

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOOD AND DAIRY DIVISION

REGULATION NO. 502. GRADING, LABELING, AND MARKETING OF TOMATOES

(By authority of Act No. 91 of the Public Acts of 1915, as amended, being S285.31 et seq. of the Michigan Compiled Laws)

R 285.502.1 Grading, labeling, and marketing of tomatoes.

Rule 1. (1) Because the tomatoes grown in Michigan comprise one of our major agricultural crops and the business of selling and distributing depends on quality pack, it is deemed necessary to promulgate Michigan grades for the successful continuance of the Michigan tomato industry. Such grades may be used in lieu of U.S. grades.

(2) Michigan No. 1:

Shall consist of tomatoes of similar varietal characteristics which are mature but not overripe or soft; which are fairly well formed, free from decay, freezing injury, and from damage caused by dirt, bruises, cuts, sunscald, sunburn, puffiness, scars, catfaces, growth cracks, insects, hail, and free from visible disease at shipping point. In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, not more than 10%, by count, of the tomatoes in any lot may be below the requirements of this grade but not more than 1/10 of this amount, or 1%, shall be allowed for soft ripe tomatoes or tomatoes affected by decay. However, when a tolerance of 10% is provided, individual containers in the lot cannot exceed 1 1/2 times the tolerance, and when a tolerance of less than 10% is provided, individual containers shall not contain more than double the tolerance.

(3) Michigan No. 2:

Shall consist of tomatoes of similar varietal characteristics which are mature but not overripe or soft; not badly misshapen; free from decay, unhealed cuts, freezing injury, and from serious damage caused by bruises, sunscald, sunburn, catfaces, growth cracks, scars, disease, hail, or mechanical or other means; puffiness; insects. In order to allow for variations other than size incident to proper grading and handling, not more than a total of 10% by count, of the tomatoes in any lot may be below the requirements of this grade but not more than 1/10 of this amount, or 1%, shall be allowed for soft ripe tomatoes or tomatoes affected by decay.

(4) Unclassified:

Tomatoes not meeting the foregoing grades or any of the U.S. grades shall be marked "Unclassified."

(5) Grade marks:

The name and address of packer with grade declared must be legibly and conspicuously printed or stamped on ends of containers in letters not less than 1/4 inch in height. Only Michigan grown and packed tomatoes may carry Michigan grades. No person, firm, association, or corporation shall sell or have in possession with intent to sell any tomatoes not graded and labeled as set forth in this rule and in section 283 of Act No. 328 of the Public Acts of 1931, being S750.283 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

(6) Definitions of terms as used in these grades:

(a) "Similar varietal characteristics" means that the tomatoes are alike as to firmness of flesh and shade of color, i.e., that soft-fleshed early maturing varieties are not mixed with firm-fleshed mid-season or late varieties, or bright red varieties mixed with varieties having a purplish tinge.

(b) "Mature" means that the contents of the seed cavities have begun to develop a jelly or glue-like consistency and the seeds are well developed.

(c) "Fairly well formed" means that the tomato is not decidedly kidney shaped, lopsided, elongated, angular, or otherwise deformed.

(d) "Damage" means any injury which materially affects the appearance or the edible or shipping quality. The following shall be considered as damage:

(i) Cuts which are not shallow, not well healed, or more than 1/2 inch in length.

(ii) Puffy tomatoes. These tomatoes are usually angular and flat-sided.

They are damaged if open space in 1 or more locules materially affects the appearance when the tomato is cut through the center at right angles to a line running from the stem to the blossom end.

(iii) Scars (except catfaces) when aggregating more than $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter.

(iv) Catfaces when scars are rough or deep, when channels are very deep or wide, or if catface is fairly smooth with an area greater than that of a circle $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter.

(v) Growth cracks (radiating from or concentric to stem scar) when not well healed, or when individual radial cracks are more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length not to exceed an aggregate length of all radial cracks of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch, measured from the stem scar. Concentric cracks permitted which do not affect the appearance of the tomato to a greater extent than the maximum radial cracks permitted.

(e) "Badly misshapen" means that the tomato is so badly deformed that its appearance is seriously affected.

(f) "Serious damage" means any injury which seriously affects the appearance, edible or shipping quality, or which cannot be removed in the ordinary process of trimming without a loss of more than 20%, by weight, of the tomato in excess of that which would occur if the tomato were perfect. The following shall be considered as "serious damage":

(i) Soft ripe tomatoes or tomatoes affected by decay.

(ii) Fresh holes, or cuts through the tomato wall.

(iii) Tomatoes showing any effects of freezing.

(iv) Puffiness which causes the tomato to be distinctly light in weight.

(v) Tomatoes actually infested with worms.

(vi) Catfaces: These are irregular, dark leathery scars at the blossom end of the tomato. Such scars seriously damage the tomato when they are fairly smooth and greater in area than a circle 1 inch in diameter, or when rough or deep, or when channels extend deeply into the tomato.

(vii) Growth cracks: These are ruptures or cracks radiating from the stem scar, or cracks concentric to the stem scar. They seriously damage the tomato when not well healed, or when more than 1 inch in length, not to exceed 3 cracks to the tomato, except that a very narrow well healed crack concentric to the stem scar shall not be considered as serious damage unless they are so numerous as to seriously damage the appearance of the tomato.

History: 1979 AC.