



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

**Agricultural
Marketing
Service**

**Fruit and
Vegetable
Programs**

**Fresh
Products
Branch**

United States Standards for Grades of Sweet Peppers

Corrected and Effective November 17, 2005

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Grades

§51.3270 U.S. Fancy.

“U.S. Fancy” consists of mature green sweet peppers of similar varietal characteristics (except when more than one variety and/or color are marked on the container), which are firm, well shaped, and free from sunscald, freezing injury, decay affecting calyxes and/or walls, decay affecting stems, and from injury caused by scars, hail, sunburn, disease, insects, mechanical or other means.

(a) **Size.** The diameter of each pepper shall be not less than 3 inches and the length of each pepper shall be not less than 3-1/2 inches.

(b) **Color.** Any lot of peppers which meets all the requirements of this grade, except those relating to green color, may be designated as “U.S. Fancy” with the characteristic color specified in connection with this grade, provided that at least 90 percent of the peppers show any amount of the specified characteristic color, and provided further, that if the peppers fail to meet the color requirements of either “U.S. Fancy” or “U.S. Fancy (color specified),” they may, when requested, be designated as “U.S. Fancy Mixed Color” (See Tolerances, §51.3274).

§51.3271 U.S. No. 1.

“U.S. No. 1” consists of mature green sweet peppers of similar varietal characteristics (except when more than one variety and/or color are marked on the container), which are firm, fairly well shaped, and free from sunscald and decay affecting calyxes and/or walls, decay affecting stems, and free from damage caused by freezing injury, hail, scars, sunburn, disease, insects, mechanical or other means.

(a) **Size.** Unless otherwise specified, the diameter of each pepper shall be not less than 2-1/2 inches and the length of each pepper shall be not less than 2-1/2 inches.

¹ Packing of the product in conformity with the requirements of these standards shall not excuse failure to comply with the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

(b) **Color.** Any lot of peppers which meet all the requirements of this grade, except those relating to green color, may be designated as “U.S. No. 1” with the characteristic color specified in connection with this grade, provided that at least 90 percent of the peppers show any amount of the specified characteristic color, and provided further, that if the peppers fail to meet the color requirements of either “U.S. No. 1” or “U.S. No. 1 (color specified),” they may, when requested, be designated as “U.S. No. 1 Mixed Color” (See Tolerances, §51.3274).

§51.3272 U.S. No. 2.

“U.S. No. 2” consists of mature green sweet peppers of similar varietal characteristics (except when more than one variety and/or color are marked on the container), which are firm, not seriously misshapen, and free from sunscald and decay affecting calyxes and/or walls, decay affecting stems, and free from serious damage caused by freezing injury, hail, scars, sunburn, disease, insects, mechanical or other means.

(a) **Color.** Any lot of peppers which meet all the requirements of this grade, except those relating to green color, may be designated as “U.S. No. 2” with the characteristic color specified in connection with this grade, provided that at least 90 percent of the peppers show any amount of the specified characteristic color, and provided further that if the peppers fail to meet the color requirements of either “U.S. No. 2” or “U.S. No. 2 (color specified),” they may, when requested, be designated as “U.S. No. 2 Mixed Color” (See Tolerances, §51.3274).

Reserved

§51.3273 [Reserved].

Tolerances

§51.3274 Tolerances.

In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling in each of the foregoing grades, the following tolerances, by count, are provided as specified:

(a) U.S. Fancy and U.S. No. 1 grades.

(1) **For defects.** Not more than a total of 10 percent of the peppers in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of these grades, but not more than one-half of this amount, or 5 percent, shall be allowed for peppers which are seriously damaged, including therein not more than 2 percent for peppers affected by decay affecting calyxes and/or walls; and,

(2) **For off-size.** Not more than 10 percent of the peppers in any lot may fail to meet the size specifications.

(b) U.S. No. 2 grade.

(1) **For defects.** Not more than a total of 10 percent of the peppers in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of this grade, but not more than one-half of this amount, or 5 percent, shall be allowed for peppers affected by sunscald or affected by decay affecting stems only, including therein not more than 2 percent for peppers affected by decay affecting calyxes and/or walls.

Application of Tolerances

§51.3275 Application of tolerances.

The contents of individual packages in the lot, based on sample inspection, are subject to the following limitations: **Provided**, that the averages for the entire lot are within the tolerances specified for the grade:

(a) For packages which contain more than 20 peppers, and a tolerance of 10 percent or more is provided, individual packages in any lot shall have not more than one and one-half times the tolerance specified.

(b) For packages which contain more than 20 peppers and a tolerance of less than 10 percent is provided, and for packages which contain 20 peppers or less, individual packages in any lot shall have not more than double the tolerance specified, except that at least 1 defective and 1 off-size pepper may be permitted in any package.

Definitions

§51.3276 Mature green.

