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Glossary of terms

Glossary of terms used in UNECE and Codex standards on fresh fruits and vegetables

Prepared by the Codex Electronic Working Group led by France* **

I. Introduction

The regulations of fruits and vegetables have changed considerably since 2007. In the European Union, the Common Market Organization (CMO), in the sector of fruits and vegetables was reformed to improve the competitiveness of the sector, to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables while protecting the environment; and to answer a will of administrative simplification. The development of the European regulation has acquired a global reach.

At its fourteenth session, the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables agreed to establish an electronic Working Group to prepare a glossary of terms used in the proposed Layout for Codex standards on fresh fruits and vegetables with particular regard to the definitions of "Extra" Class, Class I and Class II. At its fifth-eighth session, the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh fruits and Vegetables decided to pursue this work on a glossary of terms used on UNECE and Codex standards.

* The present document has been submitted late due to delayed inputs from other sources.

** The following Members participated in the electronic Working Group: Argentina, Australia, Bhutan, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, European Community, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Slovak Republic, Thailand and United States of America.

II. Domain of application

The work on these definitions has for objective to facilitate the interpretation and implementation of the provisions within UNECE and Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables.

III. Terms and definitions

The project of presented glossary contains propositions of definitions followed by an asterisk which allows relating to the title of the document source in the bibliography of annex 1. Defined terms follow bellow the same sequential order as the UNECE and Codex standards. An alphabetical classification of the defined terms is given in annex 2.

1.1. *Variety* means a plant grouping within a single botanical taxon of the lowest known rank, which grouping, irrespective of whether the conditions for the grant of a breeder's right are fully met, can be defined by the expression of the characteristics resulting from a given genotype or combination of genotypes distinguished from any other plant grouping by the expression of at least one of the said characteristics and considered as a unit with regard to its suitability for being propagated unchanged (see annex 1, para. 1).

1.2. *Commercial varieties*: A term which suggests connection of produce with a market and his marketing characteristic while *variety* or *cultivar* (cultivated varieties, bred by a human) associates with morphological characteristic of not only the produce itself i.e. fruit, root, shoot, leaves prepared to marketing but whole plant which represents given variety.

Using this term is adequate with reference to section 1 of each standard defining produce as an object of trade.

Further in classification where produce is described more precisely according to his morphological characteristic the term *variety* or *cultivar* is more suitable.

1.4. *Commercial types*: Produce with similar technical characteristics and/or appearance, but which may belong to different varieties.

1.5. *Industrial processing*: Operation distinct from conditioning or packaging which involves a substantial modification of the product or its form of presentation, such as freezing, heating, peeled, cut-up, or shredded prior to being packaged for sale.

In the Standard Layout for Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, products for industrial processing are excluded.

2.1. *Intact*: The fruit or vegetable product as it was harvested, but which may have been subjected to trimming. The edible part of the fruit or vegetable is not damaged and does not have any mutilations or injury spoiling the integrity of the produce by any means.

2.2. *Sound*: Products must be free from disease or serious deterioration (such as decay, breakdown, freezing damage, or soft or shrivelled specimens) that appreciably affects their appearance, edibility, the keeping quality of the produce or market value.

2.3. *Clean*: Practically free of visible soil, food residue, dust, or other visible foreign matter.

2.4. *Practically free*: Product of a consignment, lot or shipment, without defects, blemishes or damage in numbers or quantities in excess of those that can be expected to result from, and be consistent with good cultural and handling practices employed in the production and marketing of the commodity.

2.5. Visible foreign matter: Any visible and/or apparent matter or material not usually associated with fruits and vegetables.

2.6. Pests: “Pest” means any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent who is injurious or potentially injurious, whether directly or indirectly, to plants or to products or by-products of plants, and includes any plant prescribed as a pest.

2.7. Damage caused by pests: Injury caused by pests resulting in holes, burrows, excavations or unhealed scarring, loss of value or usefulness or having an effect on the soundness of the produce. Such loss may be economic (effects value), or affect the aesthetics (appearance affected) of the produce.

2.8. Fresh appearance: Appearance of fruits and vegetables that display, at the time of sale, similar visual characteristics to the fruit or vegetable recently harvested (i.e., colour, texture, firmness, not wilted or shrivelled and no signs of senescence).

2.9. Development: Fruits and vegetables development is dependent of the characteristics of each product. Moreover, factors such as product innate characteristics, its ability to withstand handling, transportation and storage determine the “market stage of development” at which the product is harvested. Scientifically, fruit development is divided into the following stages:

1. Growth: a period of cell division and enlargement results in increased mass or dimensions of the product
2. Maturation: this is usually reached at the end of the growth stage and may include increase in sugar content, flavour development, changes in ground colour
3. Ripe: fully developed or matured and ready to be eaten marked by increase in organoleptic qualities of smell and taste
4. Senescence: a chemical synthesizing stage that leads to the deterioration of the product.

3.1. Classification: Distribution in classes according to a certain order. Any grouping of fruit or vegetables that have the same commercial quality conditions. Classification results in the creation of mutually exclusive stable categories (e.g., each specimen of product can only be allocated to one category without duplication or omission) creating a recognizable standard of identity or recognition for a product.

3.1.1. “Extra” Class: Fruit or vegetables of superior quality. This class shall have the characteristics of the variety or commercial type, shall fulfil the minimum requirements established for the product, and shall be exempt of any defect, which can affect internal quality of fruit or vegetable. Products of this class, which have a defined shape, shall not have deformations. If these products have superficial defects, these defects shall not exceed 5% in weight or count of fruit or vegetable (see annex 1, para. 3).

