

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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Agenda Item 3 (b)

CX/FFV 06/13/6-Add.1

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

13th Session,

Mexico City, Mexico, 25 - 29 September 2006

DRAFT SECTIONS 3 - PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING
AND
4.2 – SIZE TOLERANCES (DRAFT CODEX STANDARD FOR TOMATOES)

(AT STEP 6)

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AUSTRALIA

Please find below comments from Australia in response to CX/ FFV/ 06/13/6 on the Draft Section 3 – Provisions concerning Sizing and 4.2 Size Tolerances at Step 6 (draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes) and Proposals for Amendments to the Priority List for the Standardization of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. The Australian Government would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to make comments.

1. Proposed Draft Sections 3 – Provisions concerning Sizing and 4.2 Size Tolerances at Step 6 (draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes).

Australia wishes to reiterate its opinion that sizing limits and tolerances should not be included in commodity standards as they place unnecessary limits on commercial trade, and have no bearing on health and safety or eating quality. Sizing parameters are driven by consumer and market demand and they should be left to industry practice. Including sizing in such standards could establish technical barriers to trade.

In particular, the attention of the Committee is drawn to the recent deliberations at the Working Group Meeting in Chile where it was recognised, for apples, that size *per se* is not an issue and that restrictive sizing may stifle innovation.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

General Comment

The United States appreciates this opportunity to comments on the Proposed Draft Standard for Tomatoes.

Specific Comments

The document points to the differences in sizing among national standards and the difficulty posed by having a uniform standard. In addition, tomato sizing is compounded by the annual introduction of new tomato sizes, shapes, colors and texture; all bred for specific niche market in a continuous attempt to increase global consumption of tomatoes.

The U.S. believes that the proposal in CX/FFV/06/13/6 is inconsistent and complicated.

Section 3: Provision Concerning Sizing indicates:

The difference in diameter between tomatoes in the same package shall be limited to:

- 10 mm, if the diameter of the smallest fruit is less than 70 mm.
- 15 mm, if the diameter of the smallest fruit is 70 and over but under 100 mm.
- there is no limitation of difference in diameter for fruit over 100 mm.

However, Section 4.2 on Size Tolerances indicates:

For all classes: 10 % by number or weight of tomatoes not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing but have a diameter greater or less than 5 mm of the size marked

The Provision Concerning Sizing allows the difference in diameter of 10 mm, 15mm, and no limit; therefore, having a Size Tolerance of ± 5 mm of the size marked conflicts with the provisions concerning sizing. The proposed Size Tolerance reduces the differences in diameter of tomatoes packed in the same container to 5mm of the size marked.

The minimum sizes for round and oblong tomatoes are not consistent with industry practices. Increasingly all tomato varieties are manipulated by producers to produce larger or smaller fruit to satisfy market niches. Hence the minimum size proposed is irrelevant.

U.S. Proposal

The U.S. proposes the following to simplify and harmonize the Provisions Concerning Sizing with the Size Tolerances:

PROVISION CONCERNING SIZING:

Size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section of the fruit.

SIZE TOLERANCES:

For all Classes: 10 % by number or weight of tomatoes not satisfying the requirements as regards to sizing, but shall have a diameter of up to ± 10 mm of the size marked.

The United States looks forward to discussion of this issue at the 13th Session of CCFFV in Mexico City in September.

SWITZERLAND

We are thankful to the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for the opportunity to make comments on the following proposed draft Codex Standard scheduled on the coming September session agenda.

Agenda Item 3 b), Proposed draft Codex Standard for tomatoes

(Draft Section 3 – Provisions concerning Sizing, and draft Section 4.2 – Size Tolerances)

In principle, Switzerland agrees with the Codex Working Group. As regards minimum sizes, we wonder whether an increase in value of up to 20mm (instead of the proposed 15mm) - for “cherry” tomatoes - would not be more appropriate.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The European Community considers that the provisions concerning sizing for tomatoes should guarantee uniformity in the package to ensure fair trade and that the minimum sizes are not necessary.

The European Community recommends the following changes for chapter 3 of the draft codex standard for tomatoes.

3 PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is determined by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section.

~~The minimum size is set at 15 mm for “cherry” and “cocktail” tomatoes, 35 mm for “round” and “ribbed” tomatoes and 30 mm for “oblong” tomatoes.~~

The maximum difference in diameter between tomatoes in the same package shall be limited to:

- 10 mm, if the diameter of the smallest fruit is under 70 mm.*
- ~~15-20~~ mm, if the diameter of the smallest fruit is 70 and over but under 100 mm.*
- there is no limitation of difference in diameter for fruit equal or over 100 mm.*

Sizing shall not apply to trusses of tomatoes.

Uniformity of sizing is not compulsory for Class II

4.2 SIZE TOLERANCES

For all classes: 10 % by number or weight of tomatoes not satisfying the requirements as regards sizing but have a diameter greater or less than ~~5-10~~ mm of the size marked. In any case, the tolerance may not be extended to include tomatoes with a size ~~5-10~~ mm below the minimum size.