

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Twenty-second Session

Comments of African Union (AU)

Proposed draft standard for onions and shallots (at Step 4)

Section 1: Scope

Comments: African Union proposes to move a section of the “Definition of Produce” and include it under the Scope. The section to be moved is as follows:

“This standard applies to onion bulbs of varieties grown from *Allium cepa* L. Cepa group and *Allium fistulosum* L. of the Amarilidaceae family and shallot bulbs grown from *Allium cepa* spp Aggregatum group *Allium oschaninii* O Fedtsch and *Allium ascalonicum* group, to be supplied fresh to the consumer. Green onions and green shallots with full leaves as well as onions and shallots.

Rationale: The opening statement in Section 2 is better suited for the scope than the definition of produce.

Comments: African Union proposes to amend the text under “scope” as follows and to move the deleted text to section on minimum requirements as the deleted text is related to quality requirement:

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for onions and shallots after preparation and packaging. ~~However, if applied at stages following packaging, onions and shallots 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.~~

Rationale: The deleted text is related to minimum requirement

Comments: African Union proposes to amend the text under “scope” as follows:

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 with standard such conformity.~~

Rationale: The deleted text is a repetition of the previous text. Moreover, the rules on conformity falls within the jurisdiction of National Authorities and should therefore no be included in the Codex standard.

Section 2: Definition of Produce

Comments: Africa Union notes that a definition has not been provided for onions and shallots and therefore proposes the following definitions below:

“**Onion**”: *Allium cepa*, is a herbaceous biennial plant grown as an annual in the *Amaryllidaceae* family, grown for its edible bulb. The bulbs vary in size, shape, colour, and pungency. The shapes include globular, flat, round while the colors include, red, purple and white.

Shallots: Allium cepa, variety aggregatum, Allium oschaninii and Allium aschalonium group are mild aromatic plants of the same Amaryllidaceae family grown for their edible bulbs. The bulbs are relatively small, less than 5cm and vary in size, shape, colour, and pungency as well.

Rationale: Introduction of definitions for onion and shallot is necessary to facilitate common understanding.

Section 3.1.1 Sufficiently Developed

Comments: African Union proposes to replace “developed” with “matured” as this is the standard terminology used in international trade and to revise the text as follows:

3.1.1 Sufficiently ~~Developed~~ Matured

Onions and shallots must be sufficiently ~~developed~~ **matured for their intended purpose.**

Section 3.2.1: “Extra” Class

Comments: African Union proposes to delete the last bullet point “~~for shallots, bulbs should be free from doubles or three bulbs~~”

Rationale: Shallots are naturally the double bulb plants with two growth points. Inclusion of this requirements will exclude shallots with such characteristics from international trade.

Section 3.2.3: Class II

Comments: African Union proposes to increase the area covered by stains on a bulbs surface from 25% to 50%. The requirement will read as follows:

Stains, provided they do not cover more than ~~25% (a quarter)~~ **50% (half)** the bulb’s surface;

Rationale: This provision seeks to allow for greater tolerance within “Class II”. The staining is a surface phenomenon and does not affect the inside of the bulbs.

Section 4: Provisions Concerning Sizing,

Section 4.1 (a) Onions

Comments: African Union proposes to make changes to the sizing for onions as follows:

- 10 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 15 mm and over but under ~~25~~ **35** mm;

Rationale: The upper limit was increased from 25 mm to 35 mm to allow for the uniformity of size limit to be effective.

Section 4.1 (b) Shallots

Comments: African Union proposes to make changes in the uniformity of size and size range for shallots in the same package as follows:

To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between shallots in the same package shall not exceed:

- ~~40~~ **3** mm where the diameter of the smallest bulb is 10 mm and over but under 15 mm;
- ~~45~~ **5** mm where the diameter of the smallest bulb is 15 mm and over but under ~~20~~ **25** mm; and
- 10 mm where the diameter of the smallest bulb is ~~20~~ **25** mm and over but under 40 mm
- ~~20~~ **15** mm where the diameter of the smallest bulb is greater than 40 mm.

