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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)  
11-12 May 1999, Geneva

**REPORT OF ITS EIGHTH SESSION**

**Executive summary**

Delegations were informed on the ECE annual session and invited to discuss the competitive advantage of their group and possibilities to assist the reconstruction of south eastern European countries (see paras. 2-6 and Annex 2).

The general requirements were separated from beef specific requirements in the standard so that they can be reused when discussing other types of meat (ovine and caprine). (see paras. 13-15)

The porcine standard will be reviewed to integrate it into the new framework (focal point: United States) (see paras. 15 and 44(d)).

The general requirements were finalized and will be transmitted to the Working Party for approval (see paras. 16-27 and Annex 4).

The existing text (TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/4) will be used as a guideline. The format of the beef specific section will include general provisions on cuts offering a method to identify and describe cuts. (Focal points: United Kingdom, Switzerland, France). The description of the cuts will follow the format of the AUS-MEAT book completed with information from Argentina and France. (Focal point for this work: Australia) (paras. 28-34 and 44(a))

The Specialized Section will cooperate with the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies in the creation of a UN/ECE quality trade mark for meat. The rapporteurs will prepare a draft protocol (38-43).

### **Opening of the session**

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 11 to 12 May 1999. A Meeting of Rapporteurs on Standardization of Bovine Meat took place in Geneva on 10 May 1999.
2. The session was opened by the Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division Mrs. Carol Cosgrove-Sacks, who welcomed the delegates to Geneva. She outlined the events that had taken place at the annual session of the UN/ECE (3-6 May 1999). At this session UN/ECE's work on standards in general had been greatly appreciated, especially the work done under the auspices of the Committee on Trade Industry and Enterprise Development. During the last year UN/ECE had continued to cooperate successfully with other standard setting bodies (e.g. ISO) and its work was also supported by WTO.
3. At the Commission session the secretariat had been asked to consult with participants of all subsidiary bodies to find out what they see as the competitive advantage of UN/ECE and why they find it useful to meet within this framework. She invited delegations to reflect on this issue to assist the secretariat.
4. The Director also informed delegations that UN/ECE will play a role in the reconstruction of the economies of the south eastern European countries. She invited delegations to reflect on how the Specialized Section might contribute to this task.
5. The Director said further that the Trade Division had asked for additional resources in the area of agricultural standards and electronic commerce but that these had not been agreed because of a zero growth budget.
6. Reflections of the group on its competitive advantage and possible assistance to south eastern European countries are included in Annex 2 to this report.

### **Participation**

7. The session was attended by delegations of the following countries: Argentina<sup>1</sup>; Australia<sup>1</sup>; Austria; France; Greece; Hungary; New Zealand<sup>1</sup>; Poland; Russian Federation; Switzerland; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.
8. A representative of the following non-governmental organization also participated: EAN International.
9. The list of participants is included as Annex 1 to this report.

### **Adoption of the Agenda (Item 1)**

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/1

10. The Meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda with the addition of the following documents  
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.2 (Coding standard and colour reference)

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<sup>1</sup> *Participating under Article 11 of the Commission's terms of reference. This article regulates participation of non-ECE member States and is mentioned here for administrative reasons. According to the working procedures of WP.7 and its specialized sections every member State of the United Nations can participate in their work with the same rights.*

- TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.3 (EAN UCC system)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.4 (Beef manager)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.5 (Pistola cut)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.6 (Report of the Meeting of Rapporteurs 10 May 1999)
- TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.7 (Reformatted General Requirements for Meat)

### **Election of Officers (Item 2)**

11. The Meeting unanimously confirmed Mr. B. Carpenter (USA) as its Chairman and Mr. P. Hardwick (United Kingdom) as its Vice-Chairman.

### **Matters of Interest Arising Since the Sixth Session (Item 3)**

12. The Meeting took note of document TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/2 on matters of interest arising since the last session.

### **Report of the Meeting of the Rapporteurs and Consideration of a Proposed Draft Standard for Beef Carcasses and Cuts (Item 4)**

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/3  
TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1998/4  
TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.6  
TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.7

13. The delegate of the United Kingdom introduced the report of the meeting of rapporteurs which had taken place on 10 May 1999 (see Annex 3). The rapporteurs had reviewed open questions from their last meeting in Brussels last year (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/3) and decided to propose a new structure for the UN/ECE standards on meat. This structure consists of three sections:

- *general requirements* which apply to all mammalian species (porcine, bovine, ovine and caprine) (e.g. refrigeration, labelling, coding)
- *species specific requirements* (e.g. description of cuts)
- *annexes* (e.g. best practice)

14. It is hoped that the new structure will speed up the development of further meat standards (because general requirements are not rediscussed) and facilitate updating of existing standards. Publication should be in a binder format which would make it easy to add new sections and to supply only specific parts to interested parties.

