

HIGH QUALITY FOOD CERTIFICATION MARK SCHEME



HIGH QUALITY FOOD
(KMÉ)

CERTIFICATION MARK SCHEME

SPECIFIC CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Gherkins

Budapest, October 2025

Gherkins

Applications for the High Quality Food (KMÉ) or High Quality Food gold grade trademarks may be submitted for products called 'gherkin' whose conditions of production comply with the applicable legal requirements and the relevant regulations of the Codex Alimentarius Hungaricus, and that also meet the following criteria.

Requirements for the raw material (raw gherkin cucumber):

- has a maximum length of 14 cm, is not deformed, its seeds are underdeveloped,
- is evenly cylindrical in shape, with small seed cavity, and is suitable for mechanical harvesting,
- represents a variety which is disease resistant and does not go bitter,
- integrated cultivation technology should be used in the production of gherkin cucumbers; with the use of technological tools for the prevention of pests, the implementation of plant protection-related early warning systems, monitoring, and preferably the application of biological plant protection. Logically applied chemical plant protection is allowed on the basis of the written permission of a plant protection engineer or plant doctor.

Requirements for the finished product:

Physical properties:

A maximum of 15 % by number of gherkins, with a curvature greater than 30°, may be distorted, damaged, spotted or hollow in the product.

Size specification for graded gherkin cucumbers: Dimension of raw gherkin cucumbers (cm)	Deviation from size in % of the net weight (w/w%) shall not exceed:
3-6	10
5-8	10
6-9	10
8-10	10
9-12	10
12-14	10

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KIVÁLÓ MINŐSÉGŰ ÉLELMISZER



Other requirements:

- It does not contain any stem part that is more than 1 cm in length,
- it does not contain cut or broken parts,
- the pickle juice is clear, completely covers the gherkins, the gherkins have a veil-like coating, no sediment is visible at the bottom of the jar,
- only transparent glass packaging material can be used.

Optional elements

Applications for the High Quality Food (KMÉ) and High Quality Food Gold Grade trademarks may be submitted for products that, in addition to the above-mentioned mandatory requirements, also comply with at least one point in each of the optional element categories of I and II.

I. Production process

Self-testing and self-monitoring

1. Comprehensive (organoleptic, physical, chemical, microbiological) self-testing of the product by production batch.
2. Use of methods in the holding with which production processes and product safety, quality and hygiene are regularly checked in a documented manner. Based on the findings, corrective measures are put in place, good practices are identified and staff are trained accordingly.
3. Trend analysis within the framework of self-monitoring: creation of a quality control chart for the graphical representation of analytical and microbiological values, with the setting of guidance values, a warning threshold and/or limit values. These values shall be compared to the actual data collected from self-testing, and, if necessary, appropriate measures shall be taken.
4. Tests under the self-monitoring scheme shall be carried out by authorised own or external laboratories with regard to the following criteria:
 - acidity % w/w (expressed as acetic acid),
 - NaCl (salt) content % w/w,
 - sand content % w/w,

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- microbiology (yeast count, mould count, total plate count, sulphite-reducing Clostridia, mesophilic aerobic and facultative anaerobic spore counts)
- pesticide residues from the supplied raw material,
- heavy metal residues from the supplied raw material,
- perchlorate content from the supplied raw material.

At least 9 samples per year shall be tested at random from the various batches produced in the given year.

5. Self-testing on a batch-by-batch basis, with a focus on the production process (from the receipt of raw materials to the delivery of the finished product) (particularly the checking of heat treatment time and temperature, as well as the sealing).
6. There shall be a raw material evaluation/supplier programme in place, where trend analysis is performed based on laboratory findings.
7. Use of raw materials bearing the KMÉ trademark.
8. Certified organic farming (not optional in combination with point 25).
9. Gherkin cucumber producers should have a Global G.A.P. certificate.
10. Raw gherkin cucumbers are transported to the processing plant from the producer within 24 hours from their harvesting.
11. Control of the foreign material treatment process via the PRP programme and its strict enforcement.
12. Operation of food safety and quality management systems certified by an independent body (e.g. IFS, ISO 22000, BRC, BRCS FOOD, FSSC 22000), possession of a certification.

