



United States Department of Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Specialty
Crops
Program

Specialty
Crops
Inspection
Division

United States Standards for Grades of Canned Pimientos

Effective January 20, 2017

This issue of the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Pimientos (81 FR 93572) supersedes the previous issue which has been in effect since October 23, 1967.

Voluntary U.S. grade standards are issued under the authority of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, which provides for the development of official U.S. grades to designate different levels of quality. These grade standards are available for use by producers, suppliers, buyers, and consumers. As in the case of other standards for grades of fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops these standards are designed to facilitate orderly marketing by providing a convenient basis for buying and selling, for establishing quality control programs, and for determining loan values.

The U.S. grade standards and inspection instructions for all fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops are available on the internet and upon request at the address below. These documents provide detailed interpretations of the grade standards and provide step-by-step procedures for grading the product.

Grade standards are issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) after careful consideration of all data and views submitted during rulemaking. The Department welcomes suggestions for improving the standards in future revisions. Comments may be submitted to, and copies of standards and inspection instructions obtained from:

Director, Specialty Crops Inspection Division
Specialty Crops Program,
USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0240
Washington, D.C. 20250

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Note: 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.

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United States Standards for Grades of Canned Pimientos

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Identity, Types of Packs, Styles, and Grades

§52.2681 Identity.

- (a) **Canned pimientos** means the canned product properly prepared from clean, sound, succulent pods of the pimiento plant (*Capsicum annuum*) as such product is defined in the Standards of Identity for Canned Pimientos (21 CFR 155.200) issued pursuant to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.
- (b) For the purposes of these grade standards, Pimientos are a group of sweet peppers of the pimiento-type or Spanish pepper. This group includes Pimiento, Perfection, Truhart, and similar varieties. Pimiento fruit pods are smooth, typically conical or heart-shaped, pointed at the blossom end, thick walled, red to reddish-yellow color, and possess a mild and sweet distinct pimiento flavor.
- (c) The finished product is prepared from peeled pods and may contain acidifying and firming agents and any other ingredient permissible under the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

§52.2682 Types of pack.

- (a) Regular pack (see Table I).
- (b) Heavy pack (see Table I).

§52.2683 Styles of canned pimientos.

- (a) **Whole or whole pimientos** mean pimientos that retain the approximate conformation of a whole pod pimiento.
- (b) **Halves or halved** means pimientos cut longitudinally into two approximately equal parts.
- (c) **Pieces** mean pimientos cut or broken into units with at least one square inch area each and may include less than 50 percent, by weight, of whole pods.
- (d) **Whole and pieces** mean pimientos consisting of a combination of whole and pieces of pimientos and containing not less than 50 percent, by weight, of whole pimientos.
- (e) **Slices or sliced** means pimientos sliced into strips.
- (f) **Diced** means pimientos cut into approximate cube-shaped units or cut into approximately square pieces.
- (g) **Chopped** means pimientos cut or broken into units of less than one square inch area each.

§52.2684 Grades of canned pimientos.

- (a) **U.S. Grade A** is the quality of canned pimientos that possess similar varietal characteristics; possess a normal flavor; and for the applicable type and style:
- (1) Possess a good color;
 - (2) Are practically uniform or fairly uniform in size and shape for the applicable styles;
 - (3) Are practically free from defects;
 - (4) Possess a good character; and
 - (5) Score not less than 90 points as outlined in this subpart.
- (b) **U.S. Grade C** is the quality of canned pimientos that possess similar varietal characteristics; possess a normal flavor; and for the applicable type and style:
- (1) Possess a fairly good color;
 - (2) Are fairly uniform in size and shape for the applicable styles;
 - (3) Are fairly free from defects;
 - (4) Possess a fairly good character; and
 - (5) Score not less than 80 points as outlined in this subpart.
- (c) **Substandard** is the quality of canned pimientos that fail to meet the requirements of U.S. Grade C.

