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Guide to the prepacking of fruits and vegetables

Guide pour le préemballage des fruits et légumes

Reference number
ISO 7558:1988 (E)

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for approval before their acceptance as International Standards by the ISO Council. They are approved in accordance with ISO procedures requiring at least 75 % approval by the member bodies voting.

International Standard ISO 7558 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Agricultural food products*.

Guide to the prepacking of fruits and vegetables

1 Scope

This International Standard gives general guidance on the conditions and the methods of prepacking and packing for transport of the main types of fruits and vegetables sold fresh.

Prepacking is intended to protect goods against possible damage which may result in deterioration in their freshness and to facilitate in their marketing in as much as the products are well presented and suitable for self-service marketing.

2 Materials for prepacking

Materials used for prepacking should conform to health and hygiene standards and should be capable of protecting the product. The following materials may be used:

- portable plastic film and paper bags, and plastic film and paper bags, as well as plastic plates;
- portable net "tubes", or net "tubes" and bags made of plastic, viscose, textile fibre or a combination of these materials;
- trays or boxes (boxes of height greater than 25 mm) made of cardboard, papier mâché, plastic or wood pulp with a flat or profiled bottom. Packing materials may have a functional surface and colour (e.g. the foil should be transparent; cucumbers may be packed in green packing materials) provided that any visual defect in the product is not masked by the design, colour, mesh size, etc.

However, the packing materials used may vary according to the country and the relevant regulations.

3 Prepacking systems

A product is said to be prepacked when it has been conditioned outside the presence of the buyer in a package, whatever its nature, which covers it completely or partially so that the quantity of product contained cannot be modified without the package being opened or noticeably modified, or without noticeable modification of the product. A prepackage comprises both the product and the package in which it is presented for sale.

The main prepacking systems are given in 3.1 to 3.8.

3.1 Direct application of shrink or stretch film — System A

This is mainly used to pack one fruit or vegetable item of large volume (for example citrus fruits, greenhouse cucumbers, lettuces, head lettuces, round-headed cabbages).

3.2 Application of a band of film to a tray or box — System B

This is used particularly for fruits and vegetables of small volume. The package formed contains several items.

It consists of a tray or box around which a band of film (usually shrink film) is wrapped.

The band of film is fed over the longer side of the tray or box in order to leave slits, after the formation of the package, on the shorter sides for air circulation. This type of prepacking is thus particularly suitable for fruits and vegetables with a high rate of moisture loss by evaporation (since a high relative air humidity might speed up the development of microbial contamination).

It should not be possible to remove one item without damage to the film. The packing film is joined by heat, parallel to the longer side of the container (tray or box). The mass of the contents should not normally exceed 1 kg.

3.3 Application of film to a tray or box to form a complete package — System C

This is also used for fruits and vegetables of small volume. The package formed contains several items. Films permeable to water vapour are used [for example poly(vinyl chloride) films with or without a special anti-condensation layer].

Monoaxial shrink films (in the direction of the roll) should have the same width as, or be a little wider than, the largest dimension (length) of the tray or box. Biaxial shrink films should be wider than the largest dimension of the tray or box so that after shrinking the film forms a cover on the shorter walls of the tray or box.

Stretch films are usually joined by heat, parallel to the longer side of the tray or box. Stretch film is usually moulded to the bottom of the box.