



## Technical Specifications for DATES

Version: 1  
Replacing: Ration Specification V2  
Date of issue: 25 June 2021

*The key adjustments are:  
This is a stand-alone specification for dates, the content is  
identical to the date specification in Ration specification V2.*

### 1. Introduction

This specification applies to **DATES** (hereafter called the product) distributed by WFP.

### 2. Standards and references

Except when specified otherwise in the contract, the product shall comply with latest versions of recognized international standards and best practices and/or guidelines such as:

- CODEX STANDARD FOR DATES (CXS143-1985)
- CODEX GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE INCLUDING ANNEX "HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT (HACCP) SYSTEM AND GUIDELINES FOR ITS APPLICATION" (CXC 1-1969)
- CODEX CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR LOW AND ACIDIFIED LOW ACID CANNED FOODS (CXC 23-1979)
- CODEX GENERAL STANDARD FOR CONTAMINANTS AND TOXINS IN FOOD AND FEED (CXS 193- 1995)
- CODEX GENERAL STANDARD FOR FOOD ADDITIVES (CXS 192-1995)
- CODEX GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKED FOODS (CXS 1-1985)

Additionally, the supplier shall comply with relevant local regulations/standards of the food originating and recipient countries.

### 3. RAW MATERIALS

Product shall be manufactured from ingredients that are fresh, of good quality, free from foreign materials and substances hazardous to health, that comply with Codex Alimentarius and relevant food laws and standards of the originating and recipient countries. The quality of raw materials should be adequate so that the final product will meet all requirements specified in this document. Specific requirements for the raw materials are:

### 4. PROCESSING

#### 4.1 Food safety and risk assessment at manufacturing premises

For compliance with Codex standards, the processor shall be able to demonstrate by principle and practice the adoption, implementation and recording of:

- Good Manufacturing Practice
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point program
- Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) scheme

In this context an appointed WFP staff/ WFP appointed Inspector / Quality Surveyor is entitled to visit the factory without prior notice during any period when WFP product is being manufactured to check that production is done as per WFP contract specification. The Inspector / Quality Surveyor may request to see:

- **Records** (i.e. names of people in charge of the process and quality control, temperatures of the process, mixing times / net contents, cleaning schedules, CCP monitoring, traceability etc.).
- **Procedures** (e.g. cleaning, personnel hygiene, risk assessment and HACCP, environmental monitoring programme, sampling & analysis, product release and control of non-conformance etc.).
- **Instructions** (e.g. process instructions, cleaning instructions, zoning instructions etc.).
- The **quality manual** for the process or factory.
- Conditions in the factory (process rooms, warehouses, laboratories, cloakrooms, factory grounds, utility rooms, etc.)

## **5. Product Specifications**

### **5.1 General requirements**

The product shall comply with requirements stated in Table 4 of this document.

### **5.2 Contaminants**

The product shall be free from contaminants in amounts which may represent a hazard to health. The product shall comply with those maximum contaminant limits established by the Codex Alimentarius for this commodity. This includes compliance with Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CXS 193-1995) and Codex Maximum Residue Limits for pesticide residues. Additionally, the product shall meet the requirements stated in Table 4.

### **5.3 Hygiene**

It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969), and other Codes of Practice recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission which are relevant to these products. To the extent possible in good manufacturing practice, the products shall be free from objectionable matter. When tested by appropriate methods of sampling and examination, the product:

- shall be free from micro-organisms in amounts which may represent a hazard to health;
- shall be free from parasites which may represent a hazard to health; and
- shall not contain any substance originating from micro-organisms in amounts which may represent a hazard to health.

### **5.4 Shelf life**

As per contract.

### **5.5 Fit for human consumption guarantee**

Suppliers shall have to check the quality of their products and guarantee that the product is 'fit for human consumption'.

## **6. Packaging**

### **6.1 Primary packaging**

The products covered by the provisions of this specification must be packed in appropriate packaging which safeguard the hygienic, nutritional, technological, and organoleptic qualities of the product, and fit

for storage and multiple handling. Primary packaging must be food grade and comply with general requirements stated in the contract.

Unless otherwise stated in the contract, the package is 2 units of 900g.

## 6.2 Secondary packaging

Unless otherwise stated in the contract, the following applies:

All weak, torn, dirty, used or unserviceable cartons to be rejected outright and shall be replaced at supplier's cost.

Two percent of spare printed carton as per marking requirements must be shipped along with the cargo and included in the price.