15. The specialized section agreed to this proposal and also decided to review the porcine standard in the near future to integrate it into the new framework. The delegation of the United States offered to serve as rapporteur for this task.

#### *Discussion of the general requirements in the new structure*

16. The meeting of rapporteurs had prepared a first draft of the general requirements (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.7) by taking the relevant parts out of the draft beef standard (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/4). The specialized section proceeded to review the two documents section by

section to answer any open questions and finalize the text. The consolidated text is reproduced as Annex 4 to this report.

17. The title, sections 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 and 4.1 were adopted with minor amendments (see Annex 4). The Russian delegation pointed out a translation problem for the title of 4.1. The English term “refrigeration” which already includes “freezing” should be translated with an adequate Russian term (or eventually two words).

18. It had been decided to include provisions for metal detection in section 4.2. This was achieved by dividing (A) 2. into two items separating meat inherent conditions from those caused externally and the addition of a footnote (see Annex 4).

19. The inclusion of two diagrams in 4.3 was adopted. It was decided to include the measurements both in inches and millimetres (19mm/3/4") (see Annex 4).

20. The delegate of Switzerland asked whether the reference to the ISO standard in section 4.4 should be kept. He also said that there was ongoing work at OECD concerning meat quality measurements. This work was unknown to the other delegations and it was also mentioned that the ISO standard was beef specific. It was decided to try to obtain more information about the work of OECD and not to include any reference in the general requirements until a relevant generic standard was available.

21. Section 4.5 was adopted with one amendment which allows the purchaser to “require” the seller to supply proof of documentary procedures (see Annex 4).

22. Section 4.6 was adopted with several amendments and additions (see Annex 4).

23. Section 4.7 was subject to a long discussion concerning:

- (a) the distinction into primary packaging/secondary packing
- (b) the information items which could be mentioned in an accompanying document
- (c) the additional optional information items
- (d) the format of the table

24. Concerning (a) it was agreed that labelling should rather depend on which units were actually marketed than on the distinction between primary packaging/secondary packing. It was decided to distinguish between “Unpackaged carcasses, quarters and cuts” and “Packaged or packed meat”. Concerning (b) it was decided that several information items required for “Packaged or packed meat” could also be mentioned in a document. Concerning (c) it was seen difficult to agree on an exhaustive list of additional items that might have to be labelled on request and it was decided to include a generic statement citing only a few examples. Concerning (d) it was decided to reformat the table to make it clearer and avoid duplications (see Annex 4).

25. Section 4.8 was adopted unchanged. Section 4.9 was adopted as amended (including new terminology provided by EAN International).

26. The Russian and Austrian delegations pointed out that their countries were missing in the table of country codes (see document TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/4 section 4.9). It was agreed that all codes would be included in the species specific requirements and would be based on an internationally accepted 3-digit country code.

27. Having reviewed the text on general requirements as presented by the rapporteurs the specialized section decided to present it to the Working Party for approval. Editorial comments on the text contained in Annex 4 should be communicated to the secretariat by 31 July 1999.

### **Discussion of proposals for the structure of the beef specific requirements**

#### *General structure*

28. The rapporteurs had prepared a list of items which should be included in the beef specific section but not yet elaborated any text (see Annex 3, para. 7.).

29. The list was agreed in principle. On origin and production history the American delegation pointed out that EAN International was working on meat traceability and published guidelines on the application of EAN standards in implementing Council Regulation 820/97. They said it was essential that the rapporteurs discussed this document at their next session.

30. Delegations had been supplied with an excerpt of the "Handbook of Australian Meat" relating to beef cuts. The Australian delegate explained that the emphasis had been on user-friendliness by combining pictures, graphics, Latin terminology and jargon commonly used in the business to avoid lengthy descriptions.

31. The Chairman outlined the differences between the Australian approach and the approach presently contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/4. In this draft options are described verbally which makes the text shorter but also less user-friendly because options are difficult to find. He asked the specialized section to decide which format should be used.

32. The specialized section agreed that the Australian proposal was preferable to the existing text in the UN/ECE Draft Standard. It was pointed out though that it would be necessary to look carefully at the translation of the jargon used in the different languages and the names used for the cuts. It might also be necessary to add different cuts to the document. The Argentinian document on the Pistola cut should also be taken into account.

