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UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

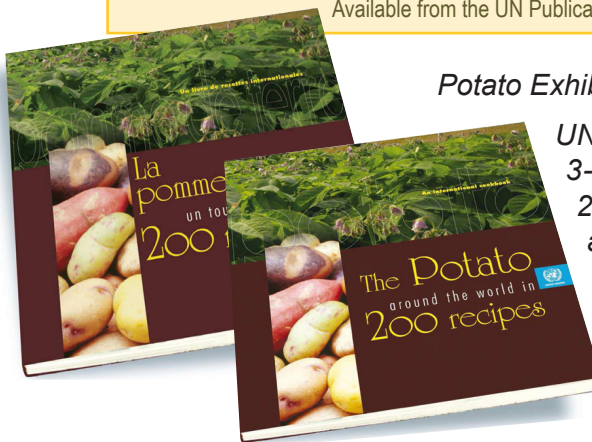
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UNECE promotes the International Year of the Potato

To celebrate the International Year of the Potato 2008, UNECE has prepared a collection of 200 potato recipes from all over the world.

The Cookbook, in English and French, will be on sale from 3 November.

Available from the UN Publications, Sales and Marketing Section (unogbookshop@unog.ch)



Potato Exhibition, 3-7 November

UNECE is organizing an exhibition in the UN Cafeteria, from 3-7 November, to mark both the International Year of the Potato 2008 and the release of the Potato Cookbook. The exhibition aims to draw attention to the work of the United Nations in focusing world attention on the importance of the potato in providing food security and alleviating poverty.

A selection of recipes from the Cookbook will be served daily in the Cafeteria.

One of the essential roles of UNECE is to promote international trade in order not only to improve our standard of living but also to promote stability and peace in this region. To facilitate exchanges and to protect consumers, it has developed a series of norms and standards in particular for transport and trade, but also for agricultural products.

At the beginning of the 1950s the member States of UNECE asked the Commission to establish quality standards for agricultural products which were exchanged throughout the region. These standards deal with fresh fruit and vegetables, dry and dried products, seed potatoes, early and ware potatoes, meat, cut flowers and eggs exported or imported by the 56 UNECE member countries. These standards help in facilitating international trade, they also encourage the production of quality goods, improve the profitability of producers and protect consumers' interests.

Among these standards, those on potatoes are of special importance this year since the United Nations General Assembly declared 2008 to be the International Year of the Potato. It has affirmed "the need to focus world attention on the role that the potato can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty in support of achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals" and has invited all relevant organizations of the United Nations system to actively participate in this celebration.

The cookbook prepared by UNECE aims not only to show that potatoes are used by a wide range of countries throughout the world, but also to attract the attention of consumers to the importance of the quality standards elaborated by UNECE. Indeed, in addition to the recipes, good quality produce is indispensable for preparing these delicious dishes. *

Did you know ...

Nowadays, the potato is the fourth most important food crop in the world, with an annual production approaching 300 million tons.

Did you know ...

An average potato provides the following percentage of recommended daily allowances:

- Vitamin C 45%
- Thiamin 10%
- Niacin 8%
- Vitamin B6 14%
- Folic acid 14%
- Panthenic acid 6%
- Phosphorous 6%
- Magnesium 12%
- Iron 9%



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Protecting consumers from unsafe products

The blueprints of products we use every day are drawn up in close reference to international standards. When these designs are developed into manufactured goods, firms cooperate with specialized bodies that check that the merchandise conforms with the official standards and norms. And when products are on the market or are used as equipment in the workplace, specialized authorities monitor the products to protect the public from hazardous products. In spite of these efforts, accidents do occur, and many unsafe products find their way to the consumer.

Thanks to international dialogue among all stakeholders in standardization matters, product safety can be enhanced and obstacles to regional and international trade reduced. The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) serves as a forum for exchanging information on developments and experiences in technical regulation, standardization and conformity assessment and has drawn up numerous formal recommendations in these areas. It will meet for its annual session at the Palais des Nations on 3 and 4 November.

On the agenda will be continuing work on regulatory cooperation and taking stock of progress by the sectoral initiatives on telecom products, earth-moving machinery and equipment for use in environments with an explosive atmosphere. The Working Party will also discuss recent developments in market surveillance, including the new EU common framework. It will review the unfolding negotiations on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement. And it will work on a model for decision-making by national market surveillance authorities. ✳

Back-to-back with the WP.6 meeting, the following half-day panel sessions will be held:

- “Company specifications, international standards and national regulations”,
- “Market Surveillance Model Initiative”
- “Equipment for explosive environments”.

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Building green is the way forward, concludes UNECE/FAO workshop



Worldwide, 40 to 50% of all primary energy is used in buildings. Buildings also account for up to 40 per cent of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. According to current trends, the impact of the building sector is unlikely to decrease, and could grow to 70% by 2050. However, the International Panel on Climate Change estimates that there is a potential to reduce approximately 29% of the projected baseline emissions by 2020 in the

residential and commercial sectors. This is the highest potential gain amongst all sectors.

In addition to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, building green reduces the overall ecological footprint of construction over its entire life cycle and, contrary to what is commonly believed, it also reduces the cost of the building over its whole life cycle. Other positive externalities include new business opportunities, more industrial productivity, improved social welfare, increased building comfort and enhanced health for occupants.

The workshop, held at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome as part of the European Forest Week (20-24 October) provided a comprehensive overview of the many opportunities offered by building green. Workshop participants – who included architects, sustainable developers, and representatives of industry associations and governments – agreed that timber (on which the workshop focused its assessment) has low-embodied energy throughout its life cycle: no other common building material requires so little energy to produce as wood. When sustainably produced, timber is also carbon neutral and renewable. Every cubic metre of wood used as a substitute for other building materials

reduces CO₂ emissions to the atmosphere by an average of 1.1 tons. Existing projects of multi-family, multi-storey buildings also showed that using timber makes for better (and less costly) conditions for construction workers and reduces waste and pollution related to construction processes.

UNECE will continue to work on green building in the years to come, through the joint work of different units and committees including the Timber Committee, the Committee on Housing and Land Management and the Committee on Sustainable Energy. ✳

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