



Tomatoes for Processing

In accordance to L.N. 467 of 2014 for the purpose of Regulation (EU) No.1305/2013 on support for Rural Development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARFD)



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1. Scope

The present product specification concerns the production of Tomato for Processing in adherence to the Quality Products National Scheme (PQNS), recognised by the Maltese Government with SL427.90 according to Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. The present product specification shall apply to tomato production, processing, commercial marketing and sale of tomatoes. Page | 3

The present product specification lays down additional requirements with respect to the directly applicable and binding rules regarded as pre-requisites.





2. Requirements

2.1. Production and harvest technique

2.1.1. Soil Choice

The cultivation of Tomatoes intended for Processing requires areas with a Mediterranean climate and soils with good fertility.

2.1.2. Variety Choice

When choosing a variety, the aspects of production and behaviour in relation to the type of pests should be considered.

Characteristics sought in varieties of Tomatoes intended for Processing are, productivity, uniformity of size, disease resistance, organoleptic characteristics, and suitability for industrial use.

Seeds should be of the standard or certified category and any seedlings should bear a plant passport.

2.2. Cultural practices: soil preparation, time and type of planting

The production system (tillage, time, density, and mode) should be one that allows the achievement of adequate yields that encourage the improvement of water and nutrient use efficiency, good weed management and the ability to protect the crop from adversity.

The preparation of the soil prior to the planting of the crop must be done in ways that take account of the texture and fertility of the soil, the climatic characteristics of the area and the cultural needs of the tomato plant.

Techniques used for the preparation of soil should minimise the disturbance of the soil and allow a levelling of the surface and making soil uniform thus, burying weeds and limit the loss of moisture in the surface layers.





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“Products of Quality” National Scheme

The seedlings grown in nurseries from certified seeds in approved nurseries should be transplanted directly into the recesses and should be planted by hand between the end of March and beginning of May. The choice of the time for planting should take into account the duration of the planting period and the plan for the supply of tomatoes to the industry.

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Tomatoes intended for processing should be planted either in a twin row with a distance of 0.30 to 0.50 m between the rows, 1.50 - 1.80 m between double rows and 0.40 to 0.50 m in the row for density variable between 4.0 - 7.0 plants m⁻².

Or simple rows 1.00 x 1.30 x 0.30 m to 0.40 m and a density of 2.5 - 3.0 plants m².

2.2.1. Fertilisation

The application of the nutrients must maintain and improve soil fertility whilst compensating for the uptake of the crop. This should be calculated by taking into account the information provided by soil analysis.

The Nitrogen required for the production of tomatoes intended for processing will be 120-170 kg ha⁻¹ of N and is to be distributed in part to the transplant, partly covered by irrigation and preferably not more than 30 days from collection.

Phosphorus and potassium fertilization will be required in the amounts of 130-220 kg ha⁻¹ of Diphosphorus Pentoxide (P₂O₅) and 200-300 kg ha⁻¹ of Potassium Oxide (K₂O).

Particular attention should be given to the phosphatic fertilizer due to the high absorption rate by the plant. In order to avoid excessive vegetative vigour and poor flowering, 50% of phosphatic fertilizer should be applied before ploughing and the remaining 50 % during the entire crop cycle.





The supply of potash fertilizers is to be expected only in the case of soil’s deficiency in available K_2O , to be distributed between pre-transplant until veraison).

2.2.2. Weed Control

Weed control should be implemented by using of products with a low impact on human health and the environment, selected from those with greater efficiency and low persistence and residual nature.

Plastic mulching should be used when cultivating tomatoes intended for processing to limit the incidence of weeds amongst tomato plants.

Weed control, as well as use the implementation with the application of good agricultural practices (crop rotation , stale seedbed , etc ..) can be made in the first period of the cycle with mechanical weeding or chemical interventions in accordance with the Standards Eco-Sustainable Defence and phytosanitary control of pests of agricultural crops.

2.2.3. Plant Protection

The crop protection must be implemented by using the least possible plant protection products, taking into account the persistence of the residual nature of the active ingredients and choosing effective crop protection products with a low impact on the environment.

There are numerous cryptogams that attack tomato although among these, the most frequent are:

- Fusarium head blight,
- Verticillium wilt





2.2.4. Irrigation

The irrigation management in the cultivation of tomatoes provides for an increase in the availability of water rising up to the stage of the enlargement of the tomato berries. Moderate irrigation application in the early stages of crop growth to flowering stimulates a more efficient use of the available water in the soil. By contrast, limiting the water availability to the crop will have negative effects on the production and quality of the tomato berry.

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Localized irrigation systems are to be favoured since these allow high frequency and low amounts of water that will result in the avoidance of excess water and reduces the risk of root rot and asphyxiation . In the case of mulched crops, the drip line shall be placed under the plastic film.

It is advisable to suspend watering at least 4days before harvesting.





2.3. Harvest and Post-Harvest (Packaging and storage)

The methods of collection and provision storage centres / process must ensure the maintenance of the best of quality and wholesomeness.

Tomatoes intended for processing are to be harvested by using harvesting machines able to produce a product selection based on the colour of the berries, discarding the unripe (green berries). The use of mechanical harvesting requires a single pass when about 85% of the berries have reached the right degree of ripeness.

The collection is strongly influenced by the type of planting density and, the time and mode; It can be scaled or with a single intervention , mechanical or manual. During the collection a pre-selection is to be made, with the elimination of the green, cracked or deteriorated tomatoes. It is recommended to collect tomatoes in the cooler hours of the day. Tomatoes should reach the processing plant and undergo processing within 24hrs from processing.





3. Traceability

The Quality Products National Scheme provides for the adoption of a mandatory traceability system which links raw materials with the end product.

Raw materials must derive from the farms adhering to the value chain agreement and to the control system. Page | 9

The farm must adopt a traceability system in order to guarantee the information traceability -as well as its compliance with the present specification.

The traceability system shall allow for keeping track of at least the following set of information:

- The farms delivering the tomatoes;
- The production capacity;
- The amount of raw materials delivered and processed;
- The amount of end product identified by the PQNS.





4. Auto Control

The producer adhering to the PQNS is responsible for the compliance with the present product specification and for the implementation of the contents of the control plan approved by the Maltese Government.

The producer adhering to the PQNS must prepare an auto-control plan and carry out periodically inspections and analytical controls.





5. Controls

The product compliance with the present specification is verified by independent control bodies approved according to the current European legislation.

Controls are conducted on the basis of the control plans established by the Control Bodies and approved by the Maltese Government.





6. Product Labelling

The product compliant with the present specification shall bear the logo identified under the PQNS regulations and shall include the authorisation code issued by the Government of Malta on the label/packaging in addition to any other required information set forth by the current regulations.

