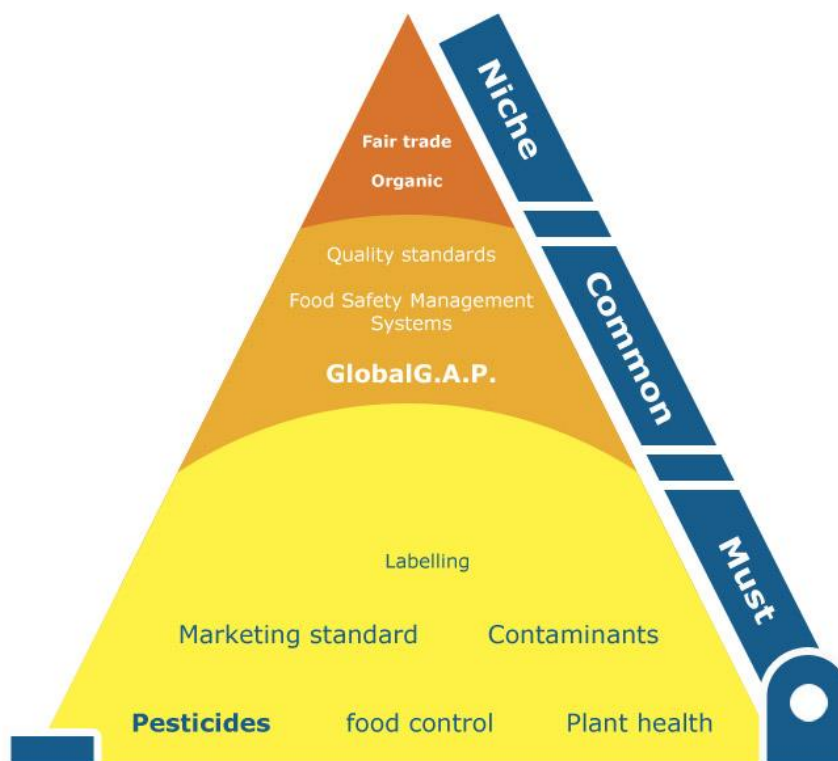




# Buyer Requirements for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Buyer requirements can be divided into (1) *musts*, requirements you must meet in order to enter the market, such as legal requirements, (2) *common* requirements, which are those most of your competitors have already implemented, in other words, the ones you need to comply with in order to keep up with the market, and (3) *niche* market requirements for specific segments.



## Requirements you must meet

### Pesticides

The EU has set maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides in and on food products. Products containing more pesticides than allowed will be withdrawn from the EU market. Note that buyers in several Members States (including

### Considerations for action

- To find out the MRLs that are relevant for your products, you can use the EU [MRL database](#) in which all harmonised MRLs can be found. You can search on your product or pesticide used and the database shows the

the UK, Germany, The Netherlands and Austria) use MRLs which are stricter than the MRLs laid down in EU legislation.

### **Control of food imported to the EU**

To avoid environmental damage, the EU has restricted the use of certain chemicals in several Regulations and Directives.

Your products will be subjected to official controls. These controls are carried out to ensure that all foods marketed in the EU market are safe, i.e. in compliance with the requirements applicable to them. There are three types of checks:

- a) Documentary checks
- b) Identity checks
- c) Physical checks

In the event of repeated non-compliance of specific products originating from particular countries, the EU can decide that controls will be carried out on an increased level or lay down emergency measures. Controls can be carried out at all stages of import and marketing in the EU. However, most checks are done at the points of entry in the EU.

### **Marketing standards**

The ELV legislation aims to avoid environmental pollution in the waste stage of cars. It aims to reduce hazardous substances in vehicles. Furthermore, vehicles should be designed to facilitate proper dismantling and recycling (by coding the components) and the heavy metals lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium are prohibited (except for a few applications).

### **Labelling**

Food placed on the EU market must meet the legislation on food labelling.

Cartons of FFV must mention the following particulars:

- The name and the address of the packer and the dispatcher
- The name of the produce (if the produce is not visible from the outside of the packaging)
- the country of origin
- The class and size (referring to the marketing standards)

list of the MRLs associated to your product or pesticide.

- A good way to reduce the amount of pesticides, is applying integrated pest management (IPM). IPM is an agricultural pest control strategy that uses complementary strategies including growing practices and chemical management. The more advanced your spray policy, the better it is to market this aspect of your farm positively
- Read more about [MRLs](#) in the EU Export Helpdesk.
- Check with your buyers if they require additional requirements on MRLs and pesticide use.

- Familiarise yourself with the procedures. Failure to follow the right procedures could cause decrease and delay of orders, increase costs and result in actions by EU enforcement authorities.
- Make sure that the accompanying documents correspond (from A-Z!) with the food products contained in the consignment.
- Check if there are any increased level of controls
- Read more about [health control](#) in the EU Export Helpdesk

- Check which standards are applicable to you and make sure your products and the necessary documentation are in order.
- Read more about [marketing standards](#) in the EU Export Helpdesk.

- Make sure that all mandatory information is mentioned, but also think of other useful information e.g. logo's of importers or certificates.
- Read more about [food labelling in the EU Export Helpdesk](#)

### Plant Health

Fruit and vegetables exported to the EU, must comply with the EU legislation on plant health. The EU has laid down phytosanitary requirements to prevent introduction and spread of organisms harmful to plants and plant products in the EU. The requirements mainly imply that:

- Certain listed organisms are not allowed to be imported into the EU, unless specific circumstances apply.
- Plants or plant products specified in Part B, Annex V of Directive [2000/29/EC](#) must be accompanied by a plant health certificate.

