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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
Early and Ware Potatoes

(1-2 February 1999, Geneva)

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING SINCE THE THIRTEENTH SESSION

Note by the secretariat

This document summarizes the outcome of the second session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and the fifty-third session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development.

Second session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development

Discussion of the work of the Working Party

The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Committee (ECE/TRADE/222, paragraphs 27 to 32):

“27. The Chairman of the Working Party (WP.7), Mr. M. Vilchez-Barros (Spain), informed the Committee that the Working Party had not met since the last session of the Committee in December. Several meetings of rapporteurs and experts had been held but their decisions would still have to be endorsed by WP.7 at its next session (2-4 November 1998).

28. The Chairman of the Working Party and other delegations expressed their satisfaction with the fact that the post dealing with agricultural standards had now been filled on a permanent basis and also thanked Ms. L. Annovazzi Jakab who had been acting as Secretary to WP.7 and its Meetings of Experts for her excellent work and support during the past years.

29. The Chairman of the Working Party gave a presentation on commercial quality standards for perishable produce and the role of UN/ECE and other international organizations (OECD Scheme, European Union, Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables) in the development of these standards. He also explained the efforts undertaken to harmonize the work of the different bodies.

30. The delegation of the European Community confirmed its continued support for the work of UN/ECE in this area. It noted that EU legislation and UN/ECE standards were already well harmonized and that the European Community advocated that all activities by other international bodies in this area should reinforce UN/ECE standards.

31. The EU representative asked further, if, in view of the uncertainty surrounding the continuation of the OECD scheme for the application of international standards for fruit and vegetables, the Committee could request the Working Party on Perishable Produce and Quality Development to consider if some of the OECD work should be transferred to UN/ECE. The delegation of Turkey said that if additional tasks were taken on by WP.7, additional resources would also be required. In an answer to these remarks, the Director of the Trade Division said that until more information was received from OECD, and before the next session of WP.7, it would be premature for the Committee to discuss this subject in depth. When more information was available, this would be reported to the Committee at its next session in June 1999, which could then, through a reassignment of priorities, decide on the allocation of resources to this work area.

32. The delegate from the Russian Federation announced that he would submit a proposal for a standard on marking of food products to the November session of WP.7.”

Prioritization of the work of the Working Party

At the Committee session the work of WP.7 was given an overall “HIGHER” priority and its individual tasks were prioritized as follows (ECE/TRADE/222, annex II, programme activity 04, B.):

- “Higher:** Setting of new standards and revisions, enlarging participation of both public and private sectors.
- Broadening the application of UN/ECE standards and recommendations and the implementation of controls at private and public levels.
- Disseminating the texts of UN/ECE standards and recommendations for perishable produce among supplying countries to UN/ECE markets and diffusion among users at different levels: producers, traders, control services, consumers.
- Medium:** Interpretation and harmonization of standards and control procedures among UN/ECE member countries.
- Lower:** Cooperation with other international standardization organizations.”

Fifty-third session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

The following decisions were taken at the fifty-third session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development. There was no discussion on Early and Ware Potatoes at the fifty-fourth session. The following excerpt is taken from TRADE/WP.7/1997/11 paras 44 to 49:

“44. The Chairman of the Meeting of Experts presented the report of the thirteenth session of the Meeting of Experts (AGRI/WP.1/GE.5/24) and informed the Working Party that the Meeting had agreed to postpone the introduction of quality classes for Early and Ware Potatoes to await developments in trade. He also briefly outlined the request by the Meeting to obtain a standing mandate for the revision of the two Standards should the necessity arise. He also mentioned that sessions would take place on a bi-annual basis and that, in the future, the Meeting would focus also on serving as a forum of discussion. Furthermore, he addressed the representative of the OECD with a request to revise the Explanatory Brochures in case the new revised Standards would be adopted by the Working Party.

45. In reviewing the revisions to the Standard for Early Potatoes, the Chairman of the Meeting of Experts and the delegate of France pointed to the omission to harmonize the two Standards and it was agreed to add the following to the Standard for Early Potatoes: III. Provisions concerning Sizing; addition of two new paragraphs reading: “A variety is regarded as long when its average length is at least twice its average width.” and “ The sizing requirements do not apply to long varieties of irregular shape.” Corrections to the Russian version of the Standard were communicated to the secretariat.

46. The Working Party adopted the revised version of the Standard for Early Potatoes as a new UN/ECE Standard.

47. The Chairman of the Meeting of Experts also explained the changes introduced in the Standard for Ware Potatoes. The Working Party adopted the revised version of the Standard for Ware Potatoes as a new UN/ECE Standard.

48. The Working Party also decided to give the Meeting of Experts a standing mandate and approved its future programme of work. The Working Party recognized the singularity of this group as to its composition and expertise.

49. The representative of the OECD informed the Working Party that the proposal to revise the OECD Explanatory Brochures for Early and Ware Potatoes would be placed on the agenda of the next plenary session of the OECD Scheme.”
