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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of  
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Fifty-first session

8 - 11 March 2005, Geneva

Item 4(a) of the Provisional Agenda

**UNECE RECOMMENDATIONS IN TRIAL PERIOD  
APPLES**

Transmitted by New Zealand

**Note by the secretariat:** In this document New Zealand does not present new data or analysis but seeks to present New Zealand's views, based on their previous analysis (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2004/9) and discussions held at the last session. The views have been arrived at following significant analysis of data from New Zealand's experience.

## UNECE APPLE STANDARD FFV-50

- **PROVISIONS CONCERNING WEIGHT SIZING**
- **MATURITY PARAMETERS FOR APPLES**

### **Weight Sizing**

New Zealand has previously tabled analysis to demonstrate that there is not an effective correlation between weight and diameter. This was previously noted in the Apple Standard as footnote 4 and supported by Chile and South Africa.

Despite there being no clear correlation between weight and diameter, New Zealand has tabled data and recommendations for minimum weights that were considered to be the closest possible alignment with the minimum equatorial diameters at present in the Apple Standard.

In November 2003 the Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables approved a two year trial period for the minimum weights recommended by New Zealand. That trial period ends in November 2005.

New Zealand is not aware of any reports that would indicate the trade in apples has been altered or distorted as a result of the trial period for weight sizing. It is, therefore, New Zealand's view we should conclude that the trial has demonstrated that the minimum weights used in the trial are appropriate for permanent inclusion in the standard.

### **Maturity Parameters**

The discussions at the 50<sup>th</sup> Session demonstrated the difficulties associated with identifying suitable parameters for apple maturity. New Zealand fully supports the following underlying principles that were tabled by the European Commission at the last session;

- a) That the sampling approach should be based on the three-step principles as tabled at the last meeting<sup>1</sup>. In particular, verification of the criteria should only occur if there is reasonable reason to assume the produce does not meet the criteria.
- b) That the goal of maturity criteria is "to define values below which apples would no longer be satisfactory to any consumer"<sup>2</sup>

New Zealand believes that criteria will only be successful if they are simple and easily verified. In this respect New Zealand supports standards that are measured at point of export and place simple criteria on **Minimum Maturity** and **Maximum Maturity**.

#### *Maximum Maturity*

It is New Zealand's view that Maximum Maturity is best established by setting a minimum fruit pressure. We support a minimum firmness of 5 kgf when measured at point of export using a penetrometer tip of 11.1mm.

In commercial practise New Zealand fruit is exported with pressures consistently above 6.0 kgf, resulting in minimum in-market pressures in the range 5.1 – 7.2 kgf for traditional varieties. For new high crisp varieties (eg Jazz<sup>TM</sup>) the in-market pressure is more likely to be in the range 9-12 kgf.

#### *Minimum Maturity*

The European Commission has proposed that Minimum Maturity requires two separate criteria; pressure and brix.

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<sup>1</sup> Point 74 from the report of the fiftieth session

<sup>2</sup> Point 75 from the report of the fiftieth session

It remains New Zealand's view that only a Soluble Solids (Brix) criteria is required to meet the test established in Point 75 of the report from the 50<sup>th</sup> Session. It is our view that a fruit that has reached a suitable brix level will continue its normal maturity process and is therefore clearly meeting minimum maturity criteria.

For the criteria of minimum maturity New Zealand supports Soluble Solids (Brix) criteria of 10% at point of export. We recognise the need to establish exceptions for apple varieties specifically intended for special consumption (eg Bramley's Seedling).

*Maturity and Size*

New Zealand supports the retention of minimum size in the UNECE standard. Until maturity criteria are well established and there is enough historical data to demonstrate the trade's commitment to the new maturity criteria, the minimum size standards will continue to provide an important stability to the trade in apples within the European market.

However, New Zealand does not accept that there is a simple correlation between maturity and size and New Zealand will continue to resist the introduction of minimum size criteria into other standards, such as CODEX.