

DRAFT CARICOM STANDARD

**Specification for the
Grading of Hot Peppers**

COMMITTEE DRAFT

Contents

0.0	Foreword	iv
1.0	Scope	1
2.0	Definitions	1
3.0	Provisions Concerning Quality	2
4.0	Provision Concerning Sizing	4
5.0	Provisions Concerning Packaging and Labeling	4
6.0	Contaminants	5
7.0	Hygienic and Sanitary Requirements	5

COMMITTEE DRAFT

Committee Representation

The preparation of this standard was carried out under the supervision of the Regional Technical Committee (RTC #19) for Agricultural Commodities, which at the time comprised of the following members:

CHAIRMAN

Mr. Lloyd Pascal

ORGANIZATION

Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA)

MEMBERS

Mr. Angus McIntyre

ORGANIZATION

Windward Island Banana Development Cooperation (WIBDECO)

Mr. Ricky Allport

Division of Agriculture

Mr. Ryan Anselm

Plant Protection and Quarantine Services

Mr. Delroy Williams

National Association of Youth in Agriculture (NAYA)

Gregory Robin, PhD

Caribbean Research and Development Institute (CARDI)

Mr. Kevin Stephenson

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Mr. Cecil Joseph

Dominica Hucksters Association (1995) Ltd. (DHA)

Mr. Clement Ferreira

Nature's Best

Mr. Rawle Leslie

Dominica State College – Agriculture Faculty

Mr. Peter Dominique

Parry W. Bellot & Co. Ltd

TECHNICAL SECRETARY

Dr. Nadia Pacquette –Anselm
Dominica Bureau of Standards

0.0 FOREWORD

- 0.1 This draft Caricom Standard was prepared by the Regional Technical Committee (RTC #19) for Agricultural Commodities, hosted by the CARICOM Member State, Dominica.
- 0.2 This regional Standard was developed in an effort to:
- (a) Avoid misunderstanding and confusion among those involved in the marketing chain
 - (b) Provide an objective basis for relating price with quality
 - (c) Encourage better selection, packaging and presentation of produce as a means of obtaining greater income overall
 - (d) Assist exporters and their countries in meeting export market requirements and thereby enhancing their reputation and market position.
- 0.3 In development of this standard reference was made to:
- (a) Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Jamaica, Standards for Grades of Hot –peppers, 1986, revised 2000
 - (b) Guyana Standard Specification for Grades of Hot-Pepper; GYS 7:1994
 - (c) Windward Islands Standards for fresh Agricultural Produce, IICA/CPEC 2001

1.0 SCOPE

This grade standard applies to **Hot Peppers** (*Capsicum frutescens (L) Sendt.*), to be supplied fresh to the consumer market and excludes products for industrial processing.

The purpose of this standard is to define specifications for quality requirements of hot peppers, after preparation and packaging.

2.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this standard, the following definitions shall apply:

- 2.1 Blemish:** means any physical injury affecting the surface of the fruit, such as scars, scratches, healed cracks or discolored spots, which detracts from its natural appearance, but will not significantly affect its shelf life.
- 2.2 Clean:** means that the hot peppers are free from soil, chemical deposits, pest, and any foreign matter
- 2.4 Correct Packed Weight/Count:** means that the weight placed in the package shall take account of the expected natural weight loss and ensure that the buyer gets the net weight/count stated on the package.
- 2.5 Damage:** means any defect or combination of defects of physical or physiological causes which detracts from the edible or marketing quality such as rot, decay, chilling injury, insect damage, healed or open cracks or punctures, bruises, sunscald and cracks to the fruit, which could lead to the abnormally quick deterioration of the fruit.
- 2.6 Desired Size:** means the weight or diameter required by the market (customer).
- 2.7 Firm:** means not soft, spongy or noticeably wilted.
- 2.8 Free from disease:** free from any visible evidence of moulds, fungal and bacterial rots, spots or any symptom of viral infection.
- 2.9 Fresh:** means the hot pepper is firm, turgid, glossy, bright, and with a green stalk. Additionally, there are no signs of shriveling, shrinkage or softness of the fruit. Hot peppers maintain their reaped appearance and are not withered or showing signs of dehydration
- 2.10 Insect Free:** means no signs of live or dead insects at any stage of development shall be present on or in the hot pepper or in the package

