



June 12, 2020

**Notice of 2020 Cantaloupe Seasonal Regulations**  
**Establishing Grade, Inspection and Certification Requirements**  
**for Cantaloupes Produced for Commercial Purposes within California**  
**North and West of the San Geronio Pass**  
**Pursuant to the California Cantaloupe Program**

**To the California Cantaloupe Handler Addressed:**

Upon the recommendation of the California Cantaloupe Advisory Board, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (Department) has issued seasonal regulations establishing requirements for grade, inspection and certification for the 2020 cantaloupe crop. Under these seasonal regulations, all cantaloupes produced in 2020 for commercial purposes within California north and west of the San Geronio Pass, unless specifically exempted, are subject to inspection and certification by a County Agricultural Commissioner to ensure compliance. The 2020 cantaloupe seasonal regulations are attached as Exhibit "A". Following is a summary of these seasonal regulations.

**Change for This Year – No Container Certification Stamp**

- The previous requirement for all containers to be stamped with the California Westside certification stamp has been eliminated. In lieu of a mandatory cantaloupe certification stamp on each container, County inspectors are instead required to issue a County Inspection Certificate for each inspection conducted.
- Please note that elimination of the mandatory certification stamp does not negate the cantaloupe handler's responsibility to have an on-carton trace back system as specified by the Cantaloupe Advisory Board's food safety requirements.

**Inspection Criterion** *(same as last year)*

- County inspectors shall inspect cantaloupes to assure compliance with the minimum grade for cantaloupes (including maturity) as specified in the California Code of Regulations, being Title 3, Article 17, Section 1420.
- County inspectors shall inspect cantaloupe cartons to assure that they contain the minimum information required by the Code of Regulations, i.e. identity (cantaloupes), responsibility (name, address, zip code) and quantity (count or weight).
- County inspectors shall inspect cantaloupes to assure that they comply with the seasonal grade regulations' higher minimum soluble solids requirements. There is a two-tier standard depending upon the type of cantaloupe. All traditional western type or extended shelf life (ESL) type cantaloupes, which include varieties that are harvested by pulling the melon from the vine leaving an abscission in the stem end, are required to have a minimum composite brix of 9%, while all long shelf life (LSL) type cantaloupes, which include varieties that are harvested with a knife and cut from the vine, are required to have a minimum composite brix of 12%.



### **Frequency / Level of Inspections**

- The responsibility of the County inspectors is to inspect a sufficient portion of each handler's cantaloupes with sufficient frequency to provide reasonable assurance that the respective handler's cantaloupes are in compliance with the regulations.
- In accordance with generally accepted inspection standards, a minimum of one percent (1%) of each handler's cantaloupes should be inspected for compliance.

### **County Inspection Certificate**

- In lieu of a mandatory certification stamp on each container, County inspectors are instead required to issue a County Inspection Certificate for each inspection conducted.
- The Counties are required to maintain a record of each inspection certificate and to provide a copy to the appropriate handler representative (field/cooler supervisor) at the time of inspection.
- Each certificate issued will be applicable to all the containers from which the representative containers for inspection are drawn, which are present on site at the time of inspection and which have the same count, brand and back style.

### **Non-Compliant Cantaloupes**

- Inspectors will treat instances of non-compliance in the same manner as in the past.
- The number of containers present found to be in violation of the regulations shall be held (red-tagged) until compliance is achieved.

### **Voluntary Use of "California Westside" Designation**

- Handlers can voluntarily use the "California Westside" designation on their containers.
- Voluntary "California Westside" designations on containers no longer constitutes an official certification as in the past, and therefore it should not include a statement referencing inspection by a County Agricultural Commissioner.

### **Exempted Cantaloupes**

As in past years, cantaloupes designated for processing, cantaloupes that are direct marketed and cantaloupes donated or sold to charitable organizations are exempted.

If you have questions about these regulations, please call John Gilstrap, Manager of the California Cantaloupe Advisory Board, at 559-591-5715, or you may call Dennis Manderfield of the Department's Marketing Branch at 916-900-5018.

Sincerely,



Joe Monson, Branch Chief  
Marketing Branch

Attachment

**2020 SEASONAL REGULATIONS  
ESTABLISHING GRADE, INSPECTION, AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS  
FOR CANTALOUPE  
PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA CANTALOUPE PROGRAM**

All 2020 crop cantaloupes, except as specifically exempted below, which are produced for commercial purposes within the State of California north and west of the San Geronio Pass shall be subject to inspection and certification by an Agricultural Commissioner to ensure compliance with these regulations. If a request is received to inspect and certify to a grade for which the Agricultural Commissioner is not so authorized, such as a U.S. grade, the Commissioner may delegate inspection authority to the appropriate inspection agency necessary to comply with the inspection request, provided however, that the requested grade is equal to or higher than the standards established in this regulation. It will be a violation of the California Marketing Act and the California Cantaloupe Program to offer for sale at any point any such cantaloupes that are not in compliance with these regulations.

Before any inspection of cantaloupes, each cantaloupe handler will be required to show proof of a CDFR produce dealer's license to inspection personnel of the county of production or the Cantaloupe Board. If the handler is not licensed with the CDFR Market Enforcement Branch (MEB), the handler will be required to apply for a license with MEB and pay the appropriate license fee before the firm will be allowed to begin packing.

