



Tonga

FRUIT EXPORT (VANILLA) REGULATIONS

Chapter 19.01.02

2020 Revised Edition



FRUIT EXPORT (VANILLA) REGULATIONS¹

Made under section 3 of the Fruit Export Act and continued in force under section 15 of the Agricultural Commodities Act

Commencement [22nd July 1993]

1.

- (1) These Regulations may be cited as the Fruit Export (Vanilla) Regulations.
- (2) The vanilla bean is hereby declared as a fruit for the purposes of Section 2 of the Fruit Export Act.

2. In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires —

“aroma”	means fresh and distinctively strong vanilla smell;
“blossom end”	means the end of the vanilla bean where the flower was formed;
“broken bean”	means snapped vanilla bean;
“bundled”	means vanilla beans tied together according to length;
“clean”	means free from dirt, soil, excreta and any other foreign matter;
“cured”	means vanilla beans which have been dried and treated properly to evolve the vanilla aroma;

“cut beans”	means small pieces of cured vanilla beans, usually resulting from the removal of damaged parts or from broken beans;
“foreign smell”	means a smell which is not typical of strong vanilla smell such as mouldy, fishy and smoky smell;
“foreign matter”	means any materials other than vanilla;
“green vanilla beans”	means ripe vanilla beans which are not cured;
“MAF”	means Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry;
“mite”	means minute insect which is a pest of cured vanilla beans;
“moisture content”	means the amount of water in fresh or cured vanilla beans;
“mould”	means fungal growth on beans which can be white, yellow, black, brown or greenish in colour;
“ripe”	means that the vanilla bean has reached a maturity at harvest as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) change to a yellow colour on the blossom end (yellow tip); or(ii) starts splitting at the tip;
“scab”	means skin marks on vanilla beans caused by physical damage;
“special grade cut beans”	means vanilla beans that have been cut into small pieces and subjected to rapid curing process;
“split beans”	means vanilla beans which are partially split lengthwise from the blossom end as they ripen;
“supple”	means vanilla beans, which are fleshy, soft and flexible;
“vanilla” or “vanilla bean”	means the vanilla bean grown from varieties of <i>Vanilla fragrans</i> , fresh or cured;
“vanilla curing shed”	means a building designed for curing of vanilla beans;

- “vanillin content”** means the amount of colourless, fragrant, crystalline compound $C_8H_8O_3$ contained in cured vanilla beans;
- “waxy”** means smooth shiny appearance.

3. Green vanilla beans must be of the following grades: —

- (1) Grade 1 vanilla beans which —
 - (a) must be ripe, fresh and firm at harvest;
 - (b) must be 15cm or more in length;
 - (c) includes both ripe split and non-split;
 - (d) includes ripe broken beans;
 - (e) includes scabbed vanilla bean. (not more than 50% of the length of the bean is affected with scab);
 - (f) must be clean and free from any foreign smell.
- (2) Grade 2 vanilla beans which —
 - (a) must be ripe at harvest;
 - (b) must be 12 cm or more in length;
 - (c) includes both split and non-split beans;
 - (d) includes scabbed, twisted vanilla beans (not more than 50% of the bean length is affected with scab);
 - (e) includes ripe, broken beans;
 - (f) must be clean and free from any foreign smell.
- (3) Green vanilla Grades 1 and 2 may have up to 5% by weight of unripe vanilla beans.

4. Cured vanilla beans must be of the following Grades: —

- (1) Premium Grade vanilla beans which —
 - (a) must have good vanilla aroma;
 - (b) must have minimum vanillin content of 0.18 vanillin;
 - (c) must be whole beans, 15cm or more in length;
 - (d) must have dark brown to black colour (without scabs, blemishes and light brown streaks), shiny, supple and have a waxy appearance;
 - (e) have moisture content not less than 30% or higher than 35% (or as specified by the buyer to the exporter and to the Director of Agriculture and Forestry);
 - (f) must be clean, free of moulds, mites, other insects and any foreign smell;

- (g) must be bundled (or unless specified otherwise by the buyer to the exporter and to the Director of Agriculture and Forestry);
 - (h) includes split beans if specifically requested by the buyer to the exporter and to the Director of Agriculture and Forestry.
- (2)
- (i) Grade 1 vanilla beans which —
 - (a) must have good vanilla aroma;
 - (b) must have minimum vanillin content of 0.18 vanillin;
 - (c) must be whole or cut beans 15cm or more in length;
 - (d) must have dark brown to black supple, shiny and waxy appearance;
 - (e) have moisture content not less than 20% nor higher than 30% (or as specified by the buyer to the exporter and to the Director of Agriculture and Forestry);
 - (f) must be clean, free of moulds, rots, mites, other insects and any foreign smell;
 - (g) must be bundled (or unless specified otherwise by the buyer to the exporter and to the Director of Agriculture and Forestry);
 - (h) includes both split and non-split beans.
 - (ii) A tolerance of up to 2% by weight of Grade 2 standard is allowed.
- (3)
- (i) Grade 2 vanilla beans which —
 - (a) must have good vanilla aroma;
 - (b) must have minimum vanillin content of 0.18 vanillin;
 - (c) must be whole or cut beans between 12cm-15cm in length;
 - (d) must have dark brown to black colour (but not as shiny and, supple as Grade 1);
 - (e) have moisture content not higher than 25%;
 - (f) must be clean, free of moulds, rots, mites, other insects and foreign smell;
 - (g) must be bundled (unless specified otherwise by the buyer to the exporter and to the Director of Agriculture and Forestry);
 - (h) includes split and non-split beans.
 - (ii) A tolerance of up to 2% by weight of subgrade vanilla is allowed.
- (4) Industrial Grade which —
- (a) may be a mixture of Grade 1 and Grade 2;
 - (b) must have the minimum requirements of Grade 2;

