

UNECE

UNECE Code of Good Practice for Reducing Food Loss in Handling Fruit and Vegetables



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Classification of fruit, based on their respiratory behaviour, into climacteric and non-climacteric fruit

ANNEX II

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Simply Measuring - Quantifying Food Loss and Waste: UNECE food loss and waste measuring methodology for fresh produce supply chains



INTRODUCTION

Fruit and vegetables are sold internationally, as well as locally, regionally and nationally. They are frequently traded over large distances and involve several actors. A continuous challenge is to reduce waste and losses, and this requires great care, attention and cooperation along the entire value chain.

The perishable nature of most fruits and vegetables means that loss and waste of products can be high. The problem of waste, in particular, has received much attention in recent years because of the impact on the environment.

Much can be gained, including economically, from taking measures to reduce the losses and waste. According to estimates, investments in measures to reduce losses and waste in food can give a 14-fold return.¹ A clear business case for the companies involved!

The Code of Good Practice supports the United Nations Sustainability Goal 12.3 on reducing food loss and waste: “By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.”

The Code was endorsed by the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP7) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) at its session in November 2019. For over 50 years, UNECE standards have been facilitating international trade in agricultural produce. The Code complements the standards and is intended to help maintain quality along supply chains. It is also aimed at strengthening the work on reducing food waste and associated costs that is already being done by many companies.

It sets out measures to be taken at the various stages before fruit and vegetables reach the consumer, i.e. from harvest to retail. It should support continued improvement, step by step. Real improvement, however, can only be achieved if actors along the distribution chain cooperate to improve their logistics, handling and planning, both inside countries and across borders. Communication will be a key factor. Measuring waste, which is the last point in each section of the Code, will give companies feedback on how well their work progresses.

¹ Hanson, C., and P. Mitchell. 2017. *The Business Case for Reducing Food Loss and Waste*. Washington, DC: Champions 12.3.

The Code consists of three distinct chapters which focus on the three major segments of the fruit and vegetable supply chain – producers, traders and retailers. The chapters can be used individually.

It is followed by two annexes and a selected list of reading matter that describe in detail the processes that regulate fruit and vegetable during growth, maturation, ripening and senescence and the best handling and storage practices.



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