



Are You Getting the Right Produce at the Right Price?

SNA Annual National Conference
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About Produce Safety University

- One week, comprehensive training course
- Developed in 2010
- Partnership between FNS and AMS
- States submit nominations to USDA
- Open to school district and state agency staff





“Its All About the Money”

- Fresh produce can be expensive
- How can you save money?
 - Purchase in season
 - Write specifications for intended use
 - Consider grades, packs, or sizes that may be a better value





AMS Fruit and Vegetable Program

- Fruit and vegetable inspections
- GAP/GHP audits
- U. S. Grade standards
 - Quality
 - Condition
- Market News

The screenshot shows the homepage of the AMS Fruit and Vegetable Program. At the top, there is a header with the USDA logo and the text 'United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, About AMS, Newsroom, Opportunities, Online Forms, Help, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Commodity Areas' and features a section for 'AMS Fruit and Vegetable Programs'. This section includes a description of the services, a link to a webinar series, and a 'Services' section with several bullet points. The 'Information' section at the bottom provides an overview of the programs and a link to a program overview brochure. The page also includes a search bar, a 'Browse by Subject' menu, and a 'See Also' section with additional links.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/FruitandVegetable>



Quality Defect Examples



Misshapen



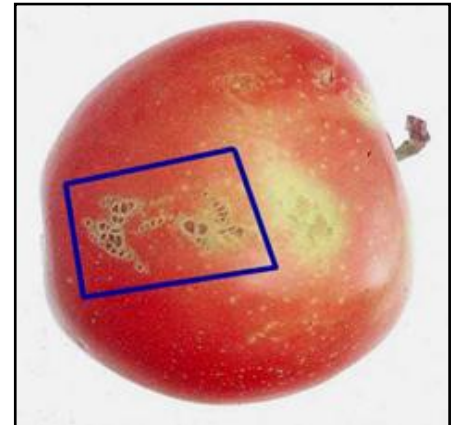
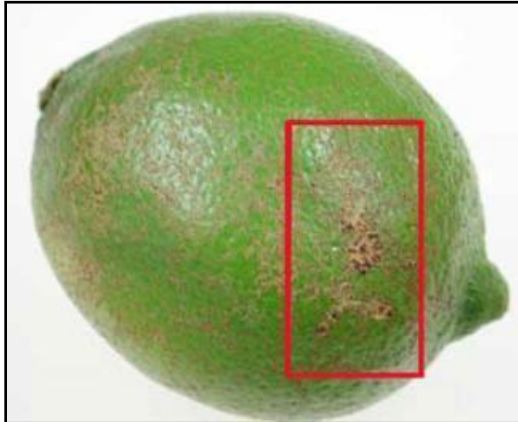


