

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda item 9

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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEx COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
21st Session**

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR BERRY FRUITS

Prepared by the Electronic Working Group chaired by Mexico and co-chaired by Argentina

Codex members and observers wishing to submit comments at Step 3 on this draft should do so as instructed in CL 2019/67-FFV available on the Codex webpage/Circular letters 2019:
<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/circular-letters/en/>

BACKGROUND

1. The 20th session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV)¹ held in Kampala, Uganda, 2 – 6 October, 2017, considered a new work proposal submitted by Mexico for the development of a horizontal Standard for berry fruits. CCFFV20 agreed to submit the following proposal for its approval by Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) and to establish an EWG chaired by Mexico and co-chaired by Argentina, in Spanish and English, to prepare a standard for its distribution, for member's observations in step 3, subject to the approval of the Commission.
2. In the 41st Session of CAC held from 2 to 6 July, 2018², the development for the standard for berry fruits was approved as new work.

MAIN ISSUES DEBATED IN THE EWG

3. The EWG was carried out through the <http://forum.codex-alimentarius.net/> platform. Comments were received during two rounds, from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Germany, Iran, Peru, Spain, United States and Uruguay.
4. The current draft is based on the observations and suggestions received from the EWG members, diverse modifications have been incorporated into all provisions of the draft, taking as reference the Layout proposal for the Codex Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for standards and taking into consideration that, the draft is intended to be a horizontal standard, its application should be for all commercial varieties of berries, to cover its minimum requirements.
5. Comments were received for all aspects covered by the draft standard. The main discussion points included the following:
 1. **SCOPE**
 6. One member suggested to include in the scope "*The tolerance established for the agreed quality category shall be met at the point of arrival of the product or delivery.*" Some members considered it unnecessary. The EWG maintained the paragraph according the layout "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".
2. **DEFINITION OF PRODUCE**
7. Members shared different varieties of berries commonly commercialized in their countries. The EWG took them into consideration in Appendix I, section 2.

¹ REP18/FFV para. 70 and Appendix V

² REP18/CAC, para 66 and Appendix VI

8. A member suggested the addition of *Malpighia emarginata* and *Myrciaria dubia* as varieties. Some scientific resources categorize them as drupes. The EWG considers that this issue require further discussion in the plenary of CCFFV21.

3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

9. The EWG agreed to add a footnote for provision 3.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS, “clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter”, considering that the peduncle for berries that are commercialized with it, is not considered as foreign matter.

10. There were different points of view about general provisions concerning quality for all classes. The EWG considered that require further discussion in CCFFV21.

5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

11. Some members proposed that the Extra Class should not have tolerance for decay, and suggested removing “Included therein, is one percent tolerance for decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown” of provision 5.1.1 “Extra” Class. The EWG removed it considering the nature of produce.

7. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING OR LABELLING

7.2.2 Nature of Produce

12. This provision was re-phrased from the layout wording suggestion, according to comments of the countries and the nature of berry fruits.

RECOMMENDATION

13. CCFFV21 is invited to consider the proposed draft standard for berry fruits (Appendix I).

PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX STANDARD FOR BERRY FRUITS**(at step 4)****1. SCOPE**

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for berries (as defined in section 2) after preparation and packaging. However, if applied at stages following packaging, berry fruits 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 such conformity.

2. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

Berries shall be supplied fresh to the consumer after preparation and packaging; berries intended for industrial processing are excluded.

This Standard applies to commercial varieties of berries grown from:

