



United States Department of Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Specialty
Crops
Program

Specialty
Crops
Inspection
Division

United States Standards for Grades of Summer Squash

Effective September 6, 2016

This issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Summer Squash (81 FR 51297) supersedes the previous issue which has been in effect since January 6, 1984.

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

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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General
§51.4050 General.

- (a) These standards apply only to squash which are picked in the immature stages of development and eaten without the removal of seeds and seed cavity tissue. Squash commonly used in this manner are yellow crookneck, yellow straightneck, white scallop (patty pan, cymling), zucchini, cocozelle, etc., each including one or more varieties.
- (b) Because of the size differences between varieties and the difference in size preference in various markets, there are no size requirements in the grades. However, if so desired, size may be specified in connection with the grade, in terms of minimum or maximum diameter or both, or minimum or maximum length or both. When size is specified it shall be stated in terms of inches and quarter inches.

Grades
§51.4051 U.S. No. 1.

“**U.S. No. 1**” consists of squash of one variety or similar varietal characteristics, with stems or portions of stems attached, which are fairly young and fairly tender, fairly well formed, firm, free from decay and breakdown, and from damage caused by discoloration, cuts, bruises and scars, freezing, dirt or other foreign material, disease, insects, mechanical or other means.

- (a) **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.** Ten percent for squash in any lot which fails to meet the requirements of this grade, including therein not more than 5 percent for defects causing serious damage, and including in this latter amount not more than 1 percent for squash which is affected by decay or breakdown.
 - (2) **For size.** Five percent for squash in any lot which is smaller than any specified minimum size and 10 percent for squash which is larger than any specified maximum size.

§51.4052 U.S. No. 2.

“**U.S. No. 2**” consists of squash of one variety or similar varietal characteristics which are not old and tough, but are firm, free from decay and breakdown, and free from damage caused by freezing, and from serious damage caused by discoloration, cuts, bruises, scars, dirt or other foreign material, disease, insects, mechanical or other means.

- (a) **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.** Ten percent for squash in any lot which fails to meet the requirements of this grade, including therein not more than 1 percent for squash which is affected by decay or breakdown.
- (2) **For size.** Five percent for squash in any lot which is smaller than any specified minimum size and 10 percent for squash which is larger than any specified maximum size.

Reserved

§51.4053 Reserved.

Application of Tolerances

§51.4054 Application of tolerances.

The contents of individual packages in the lot, based on sample inspection, are subject to the following limitations:

- (a) For a tolerance of 10 percent or more, individual packages in any lot may contain not more than one and one-half times the tolerances specified, except that at least one defective and one off-size specimen may be permitted in any package: *Provided*, That the average for the entire lot is within the tolerance specified for the grade.
- (b) For a tolerance of less than 10 percent, individual packages in any lot may contain not more than double the tolerance specified, except that at least one defective and one off-size specimen may be permitted in any package: *Provided*, That the average for the entire lot is within the tolerance specified for the grade.

Definitions

§51.4055 Fairly young and fairly tender.

“**Fairly young and fairly tender**” means a desirable stage of maturity for summer squash. This is indicated by fairly tender skin for the variety, fairly tender undeveloped seeds, and firm, moist seed cavity tissue.

§51.4056 Fairly well formed.

“**Fairly well formed**” means that the shape of the squash is characteristic of the variety or type, and that it is not so badly twisted, grooved or otherwise misshapen by any cause as to damage the appearance of the squash.

§51.4057 Firm.

“**Firm**” means that the squash does not yield appreciably to slight pressure, and is not noticeably wilted.

§51.4058 Damage.

“**Damage**” means any specific defect described in this section; or an equally objectionable variation of any one of these defects, any other defect, or any combination of defects, which materially detracts from the appearance, or the edible or marketing quality of the squash. The following specific defects shall be considered as damage:

- (a) Discoloration caused by scars, bruises or other means which materially damages the appearance of the squash.
- (b) Cuts, bruises, or scars which penetrate materially into the squash.
- (c) Insects. Worms or other insects present inside the squash. Worm holes which are unhealed, or more than three-eighths of an inch in depth, or more than one in a squash. Superficial insect injury which materially detracts from the appearance of the squash.

§51.4059 Old and tough.

“**Old and tough**” means too far advanced in maturity to be suitable for use as summer squash. The skin is tough for the variety and the seeds are tough.

§51.4060 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 squash. The following specific defect shall be considered as serious damage:

- (a) Insects, when worms or other insects are present in the squash, or when worm holes are more than three-eighths of an inch in depth, or when there are more than three worm holes in a squash.

§51.4061 Diameter.

“**Diameter**” means the greatest dimension of the squash measured at right angles to a line running from the stem to the blossom end.

§51.4062 Length.

“**Length**” means the greatest dimension of the squash measured from the blossom end to the stem end, or in the case of crooknecks, to the curved surface farthest from the blossom end.