

*Fruits, Vegetables
and Plants***1. Introduction**

Fruits, vegetables, nuts, cut flowers and other plant products are listed in Chapters 6-14 of the EC Common Customs Tariff (CTT). These chapters also include coffee, tea, cereals, gums, resins and other raw material from plants such as bamboo, rattan, and kapok.

Cut flowers attract the highest customs duties of 17 - 24%. Tropical fruits and nuts (except bananas) have lower tariff rates of 2-13%, dried fruits and vegetables command tariff rates of 4-12%.

Most fruits and vegetables are under EC market regulation within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

In order to prevent unfair competition from imported produce the EC has established a reference price system for certain agricultural products in this section. A countervailing tax, known as a levy, is imposed on products imported below a set reference price. The reference prices are set annually according to the market situation and can vary by country of origin.

EC legislation regarding plant health requires that a phytosanitary certificate confirming that products are free from serious pests and disease accompanies consignments exported. Phytosanitary certificates are required for the following:

- ◆ plants
- ◆ uprooted cuttings
- ◆ fruits
- ◆ vegetables
- ◆ cut flowers: roses, carnations, chrysanthemums, gladioli, gypsophila, statice.

Chemical residue in fresh produce is becoming an issue of concern in the EC. Some importers already test for chemical residue. Recent proposals have indicated maximum levels of chemical residue in fresh produce. The list of maximum levels of residues by product group is still under discussion and it may take a few years before a final EC list is issued. Nevertheless, Commonwealth exporters need to monitor this situation and be ready to take remedial action.

Fresh produce is increasingly being irradiated to increase shelf-life. The United Kingdom, Belgium, France and the Netherlands have lists of products approved for irradiation. Irradiated fruit and vegetables are not allowed entry into Germany. All irradiated food sold in the EC must be properly labelled as such.

2. Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**Quality standards**

The EC has laid down common quality standards for certain types of fresh fruit and vegetables. These standards apply to fresh produce when they are sold, delivered, and marketed within the Community either by traders or directly by the producers, and when they are imported from a country outside the EC.

The following commodities are subject to specific quality standards:

Fruit	Vegetables	Salads
Apples	Artichokes	Aubergines
Apricots	Asparagus	Chicory
Cherries	Bean (other than	Cucumber
Grapes	shelling beans)	Lettuce endives and batavia
Kiwifruit	Brussel sprouts	Sweet peppers
Lemons	Cabbage	Tomatoes
Mandarins (and	Carrots	
similar hybrids)	Cauliflowers	
Oranges	Celery	
Peaches	Courgettes	
and	Garlic	
Nectarines	Leeks	
Pears	Onions	
Plums	Peas	
Strawberries	Spinach	

The EC standards prescribe minimum marketing requirements and up to four quality classes. The quality classes can be described briefly as follows:

Extra Class:

- ◆ excellent quality and usually only very specially selected and presented produce.

Class I:

- ◆ good quality produce with no important defects.

Class II:

- ◆ reasonably good quality, sound but deficient in one or two requirements such as shape, colour, smell, blemishes and marks.

Class III:

- ◆ produce of marketable quality which is not up to the standard of the higher classes.

N.B. Class III will only operate in special circumstances e.g. shortage of supply throughout the Community. In recent years it has only been introduced for a limited period for witloof chicory and asparagus.

The standards may be waived temporarily in a season of shortage when supplies in the EC are insufficient to meet consumer demand and minimum sizes may be raised in a season of surplus. Such decisions are taken on a Community-wide basis.

Fruit and vegetables imported into the EC must be inspected to ensure that produce meets EC common quality standards or equivalent standards. Products can either be checked upon entry or when applicable by an EC approved inspection authority. In the latter case an inspection certificate from this body must accompany consignments.

For fruits and vegetables not already covered by market regulation there will be no EC legislation on quality standards in the immediate future. However, quality must not be taken for granted and both distributors and consumers expect higher standards of product and service. The import trade will demand higher quality standards but this will be determined on a company-to-company basis. A key success factor for Commonwealth exporters will be the ability to provide continuous delivery at consistent quality on a sufficient scale.

