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Division

United States Consumer Standards for Fresh Spinach Leaves

Effective May 19, 1949
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This is a reprint of the United States Consumer Standards for Fresh Spinach Leaves which have been in effect since May 19, 1949 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

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

§51.1750 U.S. Grade A.

U.S. Grade A shall consist of spinach leaves of similar varietal characteristics which are fresh, clean, well trimmed, and of reasonably good green color, and which are free from coarse stalks, seedstems, seedbuds, crowns and roots, sandburs or other kinds of burs, soft rot and from damage caused by clusters of leaves, leaf stems without blades, discoloration, freezing, foreign material, disease, insects, mechanical or other means. Spinach on the shown face shall be reasonably representative in size and quality of the contents of the container.

- (a) Incident to proper grading and handling not more than 5 percent, by weight, of the spinach in any lot may be small pieces of leaves, not more than 5 percent of the spinach leaves may be damaged by clusters, and not more than 3 percent may fail to meet the remaining requirements of the grade, including not more than 1 percent for serious damage: *Provided*, That no tolerance shall be permitted for sandburs or other kinds of burs.

§51.1751 U.S. Grade B.

U.S. Grade B shall consist of spinach leaves which meet the requirements for U.S. Grade A, except that they shall be reasonably clean, and except for the increased tolerances for defects specified in paragraph (a) at this section.

- (a) Incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 10 percent, by weight, of the spinach in any lot may be small pieces, not more than 10 percent of the spinach leaves may be damaged by clusters, and not more than 5 percent may fail to meet the remaining requirements of the grade, including not more than 2 percent for serious damage: *Provided*, That no tolerance shall be permitted for sandburs or other kinds of burs.

Off-Grade

§51.1752 Off-Grade spinach leaves.

Spinach leaves which fail to meet the requirements of either of the grades in §§51.1750 and 51.1751 shall be Off-Grade spinach leaves.

Definitions

§51.1753 Similar varietal characteristics.

“Similar varietal characteristics” means that the spinach leaves shall be generally of one type, as crinkly leaf type or flat leaf type. No mixture of varieties shall be permitted which materially affects the appearance of the lot.

§51.1754 Fresh.

“Fresh” means that the leaves are not more than slightly wilted.

§51.1755 Clean.

“Clean” means that the spinach does not show more than a trace of grit, sand, dirt, silt, muck or other similar water insoluble, inorganic material.

§51.1756 Well trimmed.

“Well trimmed” means that the leaf stem or petioles are not excessively long in relation to the size of the leaf blades.

§51.1757 Damage.

“Damage” means any injury or defect which materially affects the appearance, or the edible, shipping or keeping quality of the individual leaves or the lot as a whole. The following defects or any combination of defects the seriousness of which exceeds the amount allowed for any one defects shall be considered damage:

- (a) **Clusters**, when there are more than 3 leaves attached, except that clusters of heart leaves with any number of leaves shall not be considered as damage, provided the length of the longest leaf in the cluster is not over 3 inches.
- (b) **Leaf stems**, without blades attached, when present to such an extent as to materially affect the appearance of the lot, or when the individual stem is damaged.
- (c) **Discoloration**, when the appearance of the leaf is materially affected. Heart leaves which are yellow or partially blanched shall not be considered as damage by discoloration.
- (d) **Mechanical damage**, when the leaf is very badly crushed, torn or broken. (Owing to the many necessary handlings in the harvesting, icing, shipping, sorting, washing, and packing operations in preparing spinach for consumer use some leaves are crushed, torn or broken but only those leaves which are very badly crushed, torn or broken shall be considered as damaged by mechanical means.)

§51.1758 Serious damage.

“Serious damage” means any injury or defect which seriously affects the appearance, or the edible, shipping or keeping quality of the individual leaves or of the lot as a whole. The following defects shall be considered as serious damage:

- (a) **Badly discolored** leaves.
- (b) Leaves severely affected by **mildew or white rust**.
- (c) **Leaves on which insects are present**, or leaves which are seriously damaged by insects.

(d) Leaves which are affected by **soft rot**.

(e) **Weeds, grass** or pieces thereof, and **other extraneous matter**.

§51.1759 Reasonably Clean.

“Reasonably clean” means that the spinach is reasonably free from grit, sand, dirt, silt, muck and other similar water insoluble, inorganic material.