



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/3
1 March 1999

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Specialized Section on Standardization of
Meat (Porcine, Bovine and Poultry)

10-12 May 1999, Geneva

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF RAPORTEURS ON
STANDARDIZATION OF BOVINE MEAT

Note by the secretariat

This document contains the report of the Meeting of Rapporteurs which took place in Brussels, Belgium on 27 and 28 October 1998. The issues dealt with refer to Annex I of the report TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1998/5 of the 1998 session of the Meeting of Experts. Annexes I to V of the present report will be available separately in English only.

Report on the UN/ECE Rapporteurs meeting on standardisation of Bovine Meat
26/27 October 1998 - Brussels

Following the seventh session of the Meeting of Experts on Standardisation of Meat, a list of priorities for consideration by Rapporteurs was agreed and tasks apportioned.

The meeting was attended by delegations from France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The following countries participated under Article 11: Argentina and Australia. A representative of the following non-governmental organisation also participated: EAN (European Article Numbering Association) International. (A full list of participants is attached to this report.)

The list of issues included: -

- | | | |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1) | 4.4 | Provisions concerning lean colour |
| 2) | 4.5 | Provisions concerning origin and production history |
| 3) | 4.6 (new) | Provisions concerning slaughter and processing |
| 4) | 4.7 (old 4.6) | Provisions packing, storage and transport |
| 5) | 4.8 (old 4.7) | Provisions concerning labelling |
| 6) | 4.10 (old 4.9) | UCC/EAN codification system |
| 7) | 5.0 | Special Requirements - pistola cut |
| 8) | | Annexes Best practice |
| 9) | | UN/ECE world trade standard mark |
| | | Other Business |

Progress was made in all key areas

1) Provisions concerning lean colour (Paragraph 4.4)

This paragraph was renamed **“Provisions concerning meat and fat colour and pH”**.

The Rapporteurs agreed that the statements on pH as presented by the Polish delegation should remain unchanged and its importance in determining meat characteristics such as keeping quality is recognised. However it was agreed that the relationship between pH and colour is not readily correlated. Colour therefore should be evaluated by making reference to an accredited standard such as the AUS-MEAT standard presented by the Australian delegation. Such standards are designed to have similar translucency, hue, chroma and brightness to real meat when viewed under lighting proposed by the standard.

Similar provisions should be made for the assessment of marbling.

- 2) **Provisions concerning origin and production history** (Paragraph 4.5)&
3) **Provisions concerning slaughter and processing** (Paragraph 4.6)

These two headings were amalgamated as it is neither intended nor possible for the code to supersede legislative requirements. The code will make reference to Codex Alimentarius in such cases and limit itself to those requirements or claims which go beyond those stipulated by law. These could include animal history data; claims about certain slaughter systems (ethnic systems) accelerated conditioning and so on.

The specific provisions to which this approach relates fall within paragraph 4.6 as follows: -

I) Pre slaughter quality examination - It was agreed to rename this pre- slaughter procedures. Two subsections were then agreed as follows.

Ante - mortem inspection - As these relate to legislative requirements it was agreed that this would not be expanded beyond making reference to Codex.

Animal history data - A traceability system must be in place to verify animal history (origin, feed, medication, etc.) if claims are made about animal history.

ii) Slaughter Systems - Again this is an issue of verification. If there are claims, requirements for: -

Ethnic Electrical Stimulation (Accelerated Conditioning)

Then a verification system must be in place to validate. In the case of ES it was suggested that the standard should make reference to a recognised authority which has scientifically defined the parameters.

iii) Date of Slaughter - There was agreement that there must be a system in place to determine the date of slaughter. However it was also agreed that this did not have to be shown beyond the stage of carcasses and primal cuts. i.e. - non-retail trade.

iv) and v) Controls and Processing - These were amalgamated to make one single sub- heading called **System Records (Verification)**

Companies must, of course, meet appropriate legal requirements regarding hygiene, safety, record keeping and labelling, but any additional claims or contractual requirements agreed between buyer and seller should be subject to rigorous traceability and verification system

4) Provisions concerning packing, storage and transport (Paragraph 4.7)

It was agreed in principle that there should be a separation between those requirements which refer to meat in general and those that refer to beef specifically. The general requirements relating to packing, storage and transport as well as the specific standards for beef were presented by the US delegation in draft form (Annexes I & II) for discussion at the next meeting of experts. As some of these issues will have a broader application than beef alone, it may be necessary at some stage to review the pork standard in light of this approach.

5) Provisions concerning labelling - Paragraph 4.8

With reference to the provisions concerning labelling (table on page 6 of WP.7/GE.11/1998/3), the French delegation suggested that only the health mark and lot or batch number need be shown on the primary covering if it is not a unit of sale. For example cuts in a carton. The secondary covering (carton) must have the additional information required as listed in the table.

6) Coding (Paragraph 4.10)

UK presented a suggested 14 field, 16 digit coding standard. This was accepted in concept although after some discussion it was agreed to amend the proposal as follows.

The system was amended to 13 fields and 18 digits with field 9 (Style) being eliminated.

Field 6 (Primal) was amended from 1 digit (1 - 9) to 2 digits (1 - 99)

Field 7 (Sub-primal) was amended from 2 digits (1 - 99) to 3 digits (1 - 999)

These changes were felt to better accommodate the range of requirements rather than using the Style sub-heading which was not adjacent to the applicable data fields.