Fill of Container and Drained Weights

§52.2685 Recommended Fill of Container.

The recommended fill of container is not incorporated in the grades of the finished product since fill of container, as such, is not a factor of quality for the purpose of these grades. It is recommended that each container of canned pimientos be filled with pimientos as full as practicable without impairment of quality.

§52.2686 Recommended drained weight.

The drained weight recommendations in Table I are not incorporated in the grades of the finished product since drained weight, as such, is not a factor of quality for the purpose of these grades. The drained weight of pimientos is determined by emptying the contents of the container upon a U.S. Standard No. 8 circular sieve of proper

diameter containing 8 meshes to the inch [0.0937-inch (2.38 mm), \pm 3%, square openings] so as to distribute the product evenly, inclining the sieve slightly to facilitate drainage, and allow draining for 2 minutes. A sieve 8 inches in diameter is used for No. 2-1/2 size cans (401 x 411) and smaller sizes, and a sieve 12 inches in diameter is used for containers larger than the No. 2-1/2 size can.

§52.2687 Compliance with Recommended Drained Weights.

Compliance with the recommended drained weights in Table I is determined by averaging the drained weights from all the containers in the sample which represents a specific lot; and such lot is considered as meeting the recommendations if the following criteria are met:

- (a) The sample average meets the recommended minimum drained weight; and
- (b) The containers which do not meet the recommended minimum drained weight are within the range of variability of good commercial practice and there is no unreasonable shortage of pimientos in any container.

Table I – Recommended Minimum Drained Weights of Pimientos

Metal or glass container designation	Metal (container dimension) inches and sixteenths	Capacity	Styles of Pimientos				
		Avdp. ozs. of water at 68° F (Weight)	Whole; halves	Whole and pieces	Pieces	Diced; chopped	Sliced
Regular pack:			Ounces	Ounces	Ounces	Ounces	Ounces
2 Z Jar		2.28	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
4 Z Pimiento	211 x 200	4.90	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
4 Z Jar		4.88	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
7 Z Pimiento	300 x 206	7.50	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2
7 Z Jar		8.10	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3
No. 300	300 x 407	15.20	10.0	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.0
No. 303	303 x 406	16.85	11.0	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.0
No. 303 Jar		17.65	11.2	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.2
No. 2	307 x 409	20.50	13.2	13.5	14.0	14.0	13.2
No. 2-1/2	401 x 411	29.75	20.2	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.2
No. 2-1/2 Jar		29.38	20.0	20.2	20.2	20.2	20.0
No. 10	603 x 700	109.45	70.7	72.2	74.0	74.0	71.7
Containers of different capacities than above:			Not less than 66 percent of water capacity (avoirdupois weight at 68° F.) of the container.				
Heavy pack:			Little free liquid and drained weight is not less than 90 percent of the water capacity (avoirdupois weight at 68° F.) of the container.				

Factors of Quality

§52.2688 Ascertaining the grade of a sample unit.

- (a) **General.** The grade of a sample unit is ascertained by considering certain factors which are not scored; the ratings for the factors of color, uniformity of size and shape, defects, and character which are scored; the total score; and the limiting rules which may apply.
- (b) **Factors not rated by score points.**
 - (1) Varietal characteristics.
 - (2) Flavor: Normal flavor means that the canned pimientos have a good, characteristic, mild but distinct pimiento flavor and are free from

objectionable or bitter flavors and objectionable odors of any kind.

- (c) Factors rated by score points. The relative importance of each factor which is scored is expressed numerically on the scale of 100. The maximum number of points that may be given each factor is:

Factors:	Points
Color	30
Uniformity of size and shape	20
Defects	40
Character	10
Total Score	100

§52.2689 Ascertaining the rating for the factors which are scored.

The essential variations within each factor which is scored are so described that the value may be ascertained for each factor and expresses numerically. The numerical range within each factor is inclusive (for example, 27 to 30 points means 27, 28, 29, or 30 points).

