



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service**

**Fruit and  
Vegetable  
Programs**

**Fresh  
Products  
Branch**

# **United States Standards for Grades of Fresh Asparagus**

**Effective February 23, 2006**

# United States Standards for Grades of Fresh Asparagus<sup>1</sup>

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## **Grades**

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## **Grades**

### **§51.3720 U.S. No. 1.**

"U.S. No. 1" consists of stalks of asparagus which are fresh, well trimmed, and fairly straight; which are free from decay and free from damage caused by spreading or broken tips, dirt, disease, insects, or other means.

(a) **Size.** Unless otherwise specified, the diameter of each stalk is not less than one-half inch.

(b) **Color.** Unless otherwise specified, not less than two-thirds of the stalk length shall be the color of the lot.

(c) **Tolerances.** In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances, by count, are provided as specified:

(1) **For defects.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of this grade other than for trimming, including therein not more than 5 percent for defects causing serious damage: **Provided**, That not more than one-fifth of this latter amount, or 1 percent, shall be allowed for stalks affected by decay. In addition, not more than 10 percent of the stalks in any

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<sup>1</sup>Compliance with the provisions of these standards shall not excuse failure to comply with the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, or with applicable State laws and regulations.

lot may fail to meet the trimming requirement.

(2) **For off-size.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the specified diameter or length requirements.

**§51.3721 U.S. No. 2.**

"U.S. No. 2" consists of stalks of asparagus which are fresh, fairly well trimmed, and not badly misshapen; which are free from decay and free from serious damage caused by spreading or broken tips, dirt, disease, insects or other means.

(a) **Size.** Unless otherwise specified, the diameter of each stalk is not less than five-sixteenths inch.

(b) **Color.** Unless otherwise specified, not less than one-half of the stalk length shall be the color of the lot.

(c) **Tolerances.** In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances, by count, are provided as specified:

(1) **For defects.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of this grade other than for trimming, including therein not more than one-tenth of this tolerance, or 1 percent, shall be allowed for stalks affected by decay. In addition, not more than 10 percent of the stalks in any lot may fail to meet the trimming requirement.

(2) **For off-size.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the specified diameter or length requirements.

**Application of Tolerances**

**§51.3722 Application of tolerances.**

The contents of individual packages in the lot are subject to the following limitations:

(a) Packages which contain more than 50 stalks shall have not more than 1-1/2 times a specified tolerance of 10 percent or more, or not more than double a specified tolerance of less than 10 percent: **Provided,** That the averages for the entire lot are within the tolerances specified for the grade.

(b) Packages which contain 50 stalks or less shall have not more than 4 times the tolerance specified, except that at least 2 defective and 2 off-size stalks may be permitted in any package: **Provided,** That not more than 1 stalk which is affected by decay may be permitted in any package: **And provided further,** That the averages for the entire lot are within the tolerances specified for the grade.

**Diameter Classification**

**§51.3723 Diameter classification.**

The following terms are provided for describing the diameters of any lot:

- Very Small..... Less than 5/16 inch.
- Small..... 5/16 inch to less than 8/16 inch.
- Medium..... 8/16 inch to less than 11/16 inch.
- Large..... 11/16 inch to less than 14/16 inch.
- Very Large..... 14/16 inch and up.

## **Amount of Color**

### **§51.3724 Amount of color.**

When the asparagus in a lot has less or more color than is specified in the grade it may be described as 1/4 stalk length green, 3/4 stalk length purple, etc., in accordance with the facts.

## **Stalk Length**

### **§51.3725 Stalk length.**

There is no minimum stalk length specified in the grades but the minimum stalk length may be stated in terms of whole inches or whole and half inches in connection with the grade designation as "U.S. No. 1, 8-1/2-inch minimum", "U.S. No. 1 Large, 7-inch minimum", "U.S. No. 1 Large, 10-1/2-inch minimum", etc., in accordance with the facts.

## **Definitions**

### **§51.3726 Fresh.**

"Fresh" means that the stalk is not limp or flabby.

### **§51.3727 Well trimmed.**

"Well trimmed" means that at least two-thirds of the butt of the stalk is smoothly trimmed in a plane approximately parallel to the bottom of the container and that the butt is not stringy or frayed.

### **§51.3728 Damage.**

"Damage" means any defect, or any combination of defects, which materially detracts from the appearance, or the edible or marketing quality of the stalk.

### **§51.3729 Diameter.**

"Diameter" means the greatest thickness of the stalk measured at a point approximately 1 inch from the butt.

### **§51.3730 Fairly well trimmed.**

"Fairly well trimmed" means that at least one-third of the butt of the stalk is smoothly trimmed in a plane approximately parallel to the bottom of the container and that the butt is not badly stringy or frayed.

### **§51.3731 Badly misshapen**

"Badly misshapen" means that the stalk is so badly flattened, crooked or otherwise so badly deformed that its appearance is seriously affected.

### **§51.3732 Serious damage.**

"Serious damage" means any defect, or any combination of defects, which seriously detracts from the appearance, or the edible or marketing quality of the stalk.

**Metric Conversion Table**  
**§51.3733 Metric conversion table.**

Inches	Millimeters (mm)
1/8 equals	3.2
1/4 equals	6.4
5/16 equals	7.9
3/8 equals	9.5
1/2 equals	12.7
5/8 equals	15.9
11/16 equals	17.5
3/4 equals	19.1
7/8 equals	22.2
1 equals	25.4
1-1/4 equals	31.8
1-1/2 equals	38.1
1-3/4 equals	44.5
2 equals	50.8
3 equals	76.2
4 equals	101.6
5 equals	127.0
6 equals	152.4
7 equals	177.8
8 equals	203.3
9 equals	228.7
10 equals	254.1