Texture





Scars



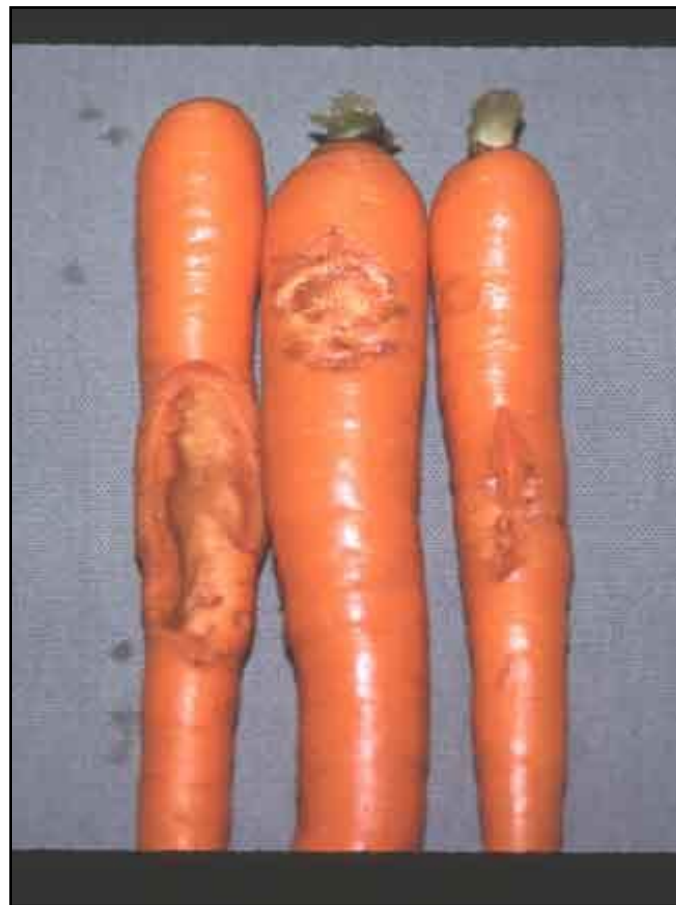


Poorly Colored*





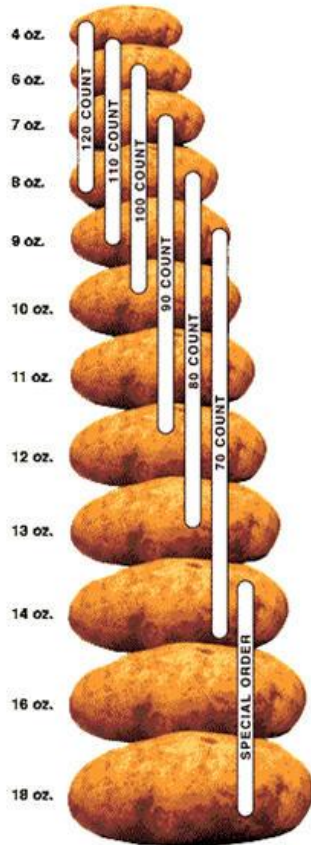
Growth / Healed Cracks





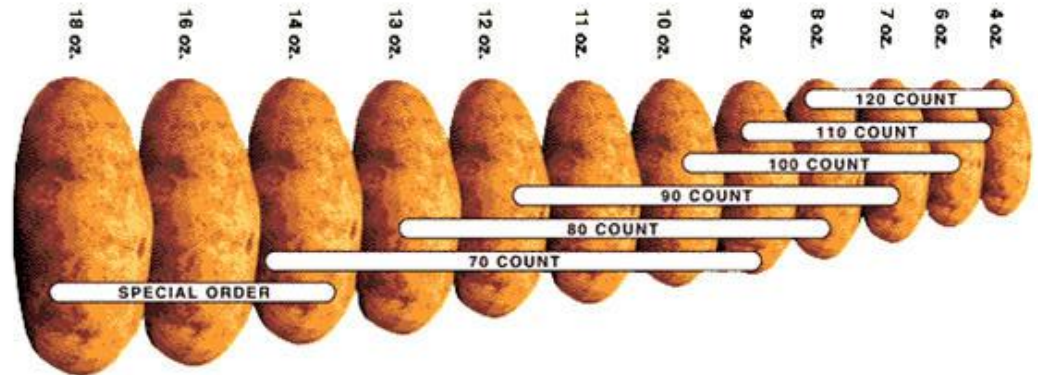
Size

Part of Grade



Quality factor

Depending on the product a minimum/maximum size may be specified for the Grade.