- 2.11 Intact:** means the stalk is firmly attached to the fruit with evidence that it was detached at the line of abscission and with no sign of breakage, twisting or damage to the stalk.
- 2.12 Lot:** means two or more hot peppers whether or not packaged, but sold as one distinct and separate group.
- 2.13 Mature:** means that the hot peppers are turgid and glossy with thick, bright colored walls and at a stage of development that will ensure that they arrive on the market in an acceptable condition subject to the expected type of transportation and handling conditions.
- 2.14 Properly Labeled:** meets the requirements of the importing country's legislation and any additional specifications dictated by the importer; each box for export shall be legibly and indelibly marked on at least two sides.
- 2.15 Similar Varietal Characteristics:** means that hot peppers in a lot shall have the same general shape, size, color, flavour, odor and pungency typical of the variety.
- 2.16 Weight:** means that the weight stated on the container shall be the minimum net weight delivered to the customer

3.0 PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

3.1 Minimum Requirements

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the Hot Peppers shall meet the following minimum requirements:

- a. Of similar varietal characteristics
- b. Mature
- c. Fresh
- d. Free from pests and diseases
- e. Of the desired size
- f. In properly labeled packages
- g. Of correct packed weight
- h. Firm
- i. Clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter
- j. Free of any foreign smell and/or taste
- k. Intact green stalk

3.2 Classification

Subject to the tolerances below all classes shall meet the minimum requirements under section 3.1

The degree of tolerance for the individual classes is meant to account for normal human error in sorting and packing, and for the deterioration in quality that may occur between the point of dispatch and receipt and should not be deliberately exploited by the packer.

There shall be two (2) classes for hot-peppers, namely, Class I and Class II

3.2.1 Class I

Hot-pepper in this class shall be:

- (a) Free from damage
- (b) Blemish free

3.2.2 Class II

Hot-pepper in this class shall be:

- (a) Free from damage
- (b) Total aggregate blemishes shall not exceed 5% of the surface area of individual fruits

3.3 Consignment Tolerance

3.3.1 Class I

Not more than 5% by number or weight of hot pepper shall fail to meet the specifications of this class but meet those of class II.

A 5% variation from the desired size shall be permitted

There shall be zero tolerance for damage at the dispatching stage

3.3.2 Class II

Not more than 10% by number or weight of hot pepper shall fail to meet the specifications of this class.

A 10% variation from the desired size shall be permitted

3.3.3 Unclassified

Unclassified shall be the hot pepper which has not been classified in any of the foregoing grades. The designation shows that the hot-pepper has been examined but no grade has been assigned.

4.0 PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is dependent on the variety and market requirement.

5.0 PROVISIONS CONCERNING PACKAGING AND LABELING

5.1 Packaging

Hot Peppers must be packed in such a manner, which will afford protection to the produce.

The material used inside the package and the container shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preservation of the hot peppers.

The use of materials, particularly of paper or stamps bearing trade specifications is allowed, provided the printing or labeling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Stickers individually affixed on the produce shall be not such that, when removed, neither leaves visible traces of glue, nor lead to skin defects.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter.

5.2 Labeling

Each package 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 package. Each Label shall include the following mandatory requirements:

- i.* Name and address of exporter, packer or dispatcher
- ii.* Name and address of consignee

- iii. Name of produce including variety or cultivar
- iv. Net weight of package as kg (lb)
- v. Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown, or national, regional or local place name.
- vi. Date of packing
- vii. Grade

In addition, labels may include the following optional information:

- i. Growers/lot identification number
- ii. Post harvest treatments e.g. waxing or fungicide use
- iii. Storage and ripening temperature requirements
- iv. Storage conditions and general handling of containers

6.0 CONTAMINANTS

All chemicals used pre/post harvest must be registered and approved for use in accordance with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and the requirements of the national regulation for pesticides and that of the importing country.

Hot peppers shall comply with those maximum levels for contaminants and heavy metals established by the Codex Alimentarius for this commodity.

7.0 HYGIENIC AND SANITARY REQUIREMENTS

It is recommended that Hot Peppers covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the Codex Code of Practice for General Principles of Food Hygiene, the requirements of the Code of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary requirements (SPS)

Hot Peppers shall comply with the microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Codex Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods.