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# United States Consumer Standards for Fresh Carrots

**Effective July 17, 1954**  
Reprinted December 12, 2018

This is a reprint of the United States Consumer Standards for Fresh Carrots which have been in effect since July 17, 1954 and were updated to modify the format.

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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## **Styles**

### **§51.495 Bunched Carrots.**

“Bunched carrots” means untopped carrots which are tied in bunches.

### **§51.496 Carrots with short-trimmed tops.**

“Carrots with short-trimmed tops” means carrots which have attached leafstems ranging up to 4 inches in length.

### **§51.497 Topped carrots.**

“Topped carrots” means carrots which have practically all of the tops clipped off.

## **Grades**

### **§51.498 U.S. Grade A.**

U.S. Grade A shall consist of carrots of similar varietal characteristics the roots of which are firm, clean, fairly well colored, fairly smooth, well formed; which are free from soft rot, and from damage caused by freezing, growth cracks, sunburn, pithiness, woodiness, internal discoloration, oil spray, dry rot, other disease, insects or mechanical or other means. Bunched carrots or carrots with short-trimmed tops shall have tops or leafstems, respectively, which are fresh and free from decay and free from damage caused by freezing, seedstems, yellowing or other discoloration, disease, insects or mechanical or other means. Tops of bunched carrots may be full length or clipped back but shall be not less than 12 inches nor more than 20 inches in length. Each bunch shall weigh not less than one pound, including the tops, and contain at least 4 carrots. Topped carrots shall be free from secondary new top growth and shall be well trimmed. All styles of carrots on the shown face shall be reasonably representative in size and quality of contents of the container.

- (a)** Size. Unless otherwise specified, the diameter of each carrot shall be not less than three-fourth inch nor more than 1-1/2 inches, and the length shall be not less than 5 inches.
- (b)** Tolerances. Incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted:
  - (1)** For defect of roots. Five percent, by count, for carrot roots in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of the grade, other than for size, including therein not more than 1 percent for carrots roots affected by soft rot;
  - (2)** For defects of tops of bunched carrots. Ten percent, by count, for bunches in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of the grade, including therein not more than 5 percent of decay;
  - (3)** For defects of leafstems of carrots with short-trimmed tops. Ten percent

by count, for carrots in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of grade, including therein not more than 5 percent for decay;

- (4) For off-size carrot roots. Five percent, by count, for carrots in any lot which are smaller than the specified minimum diameter, 10 percent, by count for carrots which are larger than the specified maximum diameter, and 5 percent, by count, for carrots which are shorter than the specified minimum length;
- (5) For off-length tops of bunched carrots. Ten percent, by count, for bunches in any lot which fail to meet the specified minimum or maximum length; and,
- (6) For excess length of leafstems of carrots with short-trimmed tops. Five percent, by count, for carrots in any lot which have leafstems in excess of the specified length.

#### **§51.499 U.S. Grade B.**

U.S. Grade B consists of carrots which meet the requirements of U.S. Grade A except for the increased tolerance for defects of the roots specified below:

- (a) Tolerances. Incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances shall be permitted:
  - (1) For defects of roots. Twenty percent, by count, for carrots in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of the grade other than for size: *Provided*, That not more than one-half of this amount, or 10 percent, shall be allowed for defect causing serious damage, including therein not more than 1 percent for carrot roots affected by soft rot;
  - (2) For defects of tops of bunched carrots. Ten percent, by count, for bunches in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of the grade, including therein not more than 5 percent for decay;
  - (3) For defects of leafstems of carrots with short-trimmed tops. Ten percent, by count, for carrots in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of the grade, including therein not more than 5 percent for decay;
  - (4) For off-size carrot roots. Five percent, by count, for carrots in any lot which are smaller than the specified minimum diameter, 10 percent, by count, for carrots which are larger than the specified maximum diameter, and 5 percent, by count, for carrots which are shorter than the specified minimum length;

- (5) For off-length tops of bunched carrots. Ten percent, by count, for bunches in any lot which fail to meet the specified minimum or maximum length; and,
- (6) For excess length of leafstems of carrots with short-trimmed tops. Five percent, by count, for carrots in any lot which have leafstems in excess of the specified length.

**Off-grade**  
**§51.500 Off-grade.**

Off-grade consists of carrots which fail to meet the requirements of the foregoing grades.

**Standard Sizing.**  
**§51.501 Standard sizing.**

- (a) Carrots in packages of 2 pounds or less may be certified as “Standard Sizing,” provided the variation in diameter of the carrots in any individual package is not more than three-eighths inch and the variation in length is not more than 2-1/2 inches.
- (b) Not more than 20 percent of the packages in any lot may contain carrots which fail to meet the requirements for “Standard Sizing”.

**Definitions**  
**§51.502 Similar varietal characteristics.**

“Similar varietal characteristics” means that the carrots in any lot are of the same general type. For example carrots with a short, but blunt growth like the Oxheart variety, shall not be mixed with long or half-long carrots like the Emperor or Danvers varieties.

**§51.503 Firm.**

“Firm” means that the carrot is not soft, flabby or shriveled.

**§51.504 Clean.**

“Clean” means that the individual carrot is practically free from dirt or other foreign matter.

**§51.505 Fairly well colored.**

“Fairly well colored” means that the carrot has an orange, orange red, or orange scarlet color, but not a pale orange or distinct yellow color.

#### **§51.506 Fairly smooth.**

“Fairly smooth” means that the carrot is not rough, ridged, or covered with secondary rootlets to the extent that the appearance is materially affected.

#### **§51.507 Well formed.**

“Well formed” means that the carrot is not forked, or misshapen to the extent that the appearance is more than slightly affected.

#### **§51.508 Damage.**

“Damage” means any defect which materially affects the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality of the individual carrot or the general appearance of the carrot roots in the container, or causes a loss of more than 3 percent, by weight, in the ordinary preparation for use, or which materially affects the appearance or shipping quality of the leafstems or tops. 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) **Growth cracks** which are not shallow and not smooth, or which materially affect the appearance of the carrot;
- (b) **Sunburn**, which causes a loss of more than 3 percent, by weight, in the ordinary preparation for use, except that superficial light green color at the stem end, which does not materially affect the appearance of the root shall be permitted; and,
- (c) **Yellowing or other discoloration** to the tops or leafstems when the appearance of the bunch or leafstems is materially affected. The appearance of the individual bunch shall be considered materially affected when the tops are trimmed to the extent that only a relatively few leaves remain. The appearance of bunches with tops having slight discoloration such as yellowing, browning, or other abnormal color affecting a few leaflets shall not be considered materially affected if the tops as a whole show a predominantly normal green color.

#### **§51.509 Secondary new top growth.**

“Secondary new top growth” means new leaves or clusters of leaves which are developing outside the original central cluster of leafstems.

#### **§51.510 Well trimmed.**

“Well trimmed” means that the tops are cut back to not more than 1 inch in length, except that new leaves developing within the central clusters of leafstems, or occasional uncut leaves or leafstems, exceeding this length which do not materially affect the appearance of the carrots in the container shall be permitted. Carrots may have tips of

roots cut or broken off: *Provided*, That these cuts or breaks are small and fairly smooth and do not materially affect the appearance of the carrots in the container.

**§51.511 Diameter.**

“Diameter” means the greatest dimension of the root measured at right angles to the longitudinal axis.

**§51.512 Length.**

“Length” means the greatest dimension of the root measured from the crown to the lowest point which is not less than one-fourth inch in diameter.

**§51.513 Serious damage.**

“Serious damage” means any defect which seriously affects the appearance, or the edible or shipping quality of the individual carrot or the general appearance of the carrots in the container, or causes a loss of more than 20 percent, by weight, in the ordinary preparation for use.