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UN/ECE Trade Mark for Meat

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**UNITED NATIONS/ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE) GUIDELINES
FOR EVALUATION OF A CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR THE USE OF THE UNITED
NATIONS TRADEMARK ASSOCIATED WITH PRODUCTS PRODUCED IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE UN/ECE STANDARDS FOR MEAT PRODUCTS**

Purpose

This guide provides Requirements for a certification program to be allowed to administer the United Nations logo to meat products produced in accordance with the United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) standards for meat products.

This standard puts forth the Requirements for recognition by UN/ECE as meeting the requirements for system oversight and administration deemed necessary by UN/ECE to maintain integrity of the mark when used in conjunction with livestock and meat products presented for sale in the international market.

1. Scope and field of application

This document specifies the Standards required to be met by UN/ECE member bodies if they are to be Registered by the UN/ECE for the operation of a certification system for marketing claims used in conjunction with livestock and meat products presented for sale on the international market.

These Requirements are approved by the UN/ECE for use in determining if the proposed certification programs of a UN/ECE member body meet the requirements of services. They do not limit or waive any requirement of international law.

2. Definitions and Interpretation

2.1 Definitions

In these standards where commencing with a capital letter;

“**Activities**” means the activities of a Certification Body referred to in section 2.8.

“**Agent**” means a person approved by UN/ECE to act on its behalf.

“**Audit**” means a systematic and functionally independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with planned objectives.

“**Certification Body**” means a legally identifiable organization, which performs product or process certification.

“**Enterprise**” means a company or organization registered by a Certification Body.

“Financial Year” means a period commencing on 1 July and ending on 30 June in any year.

“Official Recognition” means the procedure by which the Government agency having jurisdiction formally recognizes the competence of a Certification Body to provide certification services.

“Official Certification Systems” means systems administered by the Government agency having jurisdiction to perform a regulatory or enforcement function or both.

“Officially-Recognized Certification Systems” means systems which have been formally approved or recognized by the Government agency having jurisdiction.

“Quality System” means an auditable, written plan of policies, procedures, and supporting records designed to provide adequate assurance that objectives of a program are being accomplished.

“Registration” means the registration of a Certifying Body in accordance with these Standards.

“Requirements” means the Standards set down by the UN/ECE for the registration of Certification Body's and maintenance of these Standards by Certification Body's.

“UN/ECE” means the United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe

For the purpose of this document, the term *Administrator* may include program officials designated by the UN/ECE to perform specific functions.

2.2 Interpretation

2.2.1 Where a word or phrase is given a defined meaning another part of speech or other grammatical form in respect of that word or phrase has a corresponding meaning.

2.2.2 Unless the context otherwise requires, a word which denotes a person includes an individual, a body corporate and a government.

2.2.3 Unless the context otherwise requires a reference to:

- (a) any legislation includes any regulation or instrument made under it and where amended, re-enacted or replaced means that amended, re-enacted or replacement legislation;
- (b) any other agreement or instrument where amended or replaced means that agreement or instrument as amended or replaced; and
- (c) a section or annexure is a reference to a section of or annexure to this Standard.

2.3 Application

2.3.1 These Standards have been issued by the UN/ECE to take effect on

UN/ECE may from time to time by notice to each Certification Body vary these Standards.

A variation takes effect 7 days after UN/ECE sends the notice or from any other date specified in the notice and has effect despite any accidental failure to give notice to any Certification Body.

2.4 Indemnity

The Certification Body indemnifies the UN/ECE against all damages, losses, costs and expenses incurred by UN/ECE arising out of:

- (a) any breach by the Certification Body with these Standards; or
- (b) any act or omission of the Certification Body, its officers and employees and all consultants, agents and subcontractors or Auditor in connection with the activities.

2.5 Liability

2.5.1 Liquidated damages

Without limiting UN/ECE's rights arising out of a breach of these Standards, if a Certification Body breaches a term of these Standards, the Certification Body must, on demand from UN/ECE, pay UN/ECE by way of liquidated damages an amount of \$..... for each day that the breach continues.

2.5.2 Acknowledgment

The parties acknowledge that the amount set out in paragraph 2.5.1 is:

- (a) a genuine pre-estimate of the damages suffered by UN/ECE in the event of a breach, having regard to the loss of integrity attaching to the Logo and the effect on the reputation and effectiveness of the UN/ECE Accreditation scheme; and
- (b) not a penalty.

2.6 Use of information

The Certification Body acknowledges that UN/ECE may use information concerning the Certification Body or the business of the Certification Body obtained in connection with these Standards or Registration in such manner as UN/ECE considers appropriate for the purposes of these Standards or Registration, including:

- (a) publishing any or all such information as UN/ECE considers necessary or desirable for the purposes of this program.

2.7 Warranties

Each Certification Body warrants that:

- (a) it, its officers and employees and all consultants, agents and subcontractors will carry out the Activities to the best of their skill and ability;
- (b) it, its officers and employees and all consultants, agents and subcontractors have the necessary experience, skill and ability to properly carry out the Activities in accordance with this standard; and
- (c) the Activities will be carried out in a professional manner and conform to a standard of competence equal to that normally employed by persons carrying out activities of a magnitude and nature similar to the Activities.

2.8 Activities

A Certification Body may in accordance with this Standard:

- (a) conduct audits at accredited Enterprises to assess the Enterprises compliance with the UN/ECE Standards; and
- (b) carry out any other activities referred to in this Standard, including making recommendations to UN/ECE concerning the continued accreditation of Enterprises pursuant to the UN/ECE Standards.

3. Certification Body Requirements

3.1 General Requirements

All applicants shall have access to the services of the Certification Body.

There shall not be financial requirements or other conditions, which may compromise the integrity of the services provided.

The procedures under which the body operates shall be administered in a non-discriminatory manner.

3.2 Administrative structure

The Certification Body shall be an impartial third party, without financial interest in products or facilities assessed.

A structure that safeguards impartiality and enables participation from all parties concerned regarding the content and the functioning of a certification system will be deemed to satisfy this provision.

In cases where authority to perform Certification has been assigned to an officially recognized body by a government agency, the process for accreditation and the authorities for formulating policy at all levels shall be clearly defined.

3.3 Terms and Reference of Management

The Certification Body's management shall be responsible for performance of certification as defined by this document. Among other things, its functions shall cover:

- a) the formulation of policy matters relating to the operation of the Certification Body;
- b) an overview of the implementation of its policies;
- c) an overview of the finances of the Certification Body;
- d) assigning responsibilities for performing certification activities.

3.4 Organizational structure

3.4.1 The Certification Body shall:

- a) be a legally identifiable public or private entity;
- b) have rights and responsibilities relevant to its certification activities;
- c) have adequate arrangements to cover liabilities arising from its operations and/or activities;
- d) employ sufficient personnel having the necessary education, training, technical knowledge, and experience for performing certification functions relating to the type, range, and volume of work performed under a senior executive who is responsible to the Certification Body management;
- e) have a Quality System, which demonstrates its ability to operate a certification program;
- f) have policies and procedures that distinguish between certification and any other activities in which the body is engaged;
- g) together with its senior executive and staff, be free from any conflicts of interest, which might influence or be perceived to influence the results of the certification process;

- h) have formal rules and structures for the appointment and operation of any functional entities, which are involved in the certification process. Such entities shall be free from any conflicts of interests that might influence decisions;
- i) have policies and procedures for the resolution of complaints and appeals regarding the handling of certification matters from users of the certified products or any other matters;
- j) ensure that where consultancies or similar services are offered, they shall not be such as to compromise the objectivity of its certification processes or decisions.

3.4.2 The Certification Body shall have and make available on request:

- a) an organization chart showing clearly the responsibility and reporting structure of the organization and, in particular, the relationship between testing, inspection, grading, and certification functions;
- b) a description of the means by which the organization obtains financial support;
- c) a documented statement of its certification systems including its rules and procedures for providing certification services;
- d) documentation clearly identifying its legal status.

