

## PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX STANDARD FOR ONIONS & SHALLOTS

### 1. SCOPE

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for onions and shallots after preparation and packaging. However, if applied at stages following packaging, onions and shallots 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.

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 with standard.

### 2. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to onions of varieties grown from *Allium cepa* L. cepa Group and shallots grown from *Allium cepa* L. Aggregatum Group and grey shallots grown from *Allium oschaninii* O. Fedtsch., to be supplied fresh to the consumer. Onions and shallots intended for industrial processing are excluded.

The standard covers the following commercial types:

- shapes: round, demi-long, long, elongated.
- Colours: white, red, yellow.

### 3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

#### 3.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the onions and shallots 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;
- free from damage caused by pests;
- without hollow or tough stems;
- free from traces of mould;
- free of externally visible shoot growth;
- fresh in appearance;

- 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 or high temperature;
- the roots must be neatly trimmed.
- sufficiently dry for the intended use (in the case of onions for storing, at least the first two outer skins and the stem must be fully dried).
- the stems must be twisted or clean cut and must not exceed 6 cm in length (except for stringed onions). The stems must be neatly trimmed, except for shallots presented in strings that must be braided with their own stems and tied with string, raffia or any other appropriate material.

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

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

### **3.1.1 Minimum Maturity Requirements**

Onions and shallots must have reached an appropriate degree of development and/or maturity in accordance with criteria proper to the variety and/or commercial type, to the time of harvesting/picking, and to the area in which they are grown.

Onions and shallots must display sufficient development for the intended purpose in accordance with criteria appropriate to the variety and to the area in which they are grown.

## **3.2 CLASSIFICATION**

Onions and shallots are classified in two classes defined below:

### **3.2.1 Class I**

Onions and shallots in this class must be of good quality and characteristics of the variety and/or the 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:

- a slight defect in shape;
- slight defect in colouring;
- superficial cracks in and partial absence of the outer skins, provided the flesh is protected.

- light staining that does not affect the outer skin, provided it does not cover more than one fifth of the bulb's surface superficial cracks in and partial absence of the outer skins, provided the flesh is protected.

The bulbs must be:

- firm and compact.
- practically free of root tufts; however, for onions and grey shallots harvested before complete maturity, root tufts shall be allowed.
- free from externally visible shoots (unsprouted).
- free from swelling caused by abnormal vegetative development.

### **3.2.2 Class II**

This class includes onions and shallots that do not qualify for inclusion in Class I but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in section 3.2.1 above.

The following defects may be allowed, provided the onions and shallots retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape;
- defects in colouring;
- traces due to rubbing;
- slight marking caused by parasites or disease;
- small healed cracks;
- slight healed bruising;
- healed mechanical damage;
- root tufts;
- stains that do not affect the outer skin, provided they do not cover more than half the bulb's surface.
- cracks in the outer skins and partial absence of the skins over a maximum of one third of the bulb's surface, provided the flesh is not damaged.
- early evidence of externally visible shoot growth (no more than 10 per cent by number or weight by unit of presentation)

The bulbs must be:

- reasonably firm.

## **4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING**

Onions and shallots may be sized by the maximum diameter of the equatorial section in accordance with existing trade practices, the package must be labelled with the size and method used. The minimum diameter shall be 10 mm for onions and grey shallots and 15 mm for other shallots. The maximum diameter shall be 55 mm for round shallots and 60 mm for demi-long and long shallots.

To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed:

- 5 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 10 mm and over but under 20 mm. However, where the diameter of the onion is 15 mm and over but under 25 mm, the difference may be 10 mm;
- 15 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 20 mm and over but under 40 mm;
- 20 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 40 mm and over but under 70 mm;
- 30 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 70 mm or over.
- 10 mm where the diameter of the smallest shallot is 10 mm and over but under 15 mm;
- 15 mm where the diameter of the smallest shallot is 15 mm and over but under 20 mm;
- 20 mm where the diameter of the smallest shallot is 20 mm or over.