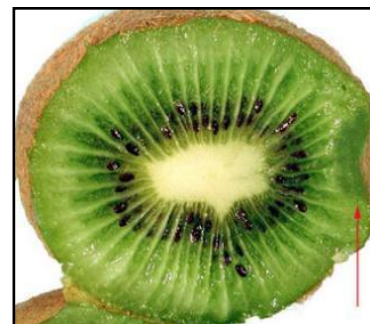
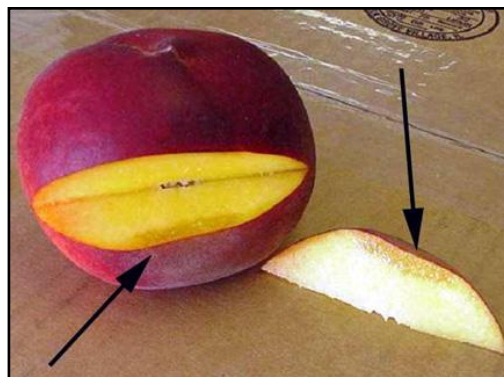
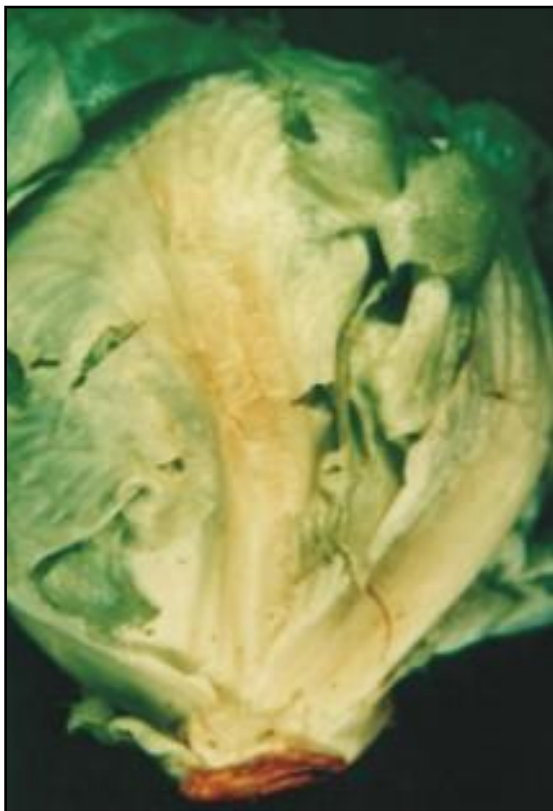




Condition Defect Examples



Bruising



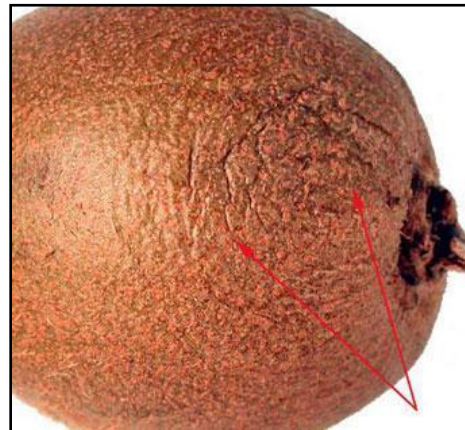
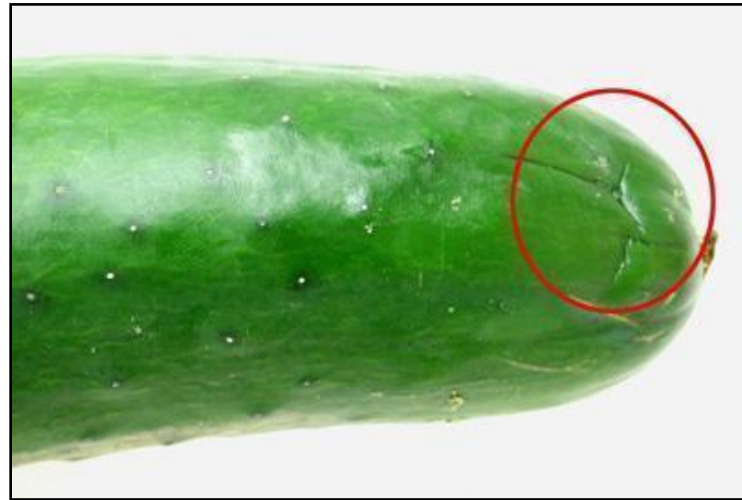


Sunken and Discolored Areas (SDAs)





