
UNECE STANDARD FFV-17

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

FRESH FIGS

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NOTE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

The commercial quality standards developed by the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) help facilitate international trade, encourage high-quality production, improve profitability and protect consumer interests. UNECE standards are used by Governments, producers, traders, importers and exporters, and other international organizations. They cover a wide range of agricultural products, including fresh fruit and vegetables, dry and dried produce, seed potatoes, meat, cut flowers, eggs and egg products.

Any member of the United Nations can participate, on an equal footing, in the activities of the Working Party. For more information on agricultural standards, please visit our website <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html>.

The present Standard for Fresh Figs is based on document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2021/18, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party in 2021 (followed by a silence procedure in line with the special procedures during the COVID-19 period).

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UNECE standard FFV-17 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of fresh figs

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to fresh figs of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Ficus carica* L. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, fresh figs for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for fresh figs 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 fresh figs 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
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

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

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

B. Maturity requirements

The development and state of maturity of the fresh figs must be such as to enable them to continue their ripening process and to reach a satisfactory degree of ripeness.

C. Classification

Fresh figs are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

Fresh figs in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type and the stem must be intact.

The flesh must be free from defects.

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

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

The flesh must be free from defects.

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 and development
- slight defects in colouring
- the stem may be slightly damaged, provided the skin is not split
- slight skin defects within the following limits:
 - slight longitudinal cracks in the skin
 - cracks on the side opposite to the stem, provided their total length does not exceed 3 cm
 - slight corkiness of the skin or slight abrasion not exceeding 1 cm in length for elongated defects or an area of 0.5 cm² for others
 - slight skin defects caused by pests not exceeding 1 cm in length for elongated defects or an area of 0.5 cm² for others.

(iii) Class II

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

The flesh must be free from major defects.

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

- defects in shape and development
- defects in colouring
- the stem may be missing, provided its loss has not caused deep splitting of the skin
- skin defects within the following limits:
 - longitudinal cracks in the skin
 - cracks on the opposite side to the stem, provided their total length does not exceed 4 cm and no single crack is longer than 3 cm
 - slight corkiness of the skin or slight abrasion not exceeding 2 cm in length for elongated defects or an area of 1.5 cm² for others
 - slight skin defects caused by pests not exceeding 2 cm in length for elongated defects or an area of 1.5 cm² for others.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

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

The minimum size shall be 40 mm.

- (a) To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed:
- 5 mm for fruit packed in rows and layers
 - 10 mm for fruit loose packed in the package.
- (b) For fruit sized by count, the difference in size should be consistent with (a).

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) **“Extra” Class**

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of fresh figs 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 fresh figs 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 fresh figs satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements are 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: a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of fresh figs not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing is allowed.

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.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only fresh figs of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality, size, appreciably the same degree of ripeness and, for the “Extra” Class, of uniform colouring.

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

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

B. Packaging

Fresh figs 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 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

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.

B. Nature of produce

- “Figs” or “fresh figs” if the contents of the package are not visible from the outside
- Name of the variety for “Extra” Class
- “Mixture of fresh figs”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties and/or commercial types of fresh figs. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the varieties or commercial types and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated. Irrespective of these provisions, for “Extra” class the names of the varieties must be indicated.

C. Origin of produce

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

In the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties and/or commercial types of fresh figs of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the variety or commercial type concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size, expressed as:
 - minimum and maximum diameters or
 - number of fruit.

E. Official control mark (optional)

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Aligned with the Standard Layout 2023

The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables has published an explanatory brochure on the application of this standard. The publication may be obtained from the OECD bookshop at: www.oecdbookshop.org.

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