
UNECE STANDARD FFV-61

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

CHILLI PEPPERS

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NOTE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

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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 revised Standard for Chilli Peppers is based on document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2013/22, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-ninth session.

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UNECE standard FFV-61 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of chilli peppers

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to chilli peppers¹ of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Capsicum annuum*, *C. baccatum*, *C. chinense*, *C. frutescens* and *C. pubescens*, to be supplied fresh to the consumer, chilli peppers for industrial processing being excluded.

II. Provisions concerning quality

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

- intact, the stalk and calyx may be missing, provided that the break is clean and the adjacent skin is not damaged
- 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, including stalk and calyx
- firm
- free from damage caused by low and/or high temperatures
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The development and condition of the chilli peppers must be such as to enable them:

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

¹ Chilli peppers with a minimum pungency of 900 on the Scoville Index. For levels of pungency see the annex.

B. Classification

Chilli peppers are classified in three classes, as defined below:

(i) “Extra” Class

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

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. Colour change due to ripening is not considered a defect.

(ii) Class I

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

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; colour change due to ripening is not considered a defect
- slight skin defects
- a slightly damaged stalk, if present.

(iii) Class II

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

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

- defects in shape
- defects in colouring; colour change due to ripening is not considered a defect
- skin defects
- damaged stalk and calyx, if present
- slight lack of freshness of the stalk and calyx.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Size is determined by length or by maximum diameter.

The following provisions are optional for chilli peppers in Class II.

To ensure uniformity in size, the range between produce in the same package shall be in accordance with the following:

(a) For chilli peppers sized by length:

<i>Size Code</i>	<i>Size range (in centimetres)</i>
1	< 4
2	4 to < 8
3	8 to < 12
4	12 to < 16

<i>Size Code</i>	<i>Size range (in centimetres)</i>
5	≥ 16

(b) For chilli peppers sized by diameter:

The range between produce in the same package shall not exceed 20 mm.

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 chilli peppers 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 chilli peppers 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 chilli peppers 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 chilli peppers 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 chilli peppers of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized).

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

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.

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

B. Packaging

The chilli peppers 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 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 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

B. Nature of produce

- “Chilli peppers” if the contents are not visible from the outside
- Name of the commercial type
- “Mixture of chilli peppers”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different colours and/or commercial types of chilli peppers. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the colours and/or commercial types and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated
- Level of pungency indicated as “mild”, “medium”, “hot” or “extra hot”, as appropriate.

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.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁷ and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.
- In the case of packages containing a mixture of distinctly different colours and/or commercial types of chilli peppers of different origin, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the colours and/or commercial type concerned.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class
- Size (if sized) expressed as minimum and maximum length (in cm) or as minimum and maximum diameter (in mm)
- Size code (optional).

E. Official control mark (optional)

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Aligned with the Standard Layout 2023

The UNECE has published an explanatory illustrated brochure on the application of this standard. The publication may be obtained from the UNECE at: www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm

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

Annex

Pungency

<i>Level of pungency</i>	<i>Scoville units</i>	<i>Total capsaicinoids (microg/gm dry weight)</i>	<i>Examples of commercial types</i>
Mild	900 - 1,999	60 - 133	Ancho, Poblano, Pasilla, X'catik
Medium	2,000 - 19,999	134 - 1,333	Fresno, Cherry, Jalapeño, Prik-Chee-Fah
Hot	20,000 - 100,000	1,334 - 6,600	Serrano, Tabasco, Cayenne, Piquin, Manzano, <i>C. baccatum</i>
Extra hot	> 100,000	> 6,600	Birdseye, Fatalli, Scotch Bonnet, Habanero, Dorset Naga, Naga Jolokia, Naga Viper, Trinidad Scorpion

In case of dispute, the packer and/or dispatcher/shipper shall supply information regarding the level of pungency.
