

HPK INTERVENTION REPORT

Prepared by:
Edvin Kotherja and Stuart Pettigrew

INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY STANDARDS FOR LOCAL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

KOSOVO

HPK
HORTICULTURAL PROMOTION
IN KOSOVO



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Cooperation Office Kosovo

Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Denmark



Background

Horticulture Promotion in Kosovo (HPK) has been active in the horticulture sector in the period 2001-2012. The focus of the project until 2009 was mainly on the production level of fresh fruits and vegetables (f&v), scaling-up areas of production and improving in competitiveness helping the sector recover. However, since the priority was production, HPK did little to support marketing of the product and improvement in quality standards.

In 2009 the situation of the sector was very different from that in 2001, positive change had occurred and local production of fresh fruits and vegetables was at an improved position in the market. Greenhouse production was increasing and sometimes coupled with integrated production, promoted by HPK especially in tomato production.

However some of the emerging problems for local f&v production observed by HPK in 2009 were:

- Not enough attention was paid to the quality of fruits and vegetables in terms of uniformity of size, shape, colour, ripening stage, and shelf life.

- There was a lack of local storage facilities which grade, package, and label local products.
- The market of fresh fruits and vegetables was generally based on oral agreements, without any written contracts of supply in which quality demands can be stated.
- The only rare instances of exports were ad hoc due to lack of quality and classification of product.
- Neighbouring countries such as Macedonia and Albania were quickly developing in presentation and quality standards of fresh fruits and vegetables and had a climate advantage in production, which allowed them to export products even during the limited production season of Kosovo.

Still there were instances that during the production season traders (including supermarkets¹) often switched supply of different crops from neighbouring countries instead of local farmers, due to these problems with quality, classification and availability of products.

On the other hand HPK observed that in the local market, especially in bigger towns, consumers started to become more aware of the quality and presentation of the fruits and vegetables they consumed.

Vision

Back in 2009 HPK decided it was necessary to consider the introduction of quality standards in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector of Kosovo.

As a next step HPK then engaged the services of a consultant² with extensive experience in

implementation of quality standards for fresh fruits and vegetables. The consultant's mission was to make an evaluation of the situation with quality standards in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector and give his opinion on the way to go further with introduction of quality standards.

¹ In 2009 supermarkets were estimated to be marketing about 5-7% of the fruit and vegetable quantities sold overall, and according to HPK evaluations this share was going to increase in the following years.

² Mr. Stefan Daehnert produced a report: The Situation of Quality Standards and Future Development in the Horticultural Sector of Kosovo available on the HPK website at: <http://helvetas-ks.org/HPK/en/documentation.html>

The consultant came with a recommendation that HPK should work in a step-by-step introduction of the UNECE standards in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector of Kosovo. This recommendation was based on the existing fresh market situation, in which locally produced f&v were lagging behind imported products in terms of classification and presentation. The consultant also stated the importance of establishing collection centres for storage, grading, packaging, and labelling of regional products that is directly linked to the development of quality standards of fruit and vegetables and this in turn would help introduction of contracts where quality requirements would be stated.

WHAT ARE UNECE STANDARDS FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?

■ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) standards are internationally recognized quality and trading standards for fresh fruits and vegetables to make trading easier and can be used in the domestic, export and import markets to ensure that the produce has a certain quality level. They are to be voluntarily used by buyers, traders, national governments and other organizations. The standard for each crop includes a definition of product, minimum requirements, classification, sizing, tolerances, presentation and marking.

Intervention by HPK

Following the consultancy HPK started consultations on introduction of quality standards with main stakeholders such as traders, supermarkets and farmer representatives. Consultations were initially based on the lengthy written UNECE standards, which were translated to Albanian. All stakeholders initially had a positive reaction and agreed that standards should act as a “trading language” or a “rulebook” between producers and traders and must meet the interests of

both. This would also allow easier market access for the products.