33. The Argentinian delegation informed the meeting that the work done on the Pistola Cut was available on CD-Rom free of charge. The work is presented in English and Spanish.

34. The specialized section agreed that it would not be possible to include every cut used in trade. Therefore it was decided to include a general section in the beef specific document which would enable the reader to identify and describe also those cuts which are not included in detail in section 5. This would provide buyer and seller with a common language in negotiations and thus facilitate international trade.

#### *Format of the publication*

35. It was mentioned by some delegates that while the text of the porcine standard was excellent the low printing quality made it less competitive on the marketplace.

36. It was decided that the beef specific section should be one consolidated document including descriptions and pictures of a high quality. The Australian delegation offered to assist in the publication of the final documents. The secretariat offered to contact the UN publication services to find out the possibilities for such cooperation.

37. It was mentioned that to reduce costs it might not be necessary to include pictures of all sub-primals but only of the primal cuts.

## **UN/ECE quality trade mark for meat**

### *Background*

38. The Secretary of the Working Party for Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6), Mr. Serguei Kouzmine gave a short presentation of the work done in this group. The group prepares an international agreement on technical harmonization issues especially conformity assessment. The goal is not to duplicate work done by WTO (e.g. TBT agreement) but to assist operators in areas not covered by WTO. There will be a general agreement supplemented by protocols for individual areas. These protocols could be used to upgrade voluntary standards to make their application mandatory.

39. It had been the idea of the specialized section to have a world quality trade mark for meat but it had been recognized that in order to provide a competitive advantage to operators using this mark some kind of accreditation and mutual recognition system was essential. This could be done in a protocol to the agreement on technical harmonization issues laying down what provisions of the standard need to be fulfilled and how organisations applying the trade mark need to be accredited. By signing such a protocol a country would automatically recognize the accreditation of national organizations accredited in another country.

40. Mr. Kouzmine also raised the issue of monitoring the application of standards. Many organizations develop standards but it is difficult to find out to what extent and where the provisions are applied. Countries could be obliged through a protocol to monitor the application of standards they adopted. If this information was collected and combined in a publication it could serve as a valuable document for trade facilitation.

41. Mr. Kouzmine invited the specialized section to discuss a possible cooperation with the standardization policy experts of WP.6. He suggested that as a possible way forward the Specialized Section prepare a draft protocol based on their standard and supply this to WP.6 where the experts would transform it into a legal document.

### *Discussion*

42. In the discussion the following comments were made:

- Implementation could be a stage by stage process and dealing with the general requirements first.
- Use of a standard should have a commercial benefit.
- Australia has a quality assurance system into which AUS-MEAT is integrated.
- EAN International is interested in working with WP.6.
- A quality assurance system exists in the European Union based on Community regulation. If this discussion goes further then a representative of the European Commission should be invited. A specific definition of the mandate for the group of rapporteurs should be drafted

43. The Specialized Section agreed that cooperation with WP.6 could be useful. As a first step it was decided that a group within the rapporteurs should prepare a draft protocol. The delegations of Australia, United States and Russian Federation offered to provide input.

## **Preparation of the next session of the meeting of rapporteurs**

### *Goals*

44. It was agreed that there should be only one meeting of rapporteurs before the next session of the specialized section in March 2000. The main goals of the meeting of rapporteurs should be as follows:

- (a) Preparation of a final draft of the species specific section for beef.

The existing text (TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/4) should be used as a guideline.

There should be a general part based on existing parts 1. to 4. This part should include general provisions on cuts offering a method to identify and describe cuts which are not included in detail in part 5 but which are used in some countries. (Focal points: UK, Switzerland, France). The existing part 5 would be completed with information from Argentina (document on Pistola cut), France (additional cuts to be included), and Australia (cuts from the AUS-MEAT handbook). Work should concentrate on getting the text right - graphics and pictures to be added later. (Focal point for this work: Australia)

- (b) Forming an opinion on traceability/ animal identification (document to be supplied by EAN International as soon as possible)
- © Preparing a draft protocol on conformity assessment (trade mark).
- (d) Revision of the Porcine document (focal point: United States)
- (e) Developing methods for the dissemination of the standard to countries which don't usually participate in the group.

45. It was agreed that work on the beef specific section should be completed within the next year. Documents should be circulated before 1 September 1999 to allow for comments. The secretariat would coordinate the distribution of documents by posting them on their homepage on the Internet.

### *Date and place of the next meeting of rapporteurs*

46. It was decided that the next meeting of rapporteurs should be held late November/ beginning of December 1999.

47. The delegation of Australia offered to host the meeting in Brisbane. Several European delegations said that they might not be able to participate because of travel cost/time.

