



United States Department of Agriculture

---

Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service

Specialty  
Crops  
Program

# Commodity Specification for Fresh Fruit

July 2019

**Commodity Specification for Fresh Fruit  
Table of Contents**

<b>General</b> .....	<b>1</b>
U.S. Standards .....	1
Exceptions to U.S. Standards.....	1
Product Origin .....	1
Packing Season.....	2
<b>Containers and Packing</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Primary Containers (Cartons) .....	2
<b>Palletization Requirements</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Pallets.....	2
Unitization.....	3
Prerequisites.....	3
Shipment and Delivery .....	3
<b>Individual Commodity Specifications</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Fresh Apples.....	3
Pears.....	4
Pears (in poly film bags) .....	5
Cantaloupes.....	6
<b>Inspection</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Requirements (Apples) .....	6
Requirements (Cantaloupes and Pears).....	7
Procedures.....	7
<b>Failure to Meet Specifications</b> .....	<b>7</b>

**GENERAL****U.S. Standards**

Fresh fruit (product/commodity) produced under this Commodity Specification must meet the requirements specified in the applicable United States Standards for Grades effective on the date of the Solicitation/Invitation for Bid (IFB). The U.S. Standards are published separately and are incorporated herein and made a part of this Commodity Specification.

**Exceptions to U.S. Standards**

Additional exceptions may be specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB. Any exceptions contained in the applicable Solicitation/IFB shall have precedence over the requirements contained herein, for that Solicitation/IFB only.

**Product Origin**

1. Commodities delivered pursuant to this Commodity Specification shall have originated from crops that have been 100 percent grown, processed, and packed in the United States, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, (hereinafter referred to as the United States). See Section I., F. of the Master Solicitation.
2. If the contractor handles any commodity originating from sources other than the United States, the contractor must have a written plan to segregate the commodity. This segregation plan will include an identification and record system for all commodities to ensure they are completely segregated and cannot be used to fulfill purchase orders awarded by USDA. Such segregation plan must be made available, within 10 days of purchase order award, to representatives of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
3. The contractor must maintain positive written documentation records evidencing 100 percent domestic origin to the grower level. Contractors must also ensure that the documentation provided by any subcontractors demonstrates the same level of traceability. The burden of proof of compliance is on the contractor.
4. Documentation may include load or warehouse storage receipts for raw product (i.e., bin tags), product coding explanations, finished product warehousing records, shipping or payment records, or other documentation or evidence that clearly establishes the product's domestic origin.
5. Contractors must provide the domestic origin certification and supporting documentation records to representatives of the AMS Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division (USDA Grader) when requesting inspection service. USDA graders will select and review at least one code for each purchase order to determine compliance with the Agency's domestic origin requirements.

6. Such records must be available for review by the Government in accordance with FAR 52.214-26. In the event of an audit, AMS auditors will examine as many codes as is necessary to verify compliance.
7. Self-certifications by contractors and subcontractors will not be accepted.
8. Failure to observe this requirement may lead to suspension or debarment, purchase order termination, and penalties at Title 18, Section 1001 of the U.S. Code concerning falsification of information.

### **Packing Season**

All fresh fruit must be from the current packing season/crop year, unless otherwise specified in the applicable Solicitation/IFB.

## **CONTAINERS AND PACKING**

### **Primary Containers (Cartons)**

The containers shall be constructed as to ensure acceptance by common carrier or other carrier for safe transportation for domestic shipment.

All products shall be packed in new, good, clean, commercially labeled primary containers which meet all applicable FDA requirements and contain a code which allows traceability of the product in the event of a recall (**this code may be added to the Positive Lot Identification sticker**). **In addition to this code, a placard which contains the Purchase Order Number and the commodity material code will be attached to each pallet or printed on each carton or bag.**

In addition to any commercial markings, each primary container shall show the grower or shipper name(s) and address. In the case of apples and pears: the variety, size by count or in inches in diameter, and grade (state grade may be shown if in compliance with Section II) shall be shown on the primary container.

## **PALLETIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Pallets**

Products must be on 48 X 40 inch, non-reversible, flush stringer, and partial four-way entry. New pallets must be good quality wood. Used pallets must be No.1 hardwood or its equivalent in new softwood. **Broken or damaged pallets are unacceptable.** If pallet exchange is desired, the contractor shall arrange for pallet exchange with consignees. USDA is in no way responsible for arrangement of pallet exchange.