### Contaminants

Contaminants are substances that have not been intentionally added to food, but which may be present as a result of the various stages of its production, packaging, transport or holding. To avoid negative impact on the quality of food and risks to human health, the EU has set limits for several contaminants. Especially the limits for Nitrate (in spinach and lettuce) and metals (cadmium, lead, mercury, inorganic tin), are relevant for fresh fruit and vegetables.

### Full overview of requirements for your fresh fruit or vegetables:

For a full list of requirements, please consult the [EU Export Helpdesk](#) where you can select your specific product code under chapter 07 and 08.

### Common buyer requirements:

#### Certification as guarantee

As food safety is a top priority in all EU food sectors, you can expect many players to request extra guarantees from you in form of certification.

#### GlobalG.A.P.

The most commonly requested food safety certification scheme, essential for exporting FFV to the EU is GLOBALG.A.P. GLOBALG.A.P is a pre-farm-gate standard that covers the whole agricultural production process, from before the plant is in the ground to the non-processed product (processing not covered).

Examples of other food safety management systems that can be required are [BRC](#) and [IFS](#),

- Check with the relevant National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) or your EU importer what the requirements are applying to your product. Click [here](#) for a list of NPPOs
- If a phytosanitary certificate is needed (click [here](#) for a list) to be allowed EU entry and arrange one with your NPPO or ask your EU importer to arrange one. A model phytosanitary certificate can be found through [Annex VII](#) of the Plant Health Directive.
- Read more about [plant health](#) in the EU Export Helpdesk
- Find the relevant contaminant levels in the annex of [Regulation \(EC\) 1881/2006](#). All contaminants are presented and maximum levels are provided per product or groups of products. Check if your food product is included in one of the product groups. Be aware that the particular product may not be mentioned specifically but can be included in a product group. For instance, mango may not be found, but fruit can.
- Find out more about prevention and reduction of lead Contamination in the [Code of Practice](#) published by the Codex Alimentarius.
- Check the European Commission's factsheet on food contaminants "[Managing food contaminants: how the EU ensures that our food is safe](#)"
- Read more about [contaminants in the EU Export Helpdesk](#).

#### Considerations for action

- EU market entry preparation is more likely to include GlobalG.A.P certification than not, and it is therefore important to familiarise yourself with GLOBALG.A.P.
- Check which Food safety management systems are most commonly requested in

[FSSC22000](#) or [SQF](#). These management systems are required additionally to GLOBALG.A.P. and also cover the chain from the farm to the buyer.

Different buyers may have different preferences for a certain management system, so before considering certification against one of these standards, it is advised to check which one is preferred. (British retailers often require BRC and IFS is more commonly required on the mainland. All the mentioned management systems are recognised by the [Global Food Safety Initiative \(GFSI\)](#), which means that any of them should be accepted by several major retailers. However, in practice some buyers still have preferences for one specific management system

#### **Quality standards**

EU buyers often require compliance with a UNECE or Codex Alimentarius standards. It should be noted that quality refers to both food safety and food quality. In fact, food safety is part of food quality. There is no quality if a food appears to be unhealthy or dangerous for consumers. However, food quality is more than food safety. Food quality also refers to specific characteristics of the food, mostly from the perspective of the consumer, including internal and external characteristics. The standards that are most widely used by EU importers and traders are those developed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)) and the [Codex Alimentarius Commission](#) (CAC). The UNECE standards are often used in the daily practice of trade, whereby they serve as a reference for the product specifications imposed by importers. Note that if a legally required standard exists (see [marketing standards](#) under must), this standard prevails.

### **Niche markets: Organic and Fair trade**

#### **Organic, a growing niche market**

An increasing number of EU consumers prefer food products that are produced and processed by natural methods. Organic fruits and vegetables are products that can meet both needs, while at the same time they could provide higher prices to producers. To market organic products in the EU, you have to use organic production methods which are laid down in [EU legislation](#). Furthermore, you have to use these production methods for at least two years before you can market the fruits and vegetables as organic. In addition, you (or your EU importer) must apply for an import authorisation from EU organic control bodies. After being audited by an accredited certifier, you may put the EU organic

your target market.

- Read more on the different Food Safety Management Systems at the [Standards Map](#).
- Make sure you supply the quality as agreed in the product specifications.

#### **Considerations for action**

- Implementing organic production and becoming certified can be expensive, so it is advised to assess the market potential.
- Check which organic labels are most commonly requested in your target market.
- Consult the [Standards Map database](#) for the different labels and their similarities and differences.

logo on your products, as well as the logo of the standard holder (e.g. [Soil Association](#) (especially relevant in the UK), [Naturland](#) (Germany) or [Bio Suisse](#) (Zwitserland)). Some of these standards are slightly different, but they all comply with the EU legislation on organic production and labelling.

There are several potential organic markets for producers in developing countries. For example: tropical crops that cannot be cultivated in Europe (e.g. tropical fruits), crops that are cultivated in Europe but not enough to meet the EU demand and crops that can be cultivated during the European off-season.

### **Fair Trade**

A small, but growing, niche market is the market for FFV produced with more focus on the social and/or environmental conditions in the producing areas. Examples of relevant standards (and consumer labels) for FFV are [Rainforest Alliance](#) (originally more focussed on environmental aspects) and [Fairtrade](#) (originally more focussed on social issues).

Furthermore importers may also adopt initiatives which may also impact you as a supplier. For example participating in a retailer initiative, such as the [Ethical Trading Initiative](#) (ETI) in the UK, or the [Business Social Compliance Initiative](#) (BSCI) in North-Western Europe. Or Unilever's [Sustainable Agriculture Code](#)

- Consult the [Standards Map database](#) for the different labels and their similarities and differences.
- Check your company's current performances. For example by doing a self assessment on the [BSCI website](#).

This document was compiled for CBI by CREM B.V.

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