

# ONIONS REGULATIONS

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### ONIONS REGULATIONS

[LN..... of .....]

[Made under section 59]

#### PART I

##### Preliminary

#### 1. Citation

These Regulations may be cited as Onions Regulations.

#### 2. Interpretation

(1) In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires –

“**Act**” means the Food Safety and Quality Act;

“**Trade**” includes the sale, distribution, production, export, manufacture and import, use of, or other dealing in any article in the course of business;

“**Authority**” means Food Safety and Quality Authority of The Gambia

“**Food Business Operator**” has the meaning given to it in the Act.

“**His**” shall mean her

(2) A word or expression used in these Regulations, which is defined in the Act, has the meaning given to it in the Act.

#### PART II

#### 3. Scope

These Regulations applies to all “stages of production, processing and distribution of onions“ means any stage, from the primary production of a food or feed, its storage, transport, sale or supply to the final consumer and, where relevant, the importation, exportation, production, manufacture, storage, transport, distribution, sale and supply of onions.

#### 4. Compliance

Onions intended for human consumption shall be in accordance with guides and standards set out in the schedules.

## **5. Duties of the Authority to monitor importers, exporters, producers, manufacturers and distributors of onions**

The Authority shall monitor compliance of importers, exporters, producers, manufacturers and distributors of onions in accordance with the guides and standards set out in the schedules.

## **6. Duties of importers, exporters, producers, manufacturers and distributors of onions**

A food business operator engaged in importing, exporting, producing, manufacturing and distribution of onions shall –

- a) not supply onions for trade purposes unless the practices used to handle, store and transport the products comply with good hygienic practices and good storage practices.
- b) importers of onions must provide an official certificate issued by the place of origin, or a certificate issued by an officially recognised independent testing institution recognised by the government of the place of origin, or any other supporting documents, certifying that the onions imported into The Gambia are fit for human consumption.

## **7. Information about onions to be imported**

Details of consignments that shall be obtained include:

- a) date and point of entry;
- b) mode of transport;
- c) comprehensive description of the commodity (including for example product description, amount, means of preservation, country of origin and/or of dispatch, identifying marks such as lot identifier or seal identification numbers etc);
- d) exporter's and importer's name and address;
- e) manufacturer and/or producer, including establishment registration number;
- f) destination; and,
- g) other information.

### **7.1. Testing of imported onions**

Testing of imported onions should be based on the risk to human health and safety presented by the product, its origin and the history of conformance to requirements and other relevant information. Control should be designed to account for factors such as:

- a) the risk to human health posed by the product or its packaging;
- b) the likelihood of non-compliance with the requirements set out in the standards;
- c) the target consumer group;
- d) the extent and nature of any further processing of the product;
- e) food inspection and certification system in the exporting country and existence of any equivalence, mutual recognition agreements or other trade agreements; and,

- f) history of conformity of producers, processors, manufacturers, importers and distributors.

## **7.2. Procedure for importation of onions**

- a) Every importer of onions shall notify the Authority of his intention to import onions, and shall furnish full information regarding the import onions, origin, certification and other particulars relating to the onions he desires to import.
- b) If such information is satisfactory, a certificate to import shall be issued by the Authority, to be attached to the bill of lading after the signature of the exporter is attached, but the possession of such permit shall not sanction the use of such onions unless all the requirements of these regulations are fulfilled.
- c) Goods without permit to import shall not be cleared by customs.

## **7.3. Minimum requirements of onions**

Every importer shall satisfy the Authority that onions imported into The Gambia are of a minimum size grade of 45-65mm and in accordance with the minimum requirements for onions as provided for in the second schedule of these Regulations.

## **7.4. Area under plant quarantine**

No onions shall be permitted to be imported into The Gambia from any area which is under plant quarantine, unless each consignment is accompanied by a certificate from a duly recognized government authority that such onions are free from serious plant disease or plant pest; and each package shall have plainly marked thereon, or on a label affixed thereon, the number of the certificate under which it is so certified.

