

UN Food Rations Standards
Changes compared to the 2016 edition

The United Nations (UN) undertook a comprehensive review of the UN Rations standards. During the review process comments were sought from the rations contractors and these comments were incorporated into this third revision, dated 30 August 2018, as appropriate and applicable to the UN requirements. Further review has been done following comments and clarification received in RFP 3100003340 from bidders. The outcome of these reviews is reflected in the changes and updates of UN standards for Inspection and Certification; UNSTD-GEN-03 and UNSTD-GEN-04 respectively. In addition, the individual food standards (food specifications) have been revised to reflect the balance between the UN requirements, the requirements stipulated in the international standards and the current market trends, to achieve an optimization between cost, quality and the needs of the UN. The United Nations Rations Scale (UNRS) has also been updated accordingly to reflect the changes in the calories/name of individual products as applicable.

The UN recognizes that some products in the United Nations Rations Scale (UNRS) are processed recipe items, therefore processor will follow unique recipes. The UN has further taken into consideration, the use of Atwater general and specific conversion factors in the computation of nutritional values and would like to emphasize that the nutritional facts in the UN standards are approximate values and should not be considered in isolation, but as one among the multiple criteria for qualification of products. Additional criteria for consideration include: product description, essential ingredients, chemical and microbiological requirements, food safety parameters, physical characteristics and the packaging and labelling requirements. All the criteria stipulated in each standard must be taken into consideration in the process of product qualification, therefore nutritional values should not be considered in isolation from the rest of the criteria. The UN will therefore not grant a blanket tolerance for its nutritional values. However, the UN will grant internal tolerances for products on a case by case basis.

The following general areas of the standards have been reviewed:

1. Packaging:

- (a) The packaging requirement has been revised to reflect the actual packaging weight required in grams, litres, kilograms etc. The “up to” has been deleted to reflect the actual packaging requirement.
- (b) Environment: In addition to other environment management requirement stipulated in the standard, contractors are encouraged to use recyclable/biodegradable packaging material that is environmental friendly. This is an optional requirement; however, contractors are encouraged to use environmental friendly packaging.

2. Temperature:

Specific temperature for storage and transportation has been specified in the standard for each product item. The temperature for transportation for ambient products is reflected as “ambient” with no requirement to use reefer containers.

3. The UN has separated Halal from non-Halal items. This is reflected in the separate Halal standards with a requirement to meet guidelines in CODEX CAC/GL 24 - 1997: “General Guidelines for use of the term “Halal”.

4. Moisture Content: In accordance with Codex Alimentarius guidelines, lower moisture limits may be required for certain destinations in relation to the climate, duration of transport and storage. The UN reserves the rights to lower moisture contents where applicable and this is reflected in the corresponding standards.

5. Global Gap standards: The UN recognizes that requirement for Global Gap standards will depend on the market sources and will be considered on case by case basis.

4. The following areas were reviewed for each commodity group:

1.0 Meats, Fish, Nuts, Beans and Dairy products:

- 1.1 Meats/Pork/Poultry/Lamb/Fish/Goat items: The cuts have been reviewed; pictorial guidance has been provided for some cuts, chemical and nutritional facts have been reviewed;
- 1.2 Fishes/seafoods: The TVN/TBN values have been reviewed, including chemical and nutritional facts;
- 1.3 Nuts: Chemical criteria and nutritional values have been reviewed;
- 1.4 Dairy Products: Cheeses: Chemical and nutritional facts have been reviewed.

2.0 Breads, Grains, Cereals and Beverages

- 2.1 Breads: chemical criteria and nutritional facts have been reviewed;
- 2.2 Grains (Legumes): chemical criteria and nutritional facts have been reviewed;
- 2.3 Ready to eat Cereals: chemical criteria and nutritional facts have been reviewed;
- 2.4 Beverages: Chemical criteria and nutritional facts have been reviewed;
- 2.5 Flours: Chemical criteria and nutritional facts have been reviewed;
- 2.6 Pastas: Chemical criteria and nutritional facts have been reviewed;
- 2.7 Cereals (Rice): Chemical criteria and nutritional have been reviewed.

3.0 Fats, Oils and Sweets

- 3.1 Chemical criteria and nutritional facts have been reviewed.

4.0 Fruits, Vegetables, Herbs and Spices

- 4.1 Chemical criteria and Nutritional Facts have been reviewed.