



## Agenda item 8

CCFFV21/CRD15

### CODEX COMMITTEE FOR FRESH FRUITS

(REVISED VERSION)

#### PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX STANDARD FOR ONIONS & SHALLOTS

##### 1. SCOPE

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.

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.

##### 2. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to onion bulbs of varieties grown from *Allium cepa* L. Cepa group of the Amarilidaceae family and (*Allium fistulosum* L.), and shallot bulbs grown from *Allium cepa* spp. Aggregatum group and *Allium oschaninii* O. Fedtsch., to be supplied fresh to the consumer.

Green onions and green shallots with full leaves as well as onions and shallots intended for industrial processing are excluded.

- Onions or shallots may be distinguished of the following shapes: round, elongated, long or demi-long.
- Onions and shallots may be of the following skin colors : white, purple, pink, red, grey or yellow, and brown.

##### 3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

###### 3.1 Minimum requirements

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

- Whole;
- 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<sup>1</sup>;
- .
- free from damage caused by pests affecting the flesh;
- free of damage caused by low and/or high temperature;
- without hollow or tough stems;
- free of external shoot growth;
- firm;
- free of abnormal external moisture excluding condensation following; removal from cold storage;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste;

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<sup>1</sup> The provisions for pests apply without prejudice to the applicable plant protection rules applied by governments in line with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

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- free of damage caused by frost or sun;
- sufficiently dry for the intended use (in the case of onions for storing, at least the first two outer skins and the stem must be fully dried).
- the stems of onions and shallots must be twisted or clean cut and must not exceed 6 cm in length; except for onions or shallots presented in strings that must be braided with their own stems and tied with string, raffia or any other appropriate material.

### 3.1.1. Sufficiently developed

Onions and shallots must be sufficiently developed. They must be firm, and present dry outer skins that are dry and papery.

The development and condition of the onions and shallots must be such as to enable them to:

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

## 3.2 Classification

Onions and shallots may be classified into three classes defined below:

### 3.2.1. "Extra" Class

Onions and shallots in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial denomination. 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 the presentation of the package.

The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided that they do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- a very slight defect in shape;
- very slight defects in colouring;
- ~~light staining covering not more than 1/5 of the bulb surface;~~
- very light staining, provided it does not cover more than one fifth of the bulb's surface.
- ~~For onions slight glossiness not exceeding the outer fleshy ring~~
- for onions, bulbs should be free from doubles and/or double centers
- for shallots, bulbs should be free from doubles or three bulbs

### 3.2.1 Class I

Onions and shallots in this class must be of good quality and characteristics of the variety and/or the commercial type.

The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided that they 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;
- ~~light staining covering not more than 1/5 of the bulb surface;~~
- superficial cracks in and partial absence of the outer skins, provided the flesh is protected.
- light staining, provided it does not cover more than one fifth of the bulb's surface.
- For onions slight glassiness not exceeding the outer fleshy ring
- For onions, bulbs should be free of double centers

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The bulbs must be:

- firm and compact;
- practically free of root tufts; however, for onions and grey shallots harvested before complete maturity, root tufts shall be allowed.

## 3.2.2 Class II

This class includes onions and shallots that do not qualify for inclusion in Class I but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in section 3.2.1 above.

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

- defects in shape;
- defects in colouring;
- slight marking caused by pests or disease;
- slight bruising;
- healed mechanical damage;
- root tufts;
- stains, provided they do not cover 25% the bulb's surface.
- cracks in the outer skins and partial absence of the skins on a maximum of one third of the bulb's surface, provided the flesh is not damaged.
- For onions slight glassiness not exceeding the two outer fleshy ring
- 

The bulbs must be firm.

## 4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

**4.1** Onions and shallots may be sized by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section in accordance with existing trade practices, when sized in accordance with existing trade practices, the package must be labelled with the size and method used. The following sizing provisions are a guide and may be used:

a) Onion

The minimum diameter shall be:

10 mm for onions b) Shallots

The maximum diameter shall be:

- 10 mm for grey, pink, red, purple shallots;
- 15 mm for other shallots.
- 55 mm for round shallots and
- 60 mm for demi-long and long shallots.

