



United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection Division

PATCH # 005

DOCUMENT: Grapes Market Inspection Instructions, November 1971

REMARKS: This is a Final Rule that constitutes a relaxation of the handling requirements for domestic table grapes regulated under California Marketing Order 925 and imported table grapes regulated under Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended. Effective April 10, 2016, the regulation period for domestic table grapes under Marketing Order (M.O.) 925 and imported table grapes under Section 8e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended, begins. The regulated period will run through July 10, 2016.

An AMS Final Rule has relaxed the minimum bunch size to meet M.O. and 8e requirements for table grapes packed *in plastic clamshells weighing five pounds or less*. The U.S. Standards for Grades of Table Grapes stipulates a minimum bunch size of 1/4 pound for the U.S. No. 1 Table grade. This rule represents a change in M.O. and 8e requirements, not in the Table Grape Standard. This final rule for table grapes in clamshells weighing five pounds or less allows for up to 20% of the weight in these individual containers to consist of single clusters weighing less than 1/4 pound, but with at least five berries each.

The sample size will be the master container. A separate column for each clamshell for bunches that are less than 1/4 pound but contain at least 5 berries will need to be kept on the notesheet to be able to determine whether the lot meets M.O. or 8e requirements based solely on this factor. One individual five-pound or less clamshell that contains in excess of 20% of the bunches that are less than 1/4 pound but contain at least 5 berries will cause the entire lot to fail M.O. or 8e requirements. If, for example, a lot consisting of four-pound clamshells contained 16% total defects (undersize bunches and other bunches and berries failing to meet the requirements of the grade), and 8% of this total was for bunches weighing less than 1/4 pound but consisting of at least five berry clusters, and no individual clamshell contained more than 20% of these undersize bunches, the lot would fail to grade U.S. No. 1 Table but still meet either M.O. or 8e requirements. However, if this same lot contained only 6% of these undersize bunches, that would mean that 10% consisted of other defects. In this scenario, the lot would not only fail to grade U.S. No. 1 Table, it would also fail to meet M.O. or 8e requirements because it exceeded the 8% tolerance for total defects. In all instances except for this allowance for bunches weighing less than 1/4 pound but with clusters of at least five berries each, the lot must meet all requirements of the U.S. No. 1 Table grade.

This PATCH represents official guidance. This PATCH is scheduled to be incorporated into the document listed above. After incorporation into the document listed above this PATCH will become obsolete. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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If a lot fails only because of this additional allowance, this must be noted in general quantity terms in the “Other” section of the certificate with a statement such as “Few (Some) individual clamshells contain from 21% to 24% bunches less than 1/4 pound but with at least 5 berries,” according to the facts.

If you have any questions, please contact DC Operations at 202-720-2482.

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