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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of  
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Meeting of Experts on Standardization of  
Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)

REPORT ON ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

1. The Meeting of Experts held its forty-fifth session in Grenoble (France) from 15 to 19 June 1998. The session was attended by delegations from France; Germany; Greece; Italy; Poland; Romania; Spain; Switzerland; Turkey; the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. The European Community also participated in the session. A delegation from India participated under Article 11.

2. At the invitation of the secretariat, representatives of the International Nut Council (INC) also participated.

3. The session was opened by the Director of the Conseil Général de l'Isère, Mr. Bernard Saugey and the Vice-Chairman of the Meeting of Experts, Mr. Wilfried Staub (Germany). The Meeting observed a minute of silence in honour of the deceased Chairman, Mr. Monastra (Italy)

Adoption of the Agenda (Item 1)

4. The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda with the addition of several documents listed below:

- TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/CRP.6 Inshell Hazelnuts (proposed by the Spanish delegation)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/CRP.7 Hazelnut Kernels (proposed by the Spanish delegation)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/CRP.3 Cashew Kernels (proposed by the Indian delegation)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/CRP.4 Multilingual Dictionary (proposed by the Italian delegation)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/CRP.5 Dried Cherries (proposed by the Romanian delegation)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/CRP.2 Charts on Cracking Yield (proposed by the Spanish delegation)
- Revised versions of the Standard for Inshell Hazelnuts and Hazelnut Kernels was presented by the Rapporteur (Turkey).

Election of Officers (Item 2)

5. The Meeting unanimously elected Mr. W. Staub (Germany) as Chairman and Mr. M. Sciannella (Italy) as Vice-Chairman.

Matters of interest arising since the forty-fourth session

(Item 3)

6. The Meeting took note of document TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/2, presenting information on decisions taken by the Working Party at its fifty-third session, related to the work on standardization of dry and dried fruit.

Working Papers on the Alignment of UN/ECE Standards with the Standard Layout

(Item 4)

a) Inshell Hazelnuts

7. The Rapporteur (Turkey) reviewed the revised version of the Standard in detail.

8. I. Definition of Produce: The Meeting decided to replace the term "écale" in the French version by the term "cupule".

9. II. Provisions concerning Quality; (i) A. Minimum Requirements:

The Meeting agreed to the following changes:

- changed in (a) first indent the word "materially" to "noticeably" (in French "sensiblement")
- amended (b) last indent to read: "free from blemishes (including alterations caused by the presence of black colour) or deterioration rendering them unfit for consumption." (in French: "exempte de taches (y compris altérations par la présence d'une couleur noire) ou d'altérations rendant le fruit impropre à la consommation."

10. Discussion on the inclusion of a cracking yield figure after (b) third indent was postponed to a later stage.

11. The Meeting also agreed to clarify (ii) Moisture content and change the reference to "hazelnuts" at the beginning of the sentence to "Inshell hazelnuts".

12. B. Classification: The Meeting decided to move the definition of "commercial type" currently in the Annex, to (i) Extra Class at the end of the second sentence as a new footnote; reference to the same footnote was also inserted after the second sentence of (ii) Class I.

13. III. Provisions concerning Sizing: The Meeting agreed to accept the proposal by the US delegation to amend footnote 4 (old numbering) to read: "In addition to this size table, provided that the size or screen in millimetres is also expressed in the marking, any size including larger sizes may be used with optional size names." The Meeting also corrected the French text and included in footnote 4 (old numbering) first sentence after "le calibre": "ou le crible en mm..." Furthermore, the US delegation withdrew its reservation included in footnote 5 (old numbering). The French text was aligned with the English text and the wording "coupe médiane" was replaced by "section équatoriale."

14. Following a comment by France, discussion took place on the necessity to identify sizes above 22 mm in two millimetre increments. Many delegations felt that it was not necessary as the standard defines minimum requirements only and should not be too restrictive.

15. Lengthy discussion also took place on whether the screened size "and less" could be deleted which, as several delegations noted, could confuse the consumer. It was finally agreed to accept the proposal by the INC and insert the following text at the end of the last paragraph: "For produce presented to the final consumer under the classification screened, the size "and less" is not allowed."

16. Provisions concerning Tolerances, A. Quality Tolerances: The Meeting reviewed in detail the table. Lengthy discussion took place on whether all tolerances should be determined by weight, by count or by both, i.e. empty nuts by count and the rest of the tolerances by weight. In the case of the tolerances for empty nuts being determined by count, it was agreed that the latter would be raised to 4%, 6% and 8% for Extra Class, Class I and Class II respectively. A small working group was requested to present a revised table at a later stage.