II. Sustainability

Environmental protection (reduction of environmental footprint, green logistics)

- Use of environment friendly, renewable energy resources

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13. The holding/applicant derives part of its energy from renewable energy sources (e.g. thermal water, geothermal heat, solar panels, biogas) in the production and preparation process.
*(The undertaking has a certified green product, green service, or sells green energy (solar energy, wind energy, hydropower, biogas, geothermal energy).
Document to demonstrate the distribution of total and renewable electricity consumption in the last financial year).*
- Use of sustainable management inputs/technological methods
14. More efficient resource management, material, energy and water management, and modernisation of processing technologies that reduce environmental impact (for example regenerative heat recovery, waste heat recovery, the improvement of the efficiency of the refrigeration systems and the reduction of energy consumption).
(It shall be demonstrated:
- *whether it has environmental compliance/certification*
- *whether it uses a qualified green product or service for its operation.*
It has a process in place to identify, assess and respond to environmental and social risks and opportunities.
It is necessary to examine what proportion of the materials used by the undertaking or by the undertakings in its value chains are recycled, reclaimed, renewable and non-renewable raw materials /circular economy/.)
15. Energy recovery system on production machines.
(For example, the use of any equipment that captures and transmits the waste heat of the compressor. Recycling of thermal energy for other industrial processes that require heat or steam).
16. Application of an Environmental Management System (EMS) or EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) in accordance with standard MSZ EN ISO 14001:2015, certifying environmental compliance.
(Preparation of annual reports which provide information about the energy use, waste management, water use and other environmental impacts.)
17. Certified and regularly used environmentally friendly and/or water-saving cleaning products and detergents.
(Certifications, safety data sheets, specifications, trademarks on the packaging. Certificates from certification bodies, e.g. Ecocert, Green Certification, Breeam, Leed.)
18. Utilization of by-products, minimisation of product and material losses.
(The undertaking has a process in place to identify, assess and respond to environmental and social risks and opportunities. The undertaking uses raw materials, secondary raw materials produced from waste in accordance with

circular economy principles, and the circular economy requirements are taken into account in the design of the product, including the packaging of the product.)

19. Operation of an environmentally sound waste management system. Separate waste collection and recycling, in a documented form.

(The undertaking is authorised to handle, collect, transport, store and dispose of persistent organic pollutants in a non-polluting way once they become waste.)

20. Efficient and environmentally friendly waste water treatment technology (e.g. biological waste water treatment).

21. Verified decrease in specific water use.

(E.g. use of run-off hot water from installations for secondary cleaning tasks, drip irrigation, rainwater collection and recycling, grey water recycling.)

- Green rating

22. Official proof of a recognised, certified sustainability rating in accordance with the EU legislation in force (e.g., but not limited to: EcoVadis, B Corp, BREEAM, LEED, ISCC).

23. Green sourcing policy, documented: prioritising suppliers that have made sustainability investments.

(The undertaking makes its suppliers carry out an environmental assessment of the products and/or services. Demonstration of the proportion in which suppliers use, for example, renewable energy sources, whether they take into account the building energy aspects, whether they operate an environmentally sound waste system, minimise the environmental impact of the logistics network and that of transport.)

24. The undertaking has a Science Based Target Initiative (SPTI) commitment.

25. The raw material used in the production of the product comes from certified organic or extensive farming or has a reduced environmental footprint for which there is other scientific evidence. (not optional together with point 8)

(E.g. products labelled as organic, environmentally friendly product or service.)

- Use of eco-friendly packaging solutions

26. Application of an eco-friendly packaging solution for packaged products (reduced packaging size or alternative packaging materials e.g. compostable (FSC or PEFC logo)).

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27. Suppliers of primary packaging material that comes into contact with the product shall have BRC or IFS PACsecure certification.

- Transport

28. The main component comes to the processing plant from own holding or from within 100 km.

(Place of production, the production and/or processing site may be located within a distance of 100 km.)

29. Plant protection products, materials that improve or maintain the fertility of the soil shall be transferred to the production site from within 100 km.

30. Transport optimisation, route planning to reduce emissions.
(Lean & Green program)

31. The product shall be delivered to the consumer within a short supply chain.

Social aspects

32. Existence of SMETA (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) audit.

33. Prevention of food waste through donation.

34. Prevention of food waste by preventing waste generation in production and logistics.