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Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat
9-10 April 2002, Geneva

REPORT ON ITS ELEVENTH SESSION

Executive summary:

Draft Standard for Ovine Carcasses and Cuts: The draft text was amended and will be forwarded to the Working Party for adoption as a UNECE Standard (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/13/Add.1 and Add.2). The final text of the standard will be published on the Internet.

Draft Standard for Chicken Meat: It was decided that one further meeting of rapporteurs was necessary to finalize the chicken specific text. The carcasses and cuts descriptions will be translated to facilitate discussions of the rapporteurs (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/13/Add.3)

Standard for Porcine Carcasses and Cuts: It was decided that there was a high priority to review this standard to integrate it into the system of UNECE standards for Meat. A maintenance group (Australia, France, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States) was formed which will report to the next session.

Standard for Bovine Carcasses and Cuts: The secretariat is working on an Internet version of the standard. The maintenance group will review the standard and report to the next session.

Trade mark for meat: The secretariat will discuss the subject with the legal services of the United Nations. Countries will name authorities recognized by them for conformity assessment with the UNECE Standard.

Future work: Future work will include information on preliminary work on veal, turkey and lama as well as a discussion paper on traceability.

Opening of the session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 9 to 10 April 2002. A Meeting of Rapporteurs on Ovine Meat was held in Geneva on 8 April 2002.
2. The session was opened by the chief of the Trade Investment and Promotion Section, Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos, who welcomed the delegations to Geneva. She congratulated them on the progress made on the standards for ovine carcasses and cuts and chicken meat and expressed the hope that at least one of the standards could be finalized at the session. She thanked the delegation of the United States for hosting a meeting of rapporteurs on chicken meat last year in Washington.
3. She said that the group was unique in providing international trade descriptions for meat and contributed through its work to the facilitation of safe and fair trade of meat.
4. She said further that it was also the first of the UNECE groups dealing with standardization of perishable produce that cooperated with EAN international to create a coding system for the standard. She informed delegations that this example was now followed by the group dealing with standardization of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Participation

5. The session was attended by delegations of the following countries: Australia; Brazil; France; Hungary; New Zealand; Poland; Russian Federation; Switzerland; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.
6. A list of participants will be published on the home page of the Agricultural Standards Unit (<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr>).

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/1

7. The Meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda with the following comments:
 - documents TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were deleted; informal documents concerning these issues were distributed during the session.
 - the square brackets were deleted from TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/11

Item 2: Matters of interest arising since the tenth session

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/2 (Secretariat)

8. The Meeting took note of document TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/2 summing up the relevant outcome of the fifth session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and the fifty-seventh session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development.

Item 3: Draft UNECE Standard for Ovine Carcasses and Cuts

9. The Specialized Section thanked the rapporteurs (Australia, New Zealand) for preparing the draft standards.

Draft Ovine Specific Standard

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/4 (Australia)

10. The document was reviewed in detail.
11. The following general change was made to the document: the figure “4A” was deleted from the numbering to make the text easier to read.
12. Section 1.1.0 Foreword, 1.2.0 Scope, 1.3.0 Field of Application: The text was simplified and adjusted to make clear that the standard is a recommendation for a language to be used between buyer and seller and not an obligation. Duplicated content was removed and the section arranged in a more logical way.
13. Section 1.4.0 General requirements: The footnote concerning the removal of the spinal cord was deleted.
14. Section 1.4.2: The section was renamed to read “Provisions concerning lean and fat colour” and in the text “is to be” was replaced by “can be”.
15. Section 1.4.3: Provisions concerning origin and production history: The group agreed that it would be necessary to treat the topic “traceability” in more detail in an Annex to the standard. For the time being the first part of the text was moved to a new section “1.4.4 Animal identification system” and the second part to the section on ovine specific coding (present section 1.4.4 to be renumbered 1.4.5). Section 1.4.3 will only contain an introductory sentence as follows:

“The following categories are provided to enable buyer and seller to specify origin and production history.”
16. Section 1.4.3.1: Ovine category:
 - The images of the incisor teeth were removed.
 - A new first category was inserted: “Young lamb: young ovine under 6 months of age which does not have any permanent incisor teeth.”
 - The category of lamb fed on milk was deleted.
 - The word “no” in the description for “Mutton” was deleted.
 - A new category “other” was added at the end to recognize that other categories might be used in trade.
17. Section 1.4.3.2: the section was renamed “Production systems”: the group agreed that production systems and feeding systems should be included in two different sections to allow more possibilities for buyers and sellers to specify the desired method. The following categories were included:
 - Not specified
 - Mainly indoors
 - Restricted outdoors
 - Pasture
 - Organic
 - Other