17. With reference to the footnotes, the German delegation withdrew its reservation included in footnote 7 (old numbering). The delegation from Romania requested to amend its reservation in footnote 9 (old numbering) to read: "Reservation by Romania requesting a 1% tolerance for mouldy in Extra Class. Romania agrees with the 3% total tolerance in Extra Class for mouldy, rotten, rancid or damaged by insects or animal pests."

18. V. Provisions concerning Presentation, C. Presentation.: The Meeting decided to replace the term "package" in the second sentence by "lot", a decision which had already been taken at the last session.

19. VI. Provisions concerning Marking, B. Nature of Produce: The Meeting agreed to delete the reference to "when the produce is not visible from the outside" after the name of the produce. It was decided that this change should be reflected in all standards and the Standard Layout because, as the

representative of the INC explained, mentioning the name of the produce was always required.

20. C. Origin of Produce: It was agreed to indent this sentence in order to align this provision with the Standard Layout.

21. D. Commercial Specifications: The Meeting deleted the second indent to reflect a decision already taken at the last session. Following a proposal by the Spanish delegation requesting that the net weight should always be indicated, the Meeting deliberated in detail on this matter. The Turkish delegation noted that the indication of the gross weight was common trade practice in their country. It was finally agreed to leave the text as it stands and to amend footnote 11 to read: (old numbering) "Net weight has to be indicated at the request of the importer or the importing country".

22. Annex I Determination of the Moisture Content: The Spanish delegation drew the Meeting's attention to current laboratory practice which was no longer reflected by the method given in Annex I, and it was agreed that a revision of this Annex, included in all Standards, would be added under 11. a. Future Work.

23. Study on Cracking Yield: With reference to the definition of the minimum requirement "sufficiently developed" the Spanish delegation presented a very useful and highly appreciated study on the subject. (see document Trade/WP.7/GE.2/1997/13). However, in discussing the issue, opinions of delegations on whether or not to include a cracking yield in the Standard widely diverged.

24. The delegations of Spain, France and Italy were in favour of including a footnote referring to the cracking yield which was proposed to read as follows: "The delegations of France, Spain and Italy consider that this condition is satisfied if the sample weight yield at the shelling is equal or higher than 39% (% Kernel's weight regarding the total weight of the sample)." Other delegations did not agree with this proposal. As the revised version of the Standard would be presented to the Working Party for a two year trial period, delegations finally agreed to a compromise solution which consisted in the following: indent three would then read: "sufficiently developed; empty, shrunken or shrivelled fruit are to be excluded." Footnote 1 was deleted. The provision would be re-discussed at the end of the trial period.

25. V. Provisions concerning Tolerances. The delegations of the United Kingdom, Turkey and Spain presented to the Meeting a revised version of the table of tolerances taking into account the discussions which had taken place the day before. The Meeting accepted the proposal, however changed the calculation of the percentage of empty nuts to "by count" and consequently doubled the tolerances to 4, 6, and 8% respectively. Furthermore, the Meeting agreed to add the explanatory note for "rancid" (second sentence) of the Annex at the end of the table to read: "An oily appearance of the flesh does not necessarily indicate a rancid condition." Furthermore, the note referring to

the presence of living insects being inadmissible in any class was left unchanged. The accepted table is reproduced below:

A. Quality tolerances

Tolerances Allowed (percent of defective fruit)	Extra	Class I	Class II
(a) Total tolerances for shell defects (calculated on a total inshell weight basis)	3 <u>6</u> /	5	7
(b) Total tolerances for kernel defects (calculated on the decorticated weight basis)	5	8 <u>8</u> /	12 <u>8</u> /
Mouldy, rotten, rancid* or damaged by insects+ (calculated on the decorticated weight basis)	3 <u>9</u> /	5	6
(c) Empty nuts (calculated by count)	4	6	8
(d) Foreign matter (calculated on a total inshell weight basis)	0.25	0.25	0.25

\* An oily appearance of the flesh does not necessarily indicate a rancid condition.

+ Living insects or animals are inadmissible in all classes.

