

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 5

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Twenty-second Session

Comments of Algeria

Proposed draft standard for fresh dates

1. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

We already highlighted the importance of defining what is generally known as fresh dates by the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. It is crucial to know if it means that the fruit is recently or freshly harvested or it contains a high amount of water? We remind that it is the point which has returned the proposed draft Standard to Step 2.

3- PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

3.1.1 MINIMUM MATURITY REQUIREMENTS

With regard to footnotes 3, it is proposed to add the word "Martouba" which is another designation of the Rutab stage in North Africa.

Moisture content should not exceed:

- 50-85% for khalal stage;
- 30-45 % for rutab stage; and
- 10-25% and less for tamar stage.

The moisture content intervals must be precisely defined (26 to 29% and 46 to 49% are not considered)

Example: the dates whose Moisture content value is 27% or 47% cannot be categorized according to these intervals.

We propose: Moisture content should not exceed:

- 46-85% for khalal stage;
- 28-45 % for rutab stage; and
- 10-27% and less for tamar stage;

3.2. CLASSIFICATION

3.2.1 "Extra" Class

Dates in this class must be of superior quality and they must be characteristics of the variety and/or commercial type. They must be free from defects It is preferable to specify the different types of slight defects (For example: shape and color defect, presence of slight blemishes, etc.), 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 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:

slight defects in shape and colour; and

slight skin defects such as scratches, and blemishes not exceeding 7% instead of 5% of the total surface area of an individual fruit for maximum 10% instead of 5% of the fruits.

The defects must not, in any case, affect the flesh of the produce.

3.2.3 Class II

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

defects in shape and colour; and

skin defects such as scratches, scars, scrapes, bruises and blemishes shall not exceed 12% instead of 10% of the total surface area of an individual fruit for maximum 15% instead of 10% of the fruits.

The defects must not, in any case, affect the flesh of the produce.

4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Questions :

1. How to match the classes quoted in 3.2 CLASSIFICATION and the sizing according to the number of dates or their weight given in 4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING A and B?
2. Applying the same standard of sizing (small, medium, large and extra-large) on dry dates as on semi-soft and soft date downgrades the first and favours the last. For this reason, we suggest considering only the sizing by count for the dry dates; which is determined by the number of dates per package. Or suggest standard of sizing by weight specific to dry dates
3. In the phrase (The following table may be used on an optional basis) .
It is proposed to delete the word (optional) because it important to use this table, it makes possible to differentiate between the 4 sizes and therefore it allows consumers to make their choice according to their needs.

5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

5.1 QUALITY TOLERANCES

	Extra Class	Class I	Class II
Total Tolerance not satisfying the quality requirement of which no more than: individual tolerance.	5	10	15 instead of 10
Damage by pest	3	8	10 instead of 8
Additional tolerances	5	8 instead of 10	10
(a)Size Tolerances-off size from what is indicated/marked			

7- Provisions concerning marking or labeling

7.1- Consumer packages

In addition to the requirements of the General Standard for the Labeling of Pre-packaged Foods (CXS 1-1985):

-It is necessary to specify a limited weight not to exceed, considering the sensitivity and the fragility of the dates, if the quantity is important, there is a risk of crushing and therefore degradation of the dates quality especially for the dates in the Maturity Tamer stage.

So it is preferable to add the following paragraph:

For their sale to the final consumer, the dates must be presented in a packing box not exceeding 5 to 6 kg.

-The labeling must include an indication of the mode of presentation mentioned in section 6.1. Uniformity.

7.2. NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

Some information about NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS should still be considered.

7.2.1 Identification

Non-retail containers must be identified by: country of origin, name and address of exporter, packer and/or dispatcher. Identification code (optional).

7.2.2 Nature of the produce

- Name of the variety and/or commercial type.
- Presentation as bunches, stalks or individuals (optional).

7.2.3 Origin of the produce

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

7.2.4 Commercial specifications

- Name of the produce "Dates".