

Decree

No .../2025 of the Minister for Agriculture of [date]

amending

Decree No 152/2009 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of 12 November 2009 on the mandatory requirements of the Codex Alimentarius Hungaricus with regard to its regulation on pickles

[1] The aim of the legislation is to provide consumers with adequate information on the quality of pickles and to clarify the nature and quality of the product to which the designation of the foodstuff refers.

[2] The product group of pickled vegetables and fruit has been defined, within which the different designations according to the chopping and variety of the plant parts have also been clarified.

[3] In accordance with the acidification process used, it is specified separately which designation may be used for products produced by natural or artificial acidification.

[4] The unique quality characteristics of the two pickles, gherkins and sauerkraut, which are important for domestic consumption and traditions, have been specified.

[5] On the basis of the authorisation granted in Section 76(2)5 of Act XLVI of 2008 on the food chain and its official supervision, and acting within the scope of my duties set out in Section 54(3) of Government Decree No 182/2022 of 24 May 2022 on the duties and powers of members of the Government, I hereby order the following:

Section 1

In Decree No 152/2009 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of 12 November 2009 on the mandatory requirements of the Codex Alimentarius Hungaricus (hereinafter referred to as ‘Decree’), the following point (g) is added to Section 1(3):

[The mandatory requirements of Volume I of the Hungarian Food Code (Codex Alimentarius Hungaricus), which contain national product specifications, are laid down in the following Annex to this Decree:]

“(g) Annex 43 on pickles,”

Section 2

The following paragraph 22 shall be added to Section 2 of the Decree:

“(22) Products which do not comply with the provisions of Annex 43 of this Decree, as laid down in Decree No .../2025 of [date] of the Ministry of Agriculture amending Decree No 152/2009 of 12 November of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the mandatory requirements of the Codex Alimentarius Hungaricus with regard to its regulation on pickles (hereinafter: Amending Decree 12), but which comply with the provisions in force on the day preceding the date of entry into force of Amending Decree 12, as specified in Annex 43, may be placed on the market until the last day of the 18th month following the date

of entry into force of Amending Decree 12 and may remain on the market until their date of minimum durability or use-by date.”

Section 3

The following Section 13 is added to the Decree:

“Section 13 The requirement for the prior notification of the draft of Annex 43 to this Decree, as stipulated in Articles 5–7 of Directive (EU) 2015/1535 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 September 2015 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical regulations and of rules on Information Society services, has been met.”

Section 4

Annex 43, as referred to in Annex 1 hereto, is added to the Decree.

Section 5

This Decree shall enter into force on the third day following its publication.

Section 6

The requirement for the prior notification of this draft decree, as stipulated in Articles 5 to 7 of Directive (EU) 2015/1535 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 September 2015 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical regulations and of rules on Information Society services, has been met.

Dr. Nagy István
Minister of Agriculture

‘Annex 43 to Decree No 152/2009 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of 12 November 2009

Regulation 1-3/22-1 of the Hungarian Food Code on pickles

Part A

GENERAL PROVISIONS

I.

1. The regulation applies to foods of plant origin preserved by acidification.
2. This regulation does not apply to pickles with a protected geographical indication or those registered as traditional specialities under Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
3. Products that are produced or placed on the market in a Member State of the European Union or in Turkey, or are produced in an EFTA State that is a contracting party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, in accordance with the applicable national legislation in that State, do not need to comply with the technical specifications specified in this regulation if the relevant provisions offer a level of protection equivalent to that laid down in this regulation in terms of consumer protection.

II.

1. For the purposes of this regulation:
 - 1.1. *decorative parts of plants*: edible parts of plants in the pickles which improve the visual appearance of the finished product;
 - 1.2. *brine*: a liquid, sometimes a spirit drink or fruit juice, which is usually clear and filtered, made from flavourings that harmonise with the composition of the product, and is used to fill the space not occupied by the fruit or vegetables placed in the container;
 - 1.3. *flavouring parts of plants*: plant parts rich in characteristic flavours, aromas and essences, which are used in the applied technology to give the product its characteristic flavour;
 - 1.4. *direct production*: production of the finished product from the fresh raw material;
 - 1.5. *marinated product*: product prepared with brine with oil and vinegar;
 - 1.6. *plant ingredient*: an essential or characteristic ingredient of pickles, with the exception of decorative and flavouring plant parts;
 - 1.7. *acidification*: the preservation of foodstuffs of plant origin by a natural or artificial acidification process, as follows:
 - 1.7.1. *artificial acidification*: acidification with brine, as an aqueous solution of salt and added vinegar,
 - 1.7.2. *natural acidification*: preservation by lactic acid fermentation;

1.8. *starter culture*: a microbiological culture containing reproducible microorganisms selected on the basis of specific characteristics, which is used in various fermentation processes in food production; they may also occur in pure cultures or in controlled mixed cultures;

1.9. *lactic fermentation*: spontaneous lactic fermentation or directed lactic fermentation involving closely related physical, chemical and microbiological changes;

1.10. *drained net weight*: part of the material remaining in the packaging container which predominates the product after draining.

III.