26. The Rapporteur (Turkey) presented a revised version of Annex II (definition of defects) to the Meeting which was accepted without changes. The new Annex is reproduced below:

- Defects of the shell: no change
- Intact: means that the shell is not broken, split or mechanically damaged; a slight crack is not considered as a defect provided the kernel is still protected.
- Well formed: Means that the shell is not noticeably misshapen and that its shape concords with the characteristic varietal or commercial type.
- Dry: no change
- Empty: no change
- Cracks or splitting: same text as for "split shell"
- Insect damage: no change
- Rancidity: Oxidation of lipids or free fatty acids producing a disagreeable flavour.
- Mould: no change
- Foreign matter: Any matter not normally associated with the product.
- Rotten/Decay: Significant decomposition caused by the action of micro-organisms.
- Shrunken: A condition yielding undeveloped firm fruit obtained after fertilization during rapid kernel growth in extremely high temperatures.
- Shrivelled: The wrinkling of more than 50 % of the fruit skin surface of the compact fruit, usually occurring in seasons when there are

high crop yields, or when there is stress from drought or poor nutrition, or as an inherited trait.

27. Meeting expressed its gratitude to the Rapporteur (Turkey) for all the efforts and work and decided to present the revised text to Working Party for adoption as a recommendation for a two year trial period.

Consideration of UN/ECE Recommendations (Item 5)

a) Cashew Kernels

28. The Rapporteur (United Kingdom) noted that no substantial comments other than those received from India had been received in advance of the Meeting. In view of the heavy agenda, it was agreed that additional comments would be submitted directly to the Rapporteur in writing within one month of the Meeting.

29. The delegation of the USA noted that the other major producing countries, Brazil and Vietnam, should be consulted before the Recommendation for Cashew Kernels be adopted as a Standard. The Meeting agreed to request that the Working Party at its next session extend the trial period for the UN/ECE Recommendation for Cashew Kernels for another year and that the revised version be discussed at the next session of the Meeting of Experts. She also explained that owing to organizational changes it might be difficult for her country to serve as Rapporteur in the future. The delegation of India offered to serve as Rapporteur if required.

30. With reference to the proposals presented by the Indian delegation, lengthy discussion took place on whether the marking of the country of origin should be mandatory or whether the marking of the country of processing was also acceptable. Several delegations felt that marking the country of origin was essential, others, including the delegation of India, noted that cashew kernels were a very specific produce and that there were no differences between cashew nuts grown in different countries. It was furthermore pointed out that substantial international trade of raw cashew nuts took place before processing and that nuts of different growing countries were mixed. Therefore, determining the origin of the processed nuts was very difficult. It was felt that this issue required further reflection, also in the light of the current deliberations on product origin taking place in the World Trade Organization and the European Union.

31. With reference to the comments of the Indian delegation contained in CRP.6, the Meeting requested more precise indications and proposals as to higher tolerances for very small pieces and baby bits.

Working Paper on the Alignment of UN/ECE Standards with the Standard Layout (Item 4)

b) Hazelnut Kernels

32. The Rapporteur (Turkey) noted that all changes agreed on at the last session had been incorporated in the current text. At the request of the French delegation, and in an effort to align the Standard for Hazelnut Kernels with the Standard for Inshell Hazelnuts, the Meeting agreed to move the

provisions on the commercial type from the Annex into the body of the Standard, i.e. as a footnote to I. B. Classification (i) Extra Class, end of the second sentence and (ii) Class I, end of second sentence.

33. A further change was introduced in I. A. Minimum Requirements, first indent, where the Meeting removed the second and third sentence as the definition of "pieces" was already included in the Definition of Defects. Lengthy discussion took place on the provision referring to a change of odour mentioned in footnote I. It was finally decided to leave the text as it was and to align the French text accordingly to read: " Cette prescription ne s'applique pas aux taches internes ou externes entraînant une altération de l'odeur ou de la saveur des noisettes, toujours à condition que celles-ci restent propres à la consommation." However, the Meeting was requested to reflect on a possible introduction of the word "slight alteration" during the trial period and on a proposal by the delegation from the United Kingdom which read as follows: "Characteristic variations in hazelnut odour or taste are permissible provided the hazelnuts remain fit for human consumption."

34. III. Provisions concerning Sizing: After a very detailed and lengthy debate on whether to include a provision on screened produce presented to the final consumer under the specification "and less", delegations decided to introduce a new sentence at the end of (ii) Screened hazelnuts which reads: "For produce presented only to the final consumer under the specification screened, the size "and less" is not allowed."

35. The Spanish delegation having prepared a working document (CRP. 7) urged the Meeting to keep the issues mentioned in his paper in mind and reflect on them during the trial period. In this respect he pointed in particular to proposals concerning sizing provisions as well as the revised Definition of Defects contained in the working document.

