



Department of **Agriculture and Food**



Information Kit

Citrus Fruits Grading Code

AUGUST 2009

Table of Contents

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| How this kit can help | 1 |
| Where to find more information | 1 |
| Citrus fruits grading code commonly asked questions | 2 |
| The Code | 4 |
| Citrus fruits grading code 2008 | 4 |
| The Order | 4 |
| Citrus Fruits Order 2008 | 4 |
| Citrus Fruits Grading Code 2008 | 5 |
| Citrus fruits maturity parameters 2009 | 5 |

INFORMATION KIT - CITRUS FRUITS GRADING CODE

Introduction

This Information Kit has been developed by the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) and Fruit West¹ to assist growers, packers, marketers and retailers to implement the requirements of the *Citrus Fruits Grading Code 2008* (the Code).

The code was gazetted on the 23rd of January 2009 and is designed to improve the eating quality of fruit offered for sale on the fresh food market in Western Australia.

How this kit can help

This Information Kit contains materials related to the code and maturity testing of fruit. It includes copies of the:

- Citrus fruits grading code commonly asked questions
- *Citrus Fruits Grading Code 2008*
- *Citrus Fruits Grading Order 2008*
- *Citrus Fruits Maturity Parameters 2009*
- Measuring the internal maturity of citrus farm-note
- Western Australian Fruit Growers Citrus Fruits Grading and Packing Code 2009

Where to find more information

Citrus Fruits Maturity Parameters will be revised annually and sent to all growers, pack-houses, marketers and retailers at the beginning of each season. The parameters will also be posted on the DAFWA website www.agric.wa.gov.au and Agricultural Produce Commission website www.apcwa.org.au.

You can contact the Citrus Industry Development Officer by email at nathan.hancock@agric.wa.gov.au or call (08) 9368 3780.

Other Citrus related information can be found at www.agric.wa.gov.au and www.australiancitrusgrowers.com.au

¹ Fruit West is a Producer Committee of the Agricultural Produce Commission, and is the peak body for Pome, Citrus and Stone fruit growers in Western Australia

Citrus fruits grading code commonly asked questions

Following is a collection of commonly asked questions which may help in understanding the application of the code. If your question is not answered here please contact the Citrus Industry Development Officer by calling (08) 9368 3780.

- **When does the new Code come into force?**

Whilst the code and the order have been gazetted the code cannot operate until the minimum maturity standards have been approved by the Director General. The parameters of the minimum maturity standards have been set after broad industry consultation. The code will apply this season, and will be used for education and communication purposes.

- **Who will enforce the Code?**

The code will be enforced by inspectors appointed under the Agricultural Products Act and contracted by the Agricultural Produce Committee - Fruit West.

- **What do growers have to do to ensure they meet the grade?**

The grower can test their fruit on farm before picking. Assistance will be provided to pack-houses who pack for more than one grower. The Citrus Industry Development Officer will assist growers with testing. The grower should then provide the test results with the consignment. There are also commercial labs which can provide internal maturity tests.

- **What happens if a buyer (merchant or retailer) buys citrus that does not meet the grade?**

The onus is on the grower not to sell fruit that is under grade. Undergrade fruit cannot be sold, and must be destroyed or in the case of large quantities may be sent to a juicing facility.

- **What are the penalties for growers, agents, merchants and retailers if they sell fruit that does not meet the code?**

The penalties under the Act are fines of \$1,000 for anyone who sells undergrade citrus. The intention of the code is to ensure that only market-grade citrus fruit is sold with the major penalty being that fruit will be removed from sale, juiced or dumped. On the spot fines of \$100 will apply.

- **What do consumers do if they buy citrus that does not taste good?**

Consumers are able to contact Fruit West and the matter will be investigated depending upon the nature of the complaint.

- **What happens to fruit that does not meet the grade? Does this mean that there will be lots of citrus that is destroyed?**

Fruit that is not to grade may be destroyed or sent for juicing. A project funded by Fruit West has been sampling fruit in retail outlets for several years, and in general only a very small numbers of consignments have been found to be below these standards. When contacted about fruit that has been of poor quality, local growers and interstate pack houses have responded positively to feedback from the project.