In addition to those specified in Part B, food additives as defined in Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and in the quantities specified therein may be used in the production of products listed in Part B.

Part B

PRODUCT GROUPS

1. ACIDIFIED VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

1.1. Specification, definition of the product group

1.1.1. Food category according to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council: 04.2.2.

1.1.2. Products preserved by natural or artificial acidification, the basic ingredients of which are vegetables, tubers, various types of mushrooms and parts of fruit suitable for acidification. The plant parts are processed in whole or after chopping.

1.1.3. Depending on the chopping of the plant parts, it can be:

1.1.3.1. chopped pickles: the processed vegetable is cut into small pieces, slices or other shapes before being acidified.

1.1.3.2. pickles in whole/cut pieces: the processed vegetable is acidified in whole or cut into halves or quarters.

1.1.4. During the production of certain products, heat treatment may be used as an additional preservation method to increase shelf life.

1.2. Ingredients that may be used

1.2.1. intact, undamaged parts of fruit and vegetables suitable for human consumption

1.2.2. sugar as per Annex 20

1.2.3. decorative plant parts

1.2.4. flavouring plant parts

1.2.5. table salt

1.2.6. vinegar

1.2.7. edible oil

1.2.8. spices and their extracts

1.2.9. drinking water

1.2.10. lactic bacteria starter culture

1.3. Quality characteristics

1.3.1. Physical and chemical properties

	A	B
1.	Characteristics	Value
2.	Acidity expressed as acetic acid in products produced by artificial acidification, % (m/m)	0,5–2,5
3.	NaCl content, % (m/m), maximum	3,5
4.	Edible oil content in marinated products, % (m/m)	0,5–6,0
5.	Volatile acidity expressed as acetic acid in products produced by natural fermentation, % (m/m), maximum	0,15
6.	pH, maximum	4,5

1.3.1.1. In pickles containing two vegetable ingredients, the quantity of either ingredient shall not be less than 20 % of the drained net weight.

1.3.1.2. In the case of mixed pickles, the quantity of any single vegetable ingredient shall not exceed 45 % of the drained net weight.

1.3.1.3. The quantity of decorative plant parts shall not exceed 5 % of the drained net weight.

1.3.2. Organoleptic properties

1.3.2.1. Pickles consist of nearly identical components characteristic of the form of processing, in whole, halved or quartered, sliced, diced, julienned or cut into other shapes.

1.3.2.2. Colour: characteristic of the plant part used.

1.3.2.3. Odour, taste: characteristic, pleasant, harmonious. In the case of spicy flavours, the spicy taste should be distinct.

1.3.2.4. Texture: flexible, characteristic of plant components, not softened.

1.3.2.5. Brine: clear or opaque/slightly cloudy in the case of products made using natural acidification.

1.4. Marking, labelling

1.4.1. In the case of pickles containing one or two types of vegetables or fruit, the designation shall contain the name of the vegetable or fruit; in the case of pickles with at least three vegetable ingredients, the designation “vegyes savanyúság” (mixed pickles) shall be used.

1.4.2. The designation shall also refer to the fact that the product has been acidified by using the term “savanyúság” (pickles).

1.4.3. In the case of products made using natural acidification, the term “savanyú” (sour) may be used instead of “savanyúság” (pickles).

1.4.4. In the case of products made using artificial acidification, the terms “savanyított” or “ecetes” (pickled/in vinegar) may be used instead of “pickles”.

1.4.5. The designation “csemege” (sweet) may be used for a directly produced, artificially acidified product preserved by heat treatment, which has an acid content expressed as acetic acid of no more than 1.2 % (m/m).

1.4.6. Examples for the designation: “Savanyított almapaprika” (Pickled apple peppers), “Csemege-zöldparadicsom, savanyúság” (Sweet green tomato pickles), “Ecetes vegyes darabos savanyúság” (Mixed pickles in vinegar, in whole/cut pieces), “Ecetes almapaprika” (Apple peppers in vinegar), “Ecetes uborka” (Gherkins in vinegar).

1.4.7. Other markings

1.4.7.1. The designation may also include a reference to the fineness of the chopped pickled vegetable, using terms such as “darabos” (in whole/cut pieces) or “vágott” (sliced/diced).

1.4.7.2. In the case of hermetically sealed products that are not heat-treated, the term “non-heat-treated” shall be indicated as an addition to the designation.

1.4.7.3. The spicy nature derived from a particular ingredient and the special flavouring of the product shall be indicated on the label if this is not otherwise apparent from the list of ingredients.

1.4.7.4. Examples of other markings: “Vágott vegyes savanyúság, nem hőkezelt” (Chopped mixed pickles, non-heat-treated), “Ecetes almapaprika, csípős, nem hőkezelt” (Apple peppers in vinegar, spicy, non-heat-treated), “Ecetes olajos (marinált) paradicsompaprika” (Marinated tomato peppers in oil and vinegar), “Szeletelt uborka savanyúság” (Sliced cucumber pickles).

Part C

PRODUCTS

1. GHERKINS

1.1. Specification, definition of the product

1.1.1. Food category according to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council: 04.2.2.

1.1.2. Gherkins are products preserved by heat treatment and pickled using an artificial process, which are made from freshly harvested cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus* L.), through direct production, with a brine containing vinegar, salt and sugar, with the addition of spices, flavourings and decorative plant parts.