The new approach brought forward by HPK in 2010 was termed ‘Quality Standards and Marketing’, and included improvement of the overall marketing channels with establishment of functional collection centres that could also play a role in classification, packaging and presentation. After consultations with stakeholders it was noticed that supermarkets could be the driving force for promotion of quality in local fruits and vegetables.

Considering the capacity of local producers to adopt new standards, and the generally low level of knowledge held by traders, the lengthy and complex text versions of UNECE standards were considered too far ahead of the market, and would not achieve the necessary impact. Thus HPK decided to produce simple illustrated materials with explanatory notes which would easily be understood and applied by the sector.



Consultation with stakeholders on introduction of quality standards for local production - round table organized by HPK in 2010

HPK Intervention Report

INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY STANDARDS FOR LOCAL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



Quality standard guides in brochure form for 8 crops produced by HPK and upgraded in 2012.

In 2010 quality guides for 3 main crops (tomato, Somborka pepper and apple) were completed in consultation with the sector and were distributed as brochures and posters to collection centres³, processors, associations⁴ and bigger farmers. The first quality guides included information about classification and packaging.

In 2011 HPK upgraded the 3 existing guides with information about sizing, tolerances and post-harvest handling and additionally two new quality guides (strawberry and cucumber) were produced in 2011. Again quality guides brochures and posters were distributed to the sector and field days were organized to demonstrate classification of products.

■ In 2011 HPK received a request from project Sustainable Agriculture Support in Albania (SASA), implemented by FIBL (Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture), to be able to use the quality guides produced by HPK for the horticulture sector in this country. FIBL confirmed the suitability and practicality of the approach on quality standards introduction used by HPK.

In 2012 HPK produced in total 9 quality guides (adding carrot, gherkin, onion and plum) and the approach was to promote the quality guides through workshops, demonstration field days with bigger farmers and especially with technical advisors who were in collaboration with HPK.



Service providers and farmers classifying apples based on the instructions provided by quality standard brochure

Results

HPK was the first development project in Kosovo to initiate an overall discussion with stakeholders about product trading standards in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. The first and main aim of HPK was to make an introduction of the product and trading standards to as many sector stakeholders as possible. Traders, supermarkets, farmers and advisors were exposed to the new knowledge about quality

standards. All of them have now the opportunity to use the available quality guides in their operations. There are different opinions as to who should do the classification of products: the farmer, the collection centre or the retailer.

During the three years that HPK concentrated efforts in introduction of quality standards, it facilitated

³ Promotion of quality standards for tomatoes and peppers started with the newly formed collection centres in Mamusha and Xerxe also supported by HPK

⁴ Promotion of quality standards was also done through the Kovraga apple association through different events such as the Apple day.

agreements between ETC supermarket and collection centres or groups of farmers which included terms about the quality standard of the products to be distributed. However the practical experience during the production season showed mixed results. On the one hand farmers delivered variable quality of product to the collection centre, and in turn the collection centre had problems complying with the request from ETC. On the other hand ETC's quality demands were not as strict at times when there was a lack of product in the market. A successful example of quality compliance between farmers and processors with gherkins was achieved in 2012 between farmers and

■ **Alban Ibrahim**, manager at MOEA, a fruit juice processing plant in Gjilan is satisfied with the quality guides that HPK has made available for the horticulture sector. He says that MOEA and the farmers collaborating with the company will use the guides as a reference to determine grading of apples.

