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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
Fifty-fifth session, 3-5 November 1999, Geneva

REPORT OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION

Addendum 1

PRESENTATION BY OECD

I. Revision of a Council decision

On 8 April 1999, the Council, OECD's highest body, adopted decision C(99)10/FINAL, revising the roles and the operation of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables. Consequently, the primary objectives of the Scheme are now as follows:

- To promote the establishment of one single international grade-standard-setting body;
- In the interim, and as in the past, to facilitate the implementation and harmonization of international grade standards activities.

The standards adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, once approved by the Plenary Meeting, will be applied under the Scheme.

It has been made easier for new countries to join the Scheme, since:

- Participation in the Scheme will henceforth be open not only to any member of the United Nations or of one of its specialized agencies, but also to any member of the World Trade Organization, wishing to participate therein as regards all or some of the produce for which an OECD standard exists;
- Furthermore, the new participating countries will in future have a period of three years after joining the Scheme to establish export quality controls.

II. Explanatory brochures

The principal work being pursued by the Plenary Meeting relates to the preparation of explanatory brochures on standards for apples and pears, plums, asparagus, beans, broccoli, tomatoes, strawberries, table grapes and cucumber.

III. Publications

The explanatory brochure on carrots is scheduled to be published in CD-Rom form by the end of the year, and at the beginning of next year the colour gauge for cauliflower is also due to be issued.

IV. Meeting of Heads of National Control Services

In the framework of the OECD Scheme, and at the kind invitation of the Israeli authorities, the ninth meeting of heads of national control services was held in Herzlia on 11, 12 and 13 October 1999. The meeting focused on the following points:

- Exchange of information among national control services;
- Use of computers and other electronic systems in quality control, particularly in devising non-destructive testing methods;
- Quality assurance systems in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector
The role of official control services vis-à-vis that of private control agencies;
- Bringing official quality standards into line with commercial requirements.

Field visits were organized to loading areas for exported fruit in the port of Ashdod, and to packing centres.