3.5 Certification Personnel

3.5.1 The personnel of the Certification Body shall be competent for the functions they undertake, including related matters of policies and techniques.

3.5.2 Information on the relevant qualifications, training, and experience of each member of the personnel shall be maintained by the Certification Body. Records of training and experience shall be kept current and available for review upon request.

3.5.3 Personnel shall have available to them clear, documented instructions pertaining to their duties and responsibilities. These instructions shall be maintained current.

3.5.4 Personnel must be financially disinterested in products, facilities, or systems on which they perform certification activities.

3.6 Documentation Control

The Certification Body shall maintain a system for the control of all documentation relating to the certification system, and shall ensure that:

- a) the current issues of the appropriate documentation are available at all relevant locations;
- b) all changes of documents or amendments to documents are covered by the correct authorization and processed in a manner, which will ensure direct and speedy action at the effective point;
- c) superseded documents are removed from use throughout the organization and its agencies;

- d) users of its certification schemes are notified of changes. This may be accomplished by direct mailing, electronic media, or by issuance of a periodic publication in a timely manner.

3.7 Records

- 3.7.1 The Certification Body shall maintain a record system that will allow verification that its certification procedures have been effectively fulfilled.

The records shall include all relevant test and inspection reports and reports pertaining to the granting, maintaining, extending, suspending, or withdrawing of product grades, certifications, or other services.

These records shall be available to the UN/ECE upon request.

- 3.7.2 The Certification Body shall retain records for a period of not less than 3 years.

3.8. Certification Procedures

- 3.8.1 The Certification Body shall have documented procedures to enable the certification to be carried out in accordance with the criteria applicable to the relevant type of certification.
- 3.8.2 The Certification Body shall ensure that each certificate of a manufacturing facility or product identifies the type of facility, product or type or range of products certified and the standards or other normative documents to which it is certified as being in compliance.

3.9 Certification Facilities

The Certification Body shall have the required facilities in terms of personnel, expertise, and equipment to perform certification.

3.10 Quality System

- 3.10.1 The Certification Body shall have a documented Quality System appropriate to the type, range, and volume of work performed. This system shall be available for use by the Certification Body staff. The Certification Body shall designate a person having direct access to its highest executive level to take responsibility for the Quality System and maintenance of the quality documentation.
- 3.10.2 The Quality System shall be documented in a quality manual and associated with quality procedures, the manual shall contain or refer to at least the following:
 - a) a quality policy statement;
 - b) a brief description of the legal status of the Certification Body;
 - c) an organization chart showing lines of authority, responsibility, and allocation of functions stemming from the senior executive;

- d) a description of the organization of the Certification Body, including details of the functional entity, its organization, terms of reference, and rules of procedure;
- e) the policy and procedures for conducting management reviews;
- f) administrative procedures including document control;
- g) the operational and functional duties and services pertaining to quality, so that each person concerned will know the extent and limits of their responsibility;
- h) the names, qualifications, experience, and responsibilities of the senior executive and other certification personnel, both internal and external;
- i) the procedure for the recruitment and training of Certification Body staff and monitoring of their performance;
- j) details of its procedures for handling nonconformances and for ensuring the effectiveness of any corrective actions taken;
- k) the policy and procedures for implementing the certification process, including the standards and test methods to be used in the certification process;
- l) the conditions under which assessments should be conducted and the resources required for making such assessments;
- m) procedures for sampling, handling, and storage of the test item (if applicable);
- n) the conditions for granting, maintaining, and extending the authority to other bodies;
- o) the conditions under which it may be suspended or withdrawn Certification;
- p) the policy and procedure for dealing with appeals, complaints, and disputes; and
- q) details of its procedures for conducting internal audits.

3.11 Publications

The Certification Body shall periodically produce a directory of organizations accredited to certify products, processes, and facilities under conformity assessment programs that produce products intended for entry into international trade that will carry or convey marketing claims related to UN/ECE recognition.

The list must fully describe the accreditation granted and be available for reference by any interested party.