*Table 2 Secondary packaging requirements*

Net weight	Packaging requirements
Max. 20kg	New, strong cardboard cartons, manufactured from well-constructed double walled corrugated board (5 ply) with a grammage of minimum 900 grams per square meter. - Edge crush resistance of carton shall be minimum 12 kN/m. - Carton seams should be glued, stapled. Cartons shall be fully filled and stacked well for maximum strength. Slip sheets or plywood should be placed inside each container to provide the required stacking strength. Pallets with appropriate stacking configuration could also be used.

## 7. Marking

As per contract. Labels of package and carton must be approved by WFP.

The labelling of the product shall comply with Codex General Standard For The Labelling Of Prepacked Foods (CXS 1-1985).

## 8. Stuffing of Containers and other transport vehicles<sup>1</sup>

If pallets<sup>2</sup> are used for transportation: it is highly recommended to have 3 first bottom layers placed as column stacking, the rest can be interlocked (cross-stacking) for load stability. Pallet shall be wrapped in a suitable manner (locked to the pallet, enough containment force) and the cartons should be banded when necessary. The cartons shall be secured to pallets in order to prevent any damage to the contents or packaging during transport. Pallet used should be strong enough to support the charge during transportation. Pallets shall be stackable (minimum double stock) without damage to the cartons during shipment. The pallets are recommended to be heat treated as per ISPM 15 standards (methyl bromide fumigation is not allowed).

If no pallets are used for transportation: dunnage (of strong sheets such as carton, plywood...) should be placed inside each container/vehicle at every three layers of cartons to provide the required stacking strength. In addition, protecting material like air bag, carton, polystyrene, can be used. Also, kraft paper shall be adhered to all internal sides, door, and floor of container. Kraft paper also need to be placed on the top of packaging.

For transportation, unless fully shrink-wrapped pallets are used, and unless otherwise specified in the contract, it is highly recommended to place desiccant at appropriate location in order to absorb moisture.

Supplier needs to use high quality desiccant and calculate the quantity of desiccant based on:

- Efficiency of desiccant
- Length of time in transit in container

<sup>1</sup>For more details, please refer to container loading procedure:

[https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual\\_guide\\_proced/wfp254688.pdf](https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp254688.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Slip sheet can be used instead of pallets upon agreement with WFP.

- Container capacity

Supplier needs to provide in the offer the type of desiccant and quantity to be used for the consignment.

The following table provides a guideline on the quantity to be used:

Table 3: Guideline on the quantity to be used for calcium chloride-based desiccants:

Estimated days in container	20 ft container	40 ft container
15-59 days	9.00 kg	17.50 kg
60-89 days	11.25 kg	22.50 kg
90-120 days	13.50 kg	25.00 kg

Better alternative material can be used upon agreement with WFP.

Empty containers/vehicles shall be clean, pest free and free of damage, odours and previous cargo remains. Ventilation holes shall remain clear and unsealed.

## 9. Storing

The product shall be stored under dry, ventilated and hygienic conditions and away from direct sunlight.

## 10. Analytical Requirements

As per contractual agreement, WFP can appoint an inspection company to check that the food matches requirements of this specification. Analytical tests in table 4 are usually utilized, and additional tests might be performed. Suppliers shall follow its own food safety and quality management plan. WFP reserves the rights to change the testing plan at any time.

Table 4: List of compulsory tests and reference method for DATES

No	Tests	Requirements		Reference method (or equivalent; Latest version)
		Unpitted dates	Pitted dates	
1	Size	Min. 4.75g/date	Min. 4.0g/date	
2	Pit		Max. 4 pits/100 dates	
3	Moisture	Max. 30.0%, m/m		ISO 24557
4	Mineral impurities	Max. 1.0 g/kg		
5	Blemishes	Max. 7.0% by count		
6	Damaged dates	Max. 6.0% by count		
7	Unripe Dates	Max. 6.0% by count		
8	Unpollinated Dates	Max. 6.0% by count		
9	Dirt	Max. 6.0% by count		
10	Insects and mites	Max. 6.0% by count		
11	Scouring	Max. 1.0% by count		
12	Mould	Max. 1.0% by count		
13	Decay	Max. 1.0% by count		
14	Live insect	Nil		
15	Organoleptic quality	Characteristic colour and flavour for the variety and type, be of proper stage of ripeness		
16	Varieties	As per contractual agreement		