48. As an alternative the delegation of EAN International offered to host the meeting in Brussels.

49. It was decided that delegations should communicate to the secretariat by 15 June 1999 whether they would be able to participate at a meeting in Australia or Brussels. The decision where to hold the meeting will be made by the Chairman upon receiving this information.

### **Next session of the Specialized Section**

#### *Date*

50. The next session of the Specialized Section has been tentatively planned to take place in Geneva from 27 to 29 March 1999.

#### *Procedure for the election of officers*

51. It was decided that from the next session onwards elections of officers should normally be held at the end of each session. Only if necessary because of the absence of both Chairperson and Vice-chairperson would they be held at the beginning. In this context it was pointed out that delegates from non-ECE member States could also be elected (Vice-)Chairperson as they were participating with the same rights as UN/ECE members.

#### *Name of the Specialized Section*

52. The group decided to delete the reference to different species in its name. The name will read "Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat" subject to approval from the Working Party.

### **Adoption of the report**

53. The specialized section adopted the report of its 8<sup>th</sup> session and its annexes. For a list of follow-up actions see Annex 5.



**Annex 1**  
**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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## **Annex 2**

### **A. Competitive advantage of UN/ECE**

The main competitive advantage of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat is that it fulfils a gap between existing food safety regulations (e.g. Codex Alimentarius) and the marketing of the products.

By discussing food quality in the international forum provided by UN/ECE and creating standards, a common trading language develops in market economies which helps to:

- promote the international meat business and the understanding and cooperation between countries
- improve quality
- improve information for consumers
- increase uniformity of products
- better address the needs of the customers
- improve traceability
- come to a better understanding of different customs and regulations to facilitate trade

### **B. Reconstruction of the economies of the south eastern European countries**

It is recognized that any assistance to the reconstruction of the economies of the south eastern European countries coming from the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat can only be effective after the resolution of the present conflict. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to start thinking about possible ways now. Yugoslavia used to be between 1980 and 1990 a meat exporting country. About 10% of the meat produced was exported as high quality meat bringing high prices on international markets.

Before assisting reconstruction, the Specialized Section could provide guidance in assessing the present situation which is necessary to plan any further action: How has the meat industry suffered in the conflict? What kind of help is needed?

Following this assessment, the forum of the specialized section can be used in a more pro-active way to form a reconstruction team using the national and international connections of the participants to create a programme of seminars or any other necessary assistance (e.g. promotion of small businesses). It should be stressed that the goals of such a programme would be to reconstruct the local industry and not to create a short term easy export market for 'subsidized' products.

In any contact with the countries, the standards can be used as a means of communication (e.g. the porcine standard was seen as a useful tool for discussions in the Ukraine by the United States).

Standards can be used in the development of a national framework in those countries where the industry has been decimated by the war.

### **Annex 3**

#### **Report of the Meeting of Rapporteurs Geneva, 10 May 1999**

1. The meeting was chaired by Ken Jones (United Kingdom).
2. The meeting was attended by delegations of the following countries: Argentina; Australia; Austria; France; Poland; Russian Federation; Switzerland; United Kingdom and United States.
3. A representative of the following non-governmental organization also participated: EAN International.

#### **Review of the report of the Meeting of Rapporteurs**

4. The group reviewed the report of the meeting of rapporteurs held in Brussels from 28-29 October 1998 (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/3). The following comments were made:

Paragraph 1): The French delegation pointed out some problems with the translation of the text (conservation instead of conservabilité and [perciage] for marbling) which will be sorted out by the secretariat for the final version of the standard. It was also agreed to use the term “colour evaluation method” in the standard which would then be supplemented giving examples of specific standards, e.g. the AUS-MEAT standard.

The representative of Australia gave a presentation of the AUS-MEAT system.

Paragraphs 2)3): The delegation of France said that the issues raised in this paragraph were related to traceability which should be described as complete and detailed as possible either here or in an annex. It was agreed that there should be a new section on post slaughter processing including maturation methods and electrical stimulation.

Paragraph 4): (see section on reformatting of UN/ECE meat standards).

Paragraph 5): The French delegation will prepare a proposal for the Specialized Section.

Paragraph 6): The specific bovine coding was not discussed but an updated wording on general meat coding was included in the reformatted version of the general requirements contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.7.

Paragraph 7): Delegations were provided with a document from Argentina on the “hind pistola cut”. The delegation of France pointed out that the cut was flexible and it might be useful to add the number of ribs.

Paragraph 8): There might be a new annex on traceability.