- **Does the fruit that is currently on the retail shelf meet the standards of the new code?**

Yes, to the best of our knowledge fruit currently on retail shelves meets these standards.

- **Then why the need for the code? How will consumers benefit from the code?**

Consumers will benefit through the increased attention to quality control required to meet the code. It is the intention of the code to increase consumer confidence in the purchase of fresh citrus in WA. By ensuring the internal quality of the fruit meets these minimum standards the industry is providing reassurance that citrus will taste good every time it is purchased.

- **How will industry get more information on this?**

Industry will shortly receive a package of information outlining the code and how it is intended to work.

- **Does imported citrus have to adhere to the code? How can you be sure that international growers are testing their fruit?**

To provide a guarantee of quality all year round and encourage repeat purchases of citrus it is important that the code applies to all citrus sold on the fresh fruit market. In the opinion of the WA Citrus Council fruit imported into the state can and should be tested. The WA Citrus Council are confident that pack houses that send fruit overseas and interstate are already testing fruit for these quality parameters and that providing evidence to marketers that these parameters are met will not be difficult nor should it incur a cost. Growers for such pack houses would have Quality Assurance programs in place that provide traceability.

The Code

The citrus fruits grading code was gazetted in January 2009. The wording of the code is as follows:

Citrus fruits grading code 2008

1. Citation

This Code may be cited as the *Citrus Fruits Grading Code 2008*.

2. Commencement

This Code comes into operation on the day of its publication in the Government Gazette.

3. Interpretation

In this Code:

'mature' means meeting the minimum standard of maturity approved by the Director General for the relevant variety, when tested in a manner approved by the Director General;

'Grower organisation' means Western Australian Fruit Growers Citrus Council

4. Grades

- (1) Citrus must be graded as:
 - (a) Market grade; or
 - (b) under-grade.
- (2) Citrus graded as market grade must be mature.
- (3) Citrus graded as under-grade must not be sold as fresh fruit.

5. Notification of minimum standard

Before the start of a season the Director General is to notify the grower organisation of the minimum standard of maturity approved by the Director General for each variety of citrus for that season.

The Order

So that the code is enforceable under the Agriculture Products act an order was written which prohibits the sale of undergrade fruit. The wording of the order is as follows:

Citrus Fruits Order 2008

Made by the Minister for Agriculture and Food under section 3D

1. Citation

This order may be cited as the Agricultural Products (Citrus Fruits) Order 2008.

2. Prohibition on sale of certain citrus fruits

The sale, except for the purpose of export from the State, of citrus fruits that are below market grade (under-grade) as specified under the Citrus Fruits Grading Code 2008 is prohibited.

Citrus Fruits Grading Code 2008

Citrus fruits maturity parameters 2009

During the 2009 season the following quality parameters must be met before fruit can be offered for sale on the fresh fruit market in Western Australia. The parameters will be reviewed each year and any changes will be posted on the Department of Agriculture and Food website as well as the Agricultural Produce Commissions website.

Table 1 Minimum total soluble solids (°Brix) to acid ratio

| Fruit type | Minimum °Brix: acid ratio |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mandarins | 8 to 1 |
| Oranges (navel only) | 8 to 1 |
| Oranges (other than navel) | 7 to 1 |
| Grapefruits and pomelos | 6.5 to 1 |
| Hybrids of any species | 8 to 1 |

Table 2 Minimum total soluble solids (sugar level)

| Fruit type | Minimum total soluble solids (°Brix at 20 °C) |
|-------------------------|--|
| Mandarins | 8 |
| Oranges | 8 |
| Grapefruits and pomelos | 8 |
| Hybrids of any species | 8 |

Table 3 Minimum juice content

| Fruit type | Minimum juice content (percentage) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Lemons | 25 % |
| Mandarins | 28 % |
| Oranges | 33 % |
| Grapefruits and pomelos | 33 % |
| Limes | 33 % |
| Hybrids of any species | 33 % |