3.1.2. Class I: Fruit or vegetables which shall have the characteristics of the variety or commercial type, shall fulfil the minimum requirements established for the product, and shall be exempt of any defect which affects the internal quality of fruit or vegetable. Products of this class which have a defined shape may have slight deformations. Superficial defects shall not exceed 10% in weight or count of fruit or vegetable (see annex 1, para. 3).

3.1.3. Class II: Fruit or vegetable which cannot be classified in Categories Extra and I, and which has to meet the minimum requirements established for the product. It shall be free from any defect which affects the internal quality of the fruit or vegetable. Products of this class which have a defined shape may have deformations. Superficial defects shall not exceed 15% of the fruit or vegetable (see annex 1, para. 3).

3.2. *Flesh/pulp*: The fleshy and edible part of the whole fruit, if appropriate, without the peel, skin, seeds, pips and similar parts (see annex 1, para. 4).

3.3. *Sizing*: The classification of fruits and vegetables based on their physical dimensions such as diameter, weight or volume. Size may be expressed in a variety of ways, such as in terms of diameter of the equatorial section. Sizing may be carried out with reference to:

1. A scale (range) or to a series of intervals defined by a minimum and a maximum size; an indication of a minimum size and minimum weight
2. Count- the number of individual units per package
3. The weight of each unit
4. The length or the diameter measured in an agreed method

3.4. *Tolerances* are provided to allow for human error during the grading and packing process. During grading and sizing it is not permitted to deliberately include out of grade produce, i.e. to exploit the tolerances deliberately. The tolerances are determined after examining each sample package and taking the average of all samples examined. The tolerances are stated in terms of percentage, by number or weight of produce in the total sample not conforming to the class or to the size indicated on the package.

4.1. *Quality tolerances*: Percentage (in weight or number) of maximum acceptable limits for physiological, morphological and pathological breakdown and physical damage affecting the appearance, organoleptic and other quality specifications permitted in a product or package of product.

4.2. *Tolerances for sizes*: Percentage (in weight or number) of the fruit or vegetable in a lot, which can be out of the size specifications permitted in a package of product. Tolerances for size establish a threshold for action to limit or control the variation in size permitted in a package of product.

5.1. *Presentation*: Way in which a product is exhibited for sale: (packaging, amount, weight) depending on: class of quality, commercial type, size, colour, origin, type of package. The visible part of the contents must be representative of the entire package

5.2. *Uniformity*: Fruit or vegetable which has similar characteristics mainly as the shape the size or weight and colour. The overall appearance of a product is not materially affected by significant variation. Generally, uniformity implies there is consistency in the overall appearance, , the quality, the size or the weight, the shape, the texture or the colour of a product. The term uniformity imposes a level of acceptable variability in a product.”

5.3. *Packaging*: Pre-packaged food: sale unit consisting of a foodstuff and the packaging that contains it prior to its presentation for sale, regardless of whether the said packaging covers it entirely or partially, provided that the contents cannot be altered without the packaging being opened or modified (see annex 1, para. 5). ***Packaging Material*:** Any containers such as cartons, boxes, cases or wrapping and covering material, as film and wax-paper (see annex 1, para.6).

5.4. *Packer*: Person or company responsible for the management of post-harvest processing and packing of fresh fruit and vegetables (see annex 1, para. 7).

A Packer would be a person (or company) who assembles product; whose activities may include sorting, trimming, sizing, waxing, grading/classifying, packing and labelling.

5.5. *Lot*: A quantity of a food material delivered at one time and known, or presumed, by the sampling officer to have uniform characteristics such as origin, producer, variety, packer, type of packing, markings, consignor, etc. (see annex 1, para. 8).

5.6. Bulk means unpacked food in direct contact with the contact surface of the food transportation unit and the atmosphere (can be powdered, granulated or in a liquid form or not)."

"Food transportation unit: Includes food transport vehicles or contact receptacles (such as containers, boxes, bins, bulk tanks) in vehicles, aircraft, railcars, trailers and ships and any other transport receptacles in which food is transported" (see annex 1, para. 9).

6.1. Accompanying documents: Sheets, bills of lading or commercial documents when they accompany foodstuffs to which they are related or when they are sent prior to or concurrent with the delivery (see annex 1, para. 5).

6.2. Dispatcher: Name of the company which sends the product. Means the handling and/or processing of food and its storage at the point of sale or delivery to the final consumer, and includes distribution terminals, catering operations, factory canteens, institutional catering, restaurants and other similar food service operations, shops, supermarket distribution centres and wholesale outlets (see annex 1, para.10).

6.3. Identification code: A permanent mark (code) uniquely identifying the origin and lot. It consists in a variety of numbers or codes may be present on a package or container within a lot. 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 country code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

6.4. Country of origin: Country in which the fruit or vegetable was grown and harvested.

7.1. Food Additives means "any substance not normally consumed as a food by itself and not normally used as a typical ingredient of the food, whether or not it has nutritive value, the intentional addition of which to food for a technological (including organoleptic) purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food results, or may be reasonably expected to result, (directly or indirectly) in it or its by-products becoming a component of or otherwise affecting the characteristics of such foods. The term does not include "contaminants" or substances added to food for maintaining or improving nutritional qualities." (see annex 1, paras. 11 and 12).

8.1. Hygiene: Food hygiene - all conditions and measures necessary to ensure the safety and suitability of food at all stages of the food chain.

Hygiene has the following two goals:

1. Safety, i.e. "assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use". Ensuring food safety means applying risk-control measures, the goal of which is to prevent, eliminate or reach an acceptable level of toxic and allergenic substances, pathogens and foreign bodies.
2. Suitability, i.e. "assurance that food is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use". Suitability means maintaining the organoleptic qualities that are characteristic of the foodstuff, for example by avoiding the introduction of contaminants that may affect the flavour (see annex 1, para. 13).

Annex I

Bibliography

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