**4.2** To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed:

**4.2.1** For onions

- 5 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 10 mm and over but under 20 mm. However, where the diameter of the onion is 15 mm and over but under 25 mm, the difference may be 10 mm;
- 15 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 20 mm and over but under 40 mm;
- 20 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 40 mm and over but under 70 mm;
- 30 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 70 mm or over.

**4.2.2** For shallots

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- 10 mm where the diameter of the smallest shallot is 10 mm and over but under 15 mm;
- 15 mm where the diameter of the smallest shallot is 15 mm and over but under 20 mm;
- 20 mm where the diameter of the smallest shallot is 20 mm or over.

## 5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

### 5.1 Quality 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. Produce that fail conformity assessment, may be allowed to be resorted and brought into conformity in accordance with the relevant provisions in the *Guideline for Food Import Control System (CXG 47-2003)*.

#### 5.1.1 Extra Class

Five per cent, (5.0%) by number or weight, of onions and shallots 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.

#### 5.1.1 Class I

Ten per cent, (10.0%) by number or weight, of onions and shallots 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.

In addition, 4.0%, by weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth not exceeding 1cm.

#### 5.1.2 Class II

Ten per cent, (10.0%) by number or weight, of onions and shallots not satisfying 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.

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

### 5.2 Size tolerances

For all classes, (if sized), ten percent (10.0%) by number or weight of onions and shallots not satisfying the requirements as regards to sizing.

## 6. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

### 6.1 Uniformity

The contents of each package (or lot presented in bulk in the transport vehicle) must be uniform and contain only onions or shallots of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size.

However, a mixture of onions or shallots of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours may be packed together in a consumer package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each commercial type and/or colour concerned, in origin and method of production. 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.

### 6.2 Packaging

Onions and shallots must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly. The materials used inside the package must be of food-grade quality, 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

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individually affixed to the produce shall be such that, when removed, they neither leave visible traces of glue nor lead to skin defects.

Onions and shallots shall be packed in each package compliance with the appropriate sections of the *Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CXC 44-1995).

## 6.2.1 Description of Containers

The container shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preserving of the onions and shallots. Packages must be free of all foreign matter and smell.

## 7. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING OR LABELLING

### 7.1 Consumer Packages

In addition to the requirements of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

#### 7.1.1 Name of produce

Each package shall be labelled as to the name of the produce and may be labelled as to name of the variety and/or commercial type.

“Onions” “Shallots” or “Grey, Pink, Purple, Red shallots” if the contents are not visible from the outside.

Commercial type: “long”, “demi-long” or “round”

“Mixture of onions” or “mixture of shallots”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of onions or shallots. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the commercial types and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated.

#### 7.1.2 Origin of produce

Country of origin<sup>2</sup> and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

In the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties of onions or shallots of different origins, the indication of the country of origin shall appear next to the name of the variety and/or colour concerned.

### 7.2. Non-retail containers

Each package<sup>3</sup> must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside.

For onions and shallot transported in bulk (direct loading into a transport vehicle) these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the goods, 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.

#### 7.2.1 Identification

Name and address of exporter, packer and/or dispatcher.

Identification code (optional)<sup>4</sup>

#### 7.2.2 Name of the Produce

Name of the produce, if the contents are not visible from the outside.

Name of the variety and/or commercial type (optional).

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<sup>2</sup>The full or commonly used name should be indicated.

<sup>3</sup>Package units of produce prepacked for direct sale to the consumer shall not be subject to these marking provisions but shall conform to the national requirements. However, the markings referred to shall in any event be shown on the transport packaging containing such package units.

<sup>4</sup>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) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

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Mixture of onions” or “mixture of shallots”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of onions or shallots. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the commercial types and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated.

## 7.2.3 Origin of the Produce

Country of origin<sup>2</sup> and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.

In the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of onions or shallots of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the commercial types and/or colours concerned.

## 7.2.4 Commercial Specifications

- Class;
- Variety and/or commercial type (optional);
- Size (if sized) expressed by minimum and maximum diameters or in accordance with the method use;

## 7.2.5 Official Control Mark (optional)

## 8 FOOD ADDITIVES

No food additives are permitted in these produces.

## 9. CONTAMINANTS

**9.1** The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

**9.2** The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995).

## 10 HYGIENE

**10.1** It is recommended that the produce covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC1-1969), *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CXC 53-2003), and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

**10.2** The produce should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria related to Foods* (CXG 21-1997).

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**Appendix II**

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