Shriveling



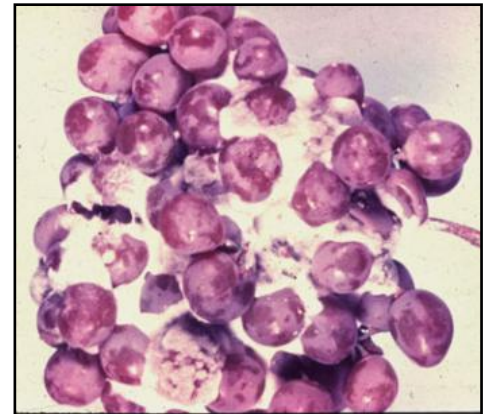
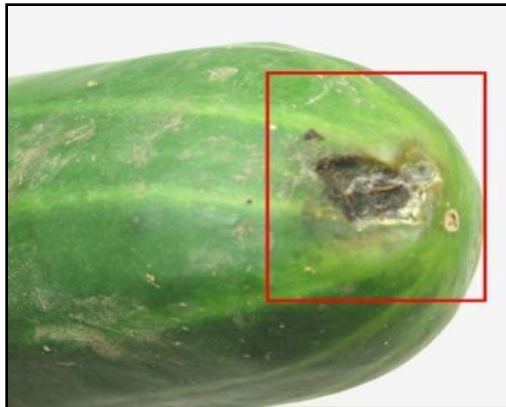


Surface Discoloration



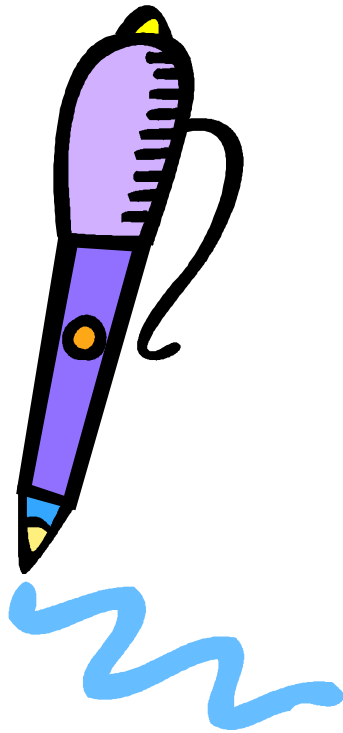


Decay





Writing Fresh Produce Specifications





Four Steps to Get the “Right Produce” at the “Right Price”

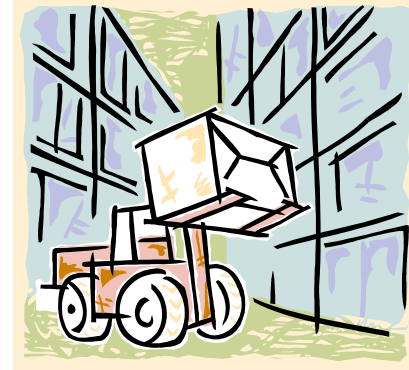
1. Determine what you need
 - Menu items, production method, portion sizes
2. Find out what is available to purchase
 - What do your vendors stock, farmers grow?
3. Write a specification for a product that is the best value for your needs and is clear to the vendor
4. Train the receiving agent how to determine if you received what you requested





Specifications may be Different

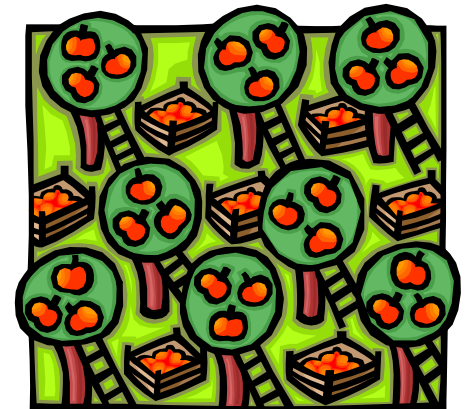
- Produce distributors
- Farmers





Distributor VS Farmer

- Most produce is not graded at the farm
- Produce that *is* graded it is often not graded until it gets to a packing house
- “To be packed to U.S. No. 1 grade standard” may be an alternative
- Use the quality and condition descriptors in grade standards to write specifications for local farmers





Determine Availability

- Does the distributor/farmer regularly stock/grow the item?
- Can the distributor/farmer supply the quantity needed?
- Is the product available when you need it?
- Can the distributor purchase local product?