- (c) must be approved by the Director of Agriculture and Forestry (as requested by the exporter).
- (5)
- (i) Special grade - cut beans which —
 - (a) must have a good vanilla aroma; .
 - (b) must have a minimum vanillin content of 0.18 vanillin;
 - (c) must have dark brown to black colour with shiny and waxy appearance;
 - (d) must have moisture content not higher than 25% (or as specified by the buyer to the exporter and to the Director of Agriculture and Forestry);
 - (e) must be clean, free of moulds, mites, other insects, and any foreign smell.
 - (ii) Export of this grade must be approved by the Director of Agriculture and Forestry (at the application of the Exporter).
- 5.
- (1) Registration of vanilla growers shall be carried out by MAF in all Island Groups of Tonga.
 - (2) A registered grower will be given a registration number.
 - (3) A list of registered growers with their registration numbers will be made available to vanilla buyers prior to the declaration of opening of harvest and inspection dates.
 - (4) Only registered growers may have their vanilla inspected and sold for export.
6. Harvesting of ripe vanilla beans shall be carried out as follows:
- (1) MAF will determine and declare open the start of the harvest season, subsequent harvesting dates, inspection dates and designated inspection sites.
 - (2) No vanilla bean is to be harvested, inspected and sold at other times unless specified by MAF.
 - (3) Ripe vanilla beans must be picked one by one and not by clusters.
7. Vanilla inspection shall be carried out as follows —
- (1)
 - (a) Inspection of all green vanilla beans shall be by MAF authorised green vanilla inspectors, who must hold MAF identification cards.
 - (b) All harvested vanilla beans must be brought to designated inspection sites where the vanilla is grown.

- (2) Duties of MAF green vanilla inspectors will be:
 - (a) to check ownership of the vanilla beans against the registration list,
 - (b) to grade vanilla beans to the appropriate grades,
 - (c) the issuing of receipts to the registered vanilla owner with the following information —
 - (i) grower's name, registration number and village;
 - (ii) date of inspection;
 - (iii) weight of Grade 1 vanilla beans;
 - (iv) weight of Grade 2 vanilla beans;
 - (v) weight of rejected vanilla beans;
 - (vi) MAF official stamp and signature of the inspector.
 - (3) In cases of disagreement on grading between MAF green vanilla inspectors, vanilla growers or vanilla buyers, the Officer-in-charge of MAF in each Island Group shall assess the situation and make the final decision.
8. Buying of green vanilla beans shall be a follows:
- (a) Vanilla buyers must buy green vanilla only from registered growers who hold MAF inspection receipts.
 - (b) Buyers must restrict their buying to declared harvest and inspection dates.
9. The curing of vanilla beans shall be carried out as follows:
- (a) By curers certified by MAF.
 - (b) The curing method shall be the Malagasy system of using hot water for scalding of vanilla beans (with the exception of the “special grade cut beans” for which a hot air drying system is used).
10. MAF will inspect and certify vanilla curing sheds annually.
11. A certified curing shed must:
- (a) be a wooden or concrete building designed for vanilla curing;
 - (b) not be used for living quarters or kitchen;
 - (c) be clean and have wooden or concrete floor;
 - (d) have good light and ventilation;
 - (e) be located away from the main roads, dusty roads, poorly drained areas, smoke and pollution; '
 - (f) have adequate water supply.

12. A certified curing shed must have the following equipment:
 - (a) a good fire-place with a drum and basket for scalding of green vanilla (or hot air drying system “for special grade-cut beans);
 - (b) a good functional thermometer;
 - (c) accurate watch or clock;
 - (d) outside platforms for sun drying of vanilla;
 - (e) drying racks or trays for shade drying in the curing shed;
 - (f) black blankets or cloth material for wrapping and drying of vanilla;
 - (g) inspection tables and chairs;
 - (h) insulated sweating boxes;
 - (i) maturing boxes.

13. All cured vanilla must be inspected by MAF Quarantine Officers for quarantine and quality purposes prior to packing for export.

14. All vanilla containers cleared for export must show clearly on the outside:
 - (i) name of exporter;
 - (ii) type of vanilla;
 - (iii) place of origin;
 - (iv) grade of vanilla;
 - (v) nett weight; and
 - (vi) “pass quarantine” label

ENDNOTES

¹ GS 1 of 1993