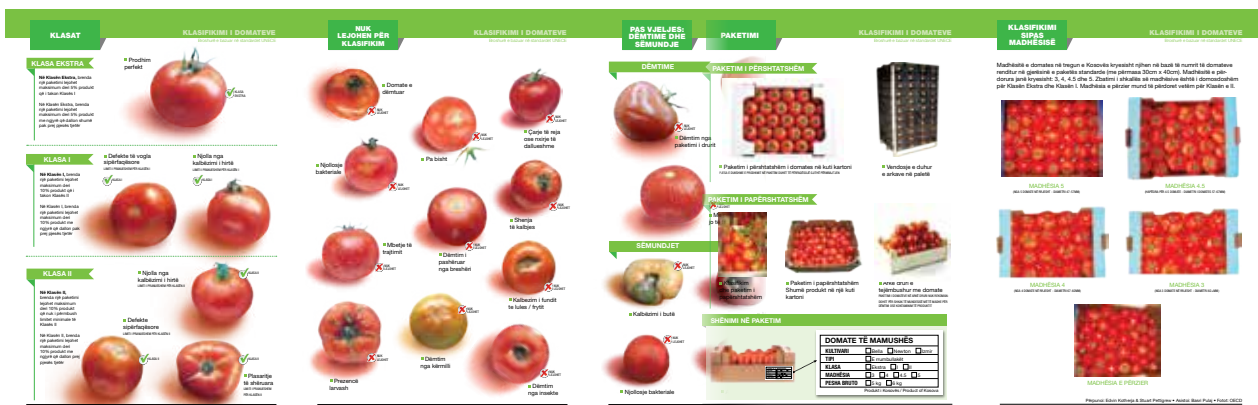
processors. In 2012 collection centres marketed a considerable quantity of gherkins and classified them in order to supply processors and got a different price for each class.

As HPK is coming to an end, the project made available for the sector a comprehensive resource on quality standards of fresh fruits and vegetables. The materials can be found and downloaded on the website of HPK and any organization or institution interested in continuation of the process can take it over in the future. The quality guides are available online at:

<http://helvetas-ks.org/HPK/en/index.html>



■ **Lirim Krasniqi**, trader and owner of a collection centre in Prizren is of the opinion that classification and packaging of products especially for export should be done only at the collection centre.



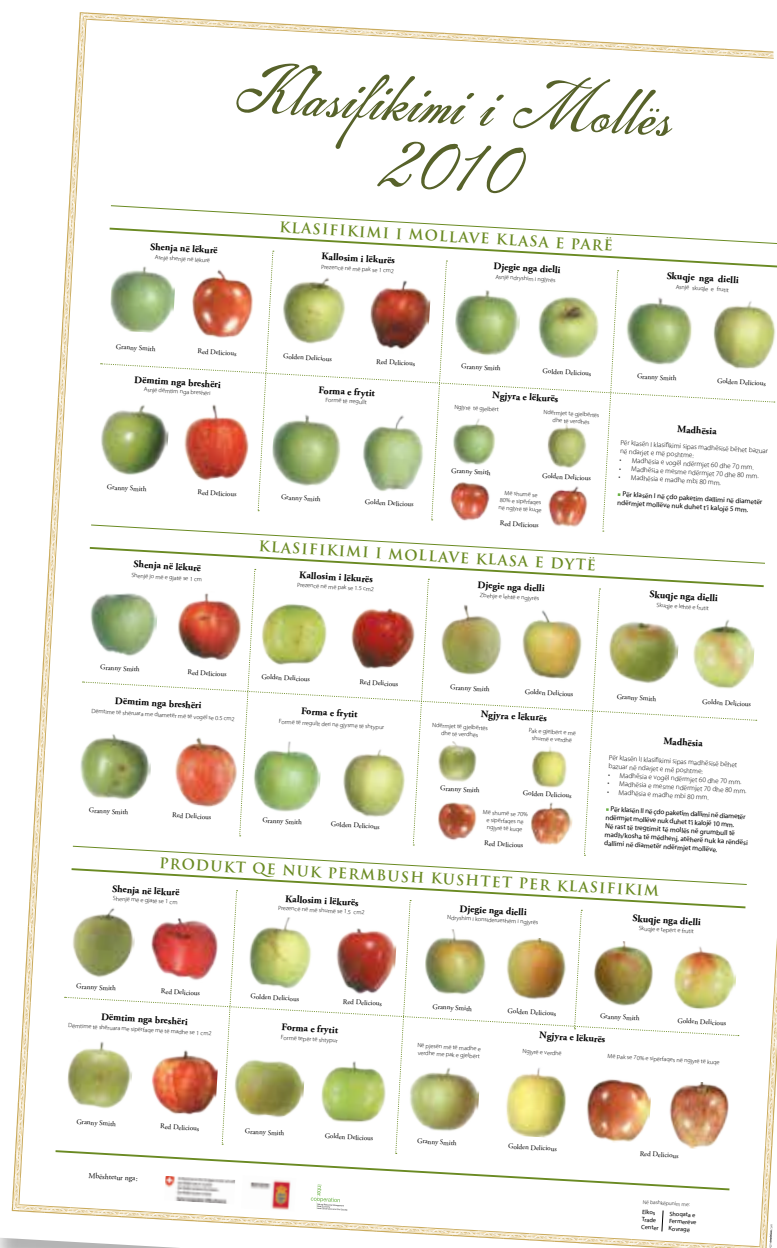
Inside view of the tomato classification brochure with sections on grading, post-harvest handling, packaging and sizing