Paragraph 9): The UN/ECE world trade quality mark will be discussed in the Specialized Section.

Paragraph 10): The subject of kill numbers will be treated together with traceability.

## **Reformatting of the UN/ECE meat standards**

5. Following a discussion on paragraph 4) of TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/3 the group agreed that:
- All mammals' Standards should share a common 'General Requirements' (section 1).
  - Each species should have 'Species specific requirements' linked to any cutting protocol appropriate to that species (section 2).
  - Best practice or 'wish lists', for each species, should form an additional section, 'Optional Requirements', to be implemented either in whole or part at the buyer's request (section 3).
  - The Standards should be published in a loose leaf sheet format which could be kept in a binder. Amendments or additions could then be added as they are agreed and became available.

### **Section 1: General requirements**

6. The reformatted general requirements are contained in document TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/CRP.7. The following list gives the new section headings followed by references to the existing text (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/4) in brackets:

- 1.0 Foreword (existing 1.0 amended and new text)
- 2.0 Scope/Application (existing 2.0 and 3.0 amended and new text)
- 3.0 Regulatory Requirement (new)
- 4.0 Meat Processing/Handling
  - 4.1 Provisions concerning refrigeration (existing 4.1 amended)
  - 4.2 Provisions concerning condition of the meat (existing 4.2 to include metal detection)
  - 4.3 Provisions for evaluating fat thickness in certain cuts (existing 4.3 and new drawing)
  - 4.4 Provisions concerning meat and fat colour and pH (existing 4.4; general text only; specific text for beef to be drawn up)
  - 4.5 Provisions concerning origin and production history (existing 4.5; general text only; specific text for beef including provisions concerning slaughter and processing to be drawn up)
  - 4.6 Provisions concerning packing, storage, and transport (existing 4.6)
  - 4.7 Provisions concerning labelling (existing 4.7 text to be reviewed by French delegation)
  - 4.8 Authority for conformity assessment (existing 4.8)
  - 4.9 UCC/EAN-128 Codification system (new version of existing 4.9 as supplied by EAN)

### **Section 2: Species Specific (bovine, porcine, ovine or caprine)**

7. It was agreed that the Species Specific sections should contain the following items:
- Foreword (1.0)
  - Scope (2.0)
  - Field of application (3.0)
  - Origin and production history (4.5)
  - Species specific coding system (4.10)
    - This includes animal type, product names and product codes
  - Produce definition system (4.10)
  - Product specifications and options (5.0 - ?)
    - (any modifications on general non-species specific general requirements)
8. Delegations were provided with copies of the description of cuts in the AUS-MEAT system to evaluate them for possible inclusion in the UN/ECE standard.

## **Annex 4**

### **DRAFT STANDARD FOR MEAT CARCASSES AND CUTS**

#### **General requirements concerning the standardization, marketing, and commercial quality of**

#### **MEAT CARCASSES AND CUTS (Bovine, Porcine, Ovine, Caprine) moving in international trade**

### **1.0 FOREWORD**

The purpose of this standard is to define and describe commercial quality and merchandising requirements of meat carcasses and cuts moving into international trade as fit for human consumption. It is recognized that many other requirements of food standardization and veterinary control must be complied with to market meat across international borders. The standard does not attempt to prescribe those aspects which are covered elsewhere, and throughout the standard, such provisions are left to national or international legislation, or requirements of the importing country.

These general requirements for meat purchase specifications are recommended for use with the individual species-specific UN/ECE Standards for meat and meat products. For assurance that items comply with these detailed requirements, buyers may choose to enlist the services of an independent, unbiased third-party to ensure product compliance with a purchaser's specified options. The species specific standards include photographs of carcasses and selected commercial cuts to facilitate a better understanding of the provisions with a view to ensuring a wide application in international trade.

### **2.0 SCOPE/APPLICATION**

This standard applies to Bovine, Porcine, Ovine, and Caprine carcasses and/or associated cuts marketed as fit for human consumption. The purpose of this document is to provide a variety of options to purchasers for meat handling, packing and packaging, and conformity assessment which conforms to good commercial practice for meat and meat products intended to be sold in international trade. Contractors are responsible for delivering products that comply with all contractual and specification requirements and are advised to set up a quality control system designed to assure compliance.

The standard may contain references to other international agreements, standards and codes of practice which have the objective of maintaining the quality after dispatch and of providing guidance to governments on certain aspects of food hygiene, labeling and other matters which fall outside the scope of this standard. Codex Alimentarius Commission Standards, Guidelines, and Codes of Practice should be consulted as the competent international reference concerning health and sanitation requirements.

