

ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/INF.4

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes
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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Sampling Practices for Lot Inspection in Seed Potato Certification

Note by the United Kingdom (Scotland)

SAMPLING PRACTICES FOR LOT INSPECTION IN SEED POTATO CERTIFICATION

1. Replies to the questionnaire revealed that the sampling practices adopted by countries are fairly diverse. All countries except one inspect all lots for diseases and faults. Regarding other aspects, however, there are considerable differences. With regards to the time of inspection, for example, some countries always inspect at grading (e.g. Belgium), while others always inspect before shipping from final sealed container (e.g. UK-Scotland) or from unsealed final container (e.g. Poland). Similar variability exists in the number of containers sampled and the size of the sample taken from each container.

2. This, of course, makes it difficult to develop a generally acceptable sampling procedure for inclusion in the Standard. This said, one must begin somewhere with the task of developing a minimum practice which countries feel that they can comply with, while at the same time providing the option to apply a stricter regime. With this in mind, and taking into account the questionnaire responses, the following proposals have been developed for discussion by the Section in an effort to focus on developing minimum guidance for sampling procedures to be adopted for lot inspection.

3. In developing this proposal, the rapporteurs considered that, in determining compliance with tuber tolerances, determining container to container variation was more critical than within container variation. The starting point for the proposals was therefore taken as defining the number of containers from which a sample should be taken, rather than the actual weight of the sample.

Proposals for Discussion

1. The minimum number of containers to be sampled should be two containers for first 10 tons of any lot presented for marketing.

2. Thereafter, sample one additional container for every additional 20 tons of a lot, or part thereof.

3. The size of sample taken from each container should be a minimum of 200 tubers. This is in accordance with the suggested minimum size in EPPO phytosanitary procedure: Export Certification and import compliance checking for potato tubers (Bulletin OEPP/EPPO Bulletin 36: 423-424).