear Mr Malanitchev,

Freshfel would like to raise your attention to the UNECE Standard FFV-14, concerning the marketing and commercial quality control, of citrus fruit. With a view of your forthcoming discussion early November on this issue and after the discussion with our members, we would like to provide some comments on this topic.

In the latest draft for revision of UNECE Standard FFV-14 citrus fruit which will be discussed in Geneva during the sixty-sixth session, 1-3 November 2010, an additional paragraph was added as follows:

- With respect to coloring, fruit may be marked in their natural color provided they meet the limits as set out for juice content, minimum sugar content and minimum sugar/acid ratio, as specified for their species concerned and the fruit is labeled Green-skinned fruit.

We would like to point out that introducing the terms "natural colour" to refer to green citrus could create confusion and might affect negatively the consumption, based on the following reasons:

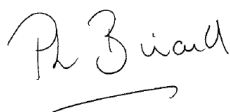
- Color is an important commercial parameter. Overall, international trade is based on "orange color" oranges and mandarins, and the consumer identifies these fruits with this color;
- The external appearance and mainly citrus color, is used by consumers as an indication of its quality. In the case of oranges and mandarins if they are marketed in green color, probably it would create a negative effect on the consumption level;
- The standard must reflect the characteristics and normal practices, rather than the reflecting the exceptions;
- The wording "natural color" could lead to misinterpretation by the consumer.

From the point of view of the inspection, free marketing of green-skinned citrus fruit (not including green oranges produced under conditions of high humidity and temperature) would lead to the obligation of controlling each lot at the beginning of the season in order to verify the internal maturity. Since this is not possible in practice, unripe fruit could be presented in the market with negative consequences.

Moreover, from a trade perspective, we believe the provisions set in the FFV-14 (version 2009) suffice to allow the marketing of tropical oranges, as specific provisions were already provided in regard to oranges produced in areas with high temperatures and high relative humidity conditions allowing for these oranges a green color exceeding one fifth of the surface area of the fruit provided they satisfy the minimum requirements as to juice content.

We take the opportunity of this letter to confirm our support for a sugar /acid ration to be kept at 6.5 for oranges.

Yours sincerely,



General Delegate
Freshfel Europe