36. IV. Provisions concerning Tolerances: The Meeting agreed to add an asterisk after "rancid" in the table of tolerances and move the second sentence from Annex II "Rancidity" below the table (which had already been done in the Standard for Inshell Hazelnuts), i.e. "An oily appearance of the flesh does not necessarily indicate a rancid condition."

37. V. Provisions concerning Presentation, C. Presentation: The word "shipment" was replaced by the word "lot" (in English and French) in a further effort to align both hazelnut standards.

38. VI. Provisions concerning Marking, D. Commercial specifications: The Meeting proceeded to align the text of the third indent referring to weight and amended footnote 8 to read: "Net weight has to be indicated at the request of the importer or the importing country". It was furthermore agreed to change the last indent to read: "- crop year according to the legislation of the importing country."

39. The Meeting thanked the Rapporteur (Turkey) for his excellent work and agreed to present the revised version of the Standard for Hazelnut Kernels to the Working Party, to be adopted as a Recommendation for a two year trial period.

Consideration of UN/ECE Recommendations (Item 5)

b) Walnut Kernels

40. The US delegation stressed the importance of this document in light of facilitating international trade and noted that in order to include important comments on e.g. the definition of defects as well as the view of other major producing countries, the trial period should be extended a further year and a small working group should elaborate a revised consolidated working document which could be reviewed at the next session. In discussing this proposal in length, the French and several other delegations expressed the opinion that the present text was the result of many years of work and should be adopted as a revised Standard without a further extension of the trial period. It was felt that the proposals by the US delegation presented too different an approach to be considered at this stage. Other delegations noted that the standard should be further adapted to technical innovations, should reflect current trade realities and not be too restrictive. The French delegation indicated that it would collaborate with the US delegation on a further development of the colour chart currently in the trial period.

41. It was finally agreed that, in order to improve the current revised text, precise items would be defined and discussed by a small working group. The items of concern to the US delegation were the following: enhancement of the definitions in the Annex of the Standard; colour and its link with grading; sizing, to reflect matters linked to machine-processed walnuts; sampling; and issues linked to varieties. Other delegations felt that this listing was too general and the Spanish delegation, having compared the two documents presented under this agenda item, identified the following four areas: definition of colour linked to grading; definition of styles; tolerances; and definition of terms and defects.

42. Lengthy discussion followed on the colour being a criteria for classification of the kernel. The US delegation explained that there was a trade in dark kernels which classified for the higher grades however could not be included owing to the current colour criteria. This could be discriminatory and therefore the US delegation was opposed to linking the colour criteria to grade classification. The Turkish delegation stressed that colour was an important criteria, however not the sole measure of quality as other factors were important too. For the French, as well as other delegations, colour constituted one of the decisive factors when classifying walnut kernels as it was also linked to the price a producer obtained for his produce.



43. The French delegation also stressed that quality was especially important to the final consumer who chose the quality he wanted and was ready to pay for superior quality. The consumer, it was explained wanted light colour kernels which, for him, represented quality. Therefore, deleting the colour criteria from classification meant, in the opinion of the French delegation, contesting the notion of quality and diminishing the quality of the kernels.

44. Lengthy discussion followed during which opinions largely diverged. For the Turkish delegation, it was obvious that superior quality could always be sold no matter what colour was maintained as a grading criteria. Other delegations felt that the real problem was the use of the walnut, i.e. for decoration or e.g. baking purposes (where colour was not that important). The representative of the INC noted that there were countries outside Europe that could never meet the colour criteria but were important traders too.

45. Consensus existed however on the fact that the Standard should be fair, flexible, protect high-quality produce and also consider current trade practices throughout the world. It was therefore decided to request the Working Party to extend the trial period for a further year. It was also agreed that at the next session the revisions had to be adopted. Comments from all interested parties including other producing countries (India had also submitted a proposal during the session) would be collected in written before October/November 1998, and consultations, especially between France and the US, who both agreed to the close collaboration, would be necessary to advance the project on the basis of document TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/7. All other interested delegations were invited to participate.

c) Dried Apples

46. The Rapporteur (Romania) briefly reviewed the changes introduced to the Recommendation and noted that the proposed text had been aligned with the Standard for Dried Pears, especially in sections I. Definition of Produce and VI. B. Nature of Produce. The Meeting agreed to the following minor changes in the proposed text:

- I. Definition of produce: addition of a new indent "(h) rings" (removal of the reference to rings in the brackets)
- Footnote 1: clarification to read "Annex II"
- Footnote 2: clarification to read "Annex I"
- Deletion of footnote 3
- II. B. (iii) Class II: addition of the following at the end of the paragraph: "Pieces may be included only in Class II."
- IV. A. Quality Tolerances: moving references to footnote 4 after the indents "- stem, seeds" and "- core-carpel" and deletion of the reference to footnote 4 after the tolerances in the table.
- VI. B. Nature of produce: addition of a new indent "- rings" (removal of the reference to rings in the brackets).
- VI. D. Commercial specifications: addition of "(optional for Class II)" in the indent "- size".