Lessons learnt

HPK's partial success in introduction of quality standards in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector came with many lessons learnt. The process had to be market-driven thus it was difficult and challenging due to the following influencing factors:

- It is very important to *find the right time* for facilitation of important changes in an existing fresh f&v market. However, HPK also recognised that introduction of standards is a long process, but one that needed to be supported even if the various actors were not ready. The guides are now available, and as the sector continues to develop, they can be adapted to specific market needs
- Quality standards introduction is a complex process which requires the *involvement of the market side* of the sector (buyers, traders, retailers etc). The market side is the intermediary link in the chain between producers / aggregators and end consumers. Ideally the consumers should dictate their demand of quality standards to the buyers, who in turn would transmit the message to the producers.
- In the existing situation in Kosovo the *market side is not fully ready* to promote trading standards. Traders / supermarkets *do not yet send the right price signals* to encourage grading or better packaging, while *costs of classification and improved packaging add up* for the farmers or collection centres. The element of motivation and *incentive is not present* for the farmers to change their existing practices.
- Traders and supermarkets have the *opportunity to quickly shift* between local production and import of fresh f&v thus they are less inclined to promote quality of local production

- Generally the *market is very much price-oriented* during the local production season.



HPK Intervention report

INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY STANDARDS FOR LOCAL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Udhëzues për Klasifikimin e Domates 2010

(BAZUAR NË STANDARDET UNECE)

KLASA EKSTRA



Produkt perfekt

Domatet e klasifikimit në Klasën Ekstra duhet të jenë më cilësi të shkëlqyeshme. Ata duhet të kenë të njëjtë formë dhe formë, paqasje dhe shprehje shprehje të mirë. Nuk duhet përfshirë domatet me deformime. Lëvizjet vjetër dhe defekte shprehje të vogla sipërfaqësore të diskutueshme gjatë kultivimit, njëfish dhe digjimit.

KLASA I



Defekte të vogla në formë - limiti për Klasën I

Njiolla nga kalibrimi i hirë - limiti për Klasën I

Defekte të vogla sipërfaqësore - limiti për Klasën I

Domatet e klasifikimit në Klasën I duhet të jenë të njëjta të një cilësi të mirë. Ata duhet të kenë të njëjtë formë dhe formë, paqasje dhe shprehje shprehje të mirë. Nuk duhet përfshirë domatet me deformime. Lëvizjet vjetër dhe defekte shprehje të vogla sipërfaqësore të diskutueshme gjatë kultivimit, njëfish dhe digjimit.

KLASA II



Defekte në formë - limiti për Klasën II

Lëndime lëvizjet për Klasën II

Defekte sipërfaqësore - limiti për Klasën II

Catje të shtritura - limiti për Klasën II

Njiolla nga kalibrimi i hirë - limiti për Klasën II

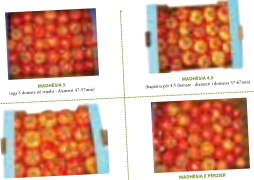
Domatet e klasifikimit në Klasën II duhet të përbëjnë kalitetet minimale të klasifikimit, të kenë cilësi të nevojshme dhe të jenë të përbërshme për konsum. Ata nuk duhet të kenë çfarësi të palidhura.

