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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Specialized Section on Standardization of
Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)

Forty-seventh session, Geneva, 19 - 22 June 2000

REPORT OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Executive Summary

Inshell Hazelnuts, Hazelnut Kernels: The texts (slightly amended) were agreed and recommended to the Working Party for adoption as revised UN/ECE standards.

Walnut Kernels: It was agreed to recommend to the Working Party to extend the trial period for this recommendation for one further year. An informal Working Group (France, Italy, Spain, United States, International Nut Council) was formed, which will look at the different proposals concerning scuffing, crop year, mould and the colour chart and present a new document at the next session.

Inshell Walnuts: The reservations concerning moisture content and tolerances were maintained for the time being and will be discussed again at the next session.

Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Nuts: The delegations of Turkey and the United States will prepare a draft for the next session.

Inshell Pistachio Nuts: Based on the initial discussions held, the delegation of Turkey will prepare a draft for the next session.

Executive Summary (cont'd)

Revision of the Standard Layout

Main text of the layout

A number of corrections were made to the text at this session. The agreed text (indicating the changes) will be recommended to the Working Party for adoption as the revised Standard Layout for Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit).

Annex II: Determination of the moisture content

An informal working group (Germany, Romania, Spain, Turkey, United States, INC) was formed to work on this matter. The delegation of Spain will present a revised document to the next session.

Annex III: Terms recommended and definition of defects

The text was discussed extensively. A revised document will be published as Addendum 4 to this report (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.4). Delegations are invited to send comments to the rapporteur from Spain concerning the items remaining in square brackets.

Dictionary of defects

The document will be finalized by the delegation of Italy and regularly published and updated on the home page of the UN/ECE Agricultural Standards Unit (www.unece.org/trade/agr);

Elaboration of a sampling plan

The delegation of the United States offered to prepare documents for sampling procedures and a sampling plan for the next session. Delegations were invited to provide information to the United States on what they expected from a sampling plan/procedure and how sampling was done at the moment.

Opening of the session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 19 to 22 June 2000.
2. The session was opened by the Deputy Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division, Mr. Hans Hansell, who welcomed the delegates to Geneva.
3. He informed the meeting of the outcome of the spring session of the Economic Commission for Europe where the UN/ECE had been asked to:
 - give more efficient regional input into global initiatives;
 - develop and strengthen cross-sectoral activities (e.g. link between trade and transport as well as trade and environment)
 - give input into subregional activities (e.g. cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in the Mediterranean region)
4. He said that in all of these areas the Specialized Section had a role to play e.g. in the area of global commerce and the definition of shorter supply chains.
5. At the session a new Executive Secretary had been named, Ms. Danuta Hübner, from Poland, who up to now served as UN/ECE Deputy Executive Secretary.
6. He also informed delegations that simultaneously to the meeting of the Specialized Section, the fourth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development was taking place in Geneva. Mr. Miguel Vilchez-Barros, Chairman of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Foodstuffs and Quality Development (WP.7) also served as Chairman of the Committee and had, together with the secretariat undertaken several activities to promote the work on agricultural quality standards. He invited the delegations to participate in the discussions of the Committee concerning the work of WP.7.
7. He said that at the third session of the Committee a discussion on the possible transfer of the work on elaboration of explanatory brochures from OECD to UN/ECE had been initiated and he invited delegations to reflect on this question during the meeting.

Participation

8. The session was attended by delegations of: Finland; France; Germany; Italy; Poland; Romania; Spain; Turkey; United Kingdom and the United States of America.
9. The European Community was also represented.
10. Representatives of the following non-governmental organization also participated: International Nut Council (INC).

Adoption of the agenda

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/1

19. The text of the recommendation contains three reservations (Poland, Romania, United States) concerning quality tolerances which were maintained by the delegations.
20. The delegation of Germany presented document TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/INF.4, which improves the drafting and aligns the text to the decisions taken at the last session concerning the standard layout.
21. The provisions concerning the marking of the crop year remained unchanged.
22. Several differences between the English and French texts were pointed out by the delegation of Spain.
23. The delegation of the United States said that the development of an explanatory brochure for this commodity should be considered.

Decision

24. Most of the changes proposed by Germany were agreed and the agreed text (indicating the changes) is reproduced in addendum 1 to the current report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.1). It was agreed to recommend this text to the Working Party for adoption as a revised UN/ECE Standard for Inshell Hazelnuts. The group agreed that the secretariat should be authorized to make minor editorial changes to the text (correction of typing errors and alignment of English and French texts), if necessary. These changes would be indicated at the Working Party.