All cantaloupes must be packed in containers that have not been previously shipped. In addition, Cantaloupes shall not be shipped in experimental containers greater than 100 pounds *UNLESS ALL of the following conditions are met by the applicant:*

1. Applicant shall have been a California cantaloupe shipper subject to this Board's jurisdiction for at least five (5) years.
2. In any one calendar year, applicant shall not ship more than 10 percent of said applicant's average California cantaloupe shipments that were under the jurisdiction of the Advisory Board over the past five years, or more than 10 percent of the current year's cantaloupe shipments which fall under the Board's jurisdiction, whichever is less.
3. Applicant's cantaloupes must be inspected and certified to meet Board-specified quality standards at shipping point.
4. Applicant's cantaloupes must be mechanically measured and packed or volume filled by count. Each bin must be marked in accordance with State and Federal Labeling Requirements and shall also meet the Experimental Container and Pack Permit Requirements.
5. Applicant shall make weekly reports of shipments packed in such experimental containers to the Cantaloupe Advisory Board, reporting quantity shipped by region, with seasonal totals. Any arrival inspection shall also be submitted to the Board.

The following standards shall apply to all cantaloupes, except as specifically exempted, that are shipped into commercial markets during the 2020 marketing season or unless such standards are amended, extended, superseded, or terminated by action of the Department of Food and Agriculture. A "California Westside" grade equivalent to the minimum grade for cantaloupes specified in the California Code of Regulations, being Title 3, Article 17, Section 1420 et seq, except as modified hereinafter, shall be applicable to cantaloupes.

## **SOLUBLE SOLIDS MINIMUMS AND MATURITY STANDARDS**

Notwithstanding other requirements of the above Sections of the California Code of Regulations, all long shelf life (LSL) type cantaloupes which include varieties that are harvested with a knife and cut from the vine will be required to have a minimum composite brix of 12%. All traditional western type or extended shelf life (ESL) type cantaloupes which include varieties that are harvested by pulling the melon from the vine leaving an abscission in the stem end will have a minimum composite brix of 9%. Brix levels to be determined from a sample of cantaloupes selected at random and tested by the use of an approved hand refractometer on a composite basis.

The composite test for solids shall consist of the random selection of seven cartons from each lot of cantaloupes. From each carton, one cantaloupe shall be selected at random, plugged, and the aggregate of the plugs juiced to determine the composite level of soluble solids. If the resulting test shows below the required percentage of soluble solids, the lot shall be deemed to fail the minimum solids requirement of these regulations. If the composite test as described above results in a test of the required percentage or more soluble solids, the lot shall be deemed to have passed the minimum solids requirements.

In addition to meeting the minimum soluble solids standard, each lot of cantaloupes shall comply with the maturity standards set in the California Code of Regulations, Title 3, Article 17, Section 1420.1, with maturity based on the least mature cantaloupe selected for testing.

## **EXEMPTION FOR CANTALOUPE DESIGNATED FOR PROCESSING**

Cantaloupes for processing, such as freezing or cut product salad, shall be designated for such use by the handler. All processing loads must move under a control order approved by the Department. A certificate must accompany the load to the processor. All loads must be weighed at origin and at destination with copies of the weight certificates provided to both the shipper and receiver. Copies of all documents must be matched to a receiving document and invoice for audit purposes.

## **EXEMPTION FOR DIRECT MARKETED CANTALOUPE**

Cantaloupes handled by the producer and sold on the premises where grown, or at the packing house or a single retail stand (in the county of production) operated by the producer, or at a Certified Farmers' Market regulated by the Department of Food and Agriculture, are exempt from these inspection and certification requirements, provided that the total amount of such cantaloupes sold cannot exceed fifty (50) pounds per purchaser per day.

### **EXEMPTION FOR CANTALOUPE DONATED OR SOLD TO CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS**

Cantaloupes that are donated or sold to charitable organizations in non-standard containers must be sold or donated before they are packed. The charity accepting or purchasing the cantaloupes will be responsible for packing the fruit. Any charitable organization wanting to use this exemption must prequalify with the Cantaloupe Advisory Board and the County Agricultural Commissioner in the County of donation or sale by requesting an exemption in writing. After obtaining the written exemption, the charity must have the exemption certificate in its possession when receiving cantaloupes from a shipper. The shipper for this fruit must provide the charity with a bill of lading for all fruit donated or sold to the charity.

### **CONTAINER MARKINGS**

During the effective period of these regulations, containers of cantaloupes meeting or exceeding the minimum standards herein established may be marked, "California Westside". Use of the "California Westside" designation on containers is strictly voluntary and is not required. This designation, when used on a container, does not constitute an official certification and therefore shall not include a reference to inspection by a County Agricultural Commissioner.

### **INSPECTION PROCESS, LOCATION OF INSPECTION, AND CERTIFICATION**

Cantaloupe inspections shall be performed by County Agricultural Commissioners at time of packing, in-line, for both shed and field operations, except when the volume of production is so low that the inspecting Agricultural Commissioner feels that field inspection is impractical. At such times inspection at the cooler will be allowed. The Agricultural Commissioner shall have the final word on whether the situation warrants an exemption from in-line field inspections. The grower/shipper must maintain constant communication with the inspecting Agricultural Commissioner to allow for proper site selection and timing of the required inspection. An "Inspection Certificate" provided by the Cantaloupe Board will be used by the County Agricultural Commissioners to ensure compliance with these regulations. County Agricultural Commissioners will retain completed Inspection Certificates and provide a copy to a representative of the respective handler at the time of each inspection.