- Raspberries (*Rubus idaeus* L.)
- Blackberries (*Rubus* sect. *Rubus*)
- Andean blackberry (*Rubus glaucus* Benth.)
- Cut-leaf blackberry, evergreen blackberry (*Rubus laciniatus* Willd)
- Loganberries (*Rubus loganobaccus* L. H. Bailey)
- White, red and black currants, (*Ribes rubrum* L., *Ribes nigrum* L.)
- Gooseberries (*Ribes uva-crispa* L.)
- Bilberries (*Vaccinium myrtillus* L.)
- Blueberries (*Vaccinium corymbosum* L., *Vaccinium formosum* Andrews, and *Vaccinium angustifolium* Aiton, *Vaccinium virgatum* Aiton)
- Cowberries, Lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-ideae* L)
- American cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon* Aiton)
- European cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos* L.)
- Cloudberries (*Rubus chamaemorus* L.)
- Andean blueberry (*Vaccinium meridionale* Sw.)
- Surinam Cherry (*Eugenia uniflora* L.)
- Physalis (*Physalis peruviana* L.)
- Jaboticaba (*Plinia trunciflora* (Berg) Kaus.)
- Strawberry-Guava (*Psidium cattleianum* Sabine)
- Golden berry (*Physalis peruviana* L.)
- Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Camu camu (*Myrciaria dubia*)
- Hybrids of these species such as boysenberry (*Rubus loganobaccus* L. H. Bailey), tayberries (*Rubus loganobaccus* L. H. Bailey.), jostaberries (*Ribes x nidigrolaria* Rud. Bauer & A. Bauer)

3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

3.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

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

- sound; berries, affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- firm;
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter¹;
- practically free from pests² and visible evidence of diseases;
- practically free from damage caused by pests and diseases;
- free of abnormal external moisture excluding condensation following removal from cold storage;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste;
- fresh in appearance;
- free of damage caused by low and/or high temperature.

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

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

3.1.1 Minimum Maturity Requirements

The berries must have reached an appropriate degree of development and/or maturity in accordance with the criteria proper 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 not be overripe.

3.2 CLASSIFICATION

The berries are classified into three classes defined below:

3.2.1 "Extra" Class

The berries in this class must be of superior quality and they must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type or in the case of wild berries characteristic of the species concerned.

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.

3.2.2 Class I

The berries in this class must be of good quality and characteristics of the variety, or in the case of wild berries characteristic of the species concerned.

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

- a slight defect in shape;
- slight defects in coloring, depending on the specie and variety;
- slight skin defects;
- Very slight leakage of juice, and
- Slight bruising.

3.2.3 Class II

This class includes berries that do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in Section 3.1.

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

¹ The peduncle for berries that are commercialized with it, is not considered as foreign matter.

² The provisions for pests applies without prejudice to the applicable plant protection rules applied by governments in line with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

- defects in shape;
- defects in coloring, depending on the specie and variety;
- skin defects;
- Leakage of juice;
- Slight samples of rot, and
- Slight bruising.

4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

There are no sizing requirements for the berries included. However, berries may be sized in accordance with pre-existing trade practices. When sized in accordance with existing trade practices the package must be labelled with the size and method used.

5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

5.1 QUALITY TOLERANCES

At all marketing stages, measuring tolerances in respect of quality shall be allowed, to validate that the product meets the agreed class. Produce that fail conformity assessment, may be allowed to be reclassified and brought into conformity in accordance with the relevant provisions in the *Guidelines for Food Import Control System (CXG 47-2003)*.

5.1.1 "Extra" Class

Five percent allowed by number or weight, of berries not satisfying the requirements of this class, but meeting those of Class I.

5.1.2 Class I

Ten percent allowed by number or weight, of berries not satisfying the requirements of this class, but meeting those of Class II. Included therein, is two percent 2.0% tolerance for decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown.

5.1.3 Class II

Ten percent allowed by number or weight, of berries not satisfying the requirements of the class. Included therein, is four percent 4.0% tolerance for decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown.

5.2 SIZE TOLERANCES

For all classes (if sized), a maximum of ten percent by number or weight of berries not satisfying the size indicated is allowed.

6. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

6.1 UNIFORMITY

The content of each package must be uniform and contain only berries from the same origin, species variety or commercial type, quality, colour and size (if sized).

However, a mixture of berries of distinctly different species and/or varieties may be packed together, as long as; they are uniform in quality and each species and variety being from the same origin. Berry fruits in Classes "Extra" and I must be practically uniform in ripeness.

6.2 PACKAGING

Berries 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.

Berries shall be packed in each container in compliance with 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 berries.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter and smell.

7. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING OR LABELLING

7.1 CONSUMER PACKAGES

In addition to the requirement 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 shall be labelled as to name of the variety and /or commercial type.

