

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation(EC) No 2406/96. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

ANNEX I

FRESHNESS RATINGS

The ratings established in this Annex apply to the following products or groups of products, by reference to appraisal criteria specific to each of them.

A. Whitefish

Haddock, cod, saithe, pollack, redfish, whiting, ling, hake, Ray's bream, anglerfish, pouting and poor cod, bogue, picarel, conger, gurnard, mullet, plaice, megrim, sole, dab, lemon sole, flounder, scabbard fish.

B. Bluefish

Albacore or longfinned tuna, bluefin tuna, bigeye tuna, blue whiting, herring, sardines, mackerel, horse mackerel, anchovy^[F1], sprat].

Textual Amendments

F1 Inserted by [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 790/2005 of 25 May 2005 amending Council Regulation \(EC\) No 2406/96 laying down common marketing standards for certain fishery products.](#)

C. Selachii

Dogfish, skate.

D. Cephalopods

Cuttlefish.

E. Crustaceans

1. Shrimps,

2. Norway lobster.

A. WHITEFISH

	Criteria			Not admitted ^a
	Freshness category			
	Extra	A	B	
Skin	Bright, iridescent pigment (save for redfish) or opalescent; no discolouration	Pigmentation bright but not lustrous	Pigmentation in the process of becoming discoloured and dull	Dull pigmentation ^b
Skin mucus	Aqueous, transparent	Slightly cloudy	Milky	Yellowish grey, opaque mucus

a This column will apply only until a Commission Decision is taken establishing criteria for fish which is unfit for human consumption, pursuant to Council Directive 91/493/EEC.

b Or in a more advanced state of decay.

c Fresh fish prior to the onset of rigor mortis will not be firm and elastic but will still be graded in category Extra.

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation(EC) No 2406/96. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

Eye	Convex (bulging); black, bright pupil; transparent cornea	Convex and slightly sunken; black dull pupil; slightly opalescent cornea	Flat; opalescent cornea; opaque pupil	Concave in the centre; grey pupil; milky cornea ^b
Gills	Bright colour; no mucus	Less coloured; transparent mucus	Brown/grey becoming discoloured; thick, opaque mucus	Yellowish; milky mucus ^b
Peritoneum (in gutted fish)	Smooth; bright; difficult to detach from flesh	Slightly dull; can be detached from flesh	Speckled; comes away easily from flesh	Does not stick ^b
Smell of gills and abdominal cavity				^b
— whitefish other than plaice	Seaweedy	No smell of seaweed; neutral smell	Fermented; slightly sour	Sour
— plaice	Fresh oily; peppery; earthy smell	Oily; seaweedy or slightly sweetish	Oily; fermented; stale, slightly rancid	Sour
Flesh	Firm and elastic; smooth surface ^c	Less elastic	Slightly soft (flaccid), less elastic; waxy (velvety) and dull surface	Soft (flaccid) ^b ; scales easily detached from skin, surface rather wrinkled
Extra criteria for headed anglerfish				
Blood vessels (ventral muscles)	Sharp outline and bright red	Sharp outline; darkening of the blood	Diffuse and brown	Totally ^b diffuse, brown and yellowing of the flesh

^a This column will apply only until a Commission Decision is taken establishing criteria for fish which is unfit for human consumption, pursuant to Council Directive 91/493/EEC.

^b Or in a more advanced state of decay.

^c Fresh fish prior to the onset of rigor mortis will not be firm and elastic but will still be graded in category Extra.

B. BLUEFISH

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation(EC) No 2406/96. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

	Criteria			
	Freshness category			Not admitted^a
	Extra	A	B	
Skin^b	Bright pigmentation, bright, shining iridescent colours; clear distinction between dorsal and central surfaces	Loss of lustre and shine; duller colours; less difference between dorsal and ventral surfaces	Dull, lustreless, insipid colours; skin creased when fish curved	Very dull pigmentation; skin coming away from flesh ^c
Skin mucus	Aqueous, transparent	Slightly cloudy	Milky	Yellowish grey, opaque mucus ^c
Consistency of flesh^b	Very firm, rigid	Fairly rigid, firm	Slightly soft	Soft (flaccid) ^c
Gill covers	Silvery	Silvery, slightly red or brown	Brownish and extensive seepage of blood from vessels	Yellowish ^c
Eye	Convex, bulging; blue-black bright pupil, transparent 'eyelid'	Convex and slightly sunken; dark pupil; slightly opalescent cornea	Flat; blurred pupil; blood seepage around the eye	Concave in the centre; grey pupil; milky cornea ^c
Gills^b	Uniformly dark red to purple. No mucus	Less bright colour, paler at edges. Transparent mucus	Becoming thick discoloured opaque mucus	Yellowish; milky mucus ^c
Smell of gills	Fresh seaweed; pungent; iodine	No smell or seaweed. Neutral smell	Slightly sulphureous ^d fatty smell, rancid bacon cuttings or rotten fruit	Rotten sour ^c

a This column will apply only until a Commission Decision is taken establishing criteria for fish which is unfit for human consumption, pursuant to Council Directive 91/493/EEC.

b For herring and mackerel preserved in cool seawater (either chilled by ice (CSW) or refrigerated by mechanical means (RSW)) complying with the requirements laid down in Directive 92/48/EEC (OJ No L 187, 7. 7. 1992, p. 41) Annex II, point 8, the following freshness categories apply:
— criterion A applies for Extra and A categories.

c Or in a more advanced state of decay.

d Iced fish goes rancid before stale, CSW/RSW fish goes stale before rancid.