### **3.0 REGULATORY REQUIREMENT**

All meat and meat products will originate from animals slaughtered in establishments regularly operated under the applicable regulations pertaining to food safety and inspection.



#### **4.0 MEAT PROCESSING/HANDLING**

##### **4.1 PROVISIONS CONCERNING REFRIGERATION**

Meat may be presented chilled, frozen or deep-frozen. Ambient temperatures should be such throughout the supply chain to ensure uniform internal product temperatures as follows:

- (A) *Chilled*: product maintained at not less than -1.5°C or more than +7°C at any time following the post-slaughter chilling process.
- (B) *Frozen*: product maintained at not exceeding -12°C at any time after freezing.
- (C) *Deep-frozen*: product maintained at not exceeding -18°C at any time after freezing.

##### **4.2 PROVISIONS CONCERNING CONDITION OF THE MEAT**

- (A) Carcasses/cuts must be:
  - 1. Intact, taking into account the presentation.
  - 2. Free from visible blood clots, or bone dust.
  - 3. Free from any visible foreign matter (e.g. dirt, wood, metal particles<sup>2</sup>).
  - 4. Free of offensive odours.
  - 5. Free of obtrusive bloodstains.
  - 6. Free of unspecified protruding or broken bones.
  - 7. Free of contusions.<sup>3</sup>
  - 8. Free from freezerburn.<sup>4</sup>
- (B) Cutting, trimming, and boning of cuts shall be accomplished with sufficient care to maintain cut integrity and identity, and avoid scores in the lean. Ragged edges shall be removed close to the lean surfaces. Except for cuts that are separated through natural seams, all cross-sectional surfaces shall form approximate right angles with the skin surface. Minimal amounts of lean, fat, or bone shall be included on a cut from an adjacent cut. For boneless cuts, all bones, cartilage, and surface lymph glands shall be removed.

##### **4.3 PROVISIONS FOR EVALUATING FAT THICKNESS IN CERTAIN CUTS**

Trimming of external fat shall be accomplished by smooth removal along the contour of underlying muscle surfaces. Bevelled fat edges alone do not substitute for complete trimming of external surfaces when required. Fat thickness requirements may apply to surface fat (subcutaneous and/ or exterior fat in relation to the item),

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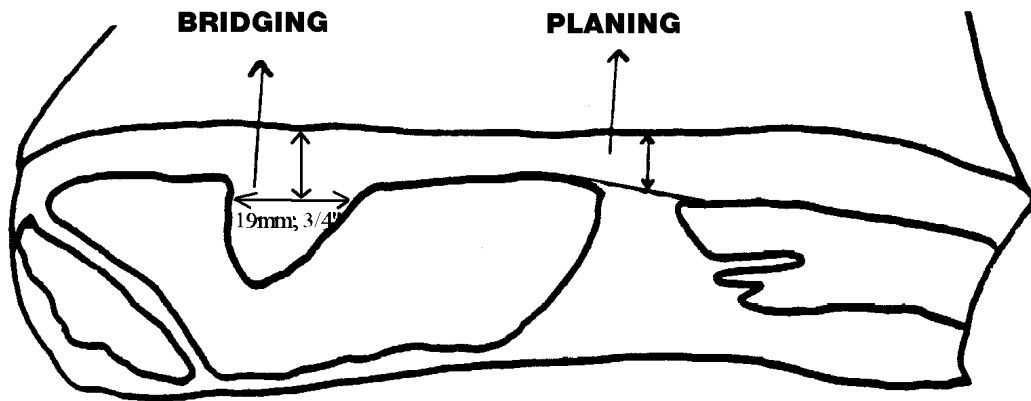
<sup>2</sup> *When specified by the purchaser, meat items will be subject to metal particle detection.*

<sup>3</sup> *Contusions having a material impact on any product are not permitted.*

<sup>4</sup> *Freezer-burn is localized or widespread areas of irreversible surface dehydration indicated, in part or all, by changes from original colour (usually paler), flavour (flavourless), smell (rancid), and/or tactile properties (dry, spongy).*

and seam (intermuscular) fat as specified by the purchaser. Two definitions are used to describe fat trim limitations:

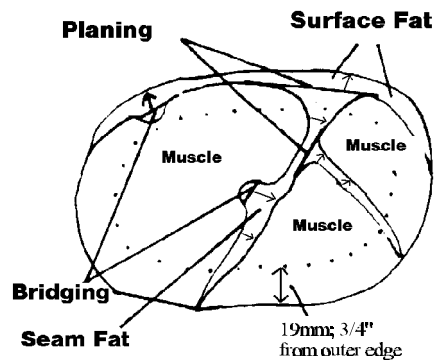
1. Maximum fat thickness at any one point. Evaluated by visually determining the area of a cut which has the greatest fat depth, and measuring the thickness of the fat at that point.
2. Average (mean) fat thickness. Evaluated by visually determining and taking multiple measurements of the fat depth of areas where surface fat is evident only. Average fat depth is determined by computing the mean depth in those areas.