Hazelnut Kernels

Documents for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/5 Text of the recommendation (Secretariat)

25. The text of the recommendation contains three reservations (Poland, Italy and Spain, Turkey) concerning quality tolerances and marking requirements.
26. The delegation of Poland maintained their reservation.
27. It was decided to change the tolerance for “Rancid, rotten, mouldy , having a bad smell or taste damaged by insects or attacked by rodents” from 1.5% to 2% for Class I and the delegations of Italy and Spain lifted their reservation.
28. The delegation of Romania entered the following reservation concerning this change: “Reservation by Romania requesting 1% tolerance for mouldy for Class I. Romania agrees with the 2% total tolerance for “Rancid, rotten, mouldy , having a bad smell or taste, damaged by insects or attacked by rodents” for Class I.”
29. The delegation of Turkey stated that they would maintain their reservation requesting the marking of the crop year (year of harvesting) which they considered as important quality information.
30. Several other delegations (Germany, France, Spain, Romania) agreed that this information was important and proposed that the marking should be mandatory.
31. The delegation of the United States said that this would be difficult to implement and enforce. He said the quality requirements of the standard would guarantee that the old crop was as acceptable as the new crop.

32. The delegation of France said that they had a traceability system in place which made the marking of the crop year easy.

33. The delegation of Romania said the crop year was important information for the consumer. Even if the tolerances were the same the taste was not the same. Romania entered the same reservation as Turkey.

34. Because there was no consensus on this question, the text was left unchanged.

35. Several differences between the English and French texts were pointed out by the delegation of Spain.

Decision

36. The text was agreed with minor editorial amendments. The agreed text (indicating the changes) is reproduced in addendum 2 to the current report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.2). It was agreed to recommend this text to the Working Party for adoption as a revised UN/ECE Standard for Hazelnut Kernels. The group agreed that the secretariat should be authorized to make minor editorial changes to the text (correction of typing errors and alignment of English and French texts), if necessary. These changes would be indicated at the Working Party.

Walnut Kernels

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1999/12 para. 27-52

Documents for this session: TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.3 Text of the recommendation
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/INF.6 (INC)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/INF.7 (Spain)

37. The trial period for this recommendation (Rapporteur: France) ends in November 2000. According to the working procedures the Specialized Section reviewed the recommendation with the goal of removing reservations. The text also contains square brackets concerning "scuffing" and discussions on the colour chart are not finalized.

Scuffing

38. It was discussed whether scuffing should only be considered for halves and quarters as only those were used for decorative purposes.

39. There was no consensus on the definitions and tolerances that should be put in the standard. France proposed to delete the square brackets and said that for any other solution they would have to consult with their trade.

40. The delegation of the United States proposed that different definitions and tolerances for scuffing should be developed depending on the method of shelling used (hand or machine).

41. It was decided to create an informal Working Group (France, Italy, Spain, United States, INC), which would look at the different proposals and present a new document to the next session.

Crop year

42. The delegation of INC proposed that the marking of the crop year should be optional for all classes because it was not necessarily a quality indicator and also difficult to enforce.

43. This view was supported by the United States, which proposed to leave it up to a contract between buyer and seller whether the crop year had to be marked.

44. Germany and France maintained that the crop year was important information and should be marked for Class Extra and I.

45. There was no consensus on this matter. It was decided that the working group should look at the question and include it in their proposal.

Commercial name

46. The delegation of Spain said that the commercial type should be defined as had been done for hazelnuts.

Mould

47. INC supported by the United States proposed to distinguish different types of mould in the definition of defects. They said that gray or white mould did not produce toxins and would dry out during the drying process.

48. The delegation of Spain said that this might make the standard very complicated to apply with different tolerances for different types of mould. They also said that mould that would dry out was already taken care of in the text because if it had dried out it could not produce any "visible filaments".

49. Other delegations felt that the standard should not be complicated and that any visible filament of mould should be considered as mould.

50. It was decided that the working group should look into this question.

Colour chart

51. A new colour chart was presented by the delegation of the United States. It was corrected as follows: The mention "but not black" was moved from the second row heading to the bottom row heading.

52. It was clarified that all four kernels shown in the bottom row of the chart could be marketed in Class II: the first 3 kernels because they are not darker than dark brown and the last because it is darker but not black.

53. It was suggested that future versions of the chart should be dated to make them easier to identify.

Decision

54. It was decided to propose to the Working Party to extend the trial period for this recommendation for one more year.

Revision of UN/ECE standards

Inshell Walnuts

Discussion at the last session: see TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1999/12 para. 60-74

Documents for this session: TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.4 Text of the standard in force (Secretariat)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/INF.3 (Germany) - Inshell Walnuts

55. The text was adopted as a new UN/ECE standard by the Working Party in November 1999. The Specialized Section discussed quality tolerances and moisture content again with the goal of removing reservations.

