



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**  
**Twenty-third Session**

**PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR FRESH CURRY LEAVES**

Prepared by the Electronic Working Group chaired by India

Codex Members and Observers wishing to submit comments at Step 3 on this draft should do so as instructed in CL 2024/90-FFV available on the Codex webpage/Circular letters 2024:  
<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/circular-letters/en/>

### Background

1. India introduced a new work proposal on a standard for fresh curry leaves at the 22nd Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV22, 2022) under Agenda item 7<sup>1</sup>.
2. It was presented and discussed by India that due to non-availability of standard for fresh curry leaves and impediments in international trade, it is necessary to establish a standard covering the safety, quality and labelling requirements in order to have a reference that has been internationally agreed by consensus between the main producing and trading countries. The Codex standard for fresh curry leaves will help to protect consumers' health and to promote fair trade practices in accordance with the different international agreements.
3. CCFFV22 agreed to establish an EWG on fresh curry leaves, led by India<sup>2</sup>. The 45th Session of Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC45, 2022) agreed to initiate new work on Codex standard for fresh curry leaves and further mentioned to define the scope and other technical issues, encouraging countries concerned to actively participate in the development of the standard<sup>3</sup>.

### Discussion in CCFFV22

4. CCFFV22 noted broad support required for the said new proposal and further noted that the commodity was traded as fresh and therefore not as spice, and that there was a lack of internationally disaggregate data on its trade volumes. The scope of the work was proposed to establish a worldwide standard for fresh curry leaves obtained from varieties (cultivars) of *Murrayakoenigii* (L.) Sprengel of *Rutaceae* family, which must be supplied fresh to the consumer after proper cleaning and packaging. It does not apply to other forms of curry leaves such as dehydrated, powdered and dried products.
5. It was mentioned that the total absence of data on this proposal made it impossible to evaluate using the Work Priorities-Criteria Applicable to Commodities as required in the Codex Procedural Manual.
6. In view of the lack of data on tropical fruits and vegetables, one Member highlighted that the Codex Procedural Manual currently includes for the critical review the need to identify the standard setting needs for developing countries to take into account the lack of sufficient data by developing countries while submitting proposals for this new work for the commodities originating from those countries.

### Conclusion of CCFFV22

7. CCFFV22: (i) recommended approval of new work on fresh curry leaves by CAC45; (ii) establish an EWG chaired by India and working in English, to prepare, subject to the approval of the new work, a proposed draft standard for fresh curry leaves for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at CCFFV23; and (iii) request the EWG to submit the report at least three months before CCFFV23.

<sup>1</sup>CX/FFV 22/22/8

<sup>2</sup>REP22/FFV, paras 95-97

<sup>3</sup>REP22/CAC, para 62

**Points of discussion for EWG members**

8. EWG members were requested to consider the above mentioned status of the draft standard and provide comments with rationale on the proposed draft standard.

**Participation and Methodology**

9. A draft proposal was prepared by India and posted on EWG online forum for comments. The EWG began its work by circulating the first consultative draft to EWG members for inviting comments on the proposed standards keeping in view of the discussions held in the CCFFV22.

10. In response, three members submitted their comments.

11. The second draft was prepared based on comments received and with specific requests for comments on maximum defects and sizing in square brackets and circulated to all EWG members.

**Discussions and Conclusion**

12. One member suggested to include the forms of presentation in the definition of produce and to include the maximum defect level in each class of leaves and also criteria for sizing.

13. One member mentioned to include criteria for minimum sizing criteria.

14. The EWG agreed with recommendations of the above two members. One member had recommended to set fixed values for the defects allowed on the basis of surface area. The same has been fixed by EWG on basis of weight as it may be difficult to measure in terms of surface area. The same has been kept within the square brackets. Further, regarding provisions concerning sizing, a difference in length of not more than 30 mm has been proposed as size of leaves in a bunch usually varies from 20 mm to 50 mm.

15. The second draft was circulated, the defects measurements and sizing has been kept in square bracket for discussion.

16. There were no comments from the participating member countries of the EWG on the second draft circulated.

**Recommendation**

17. CCFFV23 is invited to consider:

- the proposed draft standard for fresh curry leaves at Appendix I; and
- forwarding the proposed draft standard for fresh curry leaves to forthcoming CAC meeting for adoption at Step 5/8.

## PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR FRESH CURRY LEAVES

### 1. SCOPE

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for fresh curry leaves after preparation and packaging. When applied at stages following packaging, products 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 tendency to perish.

The holder/seller of products may not display such products or offer them for sale, or deliver or market them in any manner other than in conformity with this standard. The holder/seller shall be responsible for observing such conformity.

### 2. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This Standard applies to commercial varieties of fresh curry leaves obtained from varieties (cultivars) of *Murrayakoenigii*(L.) Sprengel of Rutaceae family, which must be supplied fresh to the consumer after proper cleaning and packaging. It does not apply to other forms such as dehydrated, powdered and dried curry leaves.

Fresh curry leaves may be:

- attached to small branches and/or twigs wrapped in bunches;
- as individual leaves loose in containers; or
- leaves in prepackaged in retail containers/pouches.

### 3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

#### 3.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the fresh curry leaves must be:

- fresh in appearance;
- intact with stem/stalk attached;
- free of external moisture;
- properly drained, if washed;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste;
- sound (produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded);
- clean, free of visible foreign matter; and
- free from pests<sup>4</sup> and damage caused by pests.

The development and condition of the fresh curry leaves 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 fresh curry leaves must be sufficiently developed pliable and not woody.

#### 3.2 CLASSIFICATION

Fresh curry leaves may be classified in three classes as defined below. Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated. When unclassified, the provisions for Class II requirements apply.

##### 3.2.1 "Extra" Class

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<sup>4</sup>Provisions for pests and damage caused by pests apply without prejudice to the applicable plant protection rules applied by governments in line with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

Fresh curry leaves must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type. 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 and presentation in the package.

~~5% by weight or count of fresh curry leaves not satisfying the requirements for the grade, but meeting the requirements for Class I grade.~~

### **3.2.2 Class I**

Fresh curry leaves must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type. The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- slightly damaged leaves, such as cracks, holes or tears [not exceeding 3.0% by weight]; and
- slight defects in colouring [not exceeding 5.0% by weight]

### **3.2.2 Class II**

This includes fresh curry leaves that do not qualify for inclusion in higher ~~grades~~ classes but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in Section 3.1 above. The following defects may be allowed, provided the fresh curry leaves retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- damaged leaves, such as cracks, bruises, holes or tears [not exceeding 5.0% by weight];
- defects in colouring [not exceeding 5.0% by weight];
- slight lack of freshness;
- slight black spots [not exceeding 2.0% by weight]; and
- missing or loose stalks/stems [not exceeding 1.0% by weight].

## **4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING**

There is no sizing requirement for fresh curry leaves.

## **5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES**

### **5.1 Quality tolerances**

At all marketing stages, tolerances in respect of quality shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated. Produce that fails conformity assessment, may be allowed to be re-sorted and brought into conformity in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems (CXG 47-2003).

#### **5.1.1 Extra class**

5% by weight or count of fresh curry leaves not satisfying the requirements for the ~~grade~~, but meeting the requirements for Class I ~~grade~~ is allowed.

#### **5.1.2 Class I**

10% by weight or counts of fresh curry leaves not satisfying the requirements for the ~~grade~~, but meeting the requirements for Class II ~~grade~~ is allowed.

#### **5.1.3 Class II**

10% by weight or count of fresh curry leaves not satisfying the requirements of the Class II is allowed

### **5.2 Size tolerances**

The fresh curry leaves shall be uniform in the same package i.e., having a difference in length of [not more than 30 mm].

## **6. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION**

### **6.1 UNIFORMITY**

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain fresh curry leaves of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality, colour and size. The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

### **6.2 PACKAGING**

Fresh curry leaves 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.

Fresh curry leaves may 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 containers shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preserving of the fresh curry leaves.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter and smell.

## **7. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING OR LABELLING**

### **7.1 CONSUMER PACKAGES**

In addition to the requirements of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

#### **7.1.1 Name of Produce**

If the produce is not visible from the outside, each package shall be labelled as "Fresh Curry Leaves"<sup>5</sup>.

#### **7.1.2 Origin of Produce**

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

### **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).

## **8. FOOD ADDITIVES**

No food additives are permitted in fresh curry leaves.

## **9. CONTAMINANTS**

**9.1** The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS193-1995).

**9.2** The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

## **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.

**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>5</sup>The full or commonly used name should be indicated.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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