*Figure 1*

Actual measurements of fat thickness (depth) are made on the edges of cuts by probing or scoring the overlying surface fat in a manner that reveals the actual thickness and accounts for any natural depression or seam which could affect the measurement. When a natural depression occurs in a muscle, only the fat above the portion of the depression which is more than 19 mm/ 3/4" in width is considered (known as bridging; See figure 1) . When a seam of fat occurs between adjacent muscles, only the fat above the level of the involved muscles is measured (known as planing; See figure 1).

For the purpose of measuring seam (intermuscular) fat, when specified, the maximum fat thickness at any one point is evaluated by visually determining the thickest (widest, deepest) deposits on any exposed, cross-sectional surface, and measuring the depth of fat at that point (See figure 2). Average fat thickness for seam fat is determined by visually determining the various areas of seam fat and taking measurements representing the depth at each area. The average is the computed mean of such measures.



**Figure 2**

#### **.4 PROVISIONS CONCERNING MEAT AND FAT COLOUR AND pH**

Normally, lean meat and fat, depending on the specific species, demonstrate a characteristic colour and pH. Specific provisions concerning the evaluation of lean and fat color, and pH are contained within the species specific standards.

#### **4.5 PROVISIONS CONCERNING ORIGIN AND PRODUCTION HISTORY**

These provisions are optional, however, the purchaser can require the seller to provide proof (see paragraph 4.8) of documentary procedures for validation purposes. Information under the following three headings is included in the species-specific standards.

- 1. Production Systems**
- 2. Feeding Systems**
- 3. Animal Identification**

#### **4.6 PROVISIONS CONCERNING PACKING, STORAGE, AND TRANSPORT**

The packaging (or prepacking) is the primary covering of a product and must be of food grade materials. The packing is the secondary covering containing the packaged products.

During the storage and transport, the meat must be packaged to the following minimum requirements:

- (A) Carcasses and quarters
  1. Chilled with or without packaging
  2. Frozen/deep frozen packed to protect the products
- (B) Cuts

1. Chilled
  - a. I.W.P. (Individually wrapped)
  - b. Bulk packaged (plastic or wax-lined container)
  - c. Vacuum-packed (VP)
  - d. Modified atmosphere packaging (MAP)
  - e. Other
  
2. Frozen/deep frozen
  - a. I.W.P.
  - b. Bulk packaged (plastic or wax-lined container)
  - c. vacuum-packed
  - d. Other

The conditions of storage before dispatch and the equipment used for transportation shall be appropriate to the physical and in particular the thermal condition of the meat (chilled, chilled in a modified atmosphere, frozen, or deep-frozen) and shall be in accordance with the requirements of the importing country. Attention is drawn to the provisions of the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for Such Carriage (ATP).

#### **4.7 LABELLING INFORMATION TO BE MENTIONED ON OR FIXED TO THE MARKETING UNITS OF MEAT**

Without prejudice to national requirements of the importing countries, the following table contains information that must be listed on product labels, as designated by an "x", for unpackaged carcasses, quarters, and cuts, and for packaged or packed meat items.

<b>Labelling information</b>	<b>Unpackaged carcasses, quarters and cuts</b>	<b>Packaged or packed meat</b>
Health stamp	x	x
Slaughter number or batch number	x	x
Slaughter date	x	
Packaging date		x
Name of the product		x
Use-by information as required by each country		x
Storage methods: chilled, frozen, deep-frozen		x
Storage conditions		x
Details of packer or retailer		x <sup>5</sup>
Quantity (number of pieces)		x <sup>1</sup>
Net weight		x <sup>1</sup>

There are also several other production, processing and quality factors that may need to be listed on the product label or associated documentation, amongst which are:

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<sup>5</sup> *This information can also be provided in accompanying documentation.*

- pH, lean and fat colour
- classification / grading
- Characteristics of the livestock<sup>6</sup>
- production and processing systems
- slaughtering procedures

Where appropriate details of these factors can be found in the species specific sections.

