
UNECE STANDARD FFV-08

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

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NOTE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

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The present revised Standard for Brussels Sprouts is based on document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2010/INF.38, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-sixth session.

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Please contact us at the following address with any comments or enquiries:

Agricultural Standards Unit
Economic Cooperation and Trade Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Email: agrstandards@un.org

UNECE standard FFV-08 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of brussels sprouts

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to brussels sprouts being the axillary buds of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Brassica oleracea* var. *gemmifera* DC. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, brussels sprouts for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for brussels sprouts 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
- 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 brussels sprouts must be:

- intact
- 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
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The stem of trimmed brussels sprouts must be cut just beneath the outer leaves. The stem of untrimmed brussels sprouts must show a clean fracture at the base without other parts of the plant adhering.

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

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

B. Classification

Brussels sprouts are classified in two classes, as defined below:

(i) Class I

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

They must be:

- firm
- well closed
- free of damage caused by frost
- well coloured for trimmed brussels sprouts.

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
- slightly discoloured basal leaves for untrimmed brussels sprouts
- slight skin defects
- slight damage to the outer leaves.

(ii) Class II

This class includes brussels sprouts that do not qualify for inclusion in Class I but satisfy the minimum requirements specified above.

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

- defects in shape
- defects in colouring
- skin defects
- slight lack in firmness
- less closed, but not open
- slight damage due to frost.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section.

The minimum diameter is:

- 10 mm for trimmed brussels sprouts
- 15 mm for untrimmed brussels sprouts.

To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed 20 mm.

Uniformity in size is compulsory for Class I.

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.¹

A. Quality tolerances

(i) Class I

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of brussels sprouts 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.

(ii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of brussels sprouts 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 brussels sprouts not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

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

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

B. Packaging

Brussels sprouts 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.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

¹ 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.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package² 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 authority³ if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry⁴. 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 coordinates and a PO Box address together with nearest town, region and country shall be accepted as a physical address.⁵

B. Nature of produce

- “Trimmed brussels sprouts” or “Untrimmed brussels sprouts” if the contents are not visible from the outside.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁶ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size (if sized), expressed as minimum and maximum diameters.

E. Official control mark (optional)

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² 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.

³ The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case 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 by the ISO 3166 (alpha-2) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

⁴ See <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/codemarkregistry.html>.

⁵ 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.

⁶ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.