



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2003/8  
16 January 2003

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

---

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of  
Seed Potatoes

Thirty-third session, 26-28 March 2003, Geneva

Item 4(f) of the Provisional Agenda

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF VARIETY IN THE STANDARD

Transmitted by Switzerland

**Note by the secretariat :** The delegation of Switzerland has prepared a paper on how to develop the concept of variety in the standard, looking at the present requirements included, explaining the need for development and proposing amendments to the standard.

## Development of the concept of variety in the UNECE STANDARD for SEED POTATOES

### 1. Present requirements concerning variety in the Standard

In its present version the Standard contains the following requirements concerning variety :

II A, first paragraph:	“....of normal shape for the variety.”
II B, first paragraph:	“....classified according to variety....”
V (IV), first paragraph:	“....tubers of the same variety,....”
Annex I, 1:	“The parent material must be true to type for the variety.”
Annex I, 6:	“... and from deviations of variety and type.”
Annex I, 7:	“... Confirmation of variety purity and trueness-to-type....”
Annex IV, 1. (a):	The proportion, in direct progeny, of plants of other varieties should be 0 per cent for Pre-Basic TC class. The proportion, in direct progeny, of plants not true to the variety and of other varieties should not exceed 0,01 per cent for Pre-Basic Class.
Annex IV, 2. (a):	The proportion, in direct progeny, of plants not true to the variety should not exceed 0,25 per cent. The proportion, in direct progeny, of plants of other varieties should not exceed 0,1 per cent.
Annex IV, 3. (a):	The proportion, in direct progeny, of plants not true to the variety should not exceed 0,5 per cent. The proportion, in direct progeny, of plants of other varieties should not exceed 0,2 per cent.
Annex V, A. 6.:	Variety
Annex VI, I:	“The examination ... enables the purity ... to be checked ...”
Annex VI, II, 5. (b):	“... The plots should be grouped by variety ...”

## 2. Need for developments

Compared to national or regional regulations concerning seed potatoes, or to world regulations (OECD) concerning true seeds, the Standard keeps presently silent on several aspects considered to be important, in analogical situations, to allow maximum security in the operation of a certification scheme, for example:

- National Designated Authority (NDA) responsible for implementing the Standard in a given country;
- Role of the NDA in establishing a List of Eligible Varieties accepted into the Standard;
- Requirements to the variety itself (denomination, DUS, official description, reference sample);
- Reference to methodology of identification, verification of varietal purity, identification of Novel Traits.

The Canadian document TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2002/INF.4 gives detailed explanations on the necessity of developing those essential components of a modern and efficient certification scheme, in the present times of additional demands about food safety and traceability. As mentioned in this document, there is a need for a well defined system, combining denomination, description and reference sample, to allow a thorough official, legal recognition of the genetic identity and purity of varieties.

The confirmation of the varietal identity and purity of a certified potato seed lot is an essential quality factor to the buyer because it represents the security of the link between the registration process, which associates agronomic and technological characteristics to the denomination of the variety, and the certification process, which ensures the maintenance of those characteristics in the reproduction material sold under the variety name.

The standardization of a system under the UNECE Scheme will facilitate the collaboration between NDAs and improve the effectiveness of their certification work.

The appreciation of varietal identity and purity of seed potato crops and lots mostly rely on visual inspection procedures in today's certification schemes; however, new methods should be considered, given the introduction of Plants with Novel Traits, including genetically modified varieties, which can be, in spite of their different genotype, morphologically identical to the variety of which they were derived.

The OECD seed schemes can be used as source of documentation to find ways how to introduce those concepts in our Standard for seed potatoes.

### **3. Proposed Amendments and Additions to the Standard**

#### **I. Definition of Produce**

“Seed potatoes are tubers or any other propagation material, other than true seed, of a variety of *Solanum tuberosum* L., acceptable for certification by the NDA in accordance with the provisions concerning the variety (see Section II) and which after regular inspection....

Insert a new section II as follows :

#### **‘II. Provisions concerning the variety**

1. Varieties shall be accepted into the Standard only if an official description including the essential morphological, physiological and biochemical characters and a reference sample are available from the NDA; in case of presence of Novel Traits in the variety, their identities are included in the description.  
  
The variety should be distinct, uniform and stable according to the guidelines of UPOV and have a denomination allowing its identification.
2. Each NDA shall annually transmit the modifications to their list of varieties acceptable for certification (in accordance with II 1. above) to the UNECE secretariat.
3. Based on the information received, the Specialized Section will maintain a global list of varieties which the UNECE secretariat will publish on the Internet (see [http// :www.unece.org/trade/agr/.....](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/.....)).