**Unitization**

Each delivery unit of fresh fruit must be unitized. Shipping cases must be stacked and secured from top to bottom, so that each container and layer of containers becomes an integral part of the pallet. Either stretch wrapping with plastic film or “lock ‘n pop” is acceptable. The palletized product must be loaded in the conveyance in such a way that will prevent shifting and damage to the containers of product.

**Prerequisites**

Vendors and /or suppliers providing fresh fruit shall participate in and pass an Agricultural Marketing Service, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) Verification Audit. Verification Audits shall be performed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Specialty Crops Program (SCP), Specialty Crops Inspection Division (SCI).

All scopes of the audit applicable to the operation must be completed. For instance, if a grower has a storage facility on their farm where apples are stored prior to sending them to the sliced apple vendor, then the appropriate section of the audit must be completed.

*A copy of the GAP&GHP Audit Verification checklist is available on the USDA website at [www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp), or from your local USDA or Federal-State inspection office.*

**Shipment and Delivery**

Contractor will be allowed a tolerance on the final delivery of plus or minus 50 cases of product from each shipping point named in the purchase order.

**INDIVIDUAL COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS**

All requirements including varieties and size shown below may be revised if specified otherwise in the Solicitation/IFB.

**Fresh Apples**

1. Grade - U.S. Fancy. (State grades will be acceptable provided the apples meet the requirements of the U.S. Fancy Grade).
2. Types of Pack and Size Requirement:
  - a. Tray pack - minimum size 150; maximum size- 100
  - b. Cell pack - minimum size 140; maximum size – 96
  - c. Consumer units packed within master containers - minimum size 2 1/8 inches in diameter, maximum size 3 inches in diameter. Consumer units shall be 12/3-pound

poly film bags. Varieties: Empire, Fuji, Gala, Red Delicious and Granny Smith. Apples, when Tray or Cell packed, in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall contain product of not more than three (3) adjacent sizes nor be in more than three locations at the time of inspection. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes. If shipment is by truck, the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center, and tail) shall be noted on the shipping manifest by the contractor.

3. Apples shall also meet the **United States Condition Standards for Export**.
4. Tenderness and Maturity – not more than an average of **five percent in any lot and ten percent in individual containers** may be further advanced in maturity than firm ripe.
5. Intermingling of the varieties in the truckload is permitted but not on the pallet.
6. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 40° F.
7. Refrigerated shipment at 32° to 38° F.
8. Material codes -

<b>Material Code</b>	<b>Variety</b>	<b>Container size/Type</b>
100514	Red Delicious	40-pound carton
100517	Empire	40-pound cartons
100521	Gala	40-pound carton
100522	Fuji	40-pound carton
110151	Various varieties, specified in the solicitation/IFB	37 to 40-pound carton
110543	Granny Smith	40-pound carton
110561	Various varieties, specified in the solicitation/IFB	12/3-pound bag

### Pears

1. Grade - U.S. No. 2. Provided that the pears do not contain more than **five percent** condition defects, including not more than a total of **two percent** decay and/or internal breakdown. State Grades will be acceptable provided that the pears meet the minimum requirements of U.S. No. 2 Grade (i.e., Oregon/Washington Fancy). Varieties: Anjou and Bartlett
2. Tenderness and Maturity - not more than an average of **10 percent** of the pears in any lot or more than **15 percent** in any container, may be further advanced in stages of ripeness

than firm.

3. Pack and Size Requirement:

a. Tray pack - minimum size 165; maximum size 90.

b. Wrapped pack - minimum size 165; maximum size 90.

4. Pears in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall contain product of not more than three (3) adjacent sizes nor originate from more than three locations. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes. If shipment is by truck, the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center, and tail) shall be noted on the shipping manifest by the contractor.
5. The grade, quality, condition, count, size pack, and the stage of firmness requirements referred to herein are defined in **United States Standards for Grades of Summer and Fall Pears**, and the **United States Standards for Grades of Winter Pears**.
6. Intermingling of the varieties in the truckload is permitted but not on the pallet.
7. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 40° F.
8. Refrigerated shipment at 34° to 40° F.

