

**DRAFT STANDARD FOR FRESH DATES****(At Step 5/8)****1. SCOPE**

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for fresh dates after preparation and packaging. When it is 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, cultivars or other commercial types of fresh dates (*Phoenix dactylifera* L. from Arecaceae family), to be supplied fresh and whole fruit to the consumer in unpitted form after preparation and packaging. Fresh dates shall not have undergone any intentional or artificial process to adjust the moisture content. Fresh dates intended for industrial purposes are excluded.

**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 dates shall be:

- intact;
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration, which makes it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter;
- free from living pests<sup>1</sup>, and their debris or excreta;
- practically free of damage caused by pests;
- free from mould filaments visible to the naked eye
- free of undeveloped and deformed fruits, as indicated by stunted growth, immature characteristics and naturally absence of pit;
- free of blemishes, scars, discolouration, sunburnt and black nose affecting an area more than 7mm of the fruit surface;
- free of external moisture excluding condensation following removal from cold storage; and
- free of foreign smell and/or taste.

The development and condition of the fresh dates shall be such as to enable them to:

- withstand transportation and handling; and
- arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

---

<sup>1</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).

**3.1.1 Minimum maturity requirements**

Fresh Date shall have reached an appropriate degree of development and/or maturity in accordance with criteria proper to the variety, cultivar or other commercial type, to the time of harvesting and area in which they are grown.

Fresh dates shall have a moisture content, in accordance with criteria to the variety and stage of harvest/or commercial type and the area in which they are grown. Moisture content of fresh dates ranges from 30-85%.

**3.2 CLASSIFICATION**

Classification of fresh dates is optional. When classified, the classification is done in accordance with Section 5 – Provisions concerning Tolerances, fresh dates are classified into the following classes.

- “Extra” Class, Class I and Class II.

**4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING**

Fresh dates may be sized by count or weight of the fruit or in accordance with existing trading practices. When sized in accordance with existing trade practice, the package shall be labelled with the count or size and method used. The following table may be used on an optional basis.

A. When sized by count, size is determined by the number of individual fresh date per package.

| Size            | Number of fresh dates per 500gram |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
|                 | Fresh Dates                       |
| A (Extra Large) | ≤45                               |
| B (Large)       | 46-70                             |
| C(Medium)       | 71-100                            |
| D (Small)       | >100                              |

B. When sized by weight, size is determined based on the individual weight of the fruit as mentioned below.

| Grade           | Weight of individual fruit in the package(gram) |
|-----------------|---|
|                 | Fresh Dates                                     |
| A (Extra Large) | >11   |
| B (Large)       | >7-11   |
| C(Medium)       | >5-7  |
| D (Small)       | ≤5  |

**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 fail 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 System* (CXG 47-2003).

| S. No. | Quality Tolerance  | Tolerances allowed percentage of defective produce by count or weight (Not more than) |         |           |
|--------|--|---|---------|-----------|
|        |  | Extra Class   | Class I | Class II* |
| 1.     | <b>Total Tolerance</b> not satisfying the quality requirement of which no more than, i.e. individual tolerance | 5   | 10      | 10        |
|        | <b>Individual Tolerance</b>  |   |         |           |
|        | -Undeveloped   | 1   | 3       | 6         |
|        | -Damage by pest  | 3   | 8       | 8         |
|        | -Blemished/discoloured   | 3   | 5       | 7         |
|        | -Sour/decayed/mouldy   | 1   | 1       | 1         |
|        | -Living pest   | 0   | 0       | 0         |
| 2.     | <b>Additional tolerance</b>  |   |         |           |
|        | (a)Size Tolerances-off size from what is indicated/ marked   | 5   | 10      | 10        |
|        | (b) Produce belonging to other similar varieties than marked   | 0   | 0       | 0         |
|        | (c) Loose dates among dates with stems or clusters   | 10  | 15      | 18        |

\*When fresh dates are traded as unclassified, the minimum tolerance requirements for Class II shall apply.

**6. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION**

**6.1 UNIFORMITY**

The contents of each package shall be uniform and contain only fresh dates of the same origin, variety or commercial type, stage of ripeness, quality (if indicated) and size (if sized). The visible part of the contents of the package shall be representative of the entire contents.

Fresh dates may be presented:

- in clusters (consisting mainly of the rachis and the stems to which the fruit is attached naturally);
- in stems (stems which are separated from the rachis and to which the fruit is attached naturally); and
- Separated in individual fruit, arranged in layers, or loose in the package.

Stems presented in clusters or separated from the rachis shall be at least 10cm in length and carry an average of four–six fruits per 10 cm of length.

**6.2 PACKAGING**

Fresh dates shall be packed in such a way so as to protect the produce properly. The materials used inside the package shall 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 dates shall be packed in each package in compliance with the appropriate sections of 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, ventilations and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preserving of the fresh dates. Packages shall 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 Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1- 1985), the following specific provisions apply:

#### **7.1.1 Name of produce**

Each package shall be labelled as fresh dates and may be labelled as to the name of the variety, cultivar and/or commercial type.

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

Country of origin<sup>2</sup> 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), in addition the following requirements shall apply::

#### **7.2.1 Origin of Produce**

Country of origin<sup>2</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 fresh dates of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the species and/or variety concerned.

#### **7.2.2 Commercial Specifications**

- Class (optional);
- Variety and/or commercial type;
- Weight or size (if sized) in accordance with the method applied.

## **8. FOOD ADDITIVES**

No food additives are permitted in fresh dates.

## **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 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* (CXG21-1997).

---

<sup>2</sup> The full or commonly used name should be indicated.