Specification Resources

Agricultural Marketing Service

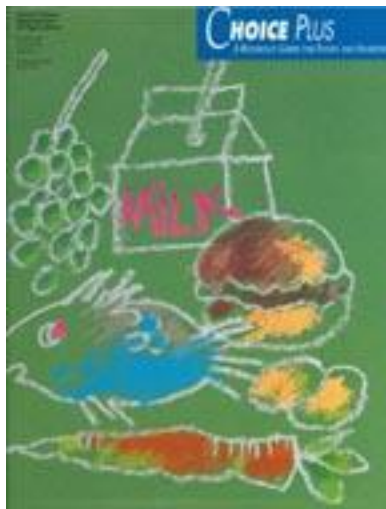
The screenshot shows the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service website. The header includes the USDA logo and navigation links: Home, About AMS, Newsroom, Opportunities, Online Forms, Help, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled "Grading, Certification and Verification" and focuses on "Fresh Fruit, Vegetable, Nut and Specialty Crop Grade Standards". It provides information on U.S. Grade Standards, lists "Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grade Standards" (Vegetables for Fresh Market, Fruit for Fresh Market, Vegetables for Processing, Fruit for Processing, Nuts and Specialty Crops), and includes contact information for Carl Newell, Standardization and Training Section, AMS Fruit and Vegetable Programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 100 Riverside Parkway, Suite 101, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22406. The page also features a search bar, a "Browse by Subject" menu, and a "Request Copies of U.S. Grade Standards (PDF)" button.

www.ams.usda.gov



Specification Resources

Choice Plus



SIZES

Jumbo: 1½- to 1¾-inch diameter, minimum 5 inch long

Medium or Large: ¾- to 1½ -inch diameter, minimum 5 inch long

Baby carrots

GRADES

U.S. Extra No. 1

U.S. No. 1

U.S. No. 1 Jumbo

U.S. No. 2

Unclassified (ungraded)

HOW PACKED

50-lb bag

1-lb bag, 40 per carton

1-lb bag, 24 per carton

IN SEASON

Available year-round

PURCHASING TIPS

- Baby carrots are available but more expensive.
- Medium carrots are the choice of most users.

RECEIVING

- Inspect for firmness (should break with crisp snap when bent); should be bright orange or red color, fresh-looking, smooth.
- Signs of poor quality: carrots that are wilted, flabby, soft or shriveled, or have decayed areas.

STORING

- Refrigerate immediately.
- Carrots develop bitter taste if stored near ethylene-producing fruits, such as apples, grapes, peaches, pears and plums.

STANDARD OF IDENTITY REFERENCE

None

GRADE STANDARD REFERENCE

Title 7 CFR 51.2360 to 51.2364

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

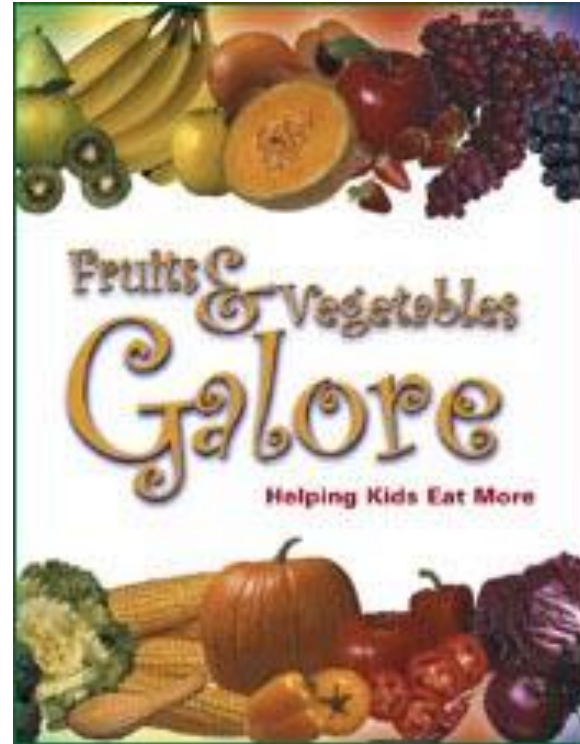
.....
*CARROTS, FRESH: to be packed to U.S.
No. 1 Grade standard; medium size; 24/1 lb.*
.....

