

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 6

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

18th Session

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REVIEW OF THE MATURITY REQUIREMENTS IN THE CODEX STANDARD FOR TABLE GRAPES

(Prepared by the Electronic Working Group on Table Grapes led by the United States of America)

BACKGROUND

1. At the 17th Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (September 2012), the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) - an accredited observer to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, submitted a Conference Room Document (CCFFV/CRD 15)¹ citing inconsistencies in the minimum maturity requirements in both the Codex (CODEX STAN 255-2007) and the UNECE (UNECE FFV-19, 2010 Edition) Standards for Table Grapes. The OIV requested a revision/correction of Section 2.1 Minimum Maturity Requirements of the Codex Standard for Table Grapes. The OIV indicated that its request is based on discussion and evaluation by OIV experts, and in particular the members of the Sub-commission on Table Grapes, Raisins and Unfermented Vine Products. Additionally, the OIV's request indicated its Member-States adopted in 2008 Resolution VITI 1-2008 on "Minimum maturity requirements for table grapes" which included additional requirements for the minimum maturity of table grapes.

2. After discussing the OIV proposal, the Committee established an electronic working group coordinated by the United States of America to evaluate the proposal of the OIV and to report back to the next session of the Committee on the opportunity to revise the maturity requirements in the Codex Standard for Table Grapes.²

3. The OIV's proposal was sent to the eWG members asking them to evaluate this proposal in accordance with the three criteria laid out by the 17th session of the CCFFV.

- i. Evaluate if the OIV proposed requirements meet countries national or domestic industry needs;
- ii. Ease of application of the proposed requirements during the inspection process; and
- iii. Indicate if changes should be made to Section 2.1 Minimum Maturity Requirements of the Codex Standard for Table Grapes (CODEX STAN 255-2007).

4. The List of Participants is provided in Annex I. For ease of reference, the Codex Secretariat has prepared Annex II to include maturity requirements for table grapes as in the Codex standard, UNECE standard and OIV resolution.

Summary of responses to the three criteria

- i. Evaluate if the OIV proposal meets countries national or domestic industry needs: There were mixed responses to this criterion; however no member country indicated that the OIV proposal would meet their national or domestic industry needs. Some members indicated a preference for the Minimum Maturity Requirements in the Codex Standard for Table Grapes by pointing out the absence of claims or possible violations against this requirement. Contrastingly, another member indicated that the OIV proposal was too broad and that applying a uniform approach to table grape maturity does not correctly reflect maturity requirements for all table grape varieties.
- ii. Ease of application of the proposed requirements during the inspection process: There were no direct comments on the ease of application of the OIV proposal. However, one member's comments included a proposal that is solely based on the application of the refractometric index (degrees Brix). While another expressed concern that the sugar/acid ratio entails added burden and cost.

It is important to note that the minimum maturity requirements in the Codex standard and the OIV's proposal include both degrees Brix and sugar/acid ratio application. Therefore, retention of the sugar/acid ratio is necessary, as this method is used for validating maturity and as an indicator of the palatability of table grapes.

¹ Working documents for CCFFV sessions including CRDs are available at: [ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/ccffv/](http://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/ccffv/)

² REP13/FFV, para. 131. Reports of Codex sessions are available at: <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/>

- iii. Indicate if changes should be made to Section 2.1 Minimum Maturity Requirements of the Codex Standard for Table Grapes (CODEX STAN 255-2007): The responses to this question were divided. Some members did not support any changes to the requirements; others indicated their support for the current requirements but indicated their willingness to a possible adjustment, whilst one member submitted a different proposal. Contrasting changes were proposed to the current minimum maturity requirements such as the abolition of the sugar/acid ratio requirement, having a single minimum degrees Brix requirement, amending the values in the current requirements with specific exemptions for selected table grape varieties.