18. New section 1.4.3.3: Feeding systems: The following categories were included:
 - Not specified
 - Milk fed
 - Grain based
 - Forage fed
 - Other
19. Existing section 1.4.3.3 Slaughter systems to be renumbered 1.4.3.4.
20. Existing section 1.4.3.4 Post slaughter processing to be renumbered 1.4.3.5. Additional changes:
 - At the beginning insert: “ The following list of post slaughter processing requirements describe various processes that may need to be agreed between buyer and seller. These requirements are not included in the ovine specific coding.
 - Replace the bullet point concerning spinal cord removal with the following:
“Spinal cord removal: Individual market requirements will have specific regulations governing the removal of the spinal cord, nervous and lymphatic tissues, where applied.
Regulations applicable to spinal cord removal, will specify at what stage the carcass and/or cut must have the spinal cord removed. There must be total removal of the spinal cord.”
21. Existing section 1.4.3.5 Weight ranging of carcasses/cuts: to be renumbered 1.4.3.6.
22. It was agreed to include a new section 1.4.3.7 concerning classification systems. The delegation from France had noted that while classification based on lean and fat Colour was included in the standard, other systems e.g. the system used in the EU were not mentioned. The result of the discussion was that a list of systems would be established without defining them in more detail. This way buyer and seller would be able to specify the desired system in a code.
23. New section 1.4.4 Traceability systems: contains text based on the second paragraph of 1.4.3. (see also Future work, paragraph ...)
24. Existing section 1.4.4 Ovine specific coding: to be renumbered 1.4.5. Other changes:
 - Insert at the beginning: “The EAN/UCC coding system provides an internationally recognizable system for describing the attributes of a product. The UN/ECE product coding system has been developed to facilitate its use within the EAN 128 protocol.”
 - The code for marbling was deleted.
 - The following changes were made to the description of the codes for packing:
 - 1: Carcasses, halve carcasses and quarters - without packaging
 - 2: Carcasses, halve carcasses and quarters - with packaging
25. It was recognized that a number of consequential amendments and corrections would have to be made to the document. This was done by an editorial group which also renumbered and streamlined the text extensively without changing its contents. The result is reproduced in Addendum 1 to this report (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/13/Add.1).

Draft Ovine Carcasses and Cuts Descriptions

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/5 (Australia)

26. The document was reviewed in detail supplemented by a document containing photographs of the cuts.
27. The introduction was rewritten to better reflect that the text is a recommendation (see Addendum 2 for the text).
28. General change to all items: Rename “flank” to read “flap”.
29. Item 4946 - Leg Pair and Saddle:
 - Photograph to be altered to leave the flap retained and the shoulders removed.
 - Carcase diagram to be altered to show flap retained.
 - Add to the Points of Specification.
 - Flap retained or removed.
 - Shoulder retained or removed.
30. Item 4789 - Hindquarter:
 - In the description amend the first sentence to read: “Hindquarter is prepared from a carcass...”
 - Number to be changed from 4789 to 4788 (8rib is main item traded).
 - Photo to be altered to leave the flap retained and to ensure 8ribs are shown.
 - Carcase diagram to be altered to show flap retained.
 - Add to the Points of Specification.
 - Flap retained or removed.
31. Item 4901 - Leg Pair and Loin Saddle:
 - Photo to be altered to show flap retained.
 - Carcase diagram to be altered to show flap retained.
32. Item 4960 - Forequarter Pair:
 - Alteration to Points of Specification.
 - Length of flap retained to be specified, or removed completely.
33. Item 4900 - Saddle:
 - Photo to be altered to show flank retained and the shoulder removed.
 - Carcase Diagram to be altered to show flank is retained.
 - Alterations to Points of Specification.
 - Add flap retained or removed.
 - Shoulder retained or removed.
34. Item 4880 - Shortloin: The photograph could be improved - longer tail this has to be done in two places as the photo is repeated under the portion cuts.
35. Item 4510 - Side: remove the sentence concerning spinal cord removal.

36. The list at the beginning of the text was adjusted to reflect the changes made.

37. The list of methods for determination of chemical lean content was deleted because it was felt that it would be difficult to keep it complete. The Group also avoided making reference to specific companies. The existing text was replaced with the following:

“The method for determination of chemical lean content in manufacturing meat needs to be agreed between buyer and seller.”

38. It was decided to delete the text concerning accredited certifying authorities until further progress was made on this issue. It was felt that for now the text included in 0.4.8 was sufficient to give an option for buyer and seller.