56. The delegation of France said that they maintained their reservation. It requests a tolerance of 2% in Extra Class and 3% in Classes I and II for mouldy. They said that they would investigate this position together with their control services and the trade during the next harvest period and report back to the next session.

57. The delegations of Spain and Romania said that they maintained their reservation requesting a moisture content of 6.0%. They said that they had the same goal as France, reducing the number of mouldy nuts. The delegation of Romania said that there were scientific studies which showed that a lower moisture content reduces the risk of mouldy and rancid nuts. They will report back to the next session showing some data concerning this question.

58. The delegation of Germany withdrew TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/INF.3.

59. The delegation of Spain recalled that they had pointed out to the secretariat several differences between the English and the French texts.

Pistachio Nuts

60. At the last session it was agreed to review the UN/ECE Standards for Pistachio Nuts because the present texts no longer reflected current production and trade practices. Turkey offered to serve as rapporteur in collaboration with the United States. Input from other delegations, including other major producing countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran was invited.

61. The delegation of Turkey reported that because no written comments had been received they had not prepared new documents for this session.

62. The delegation of the United States said that they were currently revising their domestic standard and would send proposals to Turkey once it was finalized.

Decorticated and Decorticated Peeled Pistachio Nuts

Documents for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/9 Text of the standard in force (Secretariat)

63. It was agreed that the standard should be renamed to "Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels.

64. Turkey and the United States agreed to work on a proposal for this standard keeping in mind the new standard layout and also seeking input from other producing countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Annex II: Determination of the moisture content for dry fruit

Documents for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1999/8 Document presented at the last session (Spain)

72. The delegation of Spain introduced their document. They said that the first choice to be made by the Specialized Section was the method to be used as reference, and that the other provisions in the annex (size of sample, how fine to grind the sample, number of samples) depended on this choice.

73. They said that three options had been included in the document:

- (a) the current method (which does not have any technical reference)
- (b) Reference AOAC 925.40, working at a lower temperature than (a) but under reduced pressure
- (c) ISO 1026 (mainly used for dried fruit)

74. They explained further that the document was based on option (b).

75. The delegation of Romania said that the moisture content was a very important indicator. Therefore the method used to determine it used should lead to internationally comparable results using a reproducible method for dry and dried produce in all countries. This could be best ensured by testing the methods in an international parallel ring test.

76. The delegation of Spain said that the method under option (b) had already been internationally tested.

77. The chairman said that there was also an internationally agreed method from ISO (ISO 665) which could be used.

78. The delegation of the United States said that the concerns of countries not present at this session should be taken into account when choosing the method.

79. It was decided to make reference to two methods: AOAC 925.40 and ISO 665. Texts of these standards will not be reproduced in the annex. The annex will only explain how to adapt the methods for the purpose of the UN/ECE standard.

80. An informal working group (Germany, Romania, Spain, Turkey, United States, INC) was formed to work on this matter. The delegation of Spain will present a revised document to the next session.

81. There were no comments on the text for the "rapid methods" which can be used to avoid the laboratory method.

82. The delegation of the United States said that more than two methods should be allowed as long as they were calibrated to the approved AOAC method.

Annex III: Terms recommended and definition of defects

Documents for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/1999/11 Document presented at the last session (Spain)

93. The delegation of Romania said that it was very important to have standards for sampling because the results of an analysis depended on the way sampling is done.

94. The delegation of Spain said that they would prefer to work on sampling procedures to find the minimum number of packages to be sampled. In their opinion the elaboration of a sampling plan was the responsibility of the trade.

95. The delegation of the United States offered to prepare documents for sampling procedures and a sampling plan for the next session.

96. As suggested by Turkey, all delegations were invited to provide information to the United States on what they expected from a sampling plan/procedure and how sampling was done at the moment.

Matters of interest arising from the work of

Codex Alimentarius Commission

97. The delegation of the United States informed that the Codex Committee for Processed Fruit and Vegetables will hold its next session in Washington from 11-15 September 2000.

98. They said further that they would provide a copy of the Codex standard for pistachios to the secretariat.

European Community

99. The delegation of the European Community informed that a marketing standard for dried grapes had been adopted in June, quality inspection aspects were being discussed and marketing standards for Inshell Walnuts, Hazelnuts and Almonds were currently being drafted.

OECD Scheme

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/INF.5

100. The OECD Scheme was not represented at the session but the following information was received from the OECD Secretariat:

“The publications of the OECD Scheme can be purchased at the OECD library and are also available on the OECD internet site: www.oecd.org. They can either be obtained on paper form or in electronic format. Nevertheless, the interpretative brochures on dry and dried fruit have been sold out. The question needs to be raised as to whether the OECD should republish these brochures or whether the Specialized Section on the Standardization of Dry and Dried Fruit should request the Plenary to revise them. This particularly applies to the interpretative brochures for the Unshelled Sweet Almonds and Unshelled Hazelnuts which were published in 1981. The Specialized Section on the Standardization of Dry and Dried Fruit could take this opportunity to raise the possibility to request the OECD Plenary to develop interpretative brochures for other Dry and Dried Fruit Standards.”