#### **4.8 AUTHORITY FOR CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT**

In addition to detailed product descriptions, this standard includes an option for purchasers to voluntarily select a conformity assessment authority within each contract. Conformity assessment authorities voluntarily selected by purchasers will apply and/or assign merchandising criteria and assist with resolution of claims in contractual disputes.

Each conformity assessment authority listed, if selected voluntarily in a contractual agreement, will be wholly responsible for third party assessment of compliance with the standards detailed herein, based on that authority's operating methodology. Additionally, voluntarily selected authorities can determine characteristics to be utilized for merchandising criteria on the part of the purchaser based on standards and methodology specific to that authority under secondary lists of merchandising options, contained in this document, that are related to palatability, yields, or other quality/value related characteristics of the product.

If dispute resolution is considered important between trading partners and is addressed and included as part of the contractual language between traders, purchasing entities first can voluntarily select a conformity assessment authority that will have the final responsibility for determining compliance of a product with the contractual agreement based on the standards contained herein, inclusive of any additional requirements specified in the contract. Conformity assessment for compliance can voluntarily be mandated at the point of origin, prior to shipping, or can be obtained strictly on an "as-needed" basis to resolve a contractual dispute. When a claim is filed against a supplier, the parties should be obligated to comply with the findings of their voluntarily selected third party conformity assessment authority if such an authority is designated at the time of contract initiation.

If an authority for determining compliance is voluntarily selected by the purchasing entity, that purchasing entity also will have access to additional services or procedures provided by that specific authority, e.g., carcass classification and certification services, quality systems certification services, etc.

Suppliers in some nations may be required to submit product or management systems for certification based on the laws and regulations of their country. Such mechanisms for conformity assessment should be selected by the purchasing entity in the contractual language as the authority option for binding conformity assessment.

#### **4.9 EAN-UCC CODIFICATION SYSTEM (pending approval)**

The EAN-UCC System is utilized in these standards as the recommended standard codification system to enhance the communication between buyers and sellers and third party conformity assessment entities. It is an identification and communication system standardized for use across international borders, which is managed

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<sup>6</sup> *To communicate on these elements appropriate systems of traceability will be described in annexes to the species specific standards.*

by EAN International, together with national EAN coding authorities around the world, and by the Uniform Code Council (UCC) in the USA and Canada. The system is designed to overcome the limitations of using company, industry or country specific coding systems and to make trading much more efficient and responsive to customers.

The use of the EAN-UCC System improves the efficiency and accuracy of international trade and product distribution by unambiguously identifying goods, services and locations. It is also used in electronic data interchange (EDI). EAN-UCC codes can be represented by data carriers (bar code symbols) to enable their electronic reading wherever required in the trading process. As well as providing unique identification, this system also allows for additional information, such as the UN/ECE meat carcasses and cuts standards, best before dates, weight, batch and serial numbers to be shown in bar coded format.

The codes utilized to describe meat carcasses and cuts are presented within the species-specific UN/ECE standards. They are coded in the form of identification numbers, which are represented by means of an EAN-UCC Application Identifier in the EAN-UCC-128 standard. An EAN-UCC Application Identifier is a prefix used to identify the meaning and format of the data that follows it. It is an open standard, which can be used and understood by all companies in the trading chain, regardless of the company that originally issued the codes.

Use of UCC-EAN-128 standard is recommended to enhance the communication between buyers and sellers, and third party conformity assessment entities.

Example: (01) 91234567890121 (3102) 000076 (XYZ) 97845863215987458 (15) 000831 (10) 19990801

- (01) Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)
- (3102) Net Weight
- (XYZ) UN/ECE code
- (15) Sell by date
- (10) Batch number

Information relevant to the application of the EAN-UCC system can be found in the species specific sections.

**Annex 5**  
**List of follow-up actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sending out a document on traceability	EAN International	ASAP
Check whether it is possible to have a two day meeting of rapporteurs before the next specialized section	Secretariat	ASAP
Communicating to the secretariat possible participation at a meeting of rapporteurs in Brisbane or Brussels	Members of the Specialized Section	15 June 1999
Comments on Annex 4 (General Requirements)	Members of the Specialized Section	31 July 1999
<b>Deadline Working Party</b>		25 August 1999
Provide information on OECD's work on meat quality measurements	Secretariat	1 September 1999
Provide information on country codes (numerical or letter-codes)	Secretariat	1 September 1999
Clarifying publications issues	Secretariat	1 September 1999
Draft Beef specific section sent to the secretariat	Australia	1 September 1999
Review of Porcine specific section sent to the secretariat	United States	1 September 1999
<b>Deadline Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (tentative)</b>		17 January 1999