Packaging

It is possible to use reclaimed containers provided these are clean and suitably protect the product. However packaging material used inside the package must always be new and clean. In view of European legislation concerning environmental policy, it is advised to use recyclable packaging material.

Information on packaging can be obtained from the following reference book:

MANUAL ON THE PACKAGING OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Published by: International Trade Centre
UNCTAD/GATT
54-56 rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 7346021
Fax: +41 22 733 4439

Labelling

Each package must be labelled legibly, indelibly marked and visible from the outside. It should state the following:

- i. Identification: name and address or official code mark of EC seller/packer
- ii. Origin of produce
- iii. Commercial specifications: quality class
size and/or count
- iv. Nature of produce if contents are not visible from outside.

Irradiated produce must be properly labelled as such.

Distribution

Each member state of the EC will draw up a register of traders and importers of fruit and vegetables. This will be beneficial to developing country exporters as they will be able to deal with reliable buyers in the EC.

For more information contact the trade associations as detailed in Section 6.

3. Fruits and Vegetables for Processing

Since 1 January 1993, imported fruits and vegetables identified in Section 2 due to be processed in the EC must be accompanied by a "processing certificate" issued by a competent import inspection authority. Fruits and vegetables for processing need not comply with quality standards. Therefore it is necessary to certify and check that these fruits and vegetables are not sold to consumers.

Each member state of the EC is in process of drawing up a register of traders and importers of fruit and vegetables. This will be beneficial to developing country exporters as they will be able to deal with reliable buyers in the EC.

For more information contact the trade associations as detailed in Section 6.

4. Live plants

The EC has set a common trading system and common quality standard for the following:

- ◆ live trees
- ◆ roots
- ◆ bulbs
- ◆ cut flowers
- ◆ foliage.

The quality standards are designed to keep unsatisfactory produce off the market and facilitate trade under fair conditions. The standards relate to:

- ◆ grading
- ◆ presentation
- ◆ wrapping
- ◆ marketing.

Consignments are inspected upon entry to ensure that products meet quality standards laid down by EC.

Certain species of plants may be covered by provisions laid down by the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Special licences will be required for plants classified as "endangered species".

Details on quality standards for cut flowers and foliage can be found in the EC Official Journal OJ L 071 of 21 March 1968 ref. 68/316/EC. Quality standards for flowering bulbs, corms, tubes, tuberous roots, crowns and rhizomes are found in the EC Official Journal OJ L 055 of 2 March 1968 ref. 68/315/EC.

Further details can be obtained from the European Commission (DG VI) as detailed in Part III.

5. Nuts

There are proposals to introduce EC quality standards for shelled and unshelled sweet almonds and hazelnuts. The standards proposed would apply to products intended for processing as well as delivered fresh to the consumer. However, there is no common EC regime at present.

6. Further Information and Contact Points

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	TRADE FAIRS & EXHIBITIONS
1. Confederation of Importers and Marketing Organisation in Europe of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Avenue de Broqueville 272 Bte 4, B-1200 Brussels Belgium Tel: +32 2 771 3635 Fax: +33 2 762 9425 2. European Federation of Importers of Dried Fruits, Preserves, Spices and Honey Plan 3, Warenverein der Hamburger B@rse W-2000 Hamburg Germany Tel: +49 40 326414 Fax: +49 40 322639 3. European Union of Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale, Import and Export Trade 18 Avenue de la Brabanconne Bte 8, B-1040 Brussels Belgium Tel: +32 2 736 1584 Fax: +32 2 734 8771 4. COLE ACP 5 Rue de la Corderie Centra 342 94586 Rungis Cedex France Tel: +33 1 468 70206 Fax: +33 1 468 63115	1. ANUGA World Food Market Location: Cologne, Germany Contact: Messe-und Ausstellungs- Ges mbH Koln PO Box 21 07 60 Messeplatz 1 D-5000 Koln 21 Germany Tel: +49 221 8210 Fax: +49 221 8212574 Frequency: Every 2 years in October Next fair - 1993 2. SIAL International Food Products Exhibition Location: Paris, France Contact: SIAL 39 rue de la Bienfaisance 75008 Paris France Tel: +33 189 4687 Fax: +33 189 4694 Frequency: Every 2 years in November Next fair - 1994 3. FLORISSIMO International Exhibition of Exotic Plants and Flowers Location: Dijon, France Contact: Parc des Expo et Congres 3 Blvd de Champagne 21000 Dijon, France Tel: +33 180 714434 Fax: +33 180 748650 Frequency: Every 3 years in March Next fair - 19937 Tel: +32 2 299 1111e