101. The delegation of the United States said that since the OECD Council had changed the mode of financing for the Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, its membership had been decreasing and it was questionable

whether texts elaborated there were still representative. The delegation asked the group to reflect on whether some form of explanatory material could be elaborated by the group as was being done for the colour chart for walnut kernels.

102. The delegation of the European Community said that they had stated on several occasions that they would agree that explanatory material to UN/ECE standards be developed by WP.7 and its Specialized Sections under the conditions that:

- the funding and modalities for the work are clarified;
- there is no duplication of work with work done by other organizations.

103. They said that this had also been the position of the Working Party (see TRADE/WP.7/1999/7, paras. 59 to 79).

104. It was agreed to submit to the Working Party the opinion of the Specialized Section that an updated explanatory brochure for Inshell Hazelnuts was useful for international trade.

Preparation of the next session

Future work

105. The Specialized Section agreed to ask the Working Party for authorization to review the UN/ECE standards for sweet almonds beginning with almond kernels because these comprise the majority of the trade in almonds. The delegation of Spain offered to serve as rapporteur and will prepare a draft, aligning the text to the revised standard layout and make some further suggestions for amendments.

106. The agenda for the next session of the Specialized Section will include:

- Walnut Kernels (France, Italy, Spain, United States, INC)
- Inshell Walnuts (Romania, Spain)
- Sweet Almonds (Rapporteur Spain)
- Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels (Turkey, United States)
- Inshell Pistachio Nuts (Turkey)
- Annex II of the standard layout: Determination of the moisture content (Germany, Romania, Spain, Turkey, United States, INC).
- Annex III of the standard layout: Terms recommended and definition of defects (Spain)
- Elaboration of a sampling plan (United States)
- Operational activities

107. An action list is reproduced in the annex to the current report.

Date and place of the next session

108. The forty-eighth session has been tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva from 18-21 June 2001.

Preparation of the 56th session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

109. The Specialized Section recommends to the Working Party to:
- adopt the UN/ECE Recommendation for Inshell Hazelnuts as contained in Addendum 1 to this report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.1) as a revised UN/ECE Standard;
 - adopt the UN/ECE Recommendation for Hazelnut Kernels as contained in Addendum 2 to this report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.2) as a revised UN/ECE Standard;
 - adopt the main text of the standard layout as contained in Addendum 3 to this report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.3);
 - authorize the revision of the UN/ECE Standards for Sweet Almonds;
 - extend the trial period for the UN/ECE Recommendation for Walnut Kernels for one further year;
 - note the opinion of the Specialized Section that an updated explanatory brochure for Inshell Hazelnuts would be useful for international trade.

Election of officers

110. The Specialized Section re-elected Mr. W. Staub (Germany) as its Chairman and Mr. M. Sciannella (Italy) as its Vice-Chairman.

Adoption of the report

111. The Working Party adopted the report of its forty-seventh session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

Note by the secretariat: The following addenda to this report will be published as separate documents:

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.1	Inshell Hazelnuts
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.2	Hazelnut Kernels
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.3	Standard layout (main text)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2000/17/Add.4	Standard layout (terms and definitions)

Annex

Action list

Action	Responsible	Date
Align English and French texts of Hazelnut Standards	Secretariat, Spain	28 August 2000
Walnut Kernels: Look at the different proposals concerning scuffing, crop year, mould and the colour chart and present a new document to the next session.	Working Group (France, Italy, Spain, United States , INC)	2 April 2001
Inshell Walnuts: Provide information on the influence of the moisture content on the risk for mouldy nuts	Romania, Spain	2 April 2001
Prepare a draft text for the standard for Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels	Turkey, United States	2 April 2001
Prepare a draft text for the standard for Inshell Pistachio Nuts	Turkey	2 April 2001
Annex II of the Standard Layout: Determination of the moisture content.	Working group (Germany, Romania, Spain , Turkey, United States, INC)	2 April 2001
Annex III: Terms recommended and definition of defects: send comments concerning the items remaining in square brackets.	all delegations (for comments) Spain (for preparation of the new document)	2 April 2001
Elaboration of a sampling plan: provide information on expectations from a sampling plan/procedure and how sampling was done at the moment.	all delegations (for sending information) United States (preparation of a document on sampling plan and procedures)	2 April 2001
Sweet Almonds: Align with standard layout and make further suggestions	Spain	2 April 2001