



Helpdesk

EU NEWS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF “ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE”

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Fruit and vegetable marketing standards to be made simpler

By the end of this year, specific marketing standards for fruit and vegetables in the EU – relating to size, shape and appearance – will be repealed for products intended for processing. This matter is presented in a Commission proposal. Whatever the result will be of a vote at the Council, the Commission will abolish these standards.

The Member States would be able to exempt fruit and vegetables intended for processing from existing marketing standards if their labelling clearly states 'product intended for processing'. Such products could be either misshapen or undersized and could be used by consumers for cooking or salads, for example.

This proposal aims at cutting red tape and simplify regulations. In this period of high food prices, it is also a way of keeping such products from being thrown away or destroyed.

The proposal would maintain marketing standards for ten products that make up 75 % of the value of EU trade: apples, citrus fruit, kiwis, lettuce, peaches and nectarines, pears, strawberries, sweet peppers, table grapes and tomatoes. The member states could even exempt these products from the standards if they are sold with an appropriate label.

The proposal would abolish specific standards for 26 products:

- apricots
- artichokes
- asparagus
- aubergines
- avocados
- beans
- Brussels sprouts
- carrots
- cauliflower
- cherries
- courgettes
- cucumbers
- cultivated mushrooms
- garlic
- hazelnuts in shell
- headed cabbage
- leeks
- melons
- onions
- peas
- plums
- ribbed celery
- spinach
- walnuts in shell
- watermelons
- chicory

The proposal is setting new general minimum standards for the marketing of fruit and vegetables.

For practical reasons, the date for the entry into force of all these changes has been set at 1 July 2009.