European Commission
200 Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels
Belgium

*Cut Flowers***Product Coverage**

Fresh cut flowers suitable for bouquets and ornamental purposes imported under the following CCT numbers:

CCT NUMBER	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION
06031011	Roses
06031013	Carnations
06031015	Orchids
06031021	Gladioli
06031025	Chrysanthemums
06031029	Others

Customs Duties

CCT NUMBER	FULL RATE				
1 June -	1 Nov - ACP	GSP	LDDC	31 Oct	31 May
06031011	20	15	0%	15	0%
06031013	20	15	0%	15	0%
06031015	20	15	0%	15	0%
06031021	20	15	0%	15	0%
06031025	20	15	0%	15	0%
06031029	20	20	0%	7%	0%

Product Standards**Quality and Classification**

All produce must have been carefully cut or picked according to the species and have reached an appropriate stage of growth.

Cut flowers can be classified under the following categories.

Extra Class: Produce which qualifies for Class I without the aid of any tolerance may be marked Extra. However, this classification may not be used for American carnations with a split calyx.

Class I: Flowers in this class must be of good quality. They must have the characteristics of the species and, where appropriate, of the variety.

They must be:

- ◆ Whole
- ◆ Fresh
- ◆ Unbruised
- ◆ Free of animal or vegetable parasites and from resultant damage
- ◆ Free of residue of pesticides and other extraneous matter affecting the appearance
- ◆ Free of development defect.

Calyx splitting is not considered a development defect of carnations. However, American carnations (as grown under glass in this country) must be ringed, packed separately in uniform lots and the packages marked accordingly.

According to the species and variety, the stems must be rigid and sufficiently strong to support the flower(s).

Up to 5% of the cut flowers may have slight defects providing the uniformity in a unit of presentation is not affected.

Class II: This class includes flowers which do not meet all the requirements of Class I but are:

- ◆ Whole
- ◆ Fresh
- ◆ Free of animal parasites.

The following defects may be present providing they do not impair the appearance, life or use of the flowers:

- ◆ Slight malformation
- ◆ Slight bruising
- ◆ Slight damage, including that caused by pest or disease
- ◆ Small marks resulting from pesticides
- ◆ Weaker and less rigid stems.

Up to 10% of the cut flowers may vary from requirements of the Class. However, not more than half of this 10% may be damaged by animal or vegetable parasites. The defects in question must not impair the use of the flowers.

Sizing

Cut flowers must comply at least with the size ranges given below. The stem lengths quoted include the flower head.

Description code	Minimum and maximum stem lengths
0	less than 5cm or flowers marketed without seams
5	5 - 10 cm
10	10 - 15 cm
15	15 - 20 cm
20	20 - 30 cm
30	30 - 40 cm
40	40 - 50 cm
50	50 - 60 cm
60	60 - 80 cm
80	80 - 100 cm
100	100 - 120 cm
120	more than 120 cm

Uniformity in sizing must be followed and in any one unit of presentation (eg bunch, bouquet or box, etc.) the maximum permitted difference between the shortest and longest stem lengths is as follows:

	Description Code	Stem length
For stem lengths less than 20 cm	0 - 15	2.5 cm
For stem lengths 20 - 60 cm	20 - 50	5 cm
For stem lengths greater than 60 cm	60 and over	10 cm

The difference may be doubled for flowers in flat-packed bunches; also for flat-packed bunches of large flowered chrysanthemums of stem lengths 20 - 60 cm (ie codes 20 - 50) the permitted variation is further increased to a maximum of 20 cm.

The size scale and uniform lengths set out below do not apply to mimosa which have special provisions.

