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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

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Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**PROPOSAL FOR A UNECE STANDARD FOR HORSE MEAT -  
CARCASSES AND CUTS**

**Proposal from the Russian Federation**

1. Between the mid-1960s and early 1970s, in most developed countries and in the world as a whole, the horse population stopped declining and stabilized at around 60-65 million. At the same time, quite naturally, fewer draught horses came to be used, and there was a significant increase in the use of horses for social purposes (riding, carriage work, sports, tourism and racing, etc.) and, in a number of countries, for the production of horse meat and koumiss. While horses are increasingly used for social purposes, horse breeding for food production - meat and milk - is becoming ever more important. According to the Scientific Research Institute of Horse Breeding, there are currently some 230,000 horses bred for meat consumption in the Russian Federation.

**Number of horses and production of horse meat in countries  
with the highest horse populations**

Country	Number of horses		Horse meat production	
	Million heads	Percentage of world population	Thousand tonnes	Percentage of world production
China	8.9	14.5	71	12.4
Brazil	6.4	10.4	14	2.5
Mexico	6.3	10.3	79	13.8
United States	6.0	9.8	25	4.4
Argentina	3.3	5.4	50	8.7
Mongolia	2.9	4.8	28	4.9
Colombia	2.5	4.1	12	2.1
Russian Federation	1.3	3.6	80	13.5
Kazakhstan	1.1	1.8	63	11.0
World	61.0	100	571	100

2. In the Russian Federation, as in other countries, many foodstuffs are produced using horse meat, including many delicacies. Horse meat's content in essential amino acids and polyunsaturated fats helps to reduce cholesterol. It is therefore among the foods used for the treatment through diet of diabetes, obesity, atherosclerosis and other cholesterol-related disorders.

3. Horse meat delivers essential vitamins and minerals. Compared with other types of meat, it contains greater quantities of macronutrients and trace elements: calcium, phosphorus, iron, sodium, copper, magnesium, silicon, zinc and nickel. It is rich in group B, A, PP and E vitamins.

4. Horse meat is a food of choice not only because of its nutritional properties, but also because of ethnic dietary considerations among the world's population; it is one of the kinds of meat that may be eaten by Muslims. One out of every five people in the world is a Muslim, and there are some 25 million Muslims in the Russian Federation.

5. In the light of the above, it would be useful to draw up a standard for horse meat for use in international trade.

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