



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 Plants

Effective September 6, 2016

This issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Spinach Plants (81 FR 51297) supersedes the previous issue which has been in effect since November 19, 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

§51.2880 U.S. No. 1.

“**U.S. No. 1**” consists of spinach plants of similar varietal characteristics which are well grown, fresh, fairly clean, well trimmed, and which are free from decay, and free from damage caused by coarse stalks or seed stems, discoloration, foreign material, second growth, freezing, disease, insects or mechanical or other means.

- (a) In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, not more than a total of 10 percent, by weight, of the spinach plants in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of the grade: *Provided*, That not more than one-half of this amount, or 5 percent, shall be allowed for serious damage, including therein not more than 1 percent for decay.

§51.2881 U.S. Commercial.

“**U.S. Commercial**” consists of spinach plants which meet all the requirements for U.S. No. 1 grade except that the spinach plants need only be free from damage by dirt and except for the increased tolerances specified in this section.

- (a) In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, not more than a total of 20 percent, by weight, of the spinach plants in any lot may fail to meet, the requirements of the grade: *Provided*, That not more than one-half of this amount, or 10 percent, shall be allowed for serious damage, including therein not more than 1 percent for decay.

Reserved

§51.2882 Reserved.

Application of Tolerances

§51.2883 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 grades:
 - (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.

Definitions

§51.2884 Similar varietal characteristics.

“**Similar varietal characteristics**” means that the spinach shall be of one type, such

as crinkly leaf type or flat leaf type. No mixture of types shall be permitted which materially affects the appearance of the spinach in the container.

§51.2885 Well grown.

“**Well grown**” means that the plants are not stunted or poorly developed.

§51.2886 Fresh.

“**Fresh**” means that the spinach is not more than slightly wilted.

§51.2887 Fairly clean.

“**Fairly clean**” means that the individual spinach plant is reasonably free from dirt or other adhering foreign matter, and that the general appearance of the spinach plants in the container is not materially affected.

§51.2888 Well trimmed.

“**Well trimmed**” means that the spinach plant is cut at the crown of the root, or cut so that the root is not longer than 1 inch.

§51.2889 Damage.

“**Damage**” means any defect which materially affects the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality of the individual plant, or the general appearance of the spinach in the container. 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) Coarse central stalks or seedstems when causing more than 10 percent waste of the individual plant; or when the flower buds are plainly visible;
- (b) Discoloration when materially affecting the general appearance of the plant, except that heart leaves which are yellow or partially blanched shall not be considered as damaging the plant; and
- (c) Foreign material when materially affecting the edible quality, or the general appearance of the spinach in the container. Foreign material means weeds, grass, or any loose material other than spinach.

§51.2890 Serious damage.

“**Serious damage**” means any defect which seriously affects the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality of the individual plant, or the general appearance of the spinach in the container. 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 serious damage:

- (a)** Discoloration when the plants are badly discolored;
- (b)** Insects when the plant is noticeably infested, or when it is seriously damaged by them;
- (c)** Mildew, white rust or similar diseases when seriously affecting the edible quality or appearance of the plant; and,
- (d)** Decay.