Presentation and Labelling

Presentation

A unit of presentation must consist of 5, 10 or a multiple of 10 pieces. If flowers are sold singly or by weight or other units used, packages must be marked to show exact composition of the unit of presentation contained. Each unit of presentation must contain flowers of the same genes, species or variety and of the same quality class and which have reached the same stage of development. Mixtures of flowers and mixtures of flowers with foliage of the same quality class but of different genus, species or variety are permitted provided they are appropriately marked.

Labelling

The following information must be shown in respect of each consignment or lot. When packaged it is preferable that the containers are marked legibly and indelibly on one side or end.

Identification

Packer and/or Despatcher: Name and address, or officially issued or accepted code mark

Nature of produce

- ◆ genus
- ◆ species or variety or colour of flowers
- ◆ where appropriate 'Mixture' or equivalent term
Origin of produce (optional)
- ◆ country of origin and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name
Commercial specifications
- ◆ class
- ◆ size - length code or minimum and maximum lengths (optional)
- ◆ number or net weight.

Marketing and Distribution

An important feature of the market is the major influence of the Netherlands as a re-exporter of cut flowers. The largest flower auction market in the world is situated in the Netherlands, near Amsterdam Schiphol airport. Flowers are imported and quickly re-exported either by refrigerated road-transport or by air.

Cut flowers are normally sold on a consignment basis, the usual commission rate being 12.5 - 15%. Much of the import trade with the Netherlands is beginning to be conducted on the basis of either "firm price" or profit sharing with Dutch auction based exporters.

Documentation

Aside from normal shipping and import documents, Certificate of Origin - Form A for GSP and LDDC countries, EUR 1 for ACP countries - must accompany consignments to benefit from reduced tariff or tariff free entry into the EC.

Phytosanitary certificate are required for the following:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| ◆ Roses | ◆ Gladioli |
| ◆ Carnations | ◆ Gypsophila |
| ◆ Chrysanthemums | ◆ Statice. |

CITES certification will be required for several species of orchids classified as "endangered species".

Other Information

Trade Association: International Association of Flowers and Plants
Werestemstraat 12
Postbus 170
NL-2180 AD Hillegom
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 252 018544
Fax: +31 252 029017

Trade Fairs:

FLORISSIMO

International Exhibition of Exotic Plants and Flowers

Location: Dijon, France

Contact: Parc des Expo et Congres

3 Blvd de Champagne

21000, Dijon, France

Tel: +33 1 80 71 44 34

Fax: +33 1 80 74 86 50

ACP Commonwealth Countries

ACP Commonwealth Countries

Entry Conditions:

All major topical agricultural commodities can be allowed quota free into the EC.

The following products under EC marketing regulations are also allowed quota free and tariff free entry:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ◆ cut flowers | ◆ grapefruit |
| ◆ radishes | ◆ limes |
| ◆ leguminous vegetables | ◆ other citrus fruit |
| ◆ aubergines | ◆ melons and watermelons |
| ◆ sweet peppers | ◆ pawpaws |
| ◆ courgettes | ◆ fruits of specie vaccirium myztillus |
| ◆ pistachios | ◆ other fresh fruit |
| ◆ pecans | ◆ other vegetables |
| ◆ other nuts | |

For more sensitive agricultural produce which could be in competition with EC produce, trade preference could be given through the following:

1. Marketing timetable - tariff free or reduced tariff entry allowed only on specified months of the year, usually during months when the product is not in season in the EC. An annual quota can be imposed wherein only a set amount is allowed preferential tariff rates.
2. Progressive abolition or reduction of customs duties - customs duties will be reduced by a certain percentage until the product is allowed free entry into the EC. More sensitive products will be reduced only up to a set percentage.

Progressive abolition subject to a marketing timetable applied to the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| ◆ tomatoes | ◆ figs |
| ◆ onions | ◆ oranges |
| ◆ garlic | ◆ mandarins |
| ◆ chinese leaves | ◆ apples |
| ◆ iceberg cabbage | ◆ pears |
| ◆ carrots | ◆ apricots |
| ◆ horseradish | ◆ cherries |
| ◆ salad beetroot | ◆ plums |
| ◆ small winter cucumbers | ◆ peaches |
| ◆ artichokes | ◆ strawberries |
| ◆ mushrooms | ◆ mixtures of nuts |
| ◆ walnuts | |

Rules of Origin:

In the case of products imported frozen, dried or provisionally preserved, all raw fruits, vegetables and nuts (including mixtures) must already come from an ACP or EC country.