1.1.3. The product shall not contain any preservatives.

1.1.4. Typical of the processed cucumber variety, straight in shape, nearly uniform in diameter, fresh, undamaged and intact, free from bitter taste.

1.2. Ingredients that may be used

1.2.1. cucumbers

1.2.2. sugar as per Annex 20

1.2.3. decorative plant parts

1.2.4. flavouring plant parts

1.2.5. table salt

1.2.6. vinegar

1.2.7. spices and their extracts

1.2.8. drinking water

1.2.9. only edible acids may be used from food additives belonging to the food category defined in point 1.1.1.

1.3. Quality characteristics

1.3.1. Physical and chemical properties

	A	B
1.	Characteristics	Value
2.	Acidity expressed as acetic acid, % (m/m)	0,5–1,2

3.	NaCl content, % (m/m), maximum	2,0
4.	Sand content, % (m/m), maximum	0,02

1.3.1.1. Size specification for graded gherkin cucumbers

	A	B
1.	Length of raw gherkin cucumber (cm)	Deviation from size in % of drained net weight (m/m), maximum
2.	3-6	20
3.	5-8	20
4.	6-9	20
5.	8-10	20
6.	9-12	20
7.	12-14	20

1.3.2. Organoleptic properties

1.3.2.1. The product shall not contain more than 20 % by number of distorted, damaged, spotted, hollow gherkins with a curvature greater than 30°.

1.3.2.2. Colour: characteristic olive green, typical of cucumbers.

1.3.2.3. Odour, taste: pleasant, harmonious, typical of the seasoning and spices.

1.3.2.4. Texture: crispy and crunchy.

1.3.2.5. Brine: translucent, with spices, flavouring plant parts and decorative plant parts that retain their shape.

1.4. Marking, labelling

1.4.1. Designation of the product: “csemegeuborka” (gherkins).

1.4.2. The complementary spice that gives the flavour and the decorative plant part may be specified as an addition to the designation.

1.4.3. As an addition to the designation, the size of the raw cucumber shall be indicated in accordance with point 1.3.1.1.

1.4.4. Examples for the designation: “Csemegeuborka, kapros, 6-9 cm” (Dill gherkins, 6–9 cm)

1.5. Recommended production process description

1.5.1. After cleaning, cucumbers are graded, washed, sorted, flower residues and stem residues longer than 5 mm are completely removed. The cucumbers, spices, seasonings and decorative plant parts are placed in heat-treatable containers in bulk or in rows, covered with brine and heat-treated for a period of time determined by the size of the packaging.

2. SAUERKRAUT/SOUR CABBAGE

2.1. Specification, definition of the product

2.1.1. Food category according to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council: 04.2.2.

2.1.2. Sauerkraut is a naturally fermented product made by removing the core from the cabbage and slicing it into thin, uniform slices, which are then fermented with lactic acid. The

product may contain whole fermented cabbage leaves or whole fermented cabbage heads. The shelf life of the finished product can be extended by heat treatment.

2.1.3. A maximum of 0.1 % (m/m) vinegar, expressed as acetic acid, may be added to sauerkraut.

2.2. Ingredients that may be used

2.2.1. firm, solid, heavy, ripe head cleaned from outer leaves of headed cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* L. convar. capitata L., f. alba) or red cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* L. convar. capitata L., f. rubra)

2.2.2. decorative plant parts

2.2.3 flavouring plant parts

2.2.4. table salt

2.2.5. vinegar

2.2.6. spices and their extracts

2.2.7. lactic bacteria starter culture

2.3. Quality characteristics

2.3.1. Physical and chemical properties

	A	B
1.	Characteristics	Value
2.	Acidity expressed as lactic acid, % (m/m)	0,7–2,3
3.	NaCl content, % (m/m), maximum	3,5
4.	Volatile acidity expressed as acetic acid, % (m/m), maximum	0,15

2.4. Marking, labelling

2.4.1. Designation of the product: “Savanyú káposzta” (Sauerkraut/sour cabbage).

2.4.2. The designation shall include a reference to the fact of heat treatment.

2.4.2.1. Examples for the designation: “Savanyú káposzta, hőkezelt” (Sauerkraut, heat-treated).

2.4.3. Other markings: if whole cabbages or cabbage leaves are added to sauerkraut, their quantity shall be indicated in percentage on the label.

2.4.3.1. Example of other markings: “Savanyú káposzta, 10% egész káposztával, hőkezelt” (Sauerkraut with 10 % whole cabbage, heat treated)

2.5. Recommended production process description

2.5.1. After removing the core from the cabbage, the uniform, thin slices – no more than 3 mm thick from summer cabbage and no more than 2 mm thick from autumn cabbage – are layered in a fermentation vessel with table salt, spices and flavouring plant parts, then compressed until the juice is released. It is then fermented at a temperature of around 18–20 °C, ensuring that the cabbage remains covered with the fermenting juice throughout the fermentation process.

2.5.2. If the product is to be stored for longer, it is preserved by pasteurisation.