39. The revised text is contained in Addendum 2 to this report (TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/13/Add.2).

Adoption and publication

40. It was decided that the text of the standard for ovine carcasses and cuts as amended at the session and contained in Addenda 1 and 2 to this report should be forwarded to the Working Party for adoption as a UNECE standard.

41. After adoption by the Working Party the secretariat will publish the text on the Internet in the three official languages of the UNECE. The delegation of Australia will provide the necessary images to the secretariat.

42. Countries wishing to produce other language versions of the standard should send a request to the secretariat. These would be non-official versions which should make reference to the official versions on the Internet. Only these can be taken into account in case of a dispute.

Item 4: Draft UNECE Standard for Poultry Meat

Draft chicken specific standard including product lists

43. The draft standard on chicken was discussed on the basis of a complete draft in colour distributed by the rapporteur (United States) at the session.

44. It was decided to make the same editorial changes as had been done to the ovine specific section, i.e. rewording of the foreword, deletion of the figure “7” at the beginning of the section numbers.

45. It was decided to use bullet points instead of letters in the lists of definitions of terms.

46. Section 5.0 - Provisions concerning refrigeration. The section was moved after section 7.0 Provisions concerning slaughter. A number of comments were made and the rapporteur will make a new proposal accordingly:

- It should be made clear that any of the methods can only be used if authorized e.g. “lightly frozen” is not used in Europe
- The term “quick frozen” needs to be better explained to indicate the relationship to the formation of crystals, the speed of freezing acceptable as well as the delay of freezing after slaughter.

- Concerning ice glazing it should be emphasized that the methodology and labeling terminology must be determined by buyer and seller and that any weight gain due to the glazing must be declared.
- It was clarified that in this section shelf life issues were not addressed.

47. Section 6.0 - Production systems: It was felt by some delegations that the text was trying to be very specific but at the same time not including some of the work done by major producers e.g. EU. The group would have to decide whether to be specific and then include everything or only to include generic terms which could be used by everyone. It was agreed to reword the text based on the revisions done to the draft for ovine.

48. Section 6.0 - Feeding systems: A number of comments were made:

- “Conventional” should not be confused with “traditional” which has different connotations.
- The text should be made more concise by the rapporteur and then reviewed by all relevant bodies e.g. industry and regulatory bodies.
- As in the production methods a decision has to be taken on how specific the text should be. The predominant systems that are being used in the market place should be included.

49. It was agreed that the draft text should be further refined before being sent for translation. The rapporteur (United States) will update the document according to the comments made and present a new version to the next meeting of rapporteurs.

50. The delegation of the Russian Federation has provided comments on this section to the secretariat.

General Requirements for poultry meat

51. A draft version of separate General Requirements for poultry meat was available at the session from the rapporteur (United States). The text will be further discussed in the next rapporteurs meeting.

Chicken product description pages

52. A colour version of the chicken product description pages was distributed. The following comments were made:

- At the last meeting of rapporteurs it had been decided to take out the two items concerning cartilage.
- The question was raised if the standard - like the other standards drawn up by the group - should be restricted to meat or contain all edible products derived from carcasses.
- It was decided to adopt a market driven approach and to include all products of importance to the market place in different countries.
- It was clarified that the list was still open i.e. countries should send descriptions of cuts which are of importance to their markets (e.g. cut carcass without breast for preparation of soups used in Poland or crest of head marketed in France and Brazil).
- It was clarified that item 70901 (leg with back portion) as described in the text did conform to the EU description of this item (back portion cannot be more than 25% of overall weight of the cut).

53. It was decided that the text of the chicken production pages had advanced far enough to annex it to the report in order to have a translated version for the next meeting of rapporteurs. The text will be reproduced as Addendum 3 to this report (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/13/Add.3).

54. The delegation of the Russian Federation offered to assist with the translation of the text.

Item 5: UNECE Standard for Bovine Carcass and Cuts

Background documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2000/7/Add.1

TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2000/7/Add.2

TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2000/7/Add.3

Publications issues

55. The secretariat reported that an Internet version of the bovine standard was being prepared at the moment. He thanked the delegation of Australia for providing the necessary images. The present version will be in English but it is the intention of the secretariat to include the French and Russian versions as soon as possible.

56. The delegate from Australia regretted that the sales for the colour version of the standard had been lower than expected.

Maintenance

57. It was decided that a standing maintenance group should be created that would look over the existing standards and make proposals for updating them. Australia, France, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States agreed to participate in such a group.

