



Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. AMS-SC-25-0056, SC-25-328]

Revising U.S. Standards for Grades of Mushrooms

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposes to revise the U.S. Standards for Grades of Mushrooms. The proposed changes would add a grade for portabella mushrooms, remove size from the criteria for each grade and create a separate section for size, and revise the tolerances for defects, consistent with modern production and handling practices. In addition, AMS proposes to update terminology, definitions, and defect scoring guides.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments by mail to the USDA, Specialty Crops Inspection Division, 100 Riverside Parkway, Suite 101, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22406; via fax to (540) 361-1199; or online at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

Comments should reference the date and page numbers of this issue of the **Federal Register**. Comments will be posted without change, including any personal information provided. All comments received within the comment period will become part of the public record maintained by the Agency and will be made available to the public via <https://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Buss at the address above, or by phone at (540) 361-1120; or fax at (540) 361-1199; or email

Andrew.Buss@usda.gov. Copies of the proposed U.S. Standards for Grades of Mushrooms are available at <https://www.regulations.gov>. Copies of the current U.S.

Standards for Grades of Mushrooms are available at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/vegetables>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 203(c) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1622(c)) directs and authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture “[t]o develop and improve standards of quality, condition, quantity, grade, and packaging, and recommend and demonstrate such standards in order to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices.”

AMS is committed to carrying out this authority in a manner that facilitates the marketing of agricultural commodities and makes copies of official standards available upon request. The U.S. Standards for Grades of Fruits and Vegetables that no longer appear in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) are maintained by AMS at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards>. AMS is proposing revisions to the U.S. Standards for Grades of Mushrooms using the procedures that appear in part 36 of title 7 of the CFR (7 CFR part 36).

Background

On April 2, 2020, the American Mushroom Institute (AMI), a trade association representing growers, retailers, and shippers from the United States, petitioned AMS to revise the U.S. Standards for Grades of Mushrooms. From 2020 to 2024, AMS worked closely with AMI to provide guidance and discuss the proposal, including relevant revisions. In its petition, AMI stated that USDA standards for mushrooms do not conform to current industry practices, and no standards for “Baby Bella” or “Portabella” mushroom varieties exist. AMI also requested new definitions to cover defects that are not currently defined in the mushroom standards. AMS reviewed and incorporated recommendations from AMI’s petition and subsequent feedback into this proposal, which reflects a collaborative effort between AMS and industry. The proposed updates to the standards, identified below, affect definitions, grades, size, and defects of mushrooms.

AMS thus proposes to revise the U.S. Standards for Grades of Mushrooms as follows:

- Add a new “General” section (as section 51.3385) to describe the types of mushrooms covered by the standards and redesignate existing sections 51.3385 through 51.3398 as sections 51.3386 through 51.3399.
- Clarify that the standards apply to all mushrooms of the *Agaricus bisporus* species. Brown colored button mushrooms (commonly called crimini), crimini (alternative spelling), baby, and baby bella will be added to the standards, as well as common portabella type mushrooms, including portobello (alternative spelling), ports, and giant crimini. No standard for portabella type mushrooms has been published prior to this notice.
- Remove size and tolerance specifications from the criteria for each grade and create separate sections for that information.
- Allow some degree of open space before open veils would be considered damage in mushrooms other than portabella mushrooms, while also recognizing that open veils are a characteristic of and are not considered damage in portabella type mushrooms.
- Revise the “at shipping point” and “en route or at destination” tolerances by adding a tolerance for button mushrooms damaged by open veils and portabella type mushrooms.
- Modify and update definitions to reflect current industry practices and terminology. Add specifications for “bruising,” “cuts or mechanical defects,” “extraneous material,” “feathering,” “open veils,” and “spots” as types of damage.
- Establish different package tolerance limits based on the size of the packaging. The “Application of Tolerances” section of the standards identifies

the maximum limit of defects and off-size mushrooms that are allowed in an individual package of mushrooms.

- Add language to permit mixed specialty packs of white and brown mushrooms. When lots are not intentionally packed as mixed/specialty packs, a dissimilar colored mushroom is considered a defect. The proposed revisions recognize mixed color specialty packs and better reflect current marketing trends.

A 60-day period is provided for interested persons to submit comments on the proposed grade standards. Copies of the proposed revised U.S. Standards for Grades of Mushrooms are available at <http://www.regulations.gov>. After the 60-day comment period, AMS will proceed in accordance with 7 CFR 36.3(a)(1)-(3).

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

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Agricultural Marketing Service.

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