<http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=47>



Specification Resources

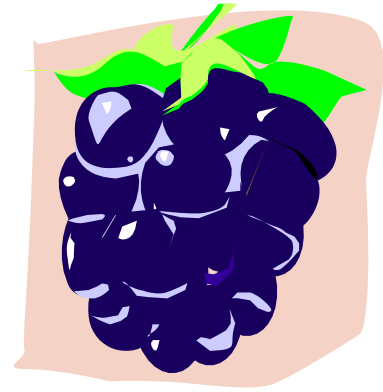
Fruits &
Vegetables
Galore



www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/fv_galore.html



U.S. Grade Standards



EXAMPLE:

U.S. No. 1. Grade Standard for Blackberries

Firm, well colored, well developed and not overripe, free from caps (calyxes), mold and decay, and damage caused by dirt or other foreign matter, shriveling, moisture, disease, insects, mechanical, or other means.

No more than 10 % of the berries in any lot may fail to meet the requirements of this grade, including not more than 5 % for defects causing serious damage, and not more than 1 % for berries that are affected by mold or decay.

www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5050347



Specifications for Farms

May Include:

- Size
- Shape
- Color requirement, if applicable
- Quality and condition **at destination**
 - % free from decay
 - % free from other damage such as surface discoloration, internal browning and bruising, shriveling, etc.
- Maturity (degree of ripeness)





Decay and Damage are Costly





Other Specification Characteristics

- Name of product
- Federal (USDA) grade
- Geographical origin
- Receiving temperature
- Type of packaging
- Size of container
- Bid unit (unit on which price is based)
 - Weight of container
 - Count





Poorly Written Specifications

- Limit competition
- Increase costs without increasing value
- May result in lower quality than desired
- May decrease product yield
- Increase costs when product is not easily attainable



Writing Better Specifications for Bid

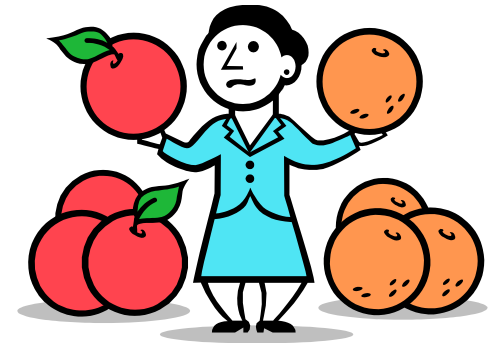
- How specific should a specification be?
- Do you need to include more than grade standards?





Specifications: A Communication Tool

- Tell vendors the quality that you want
 - Compare “apples to apples” on bids
- Must be measurable – need to be able to determine if what was ordered was received





Receiving Produce

- Compare product to specification and purchase order
- Inspect:
 - Shape, color, size or count
 - Defects, condition, and flavor
 - Temperature
- Retain information needed for traceability
 - Delivery date, vendor, product code, lot numbers, pack dates





Receiving is Critical

- Staff who receive the produce need to:
 - Understand the specifications
 - Know what to do if the product does not meet them
- Provide training





Four Steps to Get the “Right Produce” at the “Right Price”

