

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 3 (b)

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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

*Twelfth Session,  
Mexico City, Mexico, 16 - 20 May 2005*

#### Draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes

(At Step 6)

#### GOVERNMENT COMMENTS

(Australia, Brazil, United States of America and European Community)

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#### AUSTRALIA

##### General Comment

Australia believes Codex Standards should give priority to health and safety issues rather than prescriptive quality specifications. Quality factors are market driven and in the commercial world are set by the customer. Quality factors can also vary from region to region and need to allow for seasonal differences and cultural preferences. Australia considers that prescriptive quality Factors have the potential to become technical barriers to trade and thus should be minimised in Codex Standards to ensure provisions that address only those parameters that are significant to ensure fair trade are included.

In this respect, Australia believes that the Draft Standard for Tomatoes should at:

- Section 2.1.1 reflect wording in consistent with other Codex Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Standards and suggest the following wording: *Tomatoes should be carefully picked and have reached an appropriate degree of development and ripeness in accordance with criteria proper to the variety and to the area in which they are grown;* and
- Section 4 regarding colour should be deleted as such parameters are covered by the generic statement regarding development in 2.1.1 above. Further, colour is difficult to measure and assessment qualitative, which could result in an unreasonable semi-technical requirement, and no other similar Codex standards contain provisions for colour.

## BRAZIL

### "1. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE"

Brazil understands that in the "DEFINITION OF PRODUCE", the inclusion of the "commercial types of the tomato" is not appropriate. Such parameters are used to characterize different formats, which are known in the market.

Brazil suggests that the "commercial types" be included in the Standard as "Groups", under item "2. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY", together with the "Classification" and "Sizing", as follows:

### "2.2. CLASSIFICATION"

The tomatoes are classified in Groups, regarding its form; Category, regarding the incidence of defects in the fruits; and, Size, the diameter of the fruit.

2.2.1. Tomato groups are: Round when the length and the equatorial diameter ratio is among 0,90 to 1,15; Oblong when the length and the diameter equatorial ratio of the fruits, is larger than 1,15; and, Flat when the length and the diameter equatorial ratio of the fruits, is smaller than 0,90.

2.2.2. The Classes are: Extra ", I and II.

2.2.2.1. "Extra" Class.

2.2.2.2. Class I

2.2.2.2. Class II

3. Size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section of the fruit, in accordance with the following.

As a consequence of our previous proposals, Brazil would also like to suggest changing this item, as follows:

*The minimum sizing settles down in 15 mm for the tomatoes "cherry", 35 mm for the "round" and "flat" tomatoes and 30 mm for the "oblong" tomatoes.*

2.2.3.1. The minimum size set at 15 mm for "cherry tomato"; 30 mm for the oblong tomato; and 35 mm for the round and flat tomatoes.

Brazil suggests using only one sizing scale for all types of tomatoes. Brazil doesn't agree with the definition of special sizing scale for cherry tomatoes; if it is considered important, their characteristics may be defined, but outside the sizing scales (ex.: 15 mm of minimum diameter; maximum diameter of 29 mm; etc).

Size Code	Diameter mm	
	Maximum	Minimum
000	15	19
00	20	24
0	25	29
1	30	34
2	35	39
3	40	46
4	47	56
5	57	66
6	67	81
7	82	101
8	102	-

Brazil suggests excluding item below, since all Categories must observe the sizing scale.

~~Observance of the sizing scale is compulsory for “Extra”, Class and Class I tomatoes.~~

This sizing scale is not applied to trusses of tomatoes.

“4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING COLOUR”

“5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES”

5.1. QUALITY TOLERANCES

5.2 SIZE TOLERANCES

The tolerance should be restricted to the maximum percentage allowed (10%), however it should include fruits, that fit into the whole range of calibers planned for the classes right inferior and superior. Hence, the definition of minimum diameters is not appropriate.