§52.2690 Color.

- (a) **Evaluation of color.** The evaluation of color of canned pimientos shall be determined immediately after opening the container. The color is based upon the brightness and the uniformity of the exterior red to reddish-yellow color of the units. Green or dull oxidized reddish-brown units are scored under this factor when the overall color is affected.
- (b) **Color standards.** The color of the units is classified by using the USDA plastic color standards for canned pimientos as follows:
- (1) **Pimiento Red** means a red color equal to or redder than the USDA Pimiento Red color standard.
 - (2) **Pimiento Reddish-Yellow** means a reddish-yellow color equal to or redder than USDA Pimiento Reddish-Yellow but less red than USDA Pimiento Red color standard.
 - (3) Information regarding these color standards may be obtained from:

Specialty Crops Inspection Division
 Specialty Crops Program,
 USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 0240
 Washington, D.C. 20250

- (c) **“A” classification.** Canned pimientos that possess a good color may be given a score of 27 to 30 points.

Good color means that the overall color of the product is bright, practically uniform, and typical of canned pimientos; and that the color on the exterior surfaces complies with the requirements for the applicable style as outlined in Table II.

- (d) **“C” classification.** If the canned pimientos possess a fairly good color, a score of 24 to 26 points may be given. Canned pimientos that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade C, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

Fairly good color means that the overall color of the product may be variable and slightly dull but none of the units may be green or of a greenish cast or off color; and the color on the exterior surface complies with the applicable style as outlined in Table II.

- (e) **“SStd” classification.** Canned pimientos that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section or that are definitely off color may be given a score of 0 to 23 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

**Table II – Color Classification of Canned Pimientos
 “A” Classification**

Style(s)	USDA Pimiento Red (9/10 or more of surface area on each unit)	USDA Pimiento Red (3/4 or more of surface area on each unit)	USDA Pimiento Reddish-Yellow
Whole, halves, whole and pieces	Minimum 90 percent, by count, of units ¹		Remainder of surface areas may be no less red
Pieces	Minimum 90 percent, by weight, of units		
Sliced, diced, chopped		Minimum 90 percent, by weight, of units	

¹ Except permit one unit to fail in any container with less than ten units, provided the average of all sample units from the lot meets the percentage, by count, tolerance.

“C” Classification

Style(s)	USDA Pimiento Reddish-Yellow (9/10 or more of surface area on each unit).	USDA Pimiento Reddish-Yellow (3/4 or more of surface area on each unit).	USDA Pimiento Reddish-Yellow
Whole, halves, whole and pieces	Minimum 90 percent, by count, of units ¹		Remainder of surface areas may be less red
Pieces	Minimum 90 percent, by weight, of units		
Sliced, diced, chopped		Minimum 90 percent, by weight, of units	

¹Except permit 1 unit to fail in any container with less than 10 units, provided the average of all sample units from the lot meets the percent, by count, tolerance.

§52.2691 Uniformity of size and shape.

(a) Ascertaining dimensions.

- (1) **Width of whole and halved pimientos.** The width is the widest surface measured at right angles to the longitudinal axis of the flattened pimiento pod.
- (2) **Length of whole and halved pimientos.** The length is the longest surface measured from the stem end to blossom end of the flattened pimiento pod.
- (3) **Square area measurement of a piece.** The square area of a piece is calculated by multiplying the average width times the average length of the flattened single wall piece.
- (4) **Length and width of sliced pimientos.** The length of a slice is the longest measurement. The width of a slice is the widest flat surface measured at right angles to the length.
- (5) **Size of diced pimientos.** The size of a dice is measured along the edge which is most representative of the cube's size.

(b) Definitions of shapes, sizes, and trim.

- (1) **Other shapes and sizes** means noticeably large or small units that vary

in shape and size from normal units of the style; and in diced style means units smaller than one-half the volume of an average size cube.

(2) **Very small pieces in slices style** means units shorter than one-half inch length.

