



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

**Twenty-second 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 2021/85-FFV available on the Codex webpage/Circular letters 2021:  
<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/circular-letters/en/>

## INTRODUCTION

1. The 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV20)<sup>1</sup> agreed to submit a proposal to develop a standard for berry fruits for approval by the Codex Alimentary Commission (CAC) and to establish an EWG chaired by Mexico and co-chaired by Argentina to develop the standard.
2. CAC41 (2018)<sup>2</sup> approved the proposal for new work.
3. CCFFV21<sup>3</sup> considered the proposed draft standard and noted concerns on title of the standard, Sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 still needed to be addressed. CCFFV21 agreed to return the proposed draft standard (CCFFV21/CRD16) for redrafting and establish an EWG, chaired by Mexico and co-chaired by Argentina to prepare a revised proposed draft standard for further consideration by CCFFV22.

## PARTICIPATION AND METHODOLOGY

4. The EWG considered all the comments received at CCFFV21 and further conducted two rounds of consultation within the EWG members.
5. Comments from Argentina, Canada, Chile, the United States of America, Mexico, Morocco and New Zealand were received during the first round of consultation. Comments from the United States of America, Iran and Mexico were received during the second round of consultation.
6. The list of varieties in the proposed draft standard was revised based on the advice from national experts from Mexico and with the support of members from Argentina and Chile. When doing this, two criteria i.e. commercial importance and families were considered.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

7. At CCFFV21<sup>4</sup>, Mexico, Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and outlined the process used by the EWG to prepare the draft standard. She informed the Committee that the co-Chairs of the EWG had reviewed the Comments submitted at Step 3, and prepared a revised version of the proposed draft standard (CCFFV21/CRD13). It was highlighted that in some comments, it was proposed to develop a separate standard for each of the berry fruits, while in others, proposals were for the inclusion of new commercial varieties in the draft standard. These issues were outside the scope of the approved project document.

<sup>1</sup> REP18/FFV, paras 71(iii) and 72

<sup>2</sup> REP18/CAC, para 66 and Appendix VI

<sup>3</sup> REP20/CAC, paras 90-98

<sup>4</sup> REP18/FFV, paras 90-96

8. CCFFV21 held a general discussion focusing on broad issues that may need due consideration during the elaboration of the standard. The following views were expressed by delegations on this topic:

- (i) To ensure inclusivity in such a broad horizontal standard, CCFFV should take into consideration the broader definition for berries as stated in the *Classification of Food and Feeds* (CXA 4-1989) developed by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR). A similar approach was used by the Codex Committee for Food Hygiene (CCFH) to complete the work on Annex V for Berries under the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetable* (CXC 53-2003);
- (ii) The title of the standard be changed to “Berry fruits and other small fruits”; and the Scope of the Standard need careful consideration to ensure that at the time of completion and implementation of the standard international trade is not disrupted;
- (iii) The scope of the Standard, should be limited to only berry fruits or berries as laid down in the project document, as not all small fruits were berries;
- (iv) The varieties to be listed in the standard should be commercially feasible or viable; and to ensure a concise list, where necessary, some of the listed commercial varieties should be grouped together (e.g. all blue berries);
- (v) Any proposed new addition(s) to the list of commercial varieties may require assessment before being added to the list, as some of the berries were already covered by other existing codex standards; and
- (vi) When proposing a new commercial variety name for inclusion in the standard, an indication on special requirements, if any, should be indicated.

9. The Chair of the EWG explained that list of commercial varieties in the proposed draft standard was based on the original list in the approved Project Document, and that changing the title to include small fruits would require changing the scope. It was explained that to ensure integrity to the already identified commercial varieties in the project document, proposed new additions would need evaluation for inclusion in the standard.

10. Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that any amendments to the scope of approved work in the project document, would require CCFFV to inform the Commission.

11. CCFFV21 further considered the revised version of the proposed draft standard (CCFFV21/CRD13), noted concerns on the following provisions that still needed to be addressed:

- (i) Title of the Standard – whether to change it to reflect draft standard to berries and other small fruits;
- (ii) Section 1: Scope – examine the necessity of the second paragraph under the scope (either to retain it or to delete it);
- (iii) Section 2: Definition of produce – The list on commercial varieties of berries be reviewed to: remove duplication, ensure rationalisation and include missing commercial varieties;
- (iv) Section 3: Provisions concerning quality requirements – for all provisions under this section- ensure consistency with the standard layout and other FFV standards; examine the necessity for inclusion of additional or deletion of some quality attributes (e.g. intact, firm etc.); review the classification for completeness and where appropriate create clarity or exceptions around some parameters (e.g. red and white currant panicles must be completely filled);
- (v) Section 5: Provisions concerning Tolerances – Review the proposed tolerances for “Extra Class”;
- (vi) Section 6: Provisions concerning presentations – Review the provisions for uniformity (6.1); and
- (vii) Section 7: Provisions concerning Marking or Labelling – Review the different provisions to ensure consistency and alignment with existing practices.

12. CCFFV21 agreed to: (i) return the proposed draft standard (CCFFV21/CRD16) to Step 2, for redrafting; and (ii) establish an EWG, chaired by Mexico and co-chaired by Argentina and working in English and Spanish to consider the critical issues identified by the Committee and prepare a revised proposed draft Standard for further consideration by CCFFV22.