Documentation:

Certificate of Origin (EUR 1) must accompany the consignment if the exporter is to benefit from reduced or tariff free entry into the EC. These forms can be obtained from the exporter's national Customs and Excise Office or Ministry of Trade.

Phytosanitary certificate issued by an authorised official of the exporting country must accompany consignments of the following products:

- ◆ fresh fruits
- ◆ fresh vegetables
- ◆ live plants
- ◆ cut flowers: roses
carnations
chrysanthemums
gladioli
gypsophila
statice.

CITES certificate or a special licence is required to import plants classified as endangered specie.

GSP Commonwealth Countries

GSP Commonwealth Countries

Entry Conditions:

Tariff free and quota free entry for the following:

- ◆ fresh or chilled charantarelles
- ◆ dried horseradish
- ◆ fresh or dried sweet potatoes
- ◆ dried bananas
- ◆ fresh or dried guavas and mangosteen
- ◆ fresh or dried rose-hip fruit
- ◆ fresh, frozen, dried or provisionally preserved peel of citrus fruit or melon
- ◆ crushed or ground melon
- ◆ crushed or ground locust beans
- ◆ agar-agar
- ◆ fresh or chilled okra
- ◆ dried chickpeas
- ◆ pistachios
- ◆ fresh bilberries
- ◆ fresh, dried or provisionally preserved pawpaws
- ◆ crushed or ground nutmeg
- ◆ flour, meal and powder of banana
- ◆ seaweeds and other algae

Reduced tariffs for most other agricultural plant products are given to exports from GSP countries.

Rules of Origin:

In the case of products imported frozen, dried or provisionally preserved; all raw fruits, vegetables and nuts (including mixtures) must already come from a GSP country.

Documentation:

Certificate of Origin (Form A) must accompany the consignment if the exporter is to benefit from reduced or tariff free entry into the EC. These forms can be obtained from the exporter's national Customs and Excise Office or Ministry of Trade.

Phytosanitary certificates issued by an authorised official of the exporting country must accompany consignments of the following products:

- ◆ fresh fruits
- ◆ fresh vegetables
- ◆ live plants
- ◆ cut flowers: roses
carnations
chrysanthemums
gladioli
gypsophila
statice

CITES certificate or a special licence is required to import plants classified as endangered specie.

LDDC Commonwealth Countries

LDDC Commonwealth Countries

Entry Conditions:

The following are allowed tariff free and quota free entry into the EC:

- ◆ live trees and plants
- ◆ roots
- ◆ ornamental foliage
- ◆ fresh or chilled horseradish, aubergines, celery, chanelles, peppers, courgettes
- ◆ all frozen vegetables except olives
- ◆ dried potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots, bananas
- ◆ dried apricots, prunes, apples, peaches, nectarines, pears, pawpaws, mixtures of nuts and fruits, peels of citrus fruit or melon
- ◆ fresh melon, pawpaws, sloes, cherries, raspberries, currants, kiwifruit, tamarinds, lychees, jack fruit
- ◆ fresh or dried dates, pineapples, guavas, mangosteen, mangoes
- ◆ flour, meal and flakes of potatoes
- ◆ vegetables
- ◆ bulbs
- ◆ cut flowers

Rules of Origin:

In the case of products imported frozen, dried or provisionally preserved; all raw fruits, vegetables and nuts (including mixtures) must already come from an LDDC country.

Documentation:

Certificate of Origin (Form A) must accompany consignment if exporter is to benefit from reduced or tariff free entry into the EC. These forms can be obtained from the exporter's national Customs and Excise officer or Ministry of Trade.

A phytosanitary certificate issued by an authorised official of the exporting country must accompany consignments of the following products:

- ◆ fresh fruits
- ◆ fresh vegetables
- ◆ live plants
- ◆ cut flowers: roses
chrysanthemums
gladioli
gypsophila
statice

CITES certificate or a special licence is required to import plants classified as endangered specie.