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COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL QUALITY STANDARDS

Recent developments

Note by the secretariat for information

This document summarizes the activities and main achievements of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) over the last twelve months. Additional information is available at the following webpage: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr>

I. STANDARDS

1. The Working Party and its specialized sections held the following meetings to work on agricultural quality standards:

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|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Seed Potatoes (GE.6) | 20 - 22 March |
| • Meat (GE.11) | 19 - 24 April, Brisbane, Australia |
| • Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1) | 15 - 19 May |
| • Dry and Dried Produce (GE.2) | 12 - 16 June |
| • Working Party (WP.7) | 6 - 9 November |

2. In 2006, three new and six revised standards were adopted. Nine recommendations were adopted/revised for a trial period.

New UNECE standards adopted

- Porcine Meat
- Turkey Meat
- Fresh Truffles

Revised UNECE standards adopted

- Early and Ware Potatoes
- Melons
- Table Grapes
- Inshell Hazelnuts
- Inshell Walnuts
- Seed Potatoes

UNECE recommendations adopted/revised

- Bilberries and Blueberries
- Ceps
- Cherries
- Early and Ware Potatoes
- Peaches and Nectarines
- Bovine Meat
- Inshell Almonds
- Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels
- Dried Tomatoes

3. The llama/alpaca, chicken and ovine meat standards were finalized in English, French and Russian. Their published versions will be presented to the Working Party meeting in November 2006. The texts for porcine and turkey meat standards were finalized. They will be prepared for publication when the working groups submit professional pictures for carcasses and cuts to the secretariat. These publications should become available by March 2007.

4. The UNECE and the European Community worked together to keep the EC marketing standards harmonized with the UNECE standards.

5. The specialized sections prepared proposals on aligning the conformity certificate for agricultural products with the UN Layout Key and amending the Standard Layout for Dry and Dried Produce and Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. The proposals will be submitted to the Working Party for approval.

II. CAPACITY-BUILDING

6. The Working Party, together with the Government of the Republic of Georgia, FAO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), organized a Workshop on quality standardization and inspection in horticultural trade (Tbilisi, 4-8 July 2005). About 40 experts participated.

7. An expert meeting on turkey meat was organized in Warsaw, Poland (June 2005).

8. Two expert meetings on seed potatoes were held in Rostock, Germany (24-26 October 2005) and in Changin, Switzerland (19 January 2006).

9. An international training course (sponsored by OECD) on harmonization of fruit and vegetables quality assessment was held in September 2005 in Mojmirovce, Slovakia, back-to-back with the meeting organized by the Central European Initiative on: "Fresh fruit marketing quality and health safety controls – differences and similarities between CEI countries".

III. COMMUNICATIONS

10. All UNECE agricultural quality standards are available at: http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/stand_e.htm

11. The UNECE prepared a transition plan to implement the decision by the UNECE member countries to concentrate the activities in agricultural quality standards within the ECE (ECE/TRADE/C/NONE/2006/1).

12. The UNECE, the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and the OECD worked on posters to promote the WHO strategy on diet, physical activity and health.

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