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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON TRADE**

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

Thirty-eighth session  
Geneva, 17 - 19 March 2008  
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU**

Note by the Chairman of the Specialized Section

This document summarizes the discussions at the Extended Bureau meeting held in Moscow from 20 to 23 August 2007. It contains information that will be referred to under the different agenda items.

1. The meeting of the Extended Bureau was held in Moscow on the occasion of promoting the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes at the world congress POTATO RUSSIA 2007. The meeting took place at the premises of the Bioengineering Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The following persons participated: Gérard Crouau (France), Pier Giacomo Bianchi (Italy), Hendrik van de Haar (Netherlands), Ruedi Schwaerzel (Switzerland), Stuart Carnegie (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Willem Schrage (United States of America) and Serguei Malanitchev (UNECE).

2. Dmitry Dorokhov, Head of Plant Genome Laboratory of the Bioengineering Centre of the Russian Academy of Science, presented the activities of the Centre related to seed potatoes.

### **I. Promotion of the Standard at the congress**

3. The Bureau introduced a number of changes to the PowerPoint presentation drafted by the secretariat, and decided to split it into two parts, the first on general aspects of developing UNECE standards and the second on seed potatoes. The first part was presented at the congress in Russian by the secretariat and the second in English by the Chairman. More generally, the Bureau agreed that ways of promoting the Standard would be worth a separate discussion at the March 2008 meeting of the Specialized Section.

### **II. Review of the Standard**

#### **(a) Assessment key for common and netted scab, and powdery scab**

4. The Bureau selected the blue background colour for the assessment key pictures in the Standard. It asked the secretariat to approach the delegations of Germany and the Netherlands for a better picture of netted scab to include in the Standard, and process the pictures of scab and Rhizoctonia to the estimated 33.3 and 10 per cent of tuber surface area coverage.

#### **(b) Sampling procedure for inclusion in the Standard**

5. The discussion based on the note by the United Kingdom on sampling practices and lot inspection showed the need for improving the definition of “origin” as it is used in the definition of “lot”. The delegation of the United States offered to draft a revised definition of “origin” and check it with the delegations of France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The secretariat will need to receive the agreed definition by 1 December in order to submit it as part of the documentation for the March 2008 session of the Section.

### **III. Procedures for assessment of non-compliance at destination**

6. The secretariat made available to the Bureau copies of the RUCIP rules, the IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) Dispute Settlement Manual and the Dispute Settlement Mechanism for NAPPO (North American Plant Protection Organization) countries. The Bureau asked the delegation of France to prepare by 1 December a note, in consultation with Canada and United States, suggesting text on assessment of non-compliance at destination that could usefully be included in the Standard. Duplicating the above three documents should be avoided.

**IV. Images for the list of diseases and pests**

7. The Bureau studied the pictures prepared by France and the Netherlands to complement the list of diseases and pests and asked the secretariat to circulate these pictures to all the participants in the Moscow meeting to identify the best ones. The delegation of France would present the selected pictures at the March 2008 session of the Section for approval.

**V. Exchange of information on crop inspection practices**

8. The delegation of the United Kingdom offered to draw up a questionnaire on national crop inspection practices for consideration at the next session of the Section.

**VI. Control under official supervision and accreditation systems**

9. The secretariat circulated two NAPPO documents: The Accreditation of Individuals to Sign Federal Phytosanitary Certificates and The Accreditation of Laboratories for Phytosanitary Testing. The Bureau asked the secretariat to invite the delegation of Canada to prepare a note on the above issue for discussion at the March session of the Section. Italy volunteered to submit a paper on the system of seed accreditation in the European Union.

**VII. Exchange of information on post-harvest tests**

10. The delegation of the United States will draft a questionnaire for consideration at the next meeting of the Section.

**VIII. Electronic certification**

11. The Bureau asked the United States to make a presentation at the March 2008 meeting of the Section on the use of electronic phytosanitary certificates in that country. The secretariat will carry out a survey to find out if electronic certificates are being used in other countries. It will also make a presentation on the United Nations electronic Trade Documents project at the next meeting of the Specialized Section.

**IX. Vigour**

12. Switzerland gave a presentation on “vigour”, explaining its importance on yield potential. The Bureau agreed on the importance of vigour. However, a methodology for measuring it is not yet available. Therefore its incorporation into the seed potatoes certification system was thought to be premature.

**X. New terms of reference and working procedures for WP.7 and its specialized sections**

13. The Bureau took note of the above documents. It welcomed the proposal in the draft new terms of reference to make the work on agricultural quality standards global by granting equal rights to all Member States of the United Nations interested in participating in the activities of Working Party 7.