



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 August 2017

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Seventy-third session

Geneva, 7-8 November 2017

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

The revised position of the Specialized Section on blackleg of seed potatoes

Submitted by the secretariat

The following document is submitted to the Working Party for information as the revised position of the Specialized Section on blackleg of seed potatoes. It is prepared according to ECE/CTCS/2015/7 (part II, section A, subsection c).

Blackleg occurrence in seed potato crops is an important indicator of quality. In the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes, strict tolerances for blackleg in the growing crop and at lot inspection underpin, as part of the rot tolerance, the control of this disease in certified seed.

Disease expression in the progeny crop is not always directly related to either inspection findings or bacterial loading in mother tubers. It has been demonstrated that the contamination levels of the individual mother seed lots, estimated by performing molecular testing, do not allow reliable prediction of the development of the disease in the individual succeeding crop. This is due to the important influence of the multiple environmental and agronomic factors. Nevertheless, regular inspections and enforcing strict tolerances within the certification system continues to be the best regulatory mechanism to control the disease for all of the crops. In line with the UNECE Guide to Operating a Seed Potato Certification Service, DAs may wish to adopt more stringent tolerances when this is appropriate to their production conditions.

Conditions which favour blackleg, particularly excessive moisture, anaerobic conditions and in the case of *Dickeya*, high temperatures, can lead to the development of the disease.

Good agronomic practices combined with preventive measures, such as avoiding excessive nitrogen supply and over-irrigation, removal of diseased tubers prior to planting, allowing mother tubers to fully deteriorate prior to harvest, forced ventilation immediately after harvest, maintaining a high degree of farm hygiene, are very important in blackleg control.
