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TEXTS FOR ADOPTION/EXTENSION AS UNECE RECOMMENDATIONS

Blanched Almond Kernels

Note by the secretariat

The Specialized Section has recommended to the Working Party to extend the trial period for this revised text of the UNECE Standard for Blanched Almond Kernels for one more year.

It is based on document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2007/6, the text of which was agreed upon at the June 2007 session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce.

UNECE STANDARD DDP-...
concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of

BLANCHED ALMOND KERNELS

I. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to sweet blanched almond kernels of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Prunus amygdalus* Batsch, syn. *Prunus dulcis* (Mill.) D.A. Webb, from which the tegument or skin of the kernel (episperm) has been removed, 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 blanched almond kernels that are processed by salting, sugaring, flavouring, or roasting or for industrial processing, nor to bitter blanched almond kernels marketed under this denomination.

II. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements of blanched almond kernels at the export control stage, after preparation and packaging.

However, if applied at stages following 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 requirements¹

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the blanched almond kernels must display the following characteristics:

- intact; however, slight superficial damage is not considered as a defect
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for human consumption is excluded
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- sufficiently developed. Shrunken and shrivelled kernels which are extremely flat and wrinkled, or with desiccated, dried out or tough portions affecting more than 25 per cent of the kernel, are to be excluded

¹ 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 http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayout_DDP_e.doc.

- free from blemishes, areas of discoloration or spread stains in pronounced contrast with the rest of the kernel affecting in aggregate more than 10 per cent of the surface of the kernel
- well formed (see specific provisions for twins or doubles)
- free from mould filaments visible to the naked eye
- 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 of abnormal external moisture
- free of foreign smell and/or taste
- free from rancidity
- free from gum (resinous substance) exceeding an aggregate area of 6 mm in diameter
- free from brown (slightly depressed brown spots caused by the stings of insects such as the box elder bug (*Leptocoris trivittatus* Say), exceeding an aggregate area of 3 mm in diameter.

The condition of the blanched almond kernels must be such as to enable them:

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

B. Moisture content²

The blanched almond kernels shall have a moisture content not exceeding 6.5 per cent.

C. Classification

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

“Extra” Class, Class I, 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 blanched almond kernels is mandatory for Extra Class and Class I, and optional for Class II.

² The moisture content is determined by one of the methods given in annex II of the Standard Layout – Determination of the moisture content for dry produce
<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayout_DDP_e.doc>. The laboratory reference method shall be used in cases of dispute.

When sized, size is determined by one of the following:

- Screening, are determined by the minimum diameter of the equatorial section of the blanched almond kernel, by means of round-holed or elongated-holed screens.
- Count, are determined by the number of the blanched almond kernels per 100 g or per ounce (28.3495 g).

(i) Sizing is expressed by an interval defined by a minimum and maximum size in millimetres, which must not exceed 2 mm of difference. When a range in count is specified, the blanched almond kernels shall be fairly³ uniform in size, and the average count shall be within the range specified.

(ii) Screening is expressed by a reference to a minimum size, in millimetres, followed by the words “and plus” or other equivalent wording, or by a reference to a maximum number of kernels per 100 g or per ounce, followed by the words “and less” or other equivalent wording.

IV. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

Tolerances in respect of quality and size are allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the minimum requirements of the class indicated.

[A. Quality tolerances

Defects allowed	Tolerances allowed		
	Percentage of defective blanched almond kernels by weight		
	Extra	Class I	Class II
(a) Tolerances for blanched almond kernels not satisfying the minimum requirements, Of which no more than	5	10	15
- Not sufficiently developed, shrunken and shrivelled	0.5	1.5	3
- Mouldy	0.5	0.5	1
- Rancid or damaged by pests, rotting or deterioration	3	5	10
- Gum, brown spot, blemishes and discoloration	4	7	10
- Bitter almonds (by count or by weight)	1	3	4

³ Fairly uniform in size means that, in a representative sample, the weight of 10 per cent, by count, of the largest whole kernels shall not exceed 1.7 times the weight of the 10 per cent, by count, of the smallest whole kernels.

Defects allowed	Tolerances allowed		
	Percentage of defective blanched almond kernels by weight		
	Extra	Class I	Class II
- Split, broken and halves ⁴	3	7	10
- Pieces ⁵	2	3	5
- live insects (by number)	0	0	0
(b) Tolerances for other defects			
-			
- Heat damage	3	6	10
- Foreign matter including loose shells, shell fragments, fragments of hull, dust (by weight)	0.10	0.15	0.20
- Blanched almonds belonging to other varieties than that indicated on the package	10	10	20
- Chipped and scratched ⁶	5	10	15
- Kernels with residues of adhering skin	2	3	6
- Doubles or twins ⁷	5	15	20]

For Extra Class and Class I, there may be a maximum of 10 per cent by weight of kernels belonging to different varieties or commercial types, from the same local production area. For Class II, where the variety or commercial type is indicated in the marking, a maximum tolerance of 20 per cent is allowed.

[B. Size tolerances

For all classes, when sizing or screening by diameter in millimetres, a maximum of 15 per cent, by weight, of blanched almond kernels not according to the size or screen indicated on the marking is allowed.

When sizing or screening by count the number of blanched almond kernels per 100 g or per ounce, no tolerance for counts above or below the specified range or screen shall be allowed.]

⁴ Split or broken kernels are mechanically damaged kernels from which more than one quarter of the kernel is missing. A half is a longitudinally split almond kernel of which the two halves (cotyledons) are separated.

⁵ Pieces are small fragments of blanched almond kernels which pass through a 10 mm round meshed sieve.

⁶ Chipped is a mechanically damaged kernel from which less than one quarter of the kernel is missing. Scratched is a kernel with mechanical marks on its surface; it is not considered as a defect scratched areas of less, in aggregate, than the equivalent of a circle of 3 mm in diameter.

⁷ When the marking indicates “without doubles” or “without twins”, these tolerances shall be reduced to 1 per cent for Extra Class and 3 per cent for Class I and Class II.

V. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only blanched almond kernels of the same origin, quality, size (if sized) and variety or commercial type (if indicated).

For “Extra” Class and Class I, the blanched almond kernels must be of the same variety and/or commercial type.

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

B. Packaging

Blanched almond kernels 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.

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

C. Presentation

Blanched almond kernels must be presented in bags or solid containers. All sales packages within each package must be of the same weight.

VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING

Each package⁸ must bear the following particulars in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked and visible from the outside:

⁸ Package units of produce prepacked for direct sale to the consumer shall not be subject to these marking provisions, but shall conform to national requirements. However, the markings referred to shall in any event be shown on the transport packaging containing such package units.

A. Identification

Packer and/or Dispatcher: 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 authority⁹.

B. Nature of produce

- “Blanched almond kernels” or “Blanched almonds”
- Name of the variety and/or commercial type (optional)
- Additional specifications (“without doubles” or “without twins”, etc., when appropriate).

C. Origin of produce

- country of origin and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- class
- size (if sized); expressed in millimetres (or by count per 100 g or per ounce) either by:
 - the minimum and the maximum diameters, or
 - the minimum diameter followed by the words “and plus” or other equivalent wording, or
 - the maximum diameter, followed by the words “and less” or other equivalent wording
- crop year
- “Best before” followed by the date (optional).

E. Official control mark (optional)

⁹ 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.