13. The suggestions indicated in CCFFV21 report (included the comments from Algeria, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, European Union, India, Iraq, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Somalia, Switzerland, the United States of America; Republic of Korea, ; Morocco and Thailand and East African

Community) were followed up and also the comments collected during the two rounds of consultation were incorporated. The main amendments were related to:

- Scope of application;
- List of commercial varieties of greater commercial importance;
- Sections 3.2 (3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) and 7.2.1.

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

14. CCFFV22 is invited to consider the Proposed Draft Standard (Appendix I), with the view to progress it through the Codex step procedure, considering that during CCFFV21 this document was extensively reviewed by delegations and that it was about to be approved, with a large majority of delegations in favor of its adoption at Step 5/8.

## 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.

### 2. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This Standard applies to commercial varieties of berries found in the list below and shall be supplied fresh to the consumer after preparation and packaging; berries intended for industrial processing are excluded

Commercial varieties	Family
1. Andean blackberry ( <i>Rubus glaucus</i> Benth.); 2. Blackberries ( <i>Rubus</i> spp.); 3. Cloudberries ( <i>Rubus chamaemorus</i> L.); 4. Cut-leaf blackberry, evergreen blackberry ( <i>Rubus laciniatus</i> Willd); 5. Loganberries ( <i>Rubus loganobaccus</i> L. H. Bailey) and Hybrids of these species; 6. Raspberries ( <i>Rubus idaeus</i> L.);	Rosaceae
7. Andean blueberry ( <i>Vaccinium meridionale</i> Sw.); 8. Bilberries ( <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> L.); 9. Blueberries ( <i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i> L., <i>Vaccinium formosum</i> Andrews, <i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i> Aiton, <i>Vaccinium virgatum</i> Aiton); 10. Cowberries, Lingonberry ( <i>Vaccinium vitis-idaeae</i> L.); 11. Cranberries ( <i>Vaccinium macrocarpon</i> Aiton); 12. Mortiño ( <i>Vaccinium floribundum</i> Kunth); 13. Wild cranberries ( <i>Vaccinium oxycoccos</i> L.);	Ericaceae
14. Gooseberries ( <i>Ribes uva-crispa</i> L.); 15. White, red and black currants, ( <i>Ribes rubrum</i> L., <i>Ribes nigrum</i> L.);	Grossulariaceae
16. Camu ( <i>Myrciaria dubia</i> ); 17. Jabuticaba ( <i>Plinia trunciflora</i> (Berg) Kaus); 18. Strawberry-Guava ( <i>Psidium cattleianum</i> Sabine); 19. Surinam Cherry ( <i>Eugenia uniflora</i> L.);	Myrtaceae
20. Elderberry ( <i>Sambucus nigra</i> ); 21. Goji berris ( <i>Lycium barbarum</i> L.);	Solanaceae

22. White Mulberry ( <i>Morus alba</i> L.), Black Mulberry ( <i>Morus nigra</i> L.).	Moraceae
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### 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:

- fresh in appearance;
- 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 matter<sup>5</sup>;
- practically free from pests<sup>6</sup>;
- practically free from damage caused by pests;
- free of abnormal external moisture excluding condensation following removal from cold storage;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste;
- free of damage caused by low and/or high temperature;
- the peduncle may be missing in non-panicle berries, provided that the rest is clean and the juice does not drip from the breaking point.

The development and condition of the berries after packing 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 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 over-ripen. Some berry fruits such as gooseberries may be presented as hard ripe.

#### 3.2 CLASSIFICATION

The berries are classified into three classes, if it corresponds to a practice for that variety, 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 of the species or in the case of wild berries characteristic of the species concerned.

Bilberries and blueberries should be practically free of agglomerated berries and must be practically covered with bloom, according to the varietal characteristics.

Red and white currant panicles must be completely filled.

Black currant panicles may not be completely filled and single berries are allowed.

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, the pulp or flesh and presentation in the package.

<sup>5</sup> The peduncle for berries that are commercialized with it, is not considered as foreign matter.

<sup>6</sup> 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).

### 3.2.2 Class I

The berries in this class must be of good quality and characteristics of the variety, and/or commercial type of the species or in the case of wild berries characteristic of the species concerned. Currant (red, white and black) panicles may be less evenly spaced.

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:

- slight defects in shape;
- slight defects in coloring, depending on the specie and variety;
- slight skin defects; and
- slight damage.

### 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. Currant (red, white and black) panicles may be less evenly spaced.

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:

- defects in shape;
- defects in coloring, depending on the specie and variety; and
- skin defects.

## 4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Sizing of berry fruits is optional. However, berries may be sized in accordance with existing trade practices. When sized in accordance with existing trade practices the package may 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 and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated. Produce that fail conformity assessment, may be allowed to be resorted 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 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 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). The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

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/or variety being from the same origin. Berry fruits in Class "Extra" and Class 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 may be labelled as to name of the variety and /or commercial type.

Each package may be labelled "Mixture of berry fruits", in the case of a mixture of distinctly different species and/or varieties of berry fruits. The species and/or varieties in the package must be indicated. "Wild" or equivalent denomination may be included, where appropriate.

#### 7.1.2 Origin of Produce

Each package must include country of origin<sup>7</sup> 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

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail Containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021).

#### 7.2.1 Identification

Name and address of exporter, packer and/or shipper. Identification code (optional)<sup>8</sup>.

#### 7.2.2 Nature of Produce

Name of the produce.

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<sup>7</sup> The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

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 origin<sup>9</sup> 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 and/or commercial type; “wild” or equivalent denomination, where appropriate;
- Weight or size (if sized);
- Crop year (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).

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<sup>9</sup> The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.



## Appendix II

**List of Participants/Lista de Participantes  
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