## **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 resorted and brought into conformity in accordance with the relevant provisions in the *Guideline for Food Import Control System* (CAC/GL 47-2003) paragraphs 9, 10 and 27.

#### **5.1.1 Class I**

Ten percent, (10.0%) by number or weight, of onions and shallots not satisfying the requirements of this class, but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 1 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying neither the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements, or of produce affected by decay. In addition, 4 per cent, by weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth.

#### **5.1.2 Class II**

Ten percent, (10.0%) by number or weight, of onions and shallots satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements are allowed. Within this tolerance not satisfying neither in total may consist of produce affected by decay. In addition, a maximum tolerance of 10 per cent, by number or weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth.

### **5.2 SIZE TOLERANCES**

For all classes, (if sized), a maximum of ten percent (10.0%) by number or weight of onions or shallots not satisfying the requirements as regards to sizing.

## **6. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION**

### **6.1 UNIFORMITY**

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only onions or shallots of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality and size (if sized).

However, a mixture of onions or shallots of distinctly different commercial types and/or varieties, and colors may be packed together in a sales package, provided they are uniform in quality and, for each commercial type and/or color concerned, in origin.

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

### **6.2 PACKAGING**

Onions or shallots 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. Stickers individually affixed to the produce shall be such that, when removed, they neither leave visible traces of glue nor lead to skin defects.

Onions and shallots shall be packed in each package in compliance with the *Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 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 onions and shallots. 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* (CODEX STAN 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 “Onions” or “Shallots” and may be labelled as to name of the variety and/or commercial type.

"Onions" if the contents are not visible from the outside.

“Mixture of onions”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of onions. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the commercial types and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated.

- “Shallots” or “Grey shallots” if the contents are not visible from the outside
- Commercial type: “long”, “demi-long” or “round”
- “Mixture of shallots”, or equivalent denomination, in the case of a mixture of distinctly different commercial types and/or colours of shallots. If the produce is not visible from the outside, the commercial types and/or colours and the quantity of each in the package must be indicated.
  - Method of production (e.g. “Seed-grown”, for shallots grown from seed, or “Traditional”, for bulb-grown shallots) optional.

### **7.1.2 Origin of produce**

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

In the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties of onions or shallots of different origins, the indication of the country of origin shall appear next to the name of the variety and/or colour concerned.

## **7.2. NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS**

Each package<sup>1</sup> must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside.

either printed on the package itself or on a label secured to the fastening (if the labels are placed inside the packages (string bag), this should be done in such a way that the indications concerning marking are readable from the outside); or in

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<sup>1</sup> Package units of produce prepacked for direct sale to the consumer shall not be subject to these marking provisions but shall conform to the national requirements. However, the markings referred to shall in any event be shown on the transport packaging containing such package units.

the documents accompanying the shipment and attached in a visible position inside the transport vehicle.

For onions and shallot transported in bulk (direct loading into a transport vehicle) these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the goods, and attached in a visible position inside the transport vehicle unless the document is replaced by an electronic solution. In that case the identification must be machine readable and easily accessible.

### **7.2.1 Identification**

Name and address of exporter, packer and/or dispatcher.

Identification code (optional)<sup>2</sup>.

### **7.2.2 Name of produce**

- Name of the produce “Onions” or “Shallots” if the contents are not visible from the outside.
- Name of the variety and/or commercial type (optional).
- In the case of sales packages containing a mixture of different varieties and colours of onions or shallots:
- ‘Mixture of onions or shallots’ or equivalent denomination.

### **7.2.3 Origin of produce**

Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name. In the case of a mixture of distinctly different varieties of onions and shallots of different origins, the indication of each country of origin shall appear next to the name of the variety.

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<sup>2</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, and the code mark should be preceded by the ISO 3166 (alpha) country/area code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

#### **7.2.4 Commercial Specifications**

- Class;
- Variety;
- Size (if sized);

#### **7.2.5 Official Control Mark (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* (CODEX STAN 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* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 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* (CAC/GL 21-1997).