



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service**

**Fruit and  
Vegetable  
Division**

**Fresh  
Products  
Branch**

# **United States Standards for Grades of Fresh Asparagus**

**Effective April 1, 1966**  
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# United States Standards for Grades of Fresh Asparagus<sup>1</sup>

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## Grades

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## Grades

### §51.3720 U.S. No. 1.

"U.S. No. 1" consists of stalks of asparagus which are fresh, well trimmed, and fairly straight; which are free from decay and free from damage caused by spreading or broken tips, dirt, disease, insects, or other means.

(a) **Size.** Unless otherwise specified, the diameter of each stalk is not less than one-half inch.

(b) **Color.** Unless otherwise specified, not less than two-thirds of the stalk length is of a green color.

(c) **Tolerances.** In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances, by count, are provided as specified:

(1) **For defects.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of this grade other than for trimming, including therein not more than 5 percent for defects causing

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<sup>1</sup>Compliance with the provisions of these standards shall not excuse failure to comply with the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, or with applicable State laws and regulations.

serious damage: **Provided**, That not more than one-fifth of this latter amount, or 1 percent, shall be allowed for stalks affected by decay. In addition, not more than 10 percent of the stalks in any lot may fail to meet the trimming requirement.

(2) **For off-size.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the specified diameter or length requirements.

#### **§51.3721 U.S. No. 2.**

"U.S. No. 2" consists of stalks of asparagus which are fresh, fairly well trimmed, and not badly misshapen; which are free from decay and free from serious damage caused by spreading or broken tips, dirt, disease, insects or other means.

(a) **Size.** Unless otherwise specified, the diameter of each stalk is not less than five-sixteenths inch.

(b) **Color.** Unless otherwise specified, not less than one-half of the stalk length is of a green color.

(c) **Tolerances.** In order to allow for variations incident to proper grading and handling, the following tolerances, by count, are provided as specified:

(1) **For defects.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the requirements of this grade other than for trimming, including therein not more than one-tenth of this tolerance, or 1 percent, shall be allowed for stalks affected by decay. In addition, not more than 10 percent of the stalks in any lot may fail to meet the trimming requirement.

(2) **For off-size.** 10 percent for stalks in any lot which fail to meet the specified diameter or length requirements.

#### **Unclassified**

##### **§51.3722 Unclassified.**

"Unclassified" consists of stalks of asparagus which have not been classified in accordance with any of the foregoing grades. The term "unclassified" is not a grade within the meaning of these standards but is provided as a designation to show that no grade has been applied to the lot.

#### **Application of Tolerances**

##### **§51.3723 Application of tolerances.**

The contents of individual packages in the lot are subject to the following limitations:

(a) Packages which contain more than 50 stalks shall have not more than 1-1/2 times a specified tolerance of 10 percent or more, or not more than double a specified tolerance of less than 10 percent: **Provided**, That the averages for the entire lot are within the tolerances specified for the grade.

(b) Packages which contain 50 stalks or less shall have not more than 4 times the tolerance specified, except that at least 2 defective and 2 off-size stalks may be permitted in any package: **Provided**, That not more than 1 stalk which is affected by decay may be permitted in any package: **And provided further**, That the averages for the entire lot are within the tolerances specified for the grade.

#### **Diameter Classification**

##### **§51.3724 Diameter classification.**

The following terms are provided for describing the diameters of any lot:

Very Small.....	Less than 5/16 inch.
Small.....	5/16 inch to less than 8/16 inch.
Medium.....	8/16 inch to less than 11/16 inch.
Large.....	11/16 inch to less than 14/16 inch.
Very Large.....	14/16 inch and up.

**Amount of Green Color**

**§51.3725 Amount of green color.**

When the asparagus in a lot has less or more green color than is specified in the grade it may be described as 1/4 stalk length green, 3/4 stalk length green, etc., in accordance with the facts.

**Stalk Length**

**§51.3726 Stalk length.**

There is no minimum stalk length specified in the grades but the minimum stalk length may be stated in terms of whole inches or whole and half inches in connection with the grade designation as "U.S. No. 1, 8-1/2-inch minimum", "U.S. No. 1 Large, 7-inch minimum", "U.S. No. 1 Large, 10-1/2-inch minimum", etc., in accordance with the facts.

**Definitions**

**§51.3727 Fresh.**

"Fresh" means that the stalk is not limp or flabby.

**§51.3728 Well trimmed.**

"Well trimmed" means that at least two-thirds of the butt of the stalk is smoothly trimmed in a plane approximately parallel to the bottom of the container and that the butt is not stringy or frayed.

**§51.3729 Damage.**

"Damage" means any defect, or any combination of defects, which materially detracts from the appearance, or the edible or marketing quality of the stalk.

**§51.3730 Diameter.**

"Diameter" means the greatest thickness of the stalk measured at a point approximately 1 inch from the butt.

**§51.3731 Fairly well trimmed.**

"Fairly well trimmed" means that at least one-third of the butt of the stalk is smoothly trimmed in a plane approximately parallel to the bottom of the container and that the butt is not badly stringy or frayed.

**§51.3732 Badly misshapen**

"Badly misshapen" means that the stalk is so badly flattened, crooked or otherwise so badly deformed that its appearance is seriously affected.

**§51.3733 Serious damage.**

"Serious damage" means any defect, or any combination of defects, which seriously detracts from the appearance, or the edible or marketing quality of the stalk.

**Metric Conversion Table**  
**§51.3734 Metric conversion table.**

Inches	Millimeters (mm)
1/8 equals .....	3.2
1/4 equals .....	6.4
5/16 equals .....	7.9
3/8 equals .....	9.5
1/2 equals .....	12.7
5/8 equals .....	15.9
11/16 equals .....	17.5
3/4 equals .....	19.1
7/8 equals .....	22.2
1 equals .....	25.4
1-1/4 equals .....	31.8
1-1/2 equals .....	38.1
1-3/4 equals .....	44.5
2 equals .....	50.8
3 equals .....	76.2
4 equals .....	101.6
5 equals .....	127.0
6 equals .....	152.4
7 equals .....	177.8
8 equals .....	203.3
9 equals .....	228.7
10 equals .....	254.1