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Resources



Market News

The screenshot shows the USDA Market News website portal. At the top left is the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service". To the right, it says "FRUIT & VEGETABLE MARKET NEWS". Below this is a navigation bar with links for "Home", "About Us", "Careers", "Help", and "Contact Us". A search bar is located on the left side, labeled "Search AMS", with a "Go" button. Below the search bar are links for "Advanced Search", "Search Tips", and "Market News Search". There is also a "My Account" section with links for "Login/Create Account" and "Account Creation Instructions". A "Browse by Commodity" section lists various categories like "Fruits", "Onions & Potatoes", "Vegetables", "Herbs", "Nuts", "Ornamentals", and "Honey". Another section, "Browse by Report Type", lists "Terminal Market", "International Markets", "Shipping Point", "Movement", "Retail", "Daily Movement", and "Truck Rate". A "Custom Reports" section includes "Run a Custom Report" and "Organic Report". A "Standard Reports" section lists "Terminal Market", "International Markets", "Shipping Point", "Movement", "Specialty", and "Farmers Market and". The main content area features a "Welcome to Fruit and Vegetable Market News" message with a date of "June 01, 2012" and a "Run a Custom Report" section with a dropdown menu set to "Terminal Market (including Organics)" and a "Go" button. Below this is a "Popular Reports" section with a list of reports such as "Shipping Point High/Low Highlights", "Daily Movement Report", "Mexico Crossings Report", "National Shipping Point Trends", "National Fruit and Vegetable Retail Report", "National Fruit and Vegetable Organic Summary", "National Honey Report", "Tomato Report", "Plum Tomato Report", "Cherry Tomato Report", "Grape Tomato Report", "Asparagus Report", and "Western Fruit Table Grape Supplement". A "Weather Information" section includes a map of the United States and a "Your local forecast by 'City, State' or 'US ZipCode'" input field with a "Go" button. Below that is a "News Releases" section with a link for "Raspberry Growers & Importers Approve Research pgm". On the right side of the page, there is a "Contacts and Locations" section with a dropdown menu set to "ALL" and a "Go" button. Below that is a "Syndication" section with links for "Shipping Point Highlights" and "Daily Tomato Shipping Point Prices". There is also an "RSS (all feeds) | What is RSS?" link. A "Resources" section lists various services like "Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)", "Commodity Procurement", "FV Industry Advisory Committee", "Grading and Standards", "Marketing Orders", "National Agricultural Library", "National Organic Program", "Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA)", and "Research and Promotion". A "USDA Links" section lists "Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)", "Economic Research Service (ERS)", "Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)", "National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)", and "Other USDA Agencies". Finally, a "See Also" section includes "Market Information Organization of the Americas" and "National Market News".

<http://www.marketnews.usda.gov/portal/fv>



How Can You Use Market News?

- Estimate fair price over a certain time period for a contract
- Incorporate market price into your bid
- Help farmers with local produce pricing

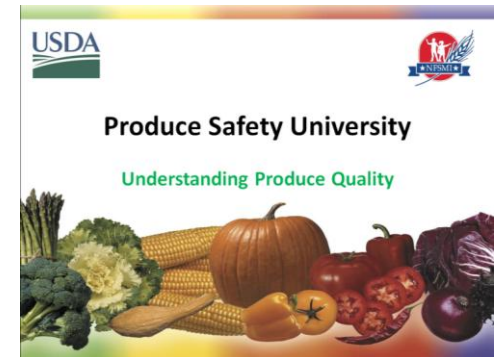
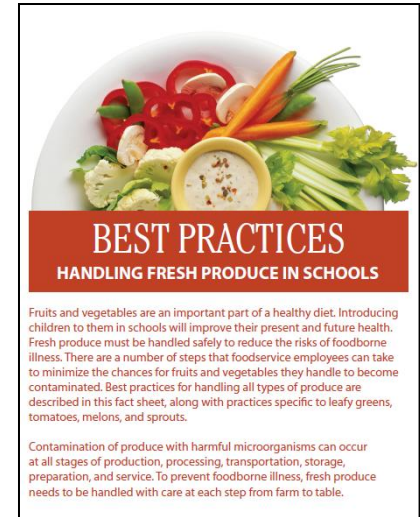




Training Materials

- Available on NFSMI website
 - Fact Sheets
 - Videos
 - Activities
 - Lessons

www.nfsmi.org/producesafety





Produce Information Sheets

LETTUCE INFORMATION SHEET

Purchasing Specifications
Specification should state grade, type, size, and quantity. Lettuce should have a light to dark green color and be bright and crisp. Depending on variety and type, lettuce also may have a reddish to dark burgundy appearance on the outer leaves. Any variety or type of lettuce should have not more than 12% defects that make lettuce unusable, and no more than 3% should be affected by decay. Romaine-type lettuce shall have not more than 10% and 2%, respectively. If lettuce is purchased in sealed bags, it should be unwashed and display the same characteristics as loose product.