Pears (in poly film bags)

1. Grade – U.S. No. 1. Provided that the pears do not contain more than **five percent** condition defects. State Grades will be acceptable provided that the pears meet the minimum requirements of the U.S. No. 1 Grade (i.e., Oregon/Washington Extra Fancy). Varieties: Anjou and Bartlett.
2. Tenderness and Maturity - not more than an average of **10 percent** of the pears in any lot or more than **15 percent** in any container, may be further advanced in stages of ripeness than firm.
3. Pack and Size Requirement:
  - a. Pack - Consumer units packed within master containers – 12/3 lb. poly film bags and master containers meeting the specification.
  - b. Size - Pears should be packed to a minimum size of 2 1/8 inches in diameter and a maximum size of 2 3/4 inches in diameter.
4. The grade, quality, condition, count, size pack, and the stage of firmness requirements referred to herein are defined in **United States Standards for Grades of Summer**

**and Fall Pears, and the United States Standards for Grades of Winter Pears.**

5. Intermingling of the varieties in the truckload is permitted but not on the pallet.
6. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 40° F.
7. Refrigerated shipment at 34° to 40° F.

**Cantaloupes**

1. Grade – U.S. No.1 or better (en route or at destination tolerances apply).
2. Types of pack and size requirements – Cartons – 9, 12, or 15 count only.
3. Cantaloupes in each offer unit ordered delivered by USDA shall not originate from more than three locations. Each size shall be segregated in the shipment with a minimum of intermingling of the sizes. If shipment is by truck, the contractor shall note the location and count of each size in the truck (front, center and tail) on the shipping manifest.
4. Shall be no further advanced in firmness than ripe and firm.
5. Must be loaded into a refrigerated trailer capable of holding air temperature not to exceed 40° F.
6. Refrigerated shipment at 34° to 40° F.

**INSPECTION****Requirements (Apples)**

Representatives of the AMS, Specialty Crops Program, SCI Division (USDA Grader) must perform the inspection. See the Master Solicitation.

Inspection of **fresh apples must be performed at shipping point within 48 hours prior to shipment**. Whether each lot offered meets the product and container requirements of the purchase order must be determined on the basis of representative sample units. Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Fresh Fruit and Related Products (7 C.F.R. part 51), and United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 C.F.R. part 42.140), effective on the date of the Solicitation/IFB.

The fresh apples shall be inspected, certified, count (number) of packages verified, and Positive Lot Identified by the Federal or Federal-State Inspection Service in accordance with the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (see the Master Solicitation). The acceptability of the quality and packaging of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Grader.



No product shall be shipped unless the USDA Grader informs the Contractor that a designated lot is acceptable. Notice by the USDA Grader that a designated lot scheduled for shipment does not meet requirements of the purchase order shall constitute rejection of such lot.

**Requirements (Cantaloupes and Pears)**

Inspection of fresh cantaloupes, and pears must be performed at destination (unless otherwise specified in the Solicitation/IFB) in accordance with the same requirements stated in paragraph “A” of this section with the exception of Positive Lot Identification. USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program, Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division (USDA Grader) must perform the inspection required see the Master Solicitation. The count (number) of packages shall be certified by Federal or Federal-State Inspection Service (see the Master Solicitation). The acceptability of the quality and packaging of the product must be evidenced by certificates issued by the USDA Grader. Representative sample units will be graded according to the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Fresh Fruit and Related Products (7 C.F.R. part 51), and United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 C.F.R. part 42.140), effective on the date of the Solicitation/IFB.

**Procedures**

The Contractor must give the USDA Inspector at least 72 hours advance notice when scheduling inspection service.

Contractors are encouraged to submit requests for inspection in writing via form FV-237 (Record of Request for Inspection or Re-inspection of Food Products) with verifiable receipt notice, such as fax log, to alleviate possible miscommunication. Requests can also be made electronically using the following link: <http://eforms.ams.usda.gov/#CustomersFV>.

**FAILURE TO MEET SPECIFICATIONS**

Any lot which fails applicable specifications prescribed herein will be rejected as not acceptable for delivery. If any lot of fresh fruit fails to meet the product or packaging requirement, the Contractor may request in writing that USDA accept delivery of the lot. USDA may, at its option, accept delivery, provided that the purchase price is the purchase order price less a discount, to be determined by the Contracting Officer.