It was felt that colour should encompass meat and fat, so field 11 (Lean Colour) was renamed as simply - Colour and expanded to 2 digits (1 - 99) using a 10 x 10 matrix with fat on one axis and meat on the other. (A copy of the proposed coding standard and colour reference is attached - Annex III.)

Mr. Mitic, who attended this part of the meeting, confirmed that there are up to 25 digits available although he recommended that we try to keep within a limit of 20 digits. The code will allow a high level of detailed specification of both animal and cut type and will be compatible with the EAN 128 codification system.

The system adopted will allow further expansion if necessary.

Mr. Mitic will send a summary of his presentation for inclusion in the minutes (Annex V).

7) Special Requirements - pistola cut (Paragraph 5.0)

The objective of this work and the discussion is to establish a basic cut and it was reiterated that this definition is only a starting point and does not exclude variations either in the place of the vertical cut or its depth.

The Argentine delegation presented their report on Pistola cut (Annex IV) and using the information provided a basic specification was agreed amongst Rapporteurs as follows:

- a) Separation - The basic cut will be made between the 5th and 6th rib
- b) The ventral depth of the cut should be approximately 50mm below the longissimus dorsi muscle.

The full description will be redrafted using the correct anatomical terminology for agreement by the meeting of experts.

8) Best practice Annexes

These still need to be developed, but emphasis was placed on reliable traceability and verifications to support claims.

9) UN/ECE world trade standard mark

There was a discussion on this issue which concluded that a mark could only have value if supported by appropriate, third party accreditation.

There was a concern that if this was too costly it might discourage its use.

The use of the mark would not exclude the standard, or elements of it being used (e.g the cutting standard itself), but the mark would indicate, a full application of the standard, including best practice. If the mark gained credibility and gave users a marketing advantage then it would encourage use. There is concern that, without this, the standards offer little added value above existing systems.

UN/ECE are drafting a proposal which will be circulated before the next Rapporteurs meeting.

10) OTHER ISSUES

Kill numbers

There was a lengthy discussion on the method that should be included in the standard for carcass identification. There are two approaches at present with some countries writing the number on each side in food grade ink and others applying a computer generated label.

The French delegation expressed their strong view that the writing of the number on the carcass was more secure and their national authority were committed to maintaining this approach. Agreement was not reached but it was agreed that the French delegation would reconsult and the other delegations would also approach their national authorities to enquire as to the possibility of adopting the method using food grade ink on the carcass.

It should be pointed out that a number of delegations feel that the writing of the number on the carcass is more secure and further discussion will be needed to resolve this issue as it has not been possible to reach a unanimous position. In view of the impasse it was also agreed that the UK would attempt to provide a form of words making more general reference a 'secure traceability system'.

Meat Manager

A presentation was made by Barony Jones of the 'Meat Manager' Software which will allow cutting specifications to be transmitted electronically between supplier and customer. A full description is attached as Annex IV.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Mr. A. BOISMARTEL
Ministère de l'Économie
DGCCARF – Bretagne
Cité administrative
Bd de la liberté
35021 Rennes
France
Tel: 33 02 99 29 76 00
Fax: 33 02 99 78 38 96

Ms. M. –C. HESTEAU
Company Director
C/o Armorica Ltd.
5a Moor Road
Broadstone
Dorset BH18 8AZ
United Kingdom
Tel: 44 1202 600775
Fax: 44 1202 600194

Mr. P.A. HARDWICK
International Manager
Meat And Livestock Commission
23 – 25 rue de la Science
1040 Bruxelles
Belgium
Tel: 32 2 230 8668
Fax: 32 2 230 8620
E-mail: peter_hardwick@mlc.org.uk

Mr. K. JONES
Food Industry Consultant
52 The Headlands
Northampton NN3 SPA
Tel: 44 1604 450 363
Fax: 44 1604 450 363
E-mail: kenjones@clara.net

Mr. C. MORRIS
International Marketing Specialist
U.S.D.A.
STOP 0254, Rm 2628 South Building
14th & Independence Av., S.W.
Washington D.C. 20090 – 6456
Tel: 1 202 720 1121
Fax: 1 202 720 1112
E-mail: craig_a_morris@usda.gov

Mr. M.D. RAVETTINO
Vocal del Consejo de Administración
Servicio nacional de sanidad y calidad
agroalimentaria
SENACA
Paseo Colón 367 - 5°P.
1063 Buenos Aires
Argentina
Tel: 54 1 345 4110/12/39 extn.1541

Mr. H. AUILA
Delegado SENASA
Paseo Colón 367 - 9°P.
C.P. 1063
1063 Buenos Aires
Argentina

Mr. I. KING

Chief Executive, AUS – Meat
Authority for Uniform Specification
of Meat and Livestock
141 Logan Road
Woolloongabba
Brisbane, Qld 4102
Australia
Tel: 61 7 3307 3333
Fax: 61 7 3307 3358

Mr. M. MITIC

Project Manager
International European Article
Numbering Association (EAN)
Rue Royale 145
1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: 32 2 227 10 20
Fax: 32 2 227 10 21
E-mail: mitic@ean.be