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# **United States Standards for Grades of Blueberries for Processing**

**Effective September 6, 2016**

This issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Blueberries for Processing (81 FR 51297) supersedes the previous issue which has been in effect since August 5, 1950.

Voluntary U.S. grade standards are issued under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, which provides for the development of official U.S. grades to designate different levels of quality. These grade standards are available for use by producers, suppliers, buyers, and consumers. As in the case of other standards for grades of fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops these standards are designed to facilitate orderly marketing by providing a convenient basis for buying and selling, for establishing quality control programs, and for determining loan values.

The U.S. grade standards and inspection instructions for all fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops are available on the internet and upon request at the address below. These documents provide detailed interpretations of the grade standards and provide step-by-step procedures for grading the product.

Grade standards are issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) after careful consideration of all data and views submitted during rulemaking. The Department welcomes suggestions for improving the standards in future revisions. Comments may be submitted to, and copies of standards and inspection instructions obtained from:

Director, Specialty Crops Inspection Division  
Specialty Crops Program,  
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0240  
Washington, D.C. 20250

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**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

**Note:** 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.

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<b>Section</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>General</b> .....	<b>2</b>
§51.2025 General.....	2
<b>Grades</b> .....	<b>2</b>
§51.2026 U.S. No. 1.....	2
§51.2027 U.S. No. 2.....	2
§51.2028 U.S. No. 3.....	2
<b>Reserved</b> .....	<b>3</b>
§51.2029 Reserved.....	3
<b>Definitions</b> .....	<b>3</b>
§51.2030 Other kinds of berries.....	3
§51.2031 Clusters.....	3
§51.2032 Large stems.....	3
§51.2033 Other foreign material.....	3
§51.2034 Distinctly immature berries.....	3
§51.2035 Damage.....	3
§51.2036 Serious damage.....	4
§51.2037 Very serious damage caused by shriveling.....	4

**General**  
**§51.2025    General.**

These standards apply to species of the genus *Vaccinium* which contain numerous small seeds that are barely noticeable and not to the true huckleberries of the genus *Gaylussacia* which contain 10 large seeds with bony coverings.

**Grades**  
**§51.2026    U.S. No. 1.**

**U.S. No. 1** shall consist of blueberries which internally are free from worms, and are free from other kinds of berries, clusters, large stems, leaves and other foreign material, distinctly immature berries, and free from damage caused by visible mold and decay, shriveling, dirt, overmaturity, or other means.

- (a) In order to allow for variations incident to proper handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted for grade defects in a half-pint cup sample:
- (b) Not more than a total of 5 leaves and other foreign material, not more than a total of 20 distinctly immature berries, clusters and large stems, and not more than 3 berries other than blueberries. No tolerance shall be allowed for large pieces of foreign material.

**§51.2027    U.S. No. 2.**

**U.S. No. 2** shall consist of blueberries which meet all the requirements of U.S. No. 1 grade except that the blueberries shall be free from serious damage caused by shriveling, overmaturity, and except for the increased tolerances specified in this section.

- (a) In order to allow for variations incident to proper handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted for grade defects in a half-pint cup sample:
  - (1) Not more than a total of 15 leaves and other foreign material, not more than a total of 40 distinctly immature berries, clusters, and large stems, and not more than 5 berries other than blueberries. No tolerance shall be allowed for large pieces of foreign material.

**§51.2028    U.S. No. 3.**

**U.S. No. 3** shall consist of blueberries which meet all the requirements of U.S. No. 1 grade except that the blueberries shall be free from serious damage caused by overmaturity and from very serious damage caused by shriveling and except for the increased tolerances specified in this section.

- (a) In order to allow for variations incident to proper handling, the following

tolerances shall be permitted for grade defects in a half-pint cup sample:

- (1) Not more than a total of 20 leaves and other foreign material, not more than a total of 70 distinctly immature berries, clusters and large stems, and not more than 12 berries other than blueberries. No tolerance shall be allowed for large pieces of foreign material.

**Reserved**

**§51.2029 Reserved.**

**Definitions**

**§51.2030 Other kinds of berries.**

“**Other kinds of berries**” means bunchberries, cranberries, or any other berries not of the genus *Vaccinium*.

**§51.2031 Clusters.**

“**Clusters**” means three or more capstems, with or without berries, attached to a main stem. Capstems are those small stems by means of which the individual berry is attached to the main stem.

**§51.2032 Large stems.**

“**Large stems**” means stems other than capstems which are over 1/4 inch in length.

**§51.2033 Other foreign material.**

“**Other foreign material**” means sticks, stones, moss or other extraneous material except dirt and leaves.

**§51.2034 Distinctly immature berries.**

“**Distinctly immature berries**” means that the berries are green, or whitish due to immaturity.

**§51.2035 Damage.**

“**Damage**” means any injury or defect which materially affects the appearance, or the processing quality of the blueberries. The following shall be considered as damage:

- (a) **Shriveling**, when more than one-fourth of the blueberries in any lot, by volume, are badly wilted, withered or shriveled.
- (b) **Dirt**, when it cannot be removed from the blueberries in the ordinary washing process.

- (c) **Overmaturity**, when the appearance and processing quality of the lot of blueberries is materially affected by berries which have a dull appearance and are sticky from leaking berries.

**§51.2036 Serious damage.**

“**Serious damage**” means any injury or defect which seriously affects the appearance, or the processing quality of the blueberries. The following shall be considered as serious damage:

- (a) **Shriveling**, when more than one-third of the blueberries in any lot, by volume, are badly wilted, withered or shriveled.
- (b) **Overmaturity**, when the appearance and processing quality of the lot of blueberries is seriously affected by blueberries which have a dull appearance and are sticky from leaking berries.

**§51.2037 Very serious damage caused by shriveling.**

“**Very serious damage caused by shriveling**” means that more than one-half of the blueberries in any lot, by volume, are badly wilted, withered or shriveled.