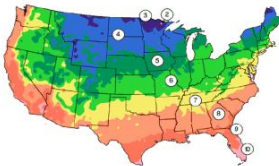
Lettuce Varieties with U.S. Grades

- Lettuce - Includes iceberg (very compact head), Boston, and Bibb types (loosely compacted heads)
- Field Green Leaf Lettuce - Most common are red leaf and green leaf with loosely compacted heads.
- Romaine - Generally the longer and broad green leaf type with a whitish sweet core.
- Greenhouse Leaf Lettuce - Includes the varieties of field lettuce grown in a controlled atmosphere.

Most Common U.S. Grades
U.S. No. 1 is common to all the lettuce varieties and types, and is considered the standard for commercial use. U.S. No. 1 consists of lettuce of similar varietal characteristics that are well developed, fairly well trimmed, free from decay, doubles, and freezing. U.S. No. 1 lettuce should be free from damage by broken midribs, bruising, dirt or foreign material, discoloration, downy mildew, seedstems, leptom, watersoaked, yellowing, insects, worms, or mechanical or other means.

Domestic Harvest

2, 3 August - September
4, 5 July - October
6, 7 June - November
8, 9, 10 Nearly All Year




Many lettuce varieties are grown throughout the United States and are harvested at varying times throughout the year, making year-round locally available lettuce possible. Check with your county or state Cooperative Extension Office for specific information regarding lettuce production in your area.

USDA Produce Safety University, 2011

CANTALOUPE INFORMATION SHEET

Receiving Guidelines


Desirable Characteristics



Acceptable Color and Shape Acceptable Discoloration

- Cantaloupe flesh should be firm to touch.

Product Defects



Bruise Mold Sunken Areas and Scars Decay

- No other external defect should extend into the flesh.

Storing and Handling Guidelines

- Store cantaloupes ideally at 36 to 41° F with a relative humidity of 95%. Under these conditions, cantaloupes are acceptable for up to 3 weeks. Cantaloupes stored at refrigeration temperatures below 41° F will have approximate shelf life of up to 5 days. Cantaloupe may be held in dry storage at temperatures below 75° F for up to 2 days.
- Do not transport or store with ethylene gas sensitive products such as green leafy vegetables. Cantaloupes produce ethylene that may cause damage and reduce shelf life of sensitive products.
- Avoid using whole melons that have visible signs of decay or damaged rinds (such as mechanical damage or cracking) due to the increased risk that harmful bacteria may have contaminated the melons.
- Wash the outer surface of the melon thoroughly under cold, running water. Scrub melons with a clean produce brush before cutting. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before serving.
- Cover, date, and refrigerate cut cantaloupe. Use by the following day for best quality.
- Hold and serve cantaloupe at 41° F. Do not store cut melon at room temperature. If possible, display cut melons in a refrigerated case, not just on top of ice. Take and record serving line temperatures.
- Discard cut cantaloupe after 2 hours in the temperature danger zone (41° F to 135° F).
- Check for ripeness by looking for the stem end to be hollowed inward or concave. The cantaloupe will yield to light pressure and have a sweet, musky aroma.

USDA Produce Safety University, 2011

www.nfsmi.org/producesafety



Produce Information Sheets

- Apples
- Bananas
- Broccoli
- Cantaloupe
- Carrots
- Grapes



- Lettuce
- Oranges
- Squash
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon

www.nfsmi.org/producesafety



SNF & USDA Webinars and P2P Calls

- Applying GAPs to Farm to School and School Gardens
- Addressing Food Safety in School Produce Purchasing
- Buying the Right Produce at the Right Price
- Handling Fresh Produce in Schools



www.schoolnutrition.org/webinars



Coming Soon: The Produce Lab

- Videos and Training Materials
- Review of produce commonly purchased by schools
 - Quality and condition factors
 - Receiving tips
 - Specification tools

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- ✓ Please complete the Evaluation Form for this Session!
- ✓ The drop-off box for COMPLETED Evaluation Forms is located on the backroom table.
- ✓ Thank You!





Questions?

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