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Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of  
Seed Potatoes

Thirty-fourth session, 22-24 March 2004, Geneva

Item 4(c) of the Provisional Agenda

**INCLUSION OF PROVISIONS FOR SHRIVELLED TUBERS (ANNEX III)**

Submitted by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

**Note by the secretariat:** Different diseases can cause shrivelling of tubers which in turn leads to a loss of seed vigour. In this document it is proposed to introduce a specific tolerance for shrivelled tubers into the Standard.

## PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A TOLERANCE FOR SHRIVELLED TUBERS

### *1. Introduction*

Many surface diseases e.g. silver scurf, black dot, are largely cosmetic, comprising of superficial discolouration. Furthermore, these diseases do not generally affect the performance of a seed tuber with respect to disease transmission to the new crop or to crop growth. Although the pathogens causing these diseases may be carried on the seed tuber, the severity of each disease on the seed tuber is not generally correlated with the amount of disease developing on the daughter tubers. This is best illustrated with silver scurf for which there is sometimes an inverse relationship between the amount of disease on the seed tuber and that developing on the daughter tubers. In other words, low levels of silver scurf on the seed tuber may give more silver scurf on the daughter tubers than high levels of silver scurf on the seed tuber.

However, these discoloured areas are, in effect, breaks in the tuber periderm and can lead to increased loss of moisture and, hence, dehydration of the tuber. When the severity of surface diseases is very high, the amount of moisture loss can be excessive leading to dehydration. The tuber becomes shrivelled and lacks vigour in producing a plant. Rather than introducing specific standards for each of these types of diseases, it is proposed that a specific tolerance for shrivelled tubers is introduced into the Standard. Such a proposal creates a general quality standard which will eliminate poorer quality seed tubers from marketed lots and will contribute to healthy crop growth from seed potatoes.

### *2. Proposal*

Under Annex III A, add new 7:

7. Shrivelled tubers: Tubers which have become excessively dehydrated and wrinkled
- pre-basic TC                    0 per cent by weight
  - pre-basic                        0.5 per cent by weight
  - basic and certified            1 per cent by weight

No change is proposed in the total tolerance allowed for the faults listed in Annex III but the text for total tolerances will need to be changed from 2 to 6 to 2 to 7.