French text (Annex I) Method I, 2.: Correction to read: "70 C + 1 C".

47. The Meeting thanked the Rapporteur (Romania) for her excellent work and decided to present the revised text to the Working Party for adoption as a new UN/ECE Standard for Dried Apples.

Revision of the Standard Layout for Dry and Dried Produce (Item 6)

48. The Meeting agreed that the Standard Layout needed to be revised and that such a proposal would be presented to the Working Party. The delegation of Germany offered to serve as Rapporteur for the revision of the text and the delegation of Spain for the revision of the Annexes.

Discussion on the UN/ECE Recommendation on Inshell Walnuts (Item 7)

49. The US delegation shortly reviewed their areas of concern which included an enhancement of definitions; the variety issue; size; and the crop year being mandatory. The Spanish delegation noted that the current US proposal contained in document TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1998/10 changed the current standard too radically and the US delegation was requested to present a more targeted paper on specific issues. The US delegation agreed to that proposal, and the issue would be re-discussed together with the moisture content at the next session, i.e. the end of the trial period.

Discussion on the UN/ECE Standards for Unshelled Pistachio Nuts and Decorticated, and Decorticated Peeled Pistachio Nuts (Item 8)

50. The US delegation proposed that in light of technical innovations as well as problems which have been encountered during recent years both Pistachio Standards should be reviewed. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the relevant Codex Committee was also envisaging a review of its Pistachio Standard taking as a basis the UN/ECE Standards. The delegation of Turkey, having previously served as Rapporteur, as well as other delegations including France supported the review of the Pistachio Standards and pointed to the technical problems linked to artificially-opened pistachios or the new drying methods which should be dealt with in the Standards.

51. It was therefore agreed to propose to the Working Party a review of the Standards for Pistachio Nuts. The former Rapporteur (Turkey) offered to continue in this function in collaboration with the US delegation and the input of all delegations, including other major producing countries such as Iran.

Discussion on a Multilingual Dictionary of Defects (Item 9)

52. The Italian delegate briefly reviewed the dictionary of defects he had presented in five languages. The Meeting stressed the usefulness of such a tool for trade and control services and congratulated the Italian delegate for his excellent initiative. The Meeting also agreed to change the title of the document to "Dictionary of terms and defects" and to include adjectives and nouns to enlarge its scope. It was furthermore requested that it be made available in electronic format. The Greek as well as other delegations noted that the conclusion of short explanations in English and French, both serving as reference languages, would be highly appreciated, although such a task could be rather difficult.

53. Delegations were requested to send to the delegate of Italy their respective language versions and to closely co-operate with the Italian delegation.

Discussion on the Importance of Dried Cherries in International Trade and on a proposal to elaborate a Draft Standard for Dried Cherries (Item 10)

54. The delegate from Romania reported that following an analysis of the trade data sent to her by other delegations, it had become obvious that the trade volume was too small to justify the elaboration of an international standard at this time. However, delegates and the secretariat should keep the issue in mind and, when appropriate, take up the work.

Other Business (Item 11)

a) Future Work

55. The Meeting agreed on a revision of the Standard Layout (see paragraph 48 of this report). Furthermore, after a brief discussion, it was agreed to reflect on the elaboration of a sampling plan and take up the issue at the next session. With reference to the proposal by the German delegation to elaborate a Standard for Pitted Dates, delegations were requested to provide trade data to the German delegation. The matter would be re-discussed at the next session.

b) Date and place of the next session

56. The Meeting was informed that the next session would take place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 25 to 28 May 1999.

Close of the Meeting

57. The Meeting of Experts expressed its sincere gratitude to the French authorities who had hosted this meeting, noting the warm hospitality extended to all participants, the excellent arrangement of the meeting, the receptions, dinners, accommodation, and the very useful technical excursion organized.

58. The Meeting of Experts expressed its sincere gratitude to Ms. Liliana Annovazzi Jakab who had served them superbly as their secretary and deeply regretted her departure.

Adoption of the Report (Item 10)

59. The Meeting adopted the report on its forty-fifth session.