C. SELACHII

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation(EC) No 2406/96. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

	Criteria			
	Freshness category			Not admitted⁰
	Extra	A	B	
Eye	Convex, very bright and iridescent; small pupils	Convex and slightly sunken; loss of brightness and iridescence, oval pupils	Flat, dull	Concave yellowish ⁰
Appearance	In rigor mortis or partially in rigor; small quantity of clear mucus present on skin	Beyond rigor stage; no mucus on skin and especially in mouth and gill openings	Some mucus in mouth and on gill openings; slightly flattened jaw	Large quantities of mucus in mouth and on gill openings ⁰
Smell	Seaweed smell	No smell or very slight stale but not an ammonia smell	Slight ammonia; sour	Pungent ammonia smell ⁰

Specific or additional criteria for skate

	Extra	A	B	Not admitted
Skin	Bright, iridescent and shiny pigmentation, aqueous mucus	Bright pigmentation, aqueous mucus	Pigmentation in the process of becoming discoloured and dull, opaque mucus	Discolouration, skin creased, thick mucus
Texture of the flesh	Firm and elastic	Firm	Soft	Flaccid
Aspect	Edge of the fins translucent and curved	Stiff fins	Soft	Drooping
Belly	White and shiny with a mauvish edge around the fins	White and shiny with red patches limited to around the fins	White and dull, with numerous red or yellow patches	Yellow to greenish bellies red patches in the flesh itself

a This column will apply only until a Commission Decision is taken establishing criteria for fish which is unfit for human consumption, pursuant to Council Directive 91/493/EEC.

b Or in a more advanced state of decay.

D. CEPHALOPODS

	Criteria		
	Freshness category		
	Extra	A	B

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation(EC) No 2406/96. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

Skin	Bright pigmentation, skin sticks to flesh	Dull pigmentation; skin sticks to flesh	Discoloured; easily detached from flesh
Flesh	Very firm; pearly white	Firm; chalky white	Slightly soft; pinky white or slightly yellowing
Tentacles	Resistant to removal	Resistant to removal	More easily removed
Smell	Fresh; seaweed	Slightly or no smell	Ink smell

E. CRUSTACEANS

1.

SHRIMPS

	Criteria	
	Freshness category	
	Extra	A
Minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Surface of shell: moist and shiny — Shrimps must fall out separately when transferred from one container to another — Flesh must be free from any foreign odour — Shrimps must be free from sand, mucus and other foreign bodies 	The same as for Extra category
Appearance of:		
1. shrimp with shell	Clear reddish-pink in colour with small white flecks; pectoral part of shell predominantly light in colour	— Ranging in colour from slightly washed-out reddish-pink to bluish-red with white flecks; pectoral part of shell should be light coloured tending towards grey
2. deep-water prawn	Uniformly pink	— Pink with possibility of start of blackening of head
Condition of flesh during and after shelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Shells easily with only technically unavoidable losses of flesh — Firm but not tough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Shells less easily with small losses of flesh — Less firm, slightly tough
Fragments	Occasional fragments of shrimp allowed	Small quantity of fragments of shrimp allowed

Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation(EC) No 2406/96. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

Smell	Fresh seaweed, slightly sweet smell	Acidulous; no smell of seaweed
--------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------

2.

NORWAY LOBSTER

	Criteria		
	Freshness category		
	Extra	A	B
Shell	Pale pink or pink to orange-red	Pale pink or pink to orange-red; no black spots	Slight discoloration; some black spots and greyish colour, particularly on shell and between tail segments
Eye and gills	Shiny black eyes; pink gills	Eyes dull and grey/black; gills greyish	Gills dark grey or some greenish colour on dorsal surface of shell
Smell	Characteristic mild shellfish smell	Loss of characteristic shellfish smell. No ammonia smell	Slightly sour
Flesh (tail)	Translucent and blue in colour tending towards white	No longer translucent but not discoloured	Opaque and dull in appearance

Changes to legislation:

There are outstanding changes not yet made to Council Regulation(EC) No 2406/96. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

[View outstanding changes](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to :

- Regulation applied (with modifications) by [S.I. 2023/959 reg. 4\(a\)Sch. 1](#)
- Annex 1 words omitted by [S.I. 2019/739 reg. 20\(9\)\(a\)](#)
- Annex 1 words omitted by [S.I. 2019/739 reg. 20\(9\)\(b\)](#)
- Annex 1 words omitted by [S.I. 2019/739 reg. 20\(9\)\(c\)](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole legislation item and associated provisions

- Art. 1(2)(a) words substituted by [S.I. 2019/739 reg. 20\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- Art. 2(3)-(6) substituted for Art. 2(3) by [S.I. 2019/753 reg. 34\(2\)](#)
- Art. 8(4)-(7) substituted for Art. 8(4) by [S.I. 2019/753 reg. 34\(3\)](#)