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# Regulations relating to the quality, grading, packing and marking of tomatoes intended for sale in the Republic of South Africa



agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## 1. Background

The tomato species *Lycopersicon esculentum* (formerly *Solanum lycopersicon*) belongs to the Solanaceae family). This is an herbaceous, usually sprawling plant of the nightshade family that is typically cultivated for its edible fruit. It presents itself in different shapes, sizes and colours with different brix or sugar levels. Tomatoes have very high lycopene content, which has several health benefits. They are grown all over the country in summer and in winter in frost-free areas, and their production is concentrated in Limpopo, the Mpumalanga Lowveld and Middleveld, the Pongola area of KwaZulu-Natal, the southern parts of the Eastern Cape, and the Western Cape. The quality, grading, packing and marking of fresh tomatoes intended for sale in South Africa is regulated under Regulation No. R.750 of 3 October 2014. This regulation is administered by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries under Agricultural Product Standards Act No. 119 of 1990. According to the said regulation, tomatoes intended for sale in RSA should comply with the standards prescribed below.

## 2. Quality standards

Types of tomatoes

- Round tomatoes
- Ribbed tomatoes
- Oblong tomatoes
- Speciality types of tomatoes

## 3. Classes for tomatoes

- Tomatoes shall be sold as either classified tomatoes or unclassified tomatoes
- There are four classes of classified tomatoes namely Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 and lowest class

## 4. Standards for classes

- Classified and unclassified tomatoes shall, contain no chemical residues that exceed the prescribed maximum residue limit permissible in terms of the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act No. 54 of 1972)

## 5. Requirements for containers

Containers in which tomatoes are packed shall-

- Be intact and clean, suitable and strong enough for the packing and normal handling of tomatoes
- Not impart a taste or odour to the tomatoes

- Be free from any foreign matter other than the tomatoes packed therein and the packing material in which tomatoes are customarily packed

In case of containers that are re-used, the container should-

- Be of such material that the container can be cleaned and disinfected prior to re-use
- Be thoroughly clean before tomatoes are packed therein
- Be free from all marks and labels removed or be covered by new labels

Note: A carrier container shall be strong enough not to bulge out or dent in during normal handling and transport

## 6. Packing requirements

Each container of tomatoes shall-

- Be packed with tomatoes to the full capacity thereof and
- In case of classified tomatoes, contain tomatoes of the same class and size group and as far as practical possible of the same colour.

## 7. Stacking of containers on pallets

If containers contain tomatoes that are palletised—

- The pallet shall be clean, undamaged and suitable and not transmit to tomatoes any harmful substance or any substance that may be injurious to human health
- The pallet for imported consignments of tomatoes shall comply with the requirements of the international Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM 15)
- The pallets shall be free from Arthropoda infestation and any visible signs of fungal growth
- The containers shall be stacked firmly and square with each other and the pallet
- Only containers of the same dimensions shall be stacked in the same layer on the pallet
- The containers shall not be stacked upside-down on the pallet

## 8. Marking requirements

Containers containing tomatoes destined for sale shall be marked in clear and legible block letters and numerals in a manner described by regulations that are used

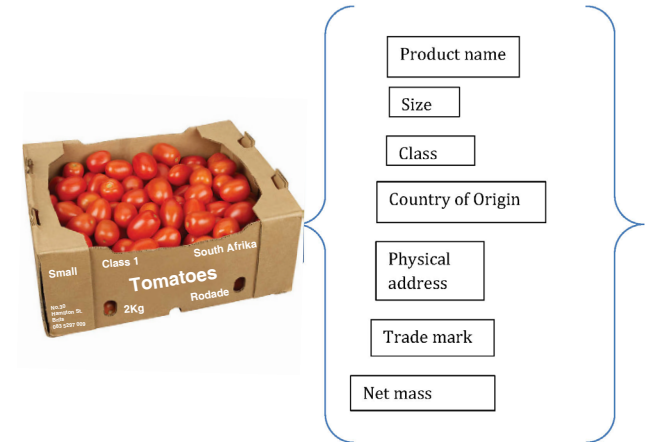


Figure 1: Example of tomato container properly marked (a better container with all the info will be designed by communication)

Detailed information about the regulation is available on our website under the link below:

<http://www.daff.gov.za/daffweb3/Branches/Agricultural-Production-Health-Food-Safety/Food-Safety-Quality-Assurance/Local-and-Import-Regulations/Vegetables-Local>

