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Marketing and
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Service

Specialty
Crops
Program

Specialty
Crops
Inspection
Division

United States Standards for Grades of Southern Peas

Effective September 6, 2016

This issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Southern Peas (81 FR 51297) supersedes the previous issue which has been in effect since July 13, 1956.

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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United States Standards for Grades of Southern Peas

Section	Page No.
General	2
§51.2670 General.....	2
Grades	2
§51.2671 U.S. No. 1.....	2
§51.2672 U.S. Commercial.....	2
Reserved	3
§51.2673 Reserved.....	3
Application of Tolerances	3
§51.2674 Application of tolerances.....	3
§51.2675 Basis for calculating percentages.....	3
Definitions	3
§51.2676 Similar varietal characteristics.....	3
§51.2677 Fairly well formed.....	3
§51.2678 Fairly well filled.....	3
§51.2679 Overmature.....	3
§51.2680 Excessively young.....	4
§51.2681 Damage.....	4
§51.2682 Serious damage.....	4

General
§51.2670 General.

The standards contained in this subpart apply only to the seed pods of plants of the species *Vigna sinensis*, generally known as “southern peas,” “cowpeas” or “field peas.” Well recognized general types are blackeyes, crowders, creams, and purple hulls, each of which includes many varieties.

Grades
§51.2671 U.S. No. 1.

“**U.S. No. 1**” consists of pods of southern peas of similar varietal characteristics which are fairly well formed, fairly well filled, not overmature or excessively young, and which are free from decay and worm holes, and free from damage caused by stems, leaves and trash, stings or other insect injury, scars, discoloration, wilting, dirt or other adhering foreign material, disease, mechanical or other means.

- (a) Unless otherwise specified, each pod shall be not less than 5 inches in length.
- (b) In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted:
 - (1) 5 percent for pods which are shorter than the specified minimum length;
 - (2) 5 percent for pods which are excessively young; and,
 - (3) 10 percent for other grade defects, including not more than 5 percent for pods with worm holes or affected by decay, but not more than one-fifth of this amount, or 1 percent, for pods affected by decay. (See §51.2674 and 51.2675.)

§51.2672 U.S. Commercial.

“**U.S. Commercial**” consists of pods of southern peas which meet the requirements of U.S. No. 1 grade, except that they shall be free from serious damage caused by stems, leaves and trash, and there shall be no requirement for minimum length, and except for the increased tolerances specified in this section.

- (a) In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted:
 - (1) 10 percent for pods which are excessively young; and,
 - (2) 15 percent for other grade defects, including not more than 5 percent for pods with worm holes or affected by decay, but not more than two-fifths of this amount, or 2 percent, for pods affected by decay. (See §51.2674 and 51.2675.)

Reserved

§51.2673 Reserved.

Application of Tolerances

§51.2674 Application of tolerances.

- (a) The contents of individual packages in the lot, based on sample inspection, are subject to the following limitations: *Provided*, That the averages for the entire lot are within the tolerances specified for the grade:
- (1) For a tolerance of 10 percent or more, individual packages in any lot may contain not more than one and one-half times the tolerance specified; and,
 - (2) For a tolerance of less than 10 percent, individual packages in any lot may contain not more than double the tolerance specified.

§51.2675 Basis for calculating percentages.

Percentages shall be calculated on the basis of weight or on an equivalent basis.

Definitions

§51.2676 Similar varietal characteristics.

“**Similar varietal characteristics**” means that the pods in any container shall be of the same general type. For example, varieties of the blackeye type shall not be mixed with varieties of the purple hull type or varieties of the crowder type; also small seeded varieties shall not be mixed with large seeded varieties.

§51.2677 Fairly well formed.

“**Fairly well formed**” means that the pod is not curved or crooked to the extent that it forms approximately a semicircle or right angle.

§51.2678 Fairly well filled.

“**Fairly well filled**” means that at least two-thirds of the length of the pod is filled with peas which are at least fairly well developed for the variety, exclusive of the normal spaces between peas and vacant space for one pea at each end of the pod.

§51.2679 Overmature.

“**Overmature**” means that the pod has developed beyond the stage at which it is desirable as a fresh product. Pods shall be considered overmature when they show definite drying or shriveling, or when green podded varieties show yellow or a conspicuous yellowish cast affecting one-half or more of the surface, or when purple hull varieties show excessively dark purplish color over the entire surface.

§51.2680 Excessively young.

“**Excessively young**” means that the pod has not developed any peas of a size suitable for shelling for the variety. Such pods with only slightly developed peas are commonly called “snaps”.

§51.2681 Damage.

“**Damage**” means any defect which materially affects the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality of the individual pod, or the general appearance of the pods in the container. The pods in a container shall be considered damaged when stems, leaves or trash are present in sufficient quantities to materially affect the general appearance. Any one of the following defects, or any combination of defects the seriousness of which exceeds the maximum allowed for any one defect, shall be considered as damage:

- (a) Stings when any pea is discolored, or when the appearance of the pod is materially affected by numerous, discolored stings;
- (b) Scars when the pod is so extensively blemished or distorted in shape as to materially affect its appearance;
- (c) Discoloration such as that caused by rust, blight or insects when so extensive or in such contrast to the color of the pod as to materially affect its appearance;
- (d) Wilting when the pod is badly wilted or very flabby; and,
- (e) Dirt or other adhering foreign material when materially affecting the appearance of the individual pod or the general appearance of the pods in the container.

§51.2682 Serious damage.

“**Serious damage**” means that stems, leaves and trash are present in sufficient quantities to seriously affect the appearance of the pods in the container.