3.12 Appeals and complaints to the Certification Body

The Certification Body shall have documented policies for the resolution of appeals and complaints received from financially interested parties about the certification activities.

A record shall be maintained of all appeals or complaints and of the actions taken to address these by the Certification Body.

3.13. Internal audit and Management Reviews

- 3.13.1 The Certification Body shall undertake internal audits in accordance with documented procedures to assess its compliance with the Requirements of this document.

3.13.2 Audits and reviews shall be carried out systematically and periodically and recorded together with results, details of any corrective action taken. The results of such audits and reviews shall be available to all persons having responsibilities for the Quality System and to other persons having a reasonable need, consistent with applicable laws, to access to this information.

3.13.3 The Quality System shall be reviewed by management to ensure its continued effectiveness.

3.14 Use of certificates and marks of conformity

3.14.1 The Certification Body shall exercise proper control over the use of its certificates and marks of conformity.

- a) Devices used to apply grade marks or other inspection and test status identification must be capable of providing unique imprints supporting positive traceability to the source of the grade application.
- b) Program documentation must include procedures for maintaining positive physical control of devices used to apply official marks of inspection or test status.
- c) Program documentation must provide for identification and traceability of officially certified products on an individual or lot basis.

3.14.2 Incorrect references to the certification system or misleading use of licences, certificates, or marks found in advertisements, catalogues, etc., shall be dealt with by suitable actions.

National Authorities must provide for the controlled use of certification claims in marketing channels as provided under established policies or regulations.

Note: Such actions could include corrective action, publication of the transgression, and if necessary legal action.

3.15 Cancellation of agreements and withdrawal of certificates and marks of conformity

The Certification Body shall have documented procedures for revoking authority to perform certification services and withdrawing certificates and marks of conformity from products.

4 Confidentiality

The Certification Body shall have adequate arrangements consistent with applicable laws to safeguard confidentiality of the information obtained in the course of its certification activities at all levels of its organization.

- 4.1 Except as required by law, no Certification Body may:
- (a) except in the proper course of performing the Activities or its obligations under this Standard, disclose to any person without the prior written consent of an Enterprise any information obtained from the Enterprise; or
 - (b) use or attempt to use any information obtained from the Enterprise in any manner which may cause or be calculated to cause injury or loss to the Enterprise or in any manner other than that contemplated by this standard.
- 4.2 Each Certification Body must at all times take all such precautions acceptable to UN/ECE as are necessary to maintain the secrecy and confidentiality of information obtained from each Enterprise and must:
- (a) prevent its disclosure directly or indirectly to any person other than in accordance with this Standard; and
 - (b) prior to disclosure to any person of any such information in accordance with this Standard, obtain a written undertaking of confidentiality from that person in the same terms as this paragraph 22.2.1.
- 4.3 Where a Certification Body is required by law to disclose information obtained from an Enterprise, the Certification Body must, immediately on becoming aware of that requirement, inform UN/ECE and the Enterprise of the required disclosure.

5 Certification Body Registration

5.1 Term

- 5.1.1 The term of initial Registration of a Certification Body continues until immediately following June 30 of the year of initial Registration. After that date the Certification Body Registration may be renewed by UN/ECE for successive periods of 1 year subject to compliance by the Certification Body with the terms of this Standard.
- 5.1.2 If a Certification Body requires its Registration to be renewed it must, by May 31 in each year, apply to UN/ECE for renewal.

5.2 Approval Criteria

Programs will be recognized by the UN/ECE when reviewed by UN/ECE representatives objectively demonstrates the following features and performance-based attributes:

- a) For product conformity assessment, systems must consistently provide a high correlation between assigned product marketing claims and corresponding product traits when

reviewed by UN/ECE officials at the point of application, consistent with accuracy levels achieved by UN/ECE conformity assessment programs.

Spot checks of imported products at port of entry or destination may be used to verify accuracy.

- b) For facility or process conformity assessment, both scheduled and unannounced Audits of these systems by UN/ECE must consistently yield objective evidence that approved or certified facilities or processes meet stated program objectives and Requirements.
- c) UN/ECE on site review of conformity assessment activities finds objective evidence that conformity assessment activities are being performed in a manner consistent with the provisions of this document.