“Mature green” means that the pepper has reached the stage of development that will withstand normal handling and shipping.

§51.3277 Similar varietal characteristics.

“Similar varietal characteristics” mean that each pepper is of the same general type (except when more than one variety and/or color are marked on the container). For example, thin walled types and thick walled types of the same color shall not be mixed within the container.

§51.3278 Firm.

“Firm means” that the pepper is not soft, shriveled, limp or pliable, although it may yield to slight pressure.

§51.3279 Well shaped.

“Well shaped” means that the pepper is not more than slightly curved, slightly indented or not otherwise more than slightly misshapen.

§51.3280 Injury.

“Injury,” unless otherwise specifically defined in this section, means any defect which more than slightly detracts from the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality of the pepper. Any one of the following defects, or any combinations of defects the seriousness of which exceeds the maximum allowed for any one defect, shall be considered as injury:

- (a) Scars when scattered over the surface and aggregating more than the area of a circle five-eighths inch in diameter or one scar three-eighths inch in diameter on a pepper 3-1/2 inch in length and 3 inches in diameter, or correspondingly greater areas of scars on larger peppers;
- (b) Sunburn when causing discoloration which affects an aggregate area exceeding 5 percent of the surface of the pepper;
- (c) Bacterial Spot when aggregating more than the area of a circle five-eighths inch in diameter on a pepper 3-1/2 inch in length and 3 inches in diameter, or correspondingly greater areas of spots on larger peppers; and,
- (d) Hail or similar injury when the skin is healed and the affected areas aggregate more than the equivalent of a circle three-eighths inch in diameter on a pepper 3-1/2 inch in length and 3 inches in diameter, or correspondingly greater areas of injury on larger peppers.

§51.3281 Fairly well shaped.

“Fairly well shaped” means that the pepper may be more than slightly indented or curved, but is not of the type commonly known as “button” or is not decidedly crooked, constricted or deformed.

§51.3282 Damage.

“Damage,” unless otherwise specifically defined in this section, means any defect which materially detracts from the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality of the pepper. Any one of the following defects, or any combinations of defects the seriousness of which exceeds the maximum allowed for any one defect, shall be considered as damage:

- (a) Scars when scattered over the surface and aggregating more than the area of a circle five-eighths inch in diameter or one scar three-eighths inch in diameter on a pepper 2-1/2 inch in length and 2-1/2 inches in diameter, or correspondingly lesser or greater areas of scars on smaller or larger peppers;
- (b) Sunburn when causing discoloration which affects an aggregate area exceeding 15 percent of the surface of the pepper;
- (c) Bacterial Spot when aggregating more than the area of a circle five-eighths inch in diameter on a pepper 2-1/2 inch in length and 2-1/2 inches in diameter, or correspondingly lesser or greater areas of spots on smaller or larger peppers; and,
- (d) Hail or similar injury when the skin is healed and the affected areas aggregate more than the equivalent of a circle three-eighths inch in diameter on a pepper 2-1/2 inch in length and 2-1/2 inches in diameter, or correspondingly lesser or greater areas of injury on smaller or larger peppers.

§51.3283 Not seriously misshapen.

“Not seriously misshapen” means that the pepper is not badly indented, crooked, constricted or otherwise badly deformed.

§51.3284 Serious damage.

“Serious damage,” unless otherwise specifically defined in this section, means any defect which seriously detracts from the appearance or the edible or shipping quality of the pepper. Any one of the following defects, or any combinations of defects the seriousness of which exceeds the maximum allowed for any one defect, shall be considered as serious damage:

- (a) Sunscald;
- (b) Any opening or puncture through the fleshy wall of the pepper;
- (c) Scars when scattered over the surface and aggregating more than the area of a circle 1 inch in diameter or one scar three-fourths inches in diameter on a pepper 2-1/2 inch in length and 2-1/2 inches in diameter, or correspondingly lesser or greater areas of scars on smaller or larger peppers;
- (d) Sunburn when causing discoloration which affects an aggregate area exceeding 25 percent of the surface of the pepper;
- (e) Bacterial Spot when aggregating more than the area of a circle 1 inch in diameter on a pepper 2-1/2 inch in length and 2-1/2 inches in diameter, or correspondingly lesser or greater areas of spots on smaller or larger peppers; and,
- (f) Decay affecting stems only.

§51.3285 Diameter.

“Diameter” means the greatest dimension measured at right angles to the longitudinal axis.

§51.3286 Length.

“Length” means the greatest overall length measured in a straight line parallel to the longitudinal axis, exclusive of the stem.

LOWER LIMIT "WELL SHAPED"
U.S. FANCY

Illustration PEP 1



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LOWER LIMIT "FAIRLY WELL SHAPED"
U.S. No. 1

Illustration PEP 2



LOWER LIMIT "NOT SERIOUSLY MISSHAPEN"
U.S. No. 2

Illustration PEP 3