## **8. Requirements for export of onions**

- a) Exporters must registration with the Authority.
- b) Exporters will be required to submit certain documents, including a full HACCP plan, and pre-requisite programmes (PRPs) to the Authority for their consideration
- c) The Authority shall undertake an inspection and provide an inspection report with recommendations to the exporter. If everything is in order, the exporter's establishment will be approved for export.
- d) Once ready to export, registered exporters must pick Export Inspection Request Form at the Authority.
- e) The Authority shall arrange for Inspection and sampling, where deemed necessary, of the products to be exported in collaboration with the Exporter as deemed necessary.
- f) Based on the result of the inspection and tests submitted, the Authority will issue Export Consignment Certificates (Export Certificate and Export Permit) to the exporter.
- g) Exporters should present all relevant documents; Export Consignment Certificates and Test Report (not mandatory) to the Customs Division of the Gambia Revenue Authority at the point of exit.

- h) Customs shall ensure that, the following requirements are met before an exporter is allowed to export any consignment –
  - i. Exporter has valid Export Consignment
  - ii. Certificates from the Authority
- i) Laboratory test report may be added to the export documents depending on the requirements of the importing country.

#### **8.1. Inspection**

Every consignment of onions shall, before shipment, be examined by an inspector of the Authority.

#### **8.2. Consignment to be re-inspected if not shipped within a reasonable time as the Authority deems it fit**

Any consignment approved for export shall be liable to a new inspection if the consignment is not shipped within a reasonable time of the previous inspection.

#### **8.3. Application for inspection**

Application for inspection shall be made to the Authority at least seventy-two hours before shipment:

Provided, however, that application may be made at shorter notice, at the risk of the exporter.

#### **8.4. Application to specify name of exporter**

Every application for inspection shall specify the name of the exporter, the number and nature of the packages, and the destination of the onions.

#### **8.5. Issue of certificate if onions found to be fit for export**

If the onions when inspected are found to conform in all respects with these regulations and to be fit for export, the Authority shall issue a certificate to that effect. Such certificate shall certify that the onions have been examined and, when such is the case, and found to comply in all respects with the regulations governing the export of onions.

#### **8.6. Design and facilities of establishment**

Depending on the nature of the operations, and the risks associated with them, premises, equipment and facilities should be located, designed and constructed to ensure that:

- a) contamination is minimized;
- b) design and layout permit appropriate maintenance, cleaning and disinfections and minimize cross contamination;
- c) surfaces and materials, in particular those in contact with onions, are non-toxic in intended use and, where necessary, suitably durable, and easy to maintain and clean;

- d) where appropriate, suitable facilities are available for temperature, humidity and other controls; and
- e) there is effective protection against pest access and harbourage.

#### **8.7. Hygienic production of onions**

Producers should as far as practicable implement measures to:

- a) control contamination from soil, water, feedstuffs, fertilizers (including natural fertilizers), pesticides or any other agent used in primary production;
- b) control plant and animal health so that it does not pose a threat to human health through onions consumption, or adversely affect the suitability of the product; and
- c) protect food sources from other contamination.

#### **9. Handling, storage and transport**

- a) Storage conditions of onions shall ensure their safe-keeping and safety during the shelf life.
- b) Shelf life and storage conditions of onions shall be set by the manufacturer so that onions remain in conformity with these Regulations during their storage for the duration of their shelf life.
- c) Onions should be stored in well ventilated facility to reduce the risk of spoilage.
- d) Onions shall not be stored together with other products if this might result in the contamination of onions.
- e) Onions should be protected from contamination by pests, or by chemical, physical or microbiological contaminants or other objectionable substances during handling storage and transport.
- f) Care should be taken to prevent, so far as reasonably practicable, deterioration and spoilage through appropriate measures which may include controlling temperature, humidity and/or other controls.
- g) Stored onions shall be supported by accompanying documents and documents confirming their safety.
- h) Storage facilities for onions shall be sanitized and disinfected on a regular basis.
- i) Transportation of onions shall ensure their safe-keeping and safety during the shelf life.
- j) Transportation of onions shall be carried out by means of transport suited for the purpose. Transportation terms and conditions shall be determined by the consignor. They shall conform to the terms and conditions prescribed by the manufacturer for transportation of onions.
- k) Onions shall not be transported together with other products if this might result in the contamination of onions.
- l) Design of transport cargo compartments shall ensure protection of onions from contamination.
- m) Conveyances and containers for transporting onions should be kept in an appropriate state of cleanliness, repair and condition. Where the same conveyance or container is used for transporting different foods, or non-foods, effective cleaning and, where necessary, disinfection should take place between loads.

