

SETTING QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS - AN ILLUSTRATED EXAMPLE

DELIVERING CUSTOMER VALUE IN FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



This document provides an illustrated example of a well-focussed quality specification. We have highlighted some of the best practice demonstrated and some things that could be made even better.

Project code: SCC007-202
Publication date: July 2018

About WRAP

WRAP is not-for-profit, working with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world in which we use resources sustainably. Our experts generate the evidence-based solutions we need to protect the environment, build stronger economies and support more sustainable societies. Our impact spans the entire life-cycle of the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the products we buy, from production to consumption and beyond.

Document reference:

WRAP, 2018, A guide to setting quality specifications – an illustrated example

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Best practice demonstrated

The following is an example of a good, focussed specification of a manageable length. It also includes clear photos to increase certainty. Below we've highlighted some of the best practice demonstrated, and some things that could be made even better.

Product Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heads must be fresh, intact and clean.• Butt should be neatly trimmed slightly below the lowest point of leaf growth, allowing the leaves to remain firmly attached.• Heart should be conical in shape.• Heart should be compact and light to mid green in colour, slight purpling to leaf is permissible.• Farm assurance – Red Tractor, GlobalG.A.P certified
Sizing/Weights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum weight - xxxg + xxg moisture loss and tare• Maximum weight xkg
Defects - Nil Tolerance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major live pest infestation.• Foreign bodies.• Uncharacteristic taints and odours.

Good practice is for the specification to be adapted to reflect feedback from customers on what they value, as well as feedback from your supplier on parameters that cause the most difficulties. This applies to all aspects, but particularly min/max sizes and weights.

<p>Defects - Major: Tolerance xx% by count of head</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical / knife damage • Split heads • Rots mould and disease • Frost damage (black, water soaked areas) • Pest infestation • Dark brown / black butts • Visible bolting / seeding of the core • Split or torn bags unfit for purpose
<p>Defects - Minor: Tolerance xx% by count of head</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underweight / Overweight • Brown butts providing the discoloured area is dry and free from rot. • Detached outer leaves • Torn outer leaves >xxmm in length. • Wind damage or dehydration of the outer leaf edge > xxmm. • Yellowing into the leaf >xxmm • Light pepper spotting on outer leaves >xx% of surface area. • Alternaria or powdery mildew • Split or torn bags (still fit for purpose) • Internal core exceeding xx% of cabbage (measured from base to tip of core to top of cabbage when halved) • Internal core >xx% of total cabbage weight • Black spotting >xx spots measuring <xxmm • Black spotting to outer leaf exceeding xxmm • Evidence of pest damage

Splitting out major defects from minor is a useful way of highlighting to suppliers what is important to you, and an easily understood way of including graduated tolerances.

Make sure you provide clear information so that suppliers can distinguish between thresholds. For example, here distinguishing 'dark brown / black' from 'brown' could be made clear using photos.

It's important to instruct QA teams to provide proportionate responses. For example, warnings should be issued for exceeding minor defect limits by a small amount, rather than rejecting the load.

Tenderheart defects



Alternaria



Yellowing into the leaf >xxmm



Light pepper spotting on outer leaves >xx% of surface area

Suppliers consistently feedback that they appreciate good use of images like this. They increase certainty and are easy to understand.

Delivering customer value in fresh fruit and vegetables

Packaging Defects - Major: Tolerance xx% by count of head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegible print or barcode
Packaging Defects - Minor: Tolerance xx% by count of head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor print and barcode, but still legible
Shelf Life	<p>Minimum life into depot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Before +xx days <p>Assessment protocol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of one pack per production run to be held in conditions that replicate the supply chain from despatch to xx days beyond the Best Before date; unless otherwise agreed with the technical manager <p>Records to be available to on request</p>
Delivery conditions	<p>Delivery conditions Delivered via approved transport on refrigerated trailer only.</p> <p>Temperature on receipt at depot +/- xx°C Minimum +xx°C Maximum +xx°C</p>

Temporary specifications are one of the most appreciated responses to deal with seasonal conditions affecting quality. To support your suppliers, you should establish clear processes with them and with your own teams for requesting and issuing temporary specifications. The process could be included in the specification, or separately.

<p>Tenderheart</p> <p>Packed tray</p>	<p><u>Packaging / labelling</u></p> <p>Pack Format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabbage to be placed into the tray carefully to avoid damage.• xx heads packed per tray <p>Labelling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good clear print quality, fully scanning barcode.• Pack Label should include:-<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Best Before Date○ Country/Countries of Origin <p>Case Layout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standard tray• Supplied with appropriate blue tray end label.• Use green labels when on ambient feature end in stores.• Tray end should include:-<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Supplier Name○ Product Name○ Grower○ Supplier Post Code○ Country of Origin○ Best Before Date○ Barcode <p>Qty / Weight tray</p>
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Where there is flexibility in your requirements to enable pragmatic changes, you should also refer to a process for agreeing changes. For example, if your supplier has more cabbage heads towards the upper end of your size requirements, quickly agreeing to change the number of heads per tray will help efficient packing.

WRAP's vision is a world in which resources are used sustainably.

Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through re-inventing how we design, produce and sell products; re-thinking how we use and consume products; and re-defining what is possible through re-use and recycling.

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