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# **United States Standards for Grades of Common Green Onions**

**Effective September 6, 2016**

This issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Common Green Onions (81 FR 51297) supersedes the previous issue which has been in effect since June 20, 1947.

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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## United States Standards for Grades of Common Green Onions

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## Grades

### §51.1055 U.S. No. 1.

**U.S. No. 1** shall consist of green onions which are fairly well-formed, firm, young and tender, fairly clean, free from decay, and from damage caused by seedstems, roots, foreign material, disease, insects, mechanical or other means. The bulbs shall be well trimmed. The tops shall be fresh, of good green color, free from damage caused by broken or bruised leaves, or by clipping. When all the tops of the onions have been evenly clipped back in accordance with good commercial practice, they shall be specified as “Clipped Tops” in connection with the grade.

- (a) **Over-all length.** Unless otherwise specified, the over-all length (roots excepted) of the onions shall be not more than 24 inches nor less than 8 inches and the onions shall be not less than one-fourth of an inch or more than one inch in diameter.
- (b) **Tolerance for defects.** In order to allow for variations, other than size, incident to proper grading and handling, not more than a total of 10 percent, by count, of the onions in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of this grade, but not more than 5 percent shall be allowed for defects causing serious damage, including not more than 2 percent for onions affected by decay.
- (c) **Tolerance for size.** Not more than a total of 10 percent, by count, of the onions in any lot may fail to meet the requirements as to the specified length, minimum diameter or maximum diameter, but not more than 5 percent shall be allowed for any one of the requirements for size.

### §51.1056 U.S. No. 2.

**U.S. No. 2** shall consist of green onions which are not badly misshapen, and which are fairly firm, fairly young and tender, fairly clean, free from decay and from serious damage caused by seedstems, roots, foreign material, disease, insects, mechanical or other means. The bulbs shall be fairly well trimmed. The tops shall be fresh, of fairly good green color, and free from serious damage caused by broken or bruised leaves, or by clipping. When all the tops of the onions have been evenly clipped back in accordance with good commercial practice, they shall be specified as “Clipped Tops” in connection with the grade.

- (a) **Over-all length.** Unless otherwise specified, the over-all length (roots excepted) of the onions shall be not less than 8 inches and the onions shall be not less than one-fourth of an inch or more than one and one-half inches in diameter.
- (b) **Tolerance for defects.** In order to allow for variations, other than size, incident to proper grading and handling, not more than a total of 10 percent, by count, of the onions in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of this grade, including not more than 2 percent for onions affected by decay.

- (c) **Tolerance for size.** Not more than a total of 10 percent, by count, of the onions in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of the specified length, minimum or maximum diameter, but not more than 5 percent shall be allowed for any one of the requirements for size.

**Reserved**

**§51.1057      Reserved.**

**Size**

**§51.1058      Size.**

The following terms and definitions are provided for describing the diameters of any lot:

“Small” means less than 1/2 inch.

“Medium” means 1/2 to 1 inch, inclusive.

“Large” means over 1 inch.

**Application of Tolerances**

**§51.1059      Application of tolerances.**

- (a) The contents of individual containers in the lot, based on sample inspection, are subject to the following limitations, provided the averages for the entire lot are within the tolerances specified:
- (1) When a tolerance is 10 percent or more, individual containers in any lot shall have not more than one and one-half times the tolerance specified, except that at least one defective and one off-size specimen may be permitted in any container.
  - (2) When a tolerance is less than 10 percent, individual containers in any lot shall have not more than double the tolerance specified, except that at least one defective and one off-size specimen may be permitted in any container.

**Definitions**

**§51.1060      Fairly well formed.**

“**Fairly well formed**” means that the onion is not more than slightly curved, angular, crooked, lopsided or otherwise slightly misshapen.

**§51.1061      Fairly clean.**

“**Fairly clean**” means that the appearance of the onion is not materially injured by dirt.

**§51.1062 Damage.**

“**Damage**” means any injury or defect which materially affects the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality.

- (a) **Seedstems.** An onion with a seedstem shall be considered as damaged if the seedstem has been broken at a point other than at the top, or is coarse, fibrous, hollow or soft, or has separated naturally from the sheath or skin. Onions often show flower buds while the seedstem is still tender. Such onions are not objectionable if the flower buds have been removed, or if present, are not noticeably protruding; however, an onion with a seedstem which, after the flower bud has been removed, exceeds the length of the longest leaves of the plant, shall be considered as damaged.
- (b) **Clipping.** The tops of onions are sometimes clipped or pinched back to remove discolored or otherwise injured leaves. An individual plant shall not be considered as damaged when not more than the tips of all the leaves have been clipped or pinched back; or when not more than half the leaves have been clipped or pinched back to a greater extent but not to the extent that the appearance is materially injured; or when the tops of all the onions have been evenly clipped back in accordance with good commercial practice and the designation “Clipped Tops” is specified in connection with the grade.

**§51.1063 Well trimmed.**

“**Well trimmed**” means that the bulb is not broken above the point of root attachment and is practically free from dead, discolored or slick outer skins. Fresh, clean, loose skins which do not materially affect the appearance of the individual onion or the bunch are permitted.

**§51.1064 Fresh.**

“**Fresh**” means that the tops are not withered or badly wilted.

**§51.1065 Good green color.**

“**Good green color**” means that the tops have a normal green color characteristic of healthy plants. A slight discoloration of the extreme tips and slight scarring caused by thrips are not objectionable.

**§51.1066 Diameter.**

“**Diameter**” means the greatest dimension of the onion taken at right angles to the longitudinal axis.

**§51.1067 Not badly misshapen.**

“**Not badly misshapen**” means that the onion is not badly curved or crooked.

**§51.1068 Fairly young and tender.**

“**Fairly young and tender**” means that the onion is not tough, stringy, or advanced to the stage where the neck is flabby.

**§51.1069 Serious damage.**

“**Serious damage**” means any injury or defect which seriously affects the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality.

- (a) Seedstems which are excessively coarse or fibrous shall be considered as serious damage.
- (b) Badly broken or badly bruised tops shall be considered as serious damage.
- (c) Clipping. The tops of onions are sometimes clipped or pinched back to remove discolored or otherwise injured leaves. An individual plant shall not be considered as seriously damaged when not more than the tips of all the leaves have been clipped or pinched back; or when not more than half the leaves have been clipped or pinched back to a greater extent but not to the extent that the appearance is seriously injured; or when the tops of all the onions have been evenly clipped back in accordance with good commercial practice and the designation “Clipped Tops” is specified in connection with the grade.

**§51.1070 Fairly well trimmed.**

“**Fairly well trimmed**” means that the bulb is not broken above the point of root attachment and is reasonably free from dead, discolored or slick outer skins. Fresh, fairly clean, loose skins which do not seriously affect the appearance of the individual onion or the bunch are permitted.

**§51.1071 Fairly good green color.**

“**Fairly good green color**” means that the tops are pale or yellowish green or otherwise slightly discolored.