



Explanation of Pulse Trading Standards 2009/10 Season

1. Background

The Pulse Standards Committee (Committee) has met during 2009 to consider submissions from industry in relation to pulse Standards for 2009/10.

This document lists:

- Agreed changes for adoption in 2009/10
- Proposed changes for adoption in 2010/11 & beyond
- Changes proposed by industry that were not accepted by the Committee

2. Adoption Timeline

The Standards with changes as listed below are for implementation by industry as at 1 August 2009.

3. Agreed Changes for Adoption in the 2009/10 Season

3.1 *Agreed Change:* For all Standards, further revise wording for ease of interpretation

In recent seasons the Committee has revised the format of the Standards tables for ease of interpretation. A number of issues arose during the 2008/09 season as a result of industry incorrectly interpreting and applying the Standards. The Committee was required to develop a number of Statements of Clarification and these were made available to industry on the Pulse Australia website.

Further refinement has occurred to the 2009/10 Standards however industry should note major changes to the format may also occur in future seasons. Industry should also note these format changes do not impact on the quality parameters and the respective tolerances stated in the Standards.

Several clarifications have occurred during this process, including:

- At receipt, there is a nil tolerance for mould. On outturn from one storage provider to another or to the domestic market, there is a tolerance of 1% mould. EXCEPT where the Storage and Handling Agreement stipulates some other tolerance may apply.
- A nil tolerance for mould applies for all Standards where an Objectionable Odour or sappy/soft/rotten grains are associated with the mould.
- Objectionable material refers to foreign matter that may or may not be otherwise stated in the Standards that has the ability to degrade the hygiene of the pulse. The material may become a food safety issue or may have a commercially unacceptable odour. A nil tolerance applies.
- Odour refers to a commercially Objectionable Odour and/or an odour not normally associated with the pulse in question. Odour may be present and be caused by various factors which may or may not be discernable in the sample being assessed. A nil tolerance applies.

3.2 *Agreed Change:* Remove Outturn Tolerances for Defective grains for all Standards

Outturn tolerances for Defective grains were previously introduced in some commodity Standards as a consequence of industry concerns with increased levels of Defective grains following handling after receipt of pulses. Specifically the level of splits and broken grain may increase following receipt during handling and outturn process.

Further feedback was received from industry during the consultation phase. It is apparent that despite these Outturn tolerances listed in specific commodity Standards, individual Receipt Agents make variations to the Standards to account for increased levels of defects such as split and broken grain following receipt. These variations are often written in their Storage and Handling Agreement.

Generally there was industry agreement that as Outturn tolerances for Defective grains are a commercial matter and are not relevant to the Receipt or Export Standards, it was agreed to remove all reference to Outturn tolerances for all commodities.

3.3 *Agreed Change:* include a nil tolerance for vetch in all red lentil exports to Saudi Arabia

Pulse Australia has been proactive in discussions with the Australian and Saudi Arabian government with a view to re-instating the red lentil trade. After extensive negotiations, approval for trade has been received based on this weed seed restriction. To reflect the requirements of the market, a nil tolerance has been applied to the presence of vetch in both whole and split red lentil exports.

Any presence of vetch in red lentils may see approval to trade cease. Industry is strongly encouraged to ensure the requirements of the Saudi Arabian government are met for all consignments.

3.4 *Agreed Change:* Develop Revised Reference Photographic Charts and definitions of various Defects

During the latter part of 2008, draft reference photographic charts of various defects in red lentils, faba beans and desi chickpeas were developed to replace the existing out of production charts. Drafts of these charts were provided to a range of industry participants and feedback received on the photographs of individual grains.

Concurrently descriptions and definitions of defects in Standards for all commodities were revised.

On the basis of feedback received, it was evident a range of industry views were held on the nature and extent of particular defects either on the seed coat or the kernel. It is recognised that as the identification of defects in a sample is subjective, full acceptance and agreement on definitions and photographs of all defects by all industry is not achievable. A further complication is the various markets for pulses and end-uses of pulses and their different perceptions of a defect.

The Committee has deemed the Definitions and Photographic Charts should be developed using the following principles:

- Where feasible, the definition be applied to all pulses
- While it is intended that definitions are to be fully prescriptive, in reality this is not feasible as all eventualities cannot be covered
- Definitions apply to the seed coat and/or the kernel as relevant
- In most cases it is not practical to describe the extent of the defect on the pulse i.e., shrivelled and wrinkled refers to a distinct ridge. Thus general terms have been used where feasible

- Quality changes over time during storage. Thus all Definitions and photographs should refer only to the initial quality of the pulse as assessed.
- Photographic Charts should only refer to photographs. Definitions should be included in the explanation section of the Standards only.

Photographic Charts will continue to be finalised and produced over ensuing seasons as required.

4. Proposed changes for adoption in 2010/11 & Beyond

4.1 *Proposed change for all pulses:* Review the tolerances for all weed seeds

For the past 12 months, the Grain Trade Australia Standards Committee has been conducting an extensive review of the various weed seed categories in all Standards. Pulse Australia has been involved in that process through various committee members. The proposal is to alter the categories, weed seed lists within each category and tolerances to better reflect domestic and export market and quarantine requirements, to provide greater consistency across all grain commodities where feasible and to make the assessment process less complicated. Concurrently the difficulties and practicalities of weed control on-farm and removal from harvested grain are being considered.

