

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 3(b)

CX/FFV 06/13/6
April 2006

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

13th Session,
Mexico City, Mexico, 25 - 29 September 2006

PROPOSED DRAFT SECTION 3 - PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING
AND SECTION 4.2 - SIZE TOLERANCES
(draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes)

(AT STEP 6)

Codex Members and Observers wishing to submit comments on the above matters, including possible implications for their economic interests, should do so in conformity with the Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts (Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual) before **30 June 2006**. Comments should be directed:

to:

Chairperson of the Committee,
C.P. Miguel Aguilar Romo, Director General,
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with a copy to:

Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission,
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BACKGROUND

1. The 12th Session of the Committee considered the draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes and agreed on a number of changes. The Committee recognized the important progress and decisions made on the major sections of the document. However, the Committee decided to retain the draft Standard at Step 7, with the exception of Sections 3 - Provisions concerning Sizing and 4.2 - Size Tolerances, on the understanding that additional comments would not be requested on the agreed sections¹.

2. The Committee had a long discussion on sizing provisions due to the different positions on the need to keep this type of provision in the draft Standard vis-à-vis Codex's aim to ensure fair practices in international food trade. As a compromise solution, the Committee agreed to retain the entire Section 3 in square brackets. In addition, it agreed to collect data on different sizing used in Codex member countries by means of a Circular Letter with a view to considering a proposal for a common denominator to the different sizing systems in place. Consequently, Section 4.2 was put in square brackets pending resolution of the discussion on Section 3.

¹ ALINORM 05/28/35, paras. 31-41, 47-48, 50-57 & Appendix II.

3. The Committee further agreed that a working group led by the European Community would prepare a revised version of Sections 3 and 4.2 based on the comments submitted in response to CL 2005/25-FFV, as well as the discussion held, for comments and consideration by the next session of the Committee².

Proposal of the Working Group on Tomatoes

4. The working group based its discussions on the proposal contained in ALINORM 05/28/35-Appendix III and the comments submitted through CL 2005/25-FFV.

5. Table 1 confirms that sizing provisions differed among standards. The purpose of the Codex Alimentarius is protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade (Article 1, Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission). In addition, the publication of the Codex Alimentarius is intended to guide and promote the elaboration and establishment of definitions and requirements for foods to assist in their harmonization and in doing so to facilitate international trade (Paragraph 1, Purpose of the Codex Alimentarius, General Principles).

6. In view of the above, to establish one size table will impose major changes for established national/regional sizes and industry practices. To have no or optional sizing provisions would not promote harmonization of national/regional requirements. In addition, further discussion might be necessary for size requirements of “cherry” and “cocktail” tomatoes.

TABLE 1: international, regional and national standards

	Draft Codex Standard	UN/ECE Standard	EC Standard	South Africa Standard	USA Standard (conversion to metric equivalent, made to nearest whole millimeter)	Canadian Standard	CARICOM Standard
Minimum size for “cherry” tomatoes	15 mm	/	/	5 mm	/	/	
Minimum size for “round” and “ribbed” tomatoes	35 mm	35 mm	35 mm	30 mm	?	38 mm	
Minimum size for “oblong” tomatoes	30 mm	30 mm	30 mm	30 mm	?	32 mm	
Size range	15 - 19	/	/		/		
	20 - 24	/	/	5 - 29	/		
	25 - 29	/	/		/		30
						maximum differences:	
	30 - 34	30 - 35	30 - 35			13 mm if	
	35 - 39	35 - 40	35 - 40	30 - 55		minimum <	40
	40 - 46	40 - 47	40 - 47			51 mm	
	47 - 56	47 - 57	47 - 57	56 - 63	54 - 58		50
	57 - 66	57 - 67	57 - 67		57 - 64	maximum differences:	60
				64 - 72	63 - 71	25 mm if	
	67 - 81	67 - 82	67 - 82	73 - 82	70 -	minimum	70
	82 - 101	82 - 102	82 - 102	83 - 94		=/> 51 mm	80
	102 -	102 -	102 -	95 -			90
Tolerances		10%		/	15%	5 or 10%	10%

² ALINORM 05/28/35, paras. 42-46, 49, 58 & Appendix II.

TABLE 2 : proposals

	SIZE RANGE	TOLERANCES
BRAZIL (see CX/FFV 05/12/6)	one scale, similar to draft Codex Standard	
EC (see CX/FFV 05/12/6)	identical to UN/ECE Standard, if necessary table size for “cherry” tomatoes optional	10%
ALINORM 05/28/35 §42 and 44	difficulties to establish a unique sizing scale; sizing provisions not necessary	
ALINORM 05/28/35 §43	harmonization of national requirements = facilitation of trade	
USA	tomatoes may be sized	10%
GERMANY	maximum difference 10 mm if maximum diameter 70 mm	10%
	maximum difference 15 mm if diameter between 70 and 100 mm	
	if diameter over 100 mm no limitation	
ARGENTINA	maximum difference 10 mm and if “cherry” tomatoes at least 5mm	

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

7. The proposal of the working group is annexed to this document. Codex Members and Observers are invited to comment on the proposal as directed on the cover page. The proposal along with the comments submitted will be considered by the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for finalization and inclusion in the draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes so that a single document can be forwarded to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for final adoption at Step 8. In submitting comments, Codex members and observers are kindly reminded that they should be made in the framework of the draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes (Agenda Item 3a) held at Step 7 pending finalization of the provisions in the Annex.

ANNEX**PROPOSED DRAFT SECTION 3 - PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING
AND SECTION 4.2 - SIZE TOLERANCES
(draft Codex Standard for Tomatoes)****(AT STEP 6)****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 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 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.

Sizing shall not apply to trusses of tomatoes.

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 mm of the size marked. In any case, the tolerance may not be extended to include tomatoes with a size 5 mm below the minimum size.