Rationale: The uniformity in size limits were larger than the size ranges for the shallots. Thus, the uniformity in size limits were adjusted to ensure that they were within the size range for each uniformity limit. The size ranges were also adjusted for a suitable progression in size range from the smallest to the largest shallots.

Section 5.1.3: Class II

Comments: African Union proposes to include counting the bulbs “by number” in addition to counting them by weight. The requirement will read as follows:

“In addition, 10.0%, **by number or** by weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth not exceeding 1 cm”.

Rationale: To ensure alignment with units of measurement of quality tolerance.

Section 7.2: Non-retail Containers

Position: African Union supports the reinstatement of the text in square bracket.

“[Each package must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside or in the documents accompanying the shipment.

For onions and shallot transported in bulk, these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the good, and attached in a visible position inside the transport vehicle, unless the document is replaced by an electronic solution. In that case the identification must be machine readable and easily accessible.]”

Rationale: It is important for onions and shallots transported in bulk to be labeled appropriately as this would make it easy to identify the fruits and vegetables that are being transported.

Proposed draft standard for berry fruits (at Step 4)

Section 1: Scope

Comments: African Union recommends to move the statement “**berries intended for industrial processing are excluded**” from the Definition of Produce to the Scope.

Rationale: The added text relates to what the standard will not cover and hence fits better a part of scope rather than as part of definition of produce.

Section 2: Definition of Produce

Comments: African Union recommends to replace the word “must” with “shall” or “should” in the minimum maturity requirements. The requirement will read as follows:

“The berries ~~must~~ **should** have reached an appropriate degree of development and/or maturity in accordance with the criteria to the specie, variety, commercial type and to the area in which they are grown, that allows the proper development of its organoleptic characteristics. The berries ~~must~~ **shall** not be over-ripen. Some berry fruits such as gooseberries may be presented as hard ripe.”

Rationale: To conform to standard phraseology for Codex standards. The use of “must” suggests that Codex standards are mandatory.

Proposed draft standard for fresh dates (at Step 4)

Section 1: Scope

Comments: African Union proposes to revise the Scope as follows:

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for fresh dates ~~at the export control stage~~ after preparation and packaging. **This Standard applies to commercial varieties of Fresh Dates (*Phoenix dactylifera* L. from *Arecaceae* family), to be supplied fresh and whole to the consumer in unpitted form after preparation and packaging. Dates intended for industrial purposes are excluded**

~~However, if applied at stages following packaging, 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 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.

Rationale: Revised to ensure appropriate description of scope. “Export control” was deleted to ensure flexibility given that the standard also applies to domestic markets.

Section 3: Provisions Concerning Quality

Section 3.1 Minimum Requirements

Comments: African Union recommends to replace the word “intact” in the first bullet point, with the word “whole” as this is the standard term used in trade. The sentence will read as follows:

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the dates must be:

- ~~Intact~~ whole

Definition of Terms for Application in the Layout for Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CX/FFV 22/22/7)

Section 1: Scope

Comments: African Union proposes to modify the definition for fruits to indicate that other parts of fruits such as the flesh is consumed and in other fruits, the whole (e.g. tomato, guava) is consumed.

Fruit: The seed-bearing structure developed from the ovary of a flowering plant. In some plants it is the edible part, the mesocarp (flesh or pulp layer) located between the exocarp (peel/skin), the endocarp (the seed/s) or whole fruit. Fruits are divided into the following two groups.

Section 3.1.1: Minimum Maturity Requirements (fruit only)

Comments: African Union proposes to replace the word “developed” with “mature” and replace the word “development” with “maturity” as follows:

“Sufficiently ~~developed~~ mature (vegetables, roots, rhizomes, tubers): measured by ground color, skin texture, flavor, leaf texture, shape, firmness/compactness. The following terms firm, tender, flabby, pithy, shriveled, woody, translucent are used to indicate stages of Sufficient ~~Development~~ maturity and together with the general quality or condition of vegetables, used to describe maturity”.

Rationale: This is the standard term used to describe the state of the plant.