

# Farmers user guide for compliance with East African Standards for fresh (Ware/Irish) potato

This brochure summarizes the key guidelines and requirements of relevant East African Standards and Codes of Practice that guide farmers in the production and handling of fresh potato for fresh market and as raw material for processors of potato crisps and chips.

These are:

- East African Standards (EAS) 748 – Fresh potato tuber (Ware potato tuber) – Specification
- EAS 775 – Production and handling of fresh ware potato-Specification

These guidelines control operations and procedures to ensure the production and handling of safe and quality fresh potatoes. The practices are evaluated for effectiveness through monitoring and documentation records.



## HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

Guidelines for production and handling of fresh potato tubers are designed to help identify issues in the production and handling process that need special attention and provide recommendations for corrective action.

Each section covers a specific aspect of production operations and handling procedures (e.g. proper harvesting, handling, storage, water supply, worker's hygiene and health, etc.).

### 1.0 Primary production of fresh potato tubers

These include tools such as hand hoes, shovels, mechanical planters and harvesters, planting materials, irrigation water, agricultural inputs, lifting roots from the ground, and sorting them into whole, damaged and diseased lots.

#### 1.1 Agronomic practices

- Planting seed shall be of good quality and of varieties which serve the intended purpose



*Use good quality seeds and recommended inputs such as fertilizers.*

- Inputs used such as pesticides, water and fertilizers shall be of approved types and shall be appropriately used following the recommended agricultural practices
- Water used for irrigation shall be of good quality with minimum contamination.

### 1.2 Human safety

- Workers shall wear personal protective equipment as required during the application of agricultural inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers.

### 1.3 Harvesting operations

- Harvesting shall be done at proper stage of maturity
- Proper implements shall be used to avoid cuts and bruising



*Use good quality water for irrigation.*



*Harvest at the right maturity time.*

- Segregation of fresh potato tubers shall be done into whole, damaged, and diseased lots.
- Avoid contamination of tubers with human and animal waste.
- Avoid using harvesting containers which may contaminate the produce.

## 2.0 Storage and preservation of fresh potato tubers

This involves treatments given to the tubers immediately after harvest which include cleaning, grading, curing, storage and facilities used to maintain the product in good condition. Best recommended practices:

- Fresh potato tubers shall be stored in polypropylene bags under shade and cool place. If necessary, fresh potatoes shall be cured immediately after harvest, in order to enhance the shelf life.

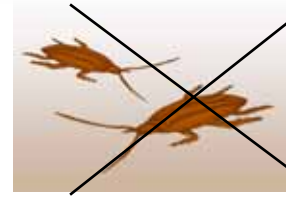
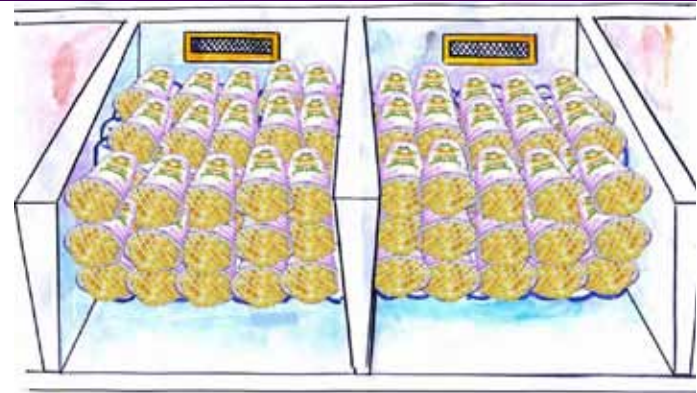


*Separate whole, damaged and diseased tubers.*



- Damaged, cut and bruised potato tubers shall not be stored together with good quality whole tubers.
- Fresh potatoes shall not be stored together with agricultural inputs such as pesticides, fertilizers or herbicides.

- No personnel and animals shall stay in the store
- Stores shall be kept clean and free of vermin
- Washing before storage is not recommended; however, if washed (for immediate consumption) the produce shall be properly dried before packaging.
- Leakage of storage structures shall be avoided in order to protect the produce from sprouting and rotting.



*Stores shall be kept clean and free of vermin*

### 3.0 Sorting, packaging and labelling

This involves grading the tubers in various sizes as specified in the standards, packaging and labelling.

#### 3.1 Sorting the potato tubers

This is done in order to facilitate trade and enable the farmer to position the produce for different market segments for better prices. It also enables the buyers to choose the products according to intended use and financial capacity.

#### Best recommended practices

- Fresh potato tubers shall be sorted according to size, shape, colour and variety

### 3.2 Packaging

This refers to hauling the produce into containers such as polypropylene bags, wooden/plastic crates or paper cartoons.

Best recommended practices

- Use packaging material that do not damage potato tubers and are easy to handle
- Use cushioning materials such as sawdust to avoid bruising if using packages such as wooden crates
- Pack and label fresh potato tubers according to the requirement of the destination country.

### 3.3. Labelling

It is a legal requirement for consumers including regulatory authorities to know the details of the food under sale/consumption. A label may be represented in words, pictures or graphically. In whatever form,



a label shall not be described or presented in a false, misleading or deceptive manner.

Required information

- Name of the product to be shown on the label shall be “Fresh sweet cassava roots”
- Name and location address of the exporter and or packer shall be declared
- Country of origin of the produce
- Place of origin such as district, or region
- Lot identification (batch number).

Commercial identification shall be declared:

- variety
- size (size code)
- net weight (in metric system)

#### 4.0 Quality requirements



Fresh potato tubers shall:

- be whole, clean, firm and practically free from defects
- be free from disease, pests, serious deterioration, and deformation
- be suitable for intended purpose
- conform to the respective classes of extra, I, II or III.



#### 5.0 Workers' Hygiene and Health

Basic workers' hygiene is critical as pathogens can be transmitted from people to the product. Contamination can occur through hand contact, from dirty clothes, coughing and sneezing.

Best Practices for Workers Hygiene:

- All workers be trained in hygiene and sanitation.

- Employees in direct contact with food shall have medical examination against communicable diseases such as Tuberculosis, (TB) typhoid and cholera and records to be kept.
- Workers with open sores, infected wounds or serious illnesses (vomiting, diarrhoea, fever) should not be allowed to handle the fresh sweet cassava roots Records should be kept to track serious illnesses as required.

## 6.0 Product identification and traceability Best Management Practices

All products traded must be identified with manufacturers/traders name and address. Effective trace back systems should be put in place to track individual lots from the production through to delivery to dealers and/or buyers. This will allow distributors to track the product through the distribution system incase of poor quality/defects.

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