- n) Where appropriate, particularly in bulk transport, containers and conveyances should be designated and marked for food use only and be used only for that purpose.
- o) Conveyances and containers should be designed and constructed so that they:
  - i. do not contaminate onions or packaging;
  - ii. can be effectively cleaned and, where necessary, disinfected;
  - iii. permit effective separation of onions or different foods from non-food items where necessary during transport;
  - iv. provide effective protection from contamination, including dust and fumes;
  - v. can effectively maintain the temperature, humidity, atmosphere and other conditions necessary to protect onions from harmful or undesirable microbial growth and deterioration likely to render it unsuitable for consumption; and
  - vi. allow any necessary temperature, humidity and other conditions to be checked.

## **10. Packaging**

Packaging design and materials should provide adequate protection for onions to minimize contamination, prevent damage, and accommodate proper labelling. Packaging materials where used must be non-toxic and not pose a threat to the safety and suitability of onions under the specified conditions of storage and use. Where appropriate, reusable packaging should be suitably durable, easy to clean and, where necessary, disinfect.

Containers shall be clean, dry and sufficiently strong as to warrant arrival at their destination in good condition. Onions should be stored in sacks that allow proper ventilation.

## **11. Documentation and records**

Records of processing, production and distribution should be kept and retained for a period that exceeds the shelf-life of the onions.

Documentation can enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the food safety control system.

## **12. Recall**

Detailed traceability records should be kept by those involved in the trade of onions for purposes of recalling.

Recalled products should be held under supervision until they are destroyed, used for purposes other than human consumption, determined to be safe for human consumption, or reprocessed in a manner to ensure their safety.

## Miscellaneous

### 13. Offences

A person who contravenes a provision of these Regulations or an order made under these Regulations commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than ten thousand dalasis or not less than six months imprisonment or to both.



## FIRST SCHEDULE

[Regulations .....]

### Guides and Standards for compliance

1. Gambian Standard on General Principles of Food Hygiene (GAMS CODEX CAC/RCP 1-1969)
2. General Standards for contaminants and toxins in food and feed (Codex Stan 193-1995)
3. Gambia Standard on the labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (Gams Codex Stan 1-1985)
4. Gambia Standard on code of practice for packaging and transport of fresh fruits and vegetables (Gams CAC/RCP 44-1995)
5. Code of hygienic practice for fresh fruits and vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003)
6. African Standard on fresh onions (ARS 921:2012)

SECOND SCHEDULE

[Regulations .....]

Annexure

1. Minimum Requirements for Onions

## **Annex1. Minimum Requirements for Onions**

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the bulbs must be:

- a) intact;
- b) sound;
- c) produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- d) clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter;
- e) free from damage due to frost;
- f) sufficiently dry for the intended use (in the case of pickling onions, at least the first two outer skins and the stem must be fully dried);
- g) without hollow or tough stems;
- h) practically free from pests;
- i) practically free from damages caused by pests;
- j) free of abnormal external moisture; and
- k) free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

In addition the stems must be twisted or clean cut and must not exceed 6 cm in length (except for stringed onions).

The development and condition of the onions must be such as to enable them:

- a) to withstand transport and handling; and
- b) to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.