
Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
RESTRICTED

AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/R.157
3 March 1997

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Meeting of Experts on Co-ordination of
Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
Forty-third session, 12 - 16 May 1997, Geneva

Item 9 b) of the Provisional Agenda

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE USEFULNESS OF SIZING PROVISIONS

Note by the Secretariat

This document has been submitted by the delegation of the Netherlands following the discussions which took place at the forty-second session of the Meeting of Experts.

1. In the Netherlands, the attitude to provisions concerning minimum sizes and sizing scales is gradually changing and in particular towards those elements determined by market demands. The Dutch delegation is increasingly being confronted with demands to review sizing provisions when, for example a buyer requires a different size or, when a new variety comes onto the market (e.g. round tomatoes attached to the stalk with a diameter of 30 mm, now in production in the Netherlands)

2. Since the market is changing from a supply market to a demand market, the Dutch delegation suggests to reflect on whether such sizing provisions are more often than not an encumbrance.

3. The Dutch delegation believes that it would be a more positive approach to allow the sector itself suggest such provisions. The purpose of these provisions - to exclude inferior products and ensure clarity in the trading channel for both supplier and buyer- will not be an issue. The business community is prepared and wants to assume more responsibility. Ultimately, the client will always turn to the product supplier since it is the client who makes demands regarding the product and its quality. Unacceptable products and inferior sizes, etc. will price themselves out of the market.

4. The Dutch delegation suggests that a first step towards more self-responsibility could be taken by not fixing any provisions on minimum sizes and sizing scales. In the intervening period, sizing could be controlled by retaining or introducing provisions concerning uniformity. Moreover, products that for various reasons do not comply with the minimum size, but are certainly acceptable as far as other requirements are concerned (such as ripeness etc.) could then be traded without any problem. The same applies also to mini-products.

5. As an example, the Dutch delegation suggests the following changes to the sizing provisions for Tomatoes:

The difference in diameter for tomatoes in the same package may not exceed:

if the smallest diameter comes between:	maximum difference in diameter in the same package: in mm
20 - 45 mm	10
45 - 70 mm	15
70 mm or more	20

6. The Dutch delegation proposes that the Meeting of Experts should have a general discussion on the usefulness of, in particular, the sizing requirements. The question among other things in whether it is preferable to simplify or even delete the sizing requirements.