Item 6: UNECE Standard for Porcine Carcasses and Cuts

Maintenance, updating and further development

Document for this session: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2002/11 (United Kingdom)

58. A proposal for updating the standard and the coding system was provided by the United Kingdom.

59. It was decided that the updating of the porcine standard should be one priority of the work of the Specialized Section in order to integrate the standard into the system of UNECE standards for meat. The maintenance group (see para. 60) will examine the proposal from the United Kingdom and report to the Specialized Section at its next session.

60. It was also decided that delegations who had participated in the development of the porcine standard but who had not participated in recent years, should be invited to contribute to the work of updating the standard.

Item 7: UNECE trade mark for meat

Background documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2001/11(Australia)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/2001/12(United Kingdom, European Community)

61. Several discussions on preparing a draft protocol on conformity assessment and a related UNECE trade mark for meat have been held by the Specialized Section. At the last session the delegation of Australia presented a document on this issue. The delegations of the European Community and the United Kingdom indicated in their document that they had some doubts about the usefulness of a UNECE trade mark for meat. No further comments have been received since.

62. The Chairman said that it might be possible to treat the issue of conformity assessment and the trade mark could be treated separately.

63. The secretary of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies, Mr. Serguei Kouzmine, explained that his group dealt with good practices in technical harmonization and conformity assessment

from a generic point of view. The group assists Governments in creating harmonized ways of adopting and implementing standards and conformity assessment. The goal is to avoid creating obstacles to trade with technical regulations.

64. He said that once the Specialized Section agreed on a text, this could be forwarded to his Working Party for further advice.

65. Concerning the trade mark, he said that similar schemes existed within UNECE, e.g. the packing mark for dangerous goods indicating conformity of packing with the ADR (European Agreement concerning the International Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road).

66. It was mentioned that this work might also have budgetary implications for UNECE, which would have to be looked at at a later stage.

67. The secretariat will discuss the Australian document with the legal services of the United Nations to find out how far this issue can be taken under the auspices of UNECE.

68. To make progress on this work:

- Each country will indicate to the secretariat a list of authorities which are recognized by the Government to certify conformity with the UNECE standard.
- Countries should also indicate any authorities of other countries that they recognize to certify conformity with the UNECE standard.
- The lists will be published on the UNECE home page.

Item 8: Preparation of the meetings of rapporteurs and the next session of the Specialized Section

(a) Date and place

69. The representative of France offered to host a meeting of rapporteurs on chicken meat in September in Brittany. The Specialized Section welcomed this proposal. Further details will be communicated by the secretariat.

70. The representative of France said that he would examine to possibility of hosting a meeting of rapporteurs on revision of the porcine standard close to Lyon in conjunction with the next meeting of the Specialized Section. Further information will be communicated by the secretariat.

71. The next session of the Specialized Section has been tentatively scheduled to take place from 5 to 8 May 2003 in Geneva.

(b) Future Work

72. Future work will include:

- Finalization of the UNECE Standard for Chicken Meat.
- Review of the UNECE Standard for Porcine Carcasses and Cuts.
- Information on preliminary work done on lama.
 - Information lama cuts were distributed at the session.
 - Comments were invited until 31 December 2002.
- Information on preliminary work done on veal.

- Information on preliminary work done on turkey.
- Review of the UNECE Standard for Bovine Carcasses and Cuts.
- Traceability
 - The United States will draft a discussion paper which will be sent to all delegations for comments until 31 December 2002.
- Circular letter to increase participation.
 - A letter to increase participation will be drafted by the Chairman and the secretariat. Delegations were invited to provide addresses of potential delegates to the secretariat.

Item 9: Preparation of the 58th session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

73. The secretariat will transmit the texts of the draft UNECE Standard for Ovine Carcasses and Cuts to the Working Party for adoption as a UNECE Standard.

Item 10 : Operational activities

74. No discussion was held under this item.

Item 11 : Other business

75. The secretary of the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies, Mr. Serguei Kouzmine, informed delegations that a seminar on market surveillance would be held on 29 October 2002.

76. The seminar will look into methodologies used by different countries to monitor implementations of standards for food products and industrial products. The goal is an exchange of information and possible identification of best practices. The seminar will be held in the same week as the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development.

77. Mr. Kouzmine extended his invitation to delegations to participate in this seminar.

Item 12 Election of officers

78. The Group re-elected Mr. B. Carpenter (United States) as its Chairman and Mr. I. King (Australia) as its Vice-Chairman.

Item 13 Adoption of the report

79. The Specialized Section adopted the report of its eleventh session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.