“Mixture of berry fruits”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different species and/or varieties of berry fruits. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the species and/or varieties in the package must be indicated.

“Wild” or equivalent denomination, where appropriate

7.1.2 Origin of Produce

Country of origin³ and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.

In the case of a mixture of distinctly different species and/or varieties of berries of different origins for each species and variety, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the species or variety concerned.

7.2 NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

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

7.2.1 Identification

Name and address of exporter, packer and/or dispatcher. Identification code (optional)⁴.

Packer and/or dispatcher/shipper: 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 authority⁵.

7.2.2 Nature of Produce

Name of the produce.

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

In the case of a mixture of berries of distinctly different varieties, names of the different varieties.

7.2.3 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 varieties of berries of the berries of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the species and /or variety concerned.

7.2.4 Commercial Specifications

- Class;
- Variety (optional);
- Size (if sized);
- Crop year (optional);
- Shipment or storage condition(optional); or
- “Wild” or equivalent denomination, where appropriate.

³ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.

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.

⁵ 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.

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

7.2.5 Official control mark (optional)**8. FOOD ADDITIVES**

No food additives are permitted in these products.

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 (CXC 1-1969)*, *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)*.

List of Participants

MÉXICO

Cesar Osvaldo Orozco Arce Director de Normatividad Internacional / Dirección General de Normas/
Secretaría de Economía /cesar.orozco@economia.gob.mx

Tania Daniela Fosado Soriano/Punto de Contacto Codex en México/ Dirección General de Normas/
Secretaría de Economía/codexmex@economia.gob.mx

Gabriela Alejandra Jiménez Rodríguez /Dirección General de Fomento a la Agricultura/Secretaría de
Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural (SADER)/ gjimenez.dgvdt@sader.gob.mx

ARGENTINA

Silvia Elda Santos/ DIRECCIÓN DE CALIDAD

AGROALIMENTARIA/Coordinadora/ssantos@senasa.gov.ar

S.no.	Name of Participant	Designation and organisation	Country	Email
1	Damian Rowe	Plant Quarantine/Produce Inspection Branch [National Plant Protection Organization] Jamaica W.I.	Jamaica	dcrowe@micaf.gov.jm
2	Mariana Urraburu	Ingeniera Agronoma / Departamento de Asesoría Técnica de la DGSA - MGAP	Uruguay	murraburu@mgap.gub.uy
3	ULRIKE BICKELMANN	HEAD OF UNIT "Marketing Standards and Conformity Checks" organization FEDERAL OFFICE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD	Germany	ULRIKE.BICKELMANN@BLE.DE
4	Andreja Martonja Hitrec	Head of Service for Plant Production organization: Ministry of Agriculture	Croatia	andreja.martonja@mps.hr
5	Anita Štefanac	Senior Advisor Ministry of Agriculture	Croatia	anita.kovacic@mps.hr
6	LEE EUNSIL	CODEX researcher Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS),	The Republic of Korea	eslee0915@korea.kr
7	Susán Dioses Córdova	Coordinadora titular de la comisión técnica de Frutas y Hortalizas frescas(CCFFV) SENASA (Servicio Nacional de sanidad Agraria)	Peru	sdioses@senasa.gob.pe
8	Ian Hewett	Market Measures Trader Manager	United Kingdom	ian.c.hewett@rpa.gsi.gov.uk
9	Kenneth Lowery	International Issues Analyst U.S. Codex Office	United States	Kenneth.lowery@fsis.usda.gov
10	Maria de Armas Jaraquemada	Jefe de Area Subdirección General de Inspección, Certificación y Asistencia Técnica de Comercio Exterior	Spain	maria.armas@comercio.mineco.es

		Secretaría de Estado de Comercio		
11	Ricardo Munar	Icontec	Colombia	
12	Johanna Maribel Jimenez	AGROCALIDAD	Ecuador	johanna.jimenez@agrocalidad.gob.ec
13	NADIA AHMADI	STANDARD RESEARCH INSTITUTE	Iran	nady.ahmadi@yahoo.com
14	Andre Bispo	Ministério da Agricultura	Brasil	andre.oliveira@agricultura.gov.br