
UNECE STANDARD FFV-06

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

BEANS

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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.

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

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UNECE standard FFV-06 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of beans

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to beans of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Phaseolus vulgaris* L. and *Phaseolus coccineus* L. to be supplied fresh to the consumer, beans for shelling or industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for beans 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 beans must be:

- intact¹
- 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
- free from parchment (hard endoderm)
- 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 development and condition of the beans must be such as to enable them:

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

¹ Due to harvesting of beans (excluding needle beans), a degree of damage is permitted at the stalk end only according to the tolerances laid down.

B. Classification

Beans are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

Beans in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type.

They must be:

- turgid, easily snapped
- very tender
- practically straight
- stringless.

Seeds, if present, must be small and soft. However, needle beans must be seedless.

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

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

They must be:

- turgid
- young and tender
- practically stringless except in the case of beans for slicing.

Seeds, if present must be small and soft.

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
- slight defects in colouring
- slight skin defects.

(iii) Class II

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

They must be:

- reasonably tender
- free from rust spots in the case of needle beans.

Seeds, if present, should not be too large and must be reasonably soft.

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

- defects in shape
- defects in colouring
- skin defects
- strings

- slight rust spots except in the case of needle beans.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by the maximum width of the pod measured at right angles to the seam.

To ensure uniformity in size, needle beans in the same package shall not exceed:

- 6 mm when marked “very fine”
- 9 mm when marked “fine”
- 12 mm when marked “medium”.

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.²

A. Quality tolerances

(i) “Extra” Class

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of beans 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 beans 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. No tolerance is allowed for produce affected by *Colletotrichum lindemuthianum* (bean spot disease).

Within this tolerance, a maximum of 5 per cent, by number or weight, may have strings in the case of a variety and/or commercial type that should be stringless.

In addition, a maximum of 15 per cent, by number or weight, of beans (excluding needle beans) may have the stalk and a small section of the narrow part of the neck missing, provided these pods remain closed, dry and not discoloured.

(iii) Class II

A total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of beans 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. No tolerance is allowed for produce affected by *Colletotrichum lindemuthianum* (bean spot disease).

In addition a maximum of 30 per cent, by number or weight, of beans (excluding needle beans) may have the stalk and a small section of the narrow part of the neck missing, provided these pods remain closed, dry and not discoloured.

² 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.

B. Size tolerances

For all classes (if sized): a total tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of beans 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 beans 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

Beans 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.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package³ 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 authority⁴ if the country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry⁵. 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.⁶

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ See <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/codemarkregistry.html>.

⁶ 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

- “Beans” and/or commercial type if the contents are not visible from the outside
- Name of the variety (optional).

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁷ and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size:
 - for needle beans expressed as “very fine”, “fine”, “medium”
 - for other beans (if sized) expressed as minimum and maximum width of the pods.

E. Official control mark (optional)

Adopted 1962

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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 illustrated brochure on the application of this standard. The publication may be obtained from the OECD bookshop at: www.oecdbookshop.org.

⁷ A full or a commonly used name should be indicated.