

Fruit and vegetables inspection in Europe



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Purpose of standards and their inspections

Inspection of compliance with international standards

- **Protection** of the market from products not conform to the standards;
- Offering choice in quality for the **consumer** in close connection with the price
- Reference point for **the trader**;
- Motivation for the **producer** to ship quality produce. ‘Better quality better price’ – in theory.

**„Only good quality can guarantee success”
(Israel, New-Zealand, USA, South-Africa)**



UNECE standards and the European Union

UNECE standards are enforced either, by :

- **National legislation or,**
- **Common rules of the EU**



Fruit and Vegetables Inspection (following the EU reform)

- **Legal background (EU)**
 - **Council Reg. (EC) No 1234/2007**
establishing a common organisation of
agricultural markets
 - **Commission Reg. (EC) No 1580/2007**
laying down implementing rules
 - **Commission Reg. (EC) No 1221/2008**



COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1234/2007

- Article 113a

Additional requirements for the marketing of the products of the fruit and vegetables sector

(1) The products of the fruit and vegetables sector which are intended to be sold fresh to the consumer, may only be marketed if they are **sound, fair and of marketable quality** and if the **country of origin is indicated**.



COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 1580/2007

(amendments coming into force after 1 July 2009)

Before 1st July 2009:

- 36 standards for 44 products in force were compulsory

After 1st July 2009: Simplification!?

- Introduction of a general marketing standard (?) and only 10 specific marketing standards

International standards:

- UNECE
- Codex Alimentarius
- EU



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Specific marketing standards (based on UNECE)

Apples	Citrus fruit (lemons, mandarins, oranges)
Kiwifruit	Headed salad, curled-leaved endives and broad-leaved endives
Peaches and nectarines	Sweet peppers
Pears	Table grapes
Strawberries	Tomatoes

+

bananas (Commission Regulation (EC) No 2257/94)



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General marketing standards

However, where the holder is able to show they are in conformity with any applicable standards adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the product shall be considered as conforming to the general marketing standard.



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Main elements of the general marketing standards:

1. Minimum quality requirements

In all classes, and bearing in mind the permitted tolerances (see below), the products must be::

- intact,
- sound, produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded,
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter,
- practically free from pests,
- practically free from damage caused by pests,
- free of abnormal external moisture,
- Free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The development and condition of the product must be such as to enable them::

- to withstand transportation and handling,
- To arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.



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Main elements of the general marketing standards :

2. Minimum maturity requirements

The product must be sufficiently developed and display satisfactory ripeness.

The development and state of maturity of the products must be such as to enable them to continue their ripening process and to reach a satisfactory degree of ripeness.



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Main elements of the general marketing standards :

3. Tolerance

A tolerance of 10 % by number or weight of product not satisfying the minimum quality requirements shall be permitted in each lot. This tolerance shall not however cover product affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption.



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Main elements of the general marketing standards :

4. Marking of origin of produce

Full name of the country of origin.



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derogation from Article 113a(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007, the following products shall not be required to conform to the marketing standards:

- intended for industrial processing, or
- intended for animal feed or other non-food use
- producer selling in his own farm
- kitchen ready
- for home processing (MS decide)



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By way of derogation from Article 113a(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007, the following products shall not be required to conform to the general marketing standard:

- mushrooms other than cultivated mushrooms of CN code 0709 59,
- capers of CN code 0709 90 40,,
- bitter almonds of CN code 0802 11 10,
- shelled almonds of CN code 0802 12,
- shelled hazelnuts of CN code 0802 22,
- shelled walnuts of CN code 0802 32,,
- pine nuts of CN code 0802 90 50, and,
- saffron of CN code 0910 20.

and
potatoes, sweet corn



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Definition of trader:

“Trader” means any natural or legal person:

- a) holding fruit and vegetables subject to marketing standards with a view to,
 - i. displaying or offering them for sale,,
 - ii. selling them, or
 - iii. marketing them in any other manner, or

- b) who actually carries out any of the activities referred to in points (i), (ii) and (iii) of point (a) as regards fruit and vegetables subject to marketing standards.



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Inspections:

- **on domestic market**

- based on risk analysis

- **at export and import stages**

- in case of products falling under the scope of the specific marketed standards, compulsory,

- in case of products falling under the scope of the general rules based on risk analysis

- accepted third countries (only for the 10 products)

Method of inspection set in Annex (based on OECD guidelines)

Problems in practice

Different interpretation between Member States
Different risk analysis
There has been introduced a double quality regime



Study on effects???



General conclusions of the Study



- **Should take into account specificities of the F&V sector and the limitations of the Study (focused on limited number of products, less than a year after the application of new rules),**
- **Arguments in favour and against the repeal of SMS not yet confirmed by facts**

General conclusions of the Study



- **Pros:**
 - + **Costs savings on controls: very limited for national authorities, administrative burden linked to control stable for operators,**
 - + **Regulatory simplification: only partial,**
 - + **Offer/product diversification: no change,**
 - + **Decrease in discards: no significant change,**
 - + **Decrease in consumer prices: no impact.**

General conclusions of the Study



- **Cons:**
 - **Development/proliferation of private standards: repealed EU SMS replaced by UNECE standards in DE, FR, IT, and distributors specifications in UK and PL;**
 - **Decrease in producer prices: no impact,**
 - **Decrease of the quality of products: no impact,**
 - **Impact on the comparability and transparency of the market: no significant changes.**

Final conclusion



Where international standard for a given product exists and there's need for regulation that has to implemented in order to avoid technical barrier for trade and confusion



**Thank you for your
attention!**