(3) **Well trimmed in whole style** means that the pod is neatly trimmed at the stem end and when trimmed at the blossom end the normal size and shape of the pod is substantially preserved.

(4) **Fairly well trimmed** means that the unit is trimmed but not mutilated to such an extent as to seriously affect the appearance of the pod.

(c) **“A” classification.** Canned pimientos that are practically uniform in size and shape may be given a score of 18 to 20 points.

Practically uniform in size and shape means that most of the pods are well trimmed and that:

(1) The pimientos comply with measurement, shape, and uniformity requirements for “A” classification in Table III; and

(2) Any such variation does not materially detract from the overall appearance of the product.

(d) **“C” classification.** If the canned pimientos are fairly uniform in size and shape, a score of 16 or 17 points may be given.

Fairly uniform in size and shape means that most of the pods are at least fairly well trimmed and that:

(1) The pimientos comply with the measurement, shape and uniformity requirement for “C” classification in Table III; and

(2) Any such variation does not seriously detract from the overall appearance of the product.

(e) **“SStd” classification.** Canned pimientos that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section may be given a score of 0 to 15 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

Table III – Uniformity of Size and Shape for Canned Pimientos

Styles	“A” Classification	
	Measurement and/or shape of individual unit	Uniformity of all units in container (unless indicated otherwise).
Whole, halved	Minimum 1-1/2 inches in any dimension (does not apply to a piece when added to assure well filled container).	Largest unit does not exceed smallest unit by more than 3/4 inch in any dimension ¹ . Maximum 25 percent, by count, of whole pods may be split the full length of pod.
Whole and pieces	Minimum 1-1/2 inches in any dimension of whole. Minimum 1 square inch per piece.	Largest whole does not exceed smallest whole by more than 3/4 inch in any dimension ¹ . Maximum 5 percent, by weight, of pieces less than 1 square inch each.
Pieces	Minimum 1 square inch	Maximum 5 percent, by weight, of pieces less than 1 square inch each.
Sliced	Minimum 1-1/4 inches length	Maximum 35 percent, by weight, of pieces less than 1-1/4 inches in length, provided very small pieces do not materially affect the appearance.
Diced	Maximum 1/2 inch. Approximate cube or square pieces.	Maximum 15 percent, by weight, of other shapes and sizes of units.
Chopped	Less than 1 square inch	Maximum 5 percent, by weight, of units larger than 1 square inch each.

¹ In containers with 10 or more units, requirements apply only to the 90 percent, by count, of most uniform units. In containers with less than 10 units, disregard least uniform unit, and apply to remainder of units.

Table III – Uniformity of Size and Shape for Canned Pimientos (Continued)

Styles	“C” Classification	
	Measurement and/or shape of individual unit	Uniformity of all units in container (unless indicated otherwise).
Whole, halved	Minimum 1-1/4 inches in any dimension (does not apply to a piece when added to assure well filled container).	Largest unit does not exceed smallest unit by more than 1 inch in any dimension ¹ .
Whole and pieces	Minimum 1-1/4 inches in any dimension of whole.	Largest whole does not exceed smallest whole by more than 1 inch in any dimension ¹ . Maximum 10 percent, by weight, of pieces less than 1 square inch each.
Pieces	Minimum 1 square inch	Maximum 10 percent, by weight, of pieces less than 1 square inch each.
Sliced	Minimum 1-1/4 inches length	Maximum 35 percent, by weight, of pieces less than 1/4 inches in length, provided very small pieces do not exceed 25 percent, by weight, of units.
Diced	Maximum 1/2 inch. Approximate cube or square pieces.	Maximum 25 percent, by weight, of other shapes and sizes of units.
Chopped	Less than 1 square inch	Maximum 10 percent, by weight, of units larger than 1 square inch each.

¹ In containers with 10 or more units, requirements apply only to the 90 percent, by count, of most uniform units. In containers with less than 10 units, disregard least uniform unit, and apply to remainder of units.