It is expected that recommendations for changes will be produced during the next 12 months. Following receipt of those proposals, the Committee will review the recommendations and provide them to the pulse industry for comment. Note that depending on the extent of the changes the timeframe for change may need to be altered to beyond 2010/11.

4.2 *Proposed change for all pulses:* Review the screen specifications

A research project has been proposed to review the current use of screens for all pulses during the classification process. Currently there is no adequate description of the specifications of reference screens for each commodity. In addition, different screen sizes are used by industry for a specific commodity.

As reference screens are required for a number of purposes including in dispute situations, the Committee over time will develop the required specifications. The research proposal will also review the current sieving method and recommend changes where required - a potential decrease in the number of shakes will be investigated.

As any change in the sieving process and screens to be used may have a significant impact on industry and require a lead-time for introduction, a fixed timeframe for introduction is not available at this point until the research project has been completed.

4.3 *Proposed change for desi chickpeas:* Review the definition and tolerance for chipped seed coat

During discussions with industry it has become apparent a different interpretation is being applied on the definition and tolerance to a chip in the seed coat for desi chickpeas. This is only where the kernel is not damaged. As any clarification of the definition will have a significant impact on existing Standards imposed by several sectors of industry, potentially leading to a large number of rejections, further advice from industry will be sought.

This advice will be in the form of an appropriate definition for a chipped seed coat and a review of the existing tolerances in all desi chickpea standards. The intent will be to apply the same definition as for other commodities if possible.

5. Rejected Changes

5.1 *Rejected change:* Alter the tolerance for total defects in the Export Standard for No.1 Machine Dressed Field Peas.

The Committee considered the request to alter the total Defective grains from 2% to 5% in the Container Export Standard for Machine Dressed No.1 grade Field Peas. The tolerance was previously set taking into consideration requirements of the marketplace, especially the sub-continent. The marketplace had previously rejected a loose tolerance up to 5% in containers. It was considered that grain failing the No.1 specifications in containers could be handled in a number of ways - it could be cleaned to meet the 2% tolerance or negotiations between the buyer and seller would occur to reach settlement on an agreed tolerance for the particular consignment. The Committee rejected the proposal on the basis of market requirements and the opportunities for individual exporters to negotiate terms when grain failed the existing tolerance.

5.2 *Rejected change:* Loose Seed Coat Assessment Procedure

The Committee acknowledged that the subjective nature of assessment of Loose Seed Coats was an issue for industry. However it is the responsibility of each company to develop their own procedure to determine this quality parameter. Handling of the grain post-receival has a large impact on the level of Loose Seed Coats upon outturn. In addition, each receival agent should assess the quality of the grain based on their own storage and marketing risks and train their sampling staff accordingly. It is impractical to develop an objective procedure at present for this test with existing technology, prior to development of new technology such as image analysis.

On the basis that the test remains very subjective, it was agreed that the development of an assessment procedure was not warranted and thus the request to develop a new objective method for assessment of Loose Seed Coats was rejected at this time.

5.3 *Rejected change:* Alter the Screen Size for Desi Chickpeas

The Committee agreed that the production of a screen to a 2 decimal place tolerance for use in the field was not necessarily practical. Screen specifications are being considered under the screen research proposal outlined above. Prior to the outcome of that review, it is not practical to alter the screen size from 3.97mm to 4.00mm for desi chickpeas as this would:

- Take considerable effort, resources and potential costs for industry to implement
- Potentially lead to another change in screens following the research proposal

The Committee rejected the proposal to alter the screen size from 3.97mm to 4.00mm for desi chickpeas at present and to await the outcome of the research project.

5.4 *Rejected change:* Sampling and associated testing and classification Procedures

The Committee noted a number of issues under this topic. The over-arching principle is that the Committee develops Standards for use by the trade. Each individual company is responsible for interpretation and application of Standards and are encouraged to produce their own operational procedures for this purpose.

5.4.1 The Committee rejected a proposal to state in the Standards that attempts to induce changes to classification by growers or their agents is prohibited. This issue relates to individual company procedures.

5.4.2 Similarly, each company is responsible for the correct use of the different types of equipment used for sampling and assessment of grain. Industry is free to use various field testing equipment to test grain, provided that equipment is sufficiently accurate and the result equates to a reference method. The Committee cannot dictate to industry to use a particular piece of equipment particularly where various options, all equally acceptable, are available. On that basis the Committee rejected the proposal to develop a list of approved and non-approved equipment.

- 5.4.3 The Committee acknowledged that correct use of sampling devices to obtain a representative sample was paramount to the classification process. Similarly accurate sample division is also a requirement for obtaining a representative sample. The existing sampling guidelines are based on international standards and are applicable to all grains. The Committee expressed the view that when used correctly, there is no significant difference between manual v vacuum spears, even when sampling large pulses. Industry is encouraged to sampling devices where large samples are required to be divided during the classification process.

There are various training courses available to industry to train their staff in correct sampling and testing procedures. In addition to generating their own operational procedures manuals as outlined above, industry is encouraged to use these courses to train their staff.

5.5 Rejected change: Reduce soil levels to those applied at export

The Committee rejected a proposal to reduce the tolerance for soil in Standards to that applied by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) at export of grain from Australia.

Soil is a quarantinable item in many countries and in several a nil tolerance applies. It is impractical for growers to meet a nil tolerance and the current tolerance is a compromise between what the market requires and what can be produced commercially.

For further information, industry should refer to further statements made in the pulse Standards on this topic. Exporters are encouraged to assess their own risk procedures in these instances where soil may be present in a sample of grain for export.