6 Official Recognition and System Review

Systems are officially recognized by UN/ECE after a review prior to approval, and as appropriate thereafter, by UN/ECE to ensure compliance with minimum program Requirements.

7 Breach of Standards by Certification Body's

7.1 Suspension of Official Recognition status

Systems found during reviews to be fundamentally deficient shall have Official Recognition status of the deficient system suspended until effective corrective and preventive action is developed, implemented, and confirmed by subsequent UN/ECE reviews.

7.2 Effect

7.2.1 If a Certification Body breaches any term of this standard, UN/ECE may give a notice to the Certification Body specifying the breach and doing one or more of the following:

- (a) requiring the Certification Body to rectify the breach within a period specified in the notice;
- (b) requiring the Certification Body to show cause, in writing, within 14 days to UN/ECE, stating why the Registration of the Certification Body under this Standard should not be withdrawn; and
- (c) suspending for the period specified in the notice the Registration of the Certification Body.

7.2.2 UN/ECE will, following the giving of any notice referred to in paragraph 21.1.1(b):

- (a) consider any written statement made by the Certification Body pursuant to paragraph 21.1.1(b);

- (b) obtain and consider any other material that it may consider relevant; and
- (c) decide:
 - (i) not to take any further action;
 - (ii) to withdraw Registration of the Certification Body;
 - (iii) if Registration is not already suspended, to suspend Registration;
 - (iv) if Registration is already suspended, to extend the period of suspension; or
 - (v) take such other action with respect to Registration as UN/ECE considers appropriate in all the circumstances.

8 Certification Body Responsibilities

8.1 Changes to or by a Certification Body

To maintain UN/ECE recognition of a certification program administered by a UN/ECE member body, substantive changes must be submitted to UN/ECE at least 60 days prior to the proposed effective date of the revisions.

Changes to UN/ECE program Requirements will require full review of recognized programs by UN/ECE and appropriate changes in previously approved systems to maintain UN/ECE recognition.

Final proposed revisions must be approved by the UN/ECE Standards Officer before implementation.

8.2 Subcontracting

8.2.1 A Certification Body must not subcontract any part of its Activities to any other person without the prior written consent of UN/ECE.

8.2.2 If a Certification Body proposes to subcontract any part of its Activities to another organization, the Certification Body must apply to UN/ECE in writing stating:

- (a) which of the Activities are proposed to be subcontracted; and
- (b) the name of the organization to whom the activities are proposed to be subcontracted.

8.3 Directions

Each Certification Body must comply with all reasonable and lawful directions of UN/ECE from time to time concerning the activities or other matters relating to this standard.

8.4 Comply with all laws

Each Certification Body must comply with all relevant laws when performing its obligations under this standard.

9 Verification of Conformance

9.1 Review of Certifying Bodies by UN/ECE

9.1.1 UN/ECE may, as it considers appropriate, review the performance of each Certification Body for the purpose of determining their compliance with the terms of this standard. Reviews will take place at frequencies and at times determined by UN/ECE.

9.1.2 Each Certification Body must on request from UN/ECE give UN/ECE and its representatives access to:

- (a) all premises under the control of the Certification Body; and
- (b) all records concerning the Certification Body,

for the purpose of any review conducted pursuant to paragraph 9.1.1

10 Assessment and Surveillance Costs

UN/ECE review, approval, and surveillance of programs seeking UN/ECE recognition is provided on a cost-recovery basis.

Development of fee structures and procedures for payment for assessing foreign programs will be consistent with comparable international user-fee-based commodity certification programs.

11 Voluntary Withdrawal of Certification

A Certification Body may by written notice to UN/ECE withdraw the Certification Body's registration under this Standard.

12 UN/ECE Logo

The UN/ECE logo is the trademark of the UN/ECE and must not be used by a Certification Body without the written permission of UN/ECE.

Permission will only be given on such terms and conditions as UN/ECE determines from time to time.