§52.2692 Defects.

- (a) **General.** Defects refer to the degree of freedom from grit, sand, silt, seeds, core and stem material, peel (except insignificant pieces of charred peel at the stem end and the blossom end), units blemished internally or externally by brown or black discoloration, pathological injury or insect injury; and any other defects not specifically defined which affect the appearance or edibility of the units or the product.
- (b) **“A” classification.** Canned pimientos that are practically free from defects may be given a score of 36 to 40 points.

Practically free from defects means that any combination of defects present, including the maximum limits for peel and seeds for “A” classification in Table IV, may no more than slightly detract from the appearance or edibility of the product.

- (c) **“C” classification.** Canned pimientos that are fairly free from defects may be given a score of 32 to 35 points. Canned pimientos that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade C, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

Fairly free from defects means that any combination of defects present, including the maximum limits for peel and seeds for C classification in Table IV does not seriously detract from the appearance or edibility of the product.

- (d) **“SStd” classification.** Canned pimientos that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section may be given a score of 0 to 31 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

Table IV – Maximum Allowances for Peel and Seeds in Canned Pimientos

Defect	“A” classification	“C” classification
Peel	Average - 1/4 square inch per 5 ounces (avoir.) of total contents.	Average - 1/2 square inch per 5 ounces (avoir.) of total contents.
Seeds ¹ - Styles; Whole, halved, whole and pieces	Average - 6 seeds per pod (or equivalent size of a whole pod).	Average - 12 seeds per pod (or equivalent size of a whole pod).
Pieces, sliced, diced, chopped	Average - 5 seeds per ounce (avoir.) of total contents.	Average - 8 seeds per ounce (avoir.) of total contents.

¹ Undeveloped seeds are not counted in tolerances.

§52.2693 Character.

- (a) **General.** The factor of character refers to the tenderness, texture, and firmness of the unit and the condition and thickness of the flesh.

- (b) **“A” classification.** Canned pimientos that possess a good character may be given a score of 9 or 10 points.

Good character means the units are firm and full fleshed and tender without apparent disintegration, and possess a practically uniform texture.

- (c) **“C” classification.** If the canned pimientos possess a fairly good character a

score of 8 points may be given. Canned pimientos that fall into this classification shall not be graded above U.S. Grade C, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

Fairly good character means that the units may be somewhat lacking in firmness and fleshiness and may show some evidence of disintegration but are not soft or mushy nor tough.

- (d) **“SStd” classification.** Canned pimientos that fail to meet the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section may be given a score of 0 to 7 points and shall not be graded above Substandard, regardless of the total score for the product (this is a limiting rule).

Lot Compliance

§52.2694 Ascertaining the grade of a lot.

The grade of a lot of canned pimientos covered by these standards is determined by the procedures set forth in the Regulations Governing Inspection and Certification of Processed Fruits and Vegetables, Processed Products Thereof, and Certain Other Processed Food Products (§52.1 through §52.83).

Score Sheet

§52.2695 Score sheet for canned pimientos.

Number, size, and kind of container			
Container marks or identification			
Label			
Net weight (ounces)			
Vacuum (inches)			
Drained weight (ounces)			
Type of pack: () regular, () heavy pack			
Style (whole, halves, pieces, sliced, etc.)			
Size of whole pimientos (inches)			
Count of whole pimientos			
	Factors	Grade	Score Points
Color	30	“A”	27-30
		“C”	24-26 ¹
		“SStd”	0-23 ¹
Uniformity of size and shape	20	“A”	18-20
		“C”	16-17 ¹
		“SStd”	0-15 ¹
Defects	40	“A”	36-40
		“C”	32-35 ¹
		“SStd”	0-31 ¹
Character	10	“A”	9-10
		“C”	8 ¹
		“SStd”	0-7 ¹
Total Score		100	
Normal flavor and odor			
U.S. Grade			

¹Indicates limiting rule.