



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 Spinach for Processing

Effective September 6, 2016

This issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Spinach for Processing (81 FR 51297) supersedes the previous issue which has been in effect since July 10, 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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Grades
§51.2696 U.S. No. 1.

“**U.S. No. 1**” consists of spinach which is fairly fresh and free from decay, mildew, grass, weeds, wood, muck chips or other foreign material, roots, and worms, and which is free from damage caused by discoloration, seedstems, seedbuds, coarse stalks and stems, other disease, other insects, spray residue, adhering dirt, or mechanical or other means.

- (a) Not more than 25 percent, by weight, of the spinach in any lot may consist of leaf stems.
- (b) In order to allow for variations incident to proper handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted in a 100 ounce sample:
 - (1) For decay, mildew, grass, small weeds, and leaves which are damaged by discoloration, not more than a total of 20 pieces: *Provided*, That not more than three-fourths of this amount, or 15 pieces, shall be permitted for decay, grass and small weeds;
 - (2) For wood, muck chips, or other foreign material over one-half inch in length, not more than 2 pieces; and
 - (3) For other defects, including foreign material not over one-half inch in length, not more than 5 ounces.

None of the foregoing tolerances shall apply to worms.

§51.2697 U.S. No. 2.

“**U.S. No. 2**” consists of spinach which meets all the requirements of U.S. No. 1 grade except for the increased tolerances specified in this section.

- (a) In order to allow for variations incident to proper handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted in a 100 ounce sample:
 - (1) For decay, mildew, grass, small weeds, and leaves which are damaged by discoloration, not more than a total of 40 pieces;
 - (2) For wood, muck chips, or other foreign material over one-half inch in length, not more than 3 pieces; and,
 - (3) For other defects, including foreign material not over one-half inch in length, not more than 10 ounces.

None of the foregoing tolerances shall apply to worms.

Reserved
§51.2698 Reserved.

Definitions
§51.2699 Fairly fresh.

“**Fairly fresh**” means that the spinach is not badly wilted.

§51.2700 Damage.

“**Damage**” means any defect which materially affects the appearance, or the processing or edible quality of the spinach. 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) Discoloration of leaf blades when the appearance or processing quality is materially affected by brown or yellow discoloration, except that heart leaves shall not be considered as damaged when showing a normal yellowish cast;
- (b) Discoloration of stalks and stems when the appearance or processing quality is materially affected by brownish or blackish discoloration or when the stalk or stem shows more than a tinge of pink or red color;
- (c) Seedstems when seedbuds have formed and are plainly visible;
- (d) Loose seedbuds when more than one-half inch in length;
- (e) Coarse stalks and stems when the leafstems or central stalks are tough, or fibrous; and,
- (f) Dirt or spray residue when it cannot be removed in the normal commercial washing process.

§51.2701 Small weeds.

“**Small weeds**” means weeds which are not over 4 inches in length.