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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards
(Fifty-eighth session, 29 to 31 October 2002, Geneva)

REPORT OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Addendum 5

Programme of Work

Note by the secretariat: In this document the secretariat presents a draft for the work programme of the Working Party for 2003 and 2004 as well as the calendar of meetings for 2003. Delegations are invited to make further proposals during the session. The finalized document will be published in an addendum to the report.

1. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2003 - 2004

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 04: TRADE FACILITATION AND AGRICULTURAL STANDARDS

04 (B) STANDARDIZATION OF PERISHABLE PRODUCE AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

04 (B).1 Activities of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Description: The Working Party together with its at present five active Specialized Sections prepares and revises standards, recommendations and interpretative brochures for the marketing and control of commercial quality of selected perishable produce moving in international trade between and to UNECE member countries. It also discusses general strategic and policy relevant subjects related to standardization of perishable produce, possibilities for technical assistance and cross-sectorial work as well as organizational matters.

Work to be undertaken:

- (a) Elaboration of new standards for dry and dried produce, fresh fruit and vegetables, and meat.

Duration: Continuing according to the needs of participating countries.

- (b) Revision of selected standards and recommendations.

Duration: The revision and updating of standards is a continuing task to adapt standards to developments of technology and the market and to harmonize with other regulations and standards.

- (c) Review of the status of the acceptance and application of UNECE Standards

Duration: Continuing.

- (d) Operational activities: workshops on harmonization of standards and control procedures for perishable produce to assist countries in implementing the standards and participate in world trade. It is expected that a workshop will be held in Bangkok in cooperation with UN ESCAP and EAN International in May 2003 and another workshop in a different location in 2004. Other activities will be planned in accordance with the extra budgetary means that can be secured.

Duration: Workshops will be planned according to the needs of countries.

(e) Interpretation of the provisions concerning quality tolerances in the standards for fresh fruit and vegetables in cooperation with the OECD Scheme.

Duration: Continuing.

(f) Investigation of quality assurance systems for perishable produce

Duration: Continuing.

(g) Updating of the home page of the agricultural standards unit containing all standards and up to date information on the work of the Working Party.

Duration: The system will be continually enlarged and updated.

(h) Co-operation with other organizations dealing with standardization of perishable produce to ensure harmonization and avoid duplication of work.

Duration: Continuing.

(i) Work on the review of the Geneva Protocol and the standard layout.

Duration: 2003

(j) Identify and evaluate possibilities of cooperation with the other regional commissions. (see also (d))

Duration: Continuing

(k) Identify and evaluate possibilities for cross sectorial activities with UN/EDIFACT, Transport Division and Environment Division.

Duration: Continuing

04(B).2 Activities of the specialized sections of the Working Party

04(B).2.1 Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

- Review and revision of standards including Maturity requirements and other issues concerning: Apples, Citrus Fruit, Kiwifruit, Peaches and Nectarines, Pears, Pineapples, Plums and Strawberries. (currently being revised; others can be proposed)
- Preparation of new standards: Shallots (others can be proposed)
- Integration of internal quality indices in the standards with a differentiation between Extra Class, Class I and Class II
- Trademark issues
- Use of code marks

- Electronic exchange of non-conformity cases
- Application of quality control, including the harmonization and overview of certification, quality control and inspections, in cooperation with the OECD Scheme on the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables. Investigation of a quality assurance system
- Development of harmonized trade descriptions and classification codes
- Review of the numbering system in the standard layout

04(B).2.2 Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce

- Review and revision of standards including Almonds, Pistachio nuts, Dried prunes (currently being revised; others can be proposed):
- Review of the Standard Layout for Dry and Dried Fruit
- Review of a multi-lingual Dictionary of Defects
- Elaboration of a sampling plan.

04(B).2.3 Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

- Publication of the UNECE standard for ovine carcasses and cuts.
- Ongoing maintenance work on the bovine standard
- Finalization of UNECE chicken standard
- development of colour chips/ marketing cards with the goal of achieving a harmonized standard in the future;
- Pilot study on implementation of the bovine standard; evaluation of possibilities to facilitate conformity assessment
- Detailed review of the porcine standard including a new coding system
- Evaluation of the possibility to elaborate standards for other species (e.g., Turkey, Veal, Lama, Camel)
- Evaluation to include products with added ingredients and size reduction in the standards.

04(B).2.4 (a) Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes,

- Review of the UNECE Standards for Early and Ware potatoes especially sizing tolerances
- Comparison of inspection and sampling methods and national legislations
- Review of the definition of long varieties
- Discussion on the UNECE Conditions of Sale and RUCIP 2000;
- Information on the progress of the OECD explanatory brochure for Early and Ware potatoes

(b) Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

- Finalize the new introduction to the standard
- Include a list of pests to be checked on the candidate nuclear stock material
- Minimum conditions to be satisfied by the crop in respect to viruses and varietal purity
- Include an assessment key for percentage tuber surface area coverage of blemish diseases (e.g., Common scab, black scurf and powdery scab)

- Create a summary table of tolerances
- Develop the concept of variety
- Work on criteria to minimize tuber rots through looking at:
 - destination tolerances,
 - quality assurance – best handling practice
 - Minimum conditions to be satisfied by the production and maintenance of Nuclear (Initial) Stock.
- Impact of GMO on the standard
- Investigate further the problem of superficial necrosis and the mop top virus
- Inclusion of test methods/ referencing methods
- Review a list of pests and diseases
- Compile the results of the questionnaire on national seed potato schemes,
- Concerns of seed buyers
- Create a UNECE label
- Discussion of grading equipment
- Discuss dispute settlement procedures
- Discussion with representatives of WTO, IPPC, EPPO, NAPPO
- Definition of the complete control procedure for the certification of seed potatoes

[04(B).2.5 Standardization of eggs and egg products

No activities planned.

04(B).2.6 Standardization of cut flowers

No activities planned.

04(B).2.7 General conditions of sale for fresh fruit and vegetables and for dry and dried fruit

No activities planned.

NOTE: For the above activities (04(B).2.5.-04(B).2.7) the regular sessions of the Specialized Sections have been discontinued. Review, revision and updating of existing standards and conditions of sale may require sessions in future as needed.]

2. TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2003

Meeting	Session	Location	Date
Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes (GE.5)	16	Geneva	24 to 25 March
Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes (GE.6)	33	Geneva	26 to 28 March
Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (GE.11)	12	Geneva	5 to 8 May
Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1)	49	Geneva	*17 to 20 June
Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit) (GE.2)	50	Geneva**	***24 to 27 June
Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7)	59	Geneva	4 to 6 November

* Working groups will have the opportunity to meet on 16 June 2003.

** Note by the secretariat: should this meeting be held outside Geneva, delegations will be informed as soon as possible.

*** Working groups will have the opportunity to meet on 23 June 2003.