PRODUKT QË NUK PËRMBUSH KUSHTET PËR KLASIFIKIM



KLASIFIKIMI SIPAS MADHËSISË

Madhësitë e domates në rangun e Kategorive kryesive njihen në bazë të numrit të domatesve venditur në gjendje të pakësuar standarde (në përmasa 30cm x 30cm). Madhësitë e përbërësve janë kategoritë 3, 4, 4.5 dhe 5. Zbatimi i kësajfish të madhësive është i domosdoshur për Klasën Ekstra dhe Klasën I. Madhësia e përbërësve mund të përdoret vetëm për Klasën II.



Ky poster u mbështet nga:



SHËNIMI NË PAKETIM

Paketuesit ose Grumbulluesit Eriti dhe adresa Paketuesit ose grumbulluesit tëbërë ose formë përgjegjëse për pakëtimin e produktit.

Klasa Shënimi i klasës në pakëtimin e bërë i obligueshëm.

Madhësia Duhet shënuar madhësia e produktit në domatet (nëse është e mundur) ose si përzierje e gjatësi të matësve të matësve në rastet e tilla.



Shembulli i shënimit në një etiketë

HPK/Agroprom/010
Eriti/Donat/010/10
Shkup/010/10
Agroprom/010/10

Udhëzues për Klasifikimin e Specave 2010

(BAZUAR NË STANDARDET UNECE)

KLASA EKSTRA



Anije defekte

KLASA I



Defekte të vogla në formë

Dëmtimi sipërfaqësor nga parazitë

Njiolla të vogla në lëkurë

Gërvëzime të lehta në sipërfaqe

KLASA II



Defekte në formë

Njiolla nga matësja e lëndimeve të lehta

Dëmtimi sipërfaqësor i lehtë nga parazitë

Njiolla në lëkurë

Gërvëzime të shtritura deri në 2.5 cm

Dëmtimi i bërë dhe huatë në bërë

PRODUKT QË NUK PËRMBUSH KUSHTET PËR KLASIFIKIM



PAKETIMI I SPECAVE



Udhëzimet e përbërësve të agrorit për specat - përbërësve për **KLASËN EKSTRA**
Dallimet në dimensionet e specave në një pakëtim nuk duhet të jenë më të mëdha se 20 mm për një përzierje të specave në pakëtim për **KLASËN EKSTRA**.

Përbërësve të përbërësve për **KLASËN I**
Dallimet në dimensionet e specave në një pakëtim nuk duhet të jenë më të mëdha se 20 mm për një përzierje të specave në pakëtim për **KLASËN I**.

Përbërësve të përbërësve për **KLASËN II**
Klasifikimi sipas madhësisë nuk është i domosdoshur për **KLASËN II**.

SHËNIMI NË PAKETIM

Paketuesit ose Shpërndarësit Eriti dhe adresa Paketuesit ose shpërndarësit tëbërë ose formë përgjegjëse për pakëtimin e produktit.
Klasa Shënimi i klasës në pakëtimin e bërë i obligueshëm.
Madhësia Duhet shënuar madhësia e produktit në domatet (nëse është e mundur) ose si përzierje e gjatësi të matësve të matësve në rastet e tilla.



Ky poster u mbështet nga:



HPK/Agroprom/010
Eriti/Donat/010/10
Shkup/010/10
Agroprom/010/10

INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY STANDARDS FOR LOCAL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



Implemented by:



HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

KOSOVO

HPK
HORTICULTURAL PROMOTION
IN KOSOVO

Founded by:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Cooperation Office Kosovo

Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Denmark



Nazim Gafurri str. 33, Po Box no.2, 10000 Pristina-Kosovo
Tel: +381(0) 38 51 77 15 • Tel: +381(0) 38 51 66 44 • Fax: +381(0) 38 51 88 33
Email: kosovo.info@helvetas.org • www.helvetas-ks.org