
UNECE STANDARD FFV-57

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

BERRY FRUITS

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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 Standard for Berry Fruits is based on document ECE//CTCS/WP.7/2019/9, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its seventy-fifth session.

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UNECE standard FFV-57 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of berry fruits

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to berry fruits of species and varieties (cultivars) grown from the following species to be supplied fresh to the consumer, berry fruits for industrial processing being excluded:

- raspberries (*Rubus idaeus* L.)
- blackberries (*Rubus* sect. *Rubus*)
- loganberries (*Rubus loganobaccus* L. H. Bailey)
- currants (*Ribes rubrum* L., *Ribes nigrum* L.)
- gooseberries (*Ribes uva-crispa* L.)
- bilberries (*Vaccinium myrtillus* L.)
- blueberries (*Vaccinium corymbosum* L., *Vaccinium formosum* Andrews, *Vaccinium angustifolium* Aiton, *Vaccinium virgatum* Aiton)
- cowberries, lingonberries (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea* L.)
- cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon* Aiton)
- wild cranberries (*Vaccinium oxycoccos* L.)
- cloudberrries (*Rubus chamaemorus* L.)
- hybrids of these species such as boysenberries (*Rubus ursinus* Cham. et Schldl. x *Rubus idaeus* L.), tayberries (*Rubus* sect. *Rubus* x *Rubus idaeus* L.), jostaberries (*Ribes nigrum* L. x *Ribes uva-crispa* L.).

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for berry fruits 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 berry fruits 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

- practically free from pests
- practically free from damage caused by pests
- fresh in appearance
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste, including bitter taste in case of bilberries.

The development and condition of the berry fruits 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

Berry fruits must be sufficiently developed and display satisfactory maturity and/or ripeness according to the species but must not be overripe.

Gooseberries may be presented hard ripe.

C. Classification

Berry fruits are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) "Extra" Class

Berry fruits in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety or in the case of wild berries characteristic of the species concerned.

Bilberries and blueberries must be practically free of agglomerated berries and must be practically covered with bloom, according to the varietal characteristics.

Red and white currant panicles must be completely filled. Black currant panicles may not be completely filled and single berries are allowed.

Berry fruits 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

Berry fruits in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety or in the case of wild berries characteristic of the species concerned.

Bilberries and blueberries must be practically free of agglomerated berries. Blueberries must be practically covered with bloom, according to the varietal characteristics.

Red and white currant panicles must be nearly filled. Black currant panicles may not be completely filled and single berries are allowed.

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:

- very slight leakage of juice
- very slight bruising.

(iii) Class II

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

Currant panicles may be less evenly spaced.

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

- slight leakage of juice
- slight early signs of mildew in the case of gooseberries
- slight bruising.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

There are no sizing requirements for berry fruits.

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

At all marketing stages, tolerances in respect of quality shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.¹

Quality tolerances

(i) "Extra" Class

A total tolerance of 5 per cent, by number or weight, of berry fruits 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 berry fruits not satisfying the requirements of the class but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 2 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 berry fruits satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 4 per cent in total may consist of produce affected by decay.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only berry fruits of the same origin, variety or, in the case of wild berry fruits, species, and quality.

Berry fruits in Classes "Extra" and I must be practically uniform in ripeness.

However, a mixture of berry fruit of distinctly different species and/or different colours of the same species may be packed together in a sales package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each species and/or colour concerned, in origin.

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

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.

B. Packaging

Berry fruits 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, except for incidental leaves and twigs for wild berries.

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

- "Raspberries", "black berries", "loganberries", "currants", "gooseberries", "bilberries", "blueberries", "cowberries", "cranberries", "cloudberries", "boysenberries", "tayberries", "jostaberries" or equivalent denomination if the contents are not visible from the outside
- "Mixture of berry fruit ", or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different species and/or colours of berry fruit of the same species. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the species and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated
- Name of the variety (optional).

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.

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 species and/or colours of berry fruit of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the species and/or colour concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- “Wild”, where appropriate.

E. Official control mark (optional)

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