

Allowable Units of Retail Sale for Fruits and Vegetables

Amy D. Ladd
Center for Profitable Agriculture

Producers retailing fruits and vegetables are expected to comply with regulations and guidelines regarding allowable methods of retail sale. These regulations and guidelines are enforced by the Weights and Measures Section (WM) which is located within the Regulatory Services Division of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

WM adopted these regulations and guidelines as part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Handbook 130 (H130). The standards found in this document were established and adopted to promote uniformity of commerce across not only the State of Tennessee, but the entire United States. Recognizing the importance and direct economic impact of fruits and vegetables, a specific section in H130 was designated to include guidelines for retail methods of sale of these commodities.

As shown in the H130, the current guidelines for allowable methods of retail sale of fruits and vegetables commonly found for sale have been outlined in the following tables. Table 1, lists examples of specific commodities and Table 2, refers to general commodity groups. The fruit or vegetable item may be sold by any method of sale marked with an X.

Table 1: Allowable Units of Retail Sale for Fruits and Vegetables – Specific Commodity

Commodity	Weight	Count	Head or Bunch	Dry Measure (any size)	Dry Measure (1 dry qt or larger)
Artichokes	X	X			
Asparagus	X		X		
Avocados		X			
Bananas	X	X			
Beans (green, yellow, etc.)	X				X
Brussels Sprouts (loose)	X				
Brussels Sprouts (on stalk)			X		
Cherries	X			X	X
Coconuts	X	X			
Corn on the Cob		X			X
Dates	X				
Eggplant	X	X			
Figs	X				
Grapes	X				
Melons (cut in pieces)	X				
Mushrooms (small)	X			X	X
Mushrooms (portobello, large)	X	X			

Okra	X		
Peas	X		X
Peppers (bell and other varieties)	X	X	X
Pineapples	X	X	
Rhubarb	X		X
Tomatoes (except cherry / grape)	X	X	X

Table 2: Allowable Units of Retail Sale for Fruits and Vegetables – General Commodity Groups

Commodity	Weight	Count	Head or Bunch	Dry Measure (any size)	Dry Measure (1 dry qt or larger)
Berries and Cherry / Grape Tomatoes	X			X	
Citrus Fruits (oranges, grapefruits, lemons, etc.)	X	X			X
Edible Bulbs (onions [spring or green], garlic, leeks, etc.)	X	X	X		X
Edible Tubers (Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, ginger, horseradish, etc.)	X				X
Flower Vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, etc.)	X		X		
Gourd Vegetables (cucumbers, squash, melons, etc.)	X	X			X
Leaf Vegetables (lettuce, cabbage, celery, etc.)	X		X		
Leaf Vegetables (parsley, herbs, loose greens)	X		X	X	
Pitted Fruits (peaches, plums, prunes, etc.)	X	X			X
Pome Fruits (apples, pears, mangoes, etc.)	X	X			X
Root Vegetables (turnips, carrots, radishes, etc.)	X		X		

Producers are expected to sell fruits and vegetables by the applicable standard(s) noted above. For example, eggplant can be sold by weight or by count. Okra may only be sold by weight. It is recommended that non-comparable methods of sale, for the same produce item, in the same outlet should be minimized. The weight a product is sold by must be calculated according to the net weight of the commodity and cannot include the weight of a carton, container or wrapper, etc. Additionally, commodities must be weighed on a state inspected and permitted scale. To learn more, refer to CPA Info#166 Produce Scales Permit available online at <http://cpa.utk.edu/pdffiles/cpa166.pdf>.

For questions regarding these guidelines, contact Weights and Measures Section at (615) 837-5109.