As a consequence of our previous proposals, Brazil would also like to suggest changing this item. We suggest the following wording, which is underlined:

~~For all classes: 10% by number or weight of tomatoes corresponding to the size immediately above and/or below that indicated on the package, with a minimum of 33 mm for “round” and “ribbed” tomatoes, and 28 mm for “oblong” tomatoes.~~

For all the classes, it is admitted up to 10% in weight of the tomatoes that correspond to the size immediately inferior and superior to the indicated in the packing.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### **Issue: Provision Concerning Sizing:**

#### **Comment 1:**

A review of the Proposed Draft Codex Standard, the Revised UNECE standard and industry/trade practices indicate the need for harmonization of the Codex and UNECE standards:

#### **Proposal:**

The United States recommends the following changes to **Section III:** *Provision Concern Sizing* in the Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes aligning it with the **Section 3:** *of the Revised UNECE Standard for Tomatoes (FFV-36. 2001)* in part as outlined in the table below or entirely.

Proposed Codex Standard		Existing UNECE Standard	
Size Code	Diameter mm	Size Code	Diameter mm
1	<del>30—34 mm</del>	1	30 mm and over but under 35 mm <sup>1</sup>
2	<del>35—39 mm</del>	2	35 mm " " " " 40 mm
3	<del>40—46 mm</del>	3	40 mm " " " " 47 mm
4	<del>47—56 mm</del>	4	47 mm " " " " 57 mm
5	<del>57—66 mm</del>	5	57 mm " " " " 67 mm
6	<del>67—81 mm</del>	6	67 mm " " " " 82 mm
7	<del>82—101 mm</del>	7	82 mm " " " " 102 mm
8	<del>102 and over</del>	8	102 mm and over

<sup>1</sup> Only for “oblong” tomatoes

Observance of the sizing scale is compulsory for “Extra” Class and Class I tomatoes.

The sizing code for “Cherry” tomatoes in the proposed Draft Codex Standard remain unchanged

This sizing scale shall not apply to trusses of tomatoes.

**Comment 2:**

The U.S. industry increasingly uses other sizes to market tomatoes to large retailers and to special markets by using different carton sizes based on tomato sizes not listed.

**Proposal:**

It is therefore the Proposed Codex Standard for Tomatoes reflect this practice by amending the sentence at the base of the sizing table to read:

“The observance of the sizing scale *or specific markings on the container* is compulsory for “Extra” Class and Class I tomatoes.

**Issue: Provision Concerning Color:**

**Comment:**

This section should be simplified with subjective descriptions as that for “Mature Green”; tomatoes in tropical zones may present a *yellow color* as described in the stage of ripeness may also indicate plant nutritionally deficiency or other defects.

**Proposal:**

The United States proposes to reduce to color descriptions from seven to six to simplify and indicate stages of ripeness as follows:

Stages	Color Classification	Description
Stage 1	Green	The tomato surface is completely green- varying from light to dark green
Stage 2	Breakers	There is a definite break in the color from green to tannish-yellow, pink or red on 10% or less of the surface
Stage 3	Turning	Tannish-yellow, pink or red show on 10 – 30% of the tomato surface
Stage 4	Pink	Pink or red color on 30 – 60% of the tomato surface.
Stage 5	Light Red	Pink-red or red color on 60 – 90% of the tomato surface
Stage 6	Red	Red color shows on more than 90% of the tomato surface

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY**

The European Community would like to submit the following comments:

- **Classification (pt 2.2.1 and 2.2.2)**

The European Community is of the view that the words “They must be uniform in terms of size.” should be deleted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of classes Extra and I as the uniformity in size is dealt with in chapter PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING (pt. 3). For the sake of clarity, any duplication should be avoided.

- **Provisions concerning sizing (pt 3.)**

The European Community agrees with the figure for the sizing of the ‘round’, ‘ribbed’ and ‘oblong’ tomatoes but considers that size codes create confusion and are not necessary.

The EC is of the view that table size for ‘cherry’ tomatoes is not necessary and not recommended as these provisions would require operators to buy new sizing equipment. However, if these provisions are requested by some delegations, they should be optional.

- **Provisions concerning colour (pt 4.)**

The European Community considers that provisions concerning colours should be avoided: these provisions might create dispute between traders as tomato colour may vary quite quickly.

- **Size Tolerances (pt 5.2)**

The European Community considers that the first sentence of the paragraph 5.2 is not necessary (moreover it is included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence) and should be deleted.

- **Uniformity (pt 6.1)**

The European Community is of the view that in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph the words “variety and/or commercial type” should read “variety or commercial type” to emphasize that either a variety or a commercial type may be packed but not a mixture of commercial types.