Recommendation/findings:

5. Within the e-working group on the OIV proposal there was no consensus for changing the minimum maturity requirements in the Codex Standard for Table Grapes. The lack of consensus stems largely from the following (i) There is no evidence that the current requirements pose impediments to the international table grape trade, (ii) there were very diverse proposals submitted to the e-working group which included some from OIV membership, and (iii) the development of the minimum maturity requirements section of Codex Standard for Table Grapes was very difficult, contentious and time consuming for the former table grape working group and the relevant plenary sessions of the CCFFV. Therefore, it can be concluded that the minimum maturity requirements in the Codex Standard for Table Grapes (CODEX STAN 255-2007) should be retained.
6. The Committee is invited to consider the recommendations/findings of the eWG and make a decision on the opportunity to revise the minimum maturity requirements in the Codex Standard for Table Grapes (CODEX STAN 255-2007).

ANNEX I
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

COUNTRY / ORGANIZATION	NAME	POSITION / WORK INFORMATION	EMAIL ADDRESS
Argentina		Codex Contact Point	codex@minagri.gob.ar
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ANNEX II

CODEX STANDARD FOR TABLE GRAPES (CODEX STAN 255-2007)³**2.1.2 Maturity Requirements**

Table grapes must be sufficiently developed and display satisfactory ripeness.

In order to satisfy this requirement, the fruit must have obtained a refractometric index of at least 16°Brix.

Fruit with a lower refractometric index are accepted provided the sugar/acid ratio is at least equal to:

- (a) 20:1 if the Brix level is greater than or equal to 12.5° and less than 14°Brix,
- (b) 18:1 if the Brix level is greater than or equal to 14° and less than 16°Brix.

UNECE STANDARD FOR TABLE GRAPES (FFV-19, 2010 Edition)⁴**B. Maturity Requirements (1)**

The table grapes must be sufficiently developed and display satisfactory ripeness. In order to satisfy this requirement, the fruit must have obtained a refractometric index of at least 16° Brix. Fruit with a lower refractometric index are accepted provided the sugar/acid ratio is at least equal to:

- 20:1 if the Brix level is greater than or equal to 12.5° and less than 14° Brix,
 - 18:1 if the Brix level is greater than or equal to 14° and less than 16° Brix.
- (1) Reservation by France (2010) and the United States of America (2007): "The uniform approach applied to the minimum maturity requirements in the UNECE Standard for Table Grapes does not correctly reflect minimum maturity requirements for all table grape varieties from all geographical production regions, and the practices of the table grape industry."

RESOLUTION VITI 1/2008⁵**OIV STANDARD ON MINIMUM MATURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR TABLE GRAPES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,**

Considering article 2, paragraph 1c of the Agreement of 3 April 2001 establishing the International Organisation of Vine and Wine,

Based on the works of the former "Table grapes and Raisins" Expert and on the proposal of Commission I "Viticulture" and the "Table grapes, raisins and unfermented vine products" Sub commission,

CONSIDERING the technical and scientific exchange with the *Codex Alimentarius*,

CONSIDERING the need to offer consumers a quality product, table grapes, which are satisfactorily ripened and have optimal nutritional value,

DECIDES to set up the following minimum maturity requirements for table grapes: Grapes with a Brix degree equal to or above 16 shall be considered as ripe.

For white/pink colour table grape varieties:

- Grapes with a Brix degree under 16 must present a minimum sugar* /acid** ratio of 20/1 to be considered as ripe.

For red colour table grape varieties:

- Grapes with a Brix degree equal to or above 12.5 and under 16 must present a minimum sugar* / acid** ratio of 20/1 to be considered as ripe.
- Grapes with a Brix degree under 12.5 shall not be considered as ripe.

Exceptions to the sugar/acid ratio are possible for particular varieties. These exceptions shall be communicated to the OIV by the member countries. They are reviewed by the Sub-Commission «Table grapes, raisins and unfermented vine products» in view of these exceptions being inserted into the OIV standard on minimum requirement for ripeness in table grapes.

The OIV recommends that member countries develop growing techniques and promote varieties in view of observing the above-defined values and ratios.

* Soluble sugar expressed in grams per liter

** Titrable acidity expressed in grams per liter of tartaric acid

³ CODEX standards can be downloaded from: <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/>

⁴ UNECE standards can be downloaded from: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html>

⁵ OIV resolutions can be downloaded from: <http://www.oiv.int/oiv/info/enresolution>