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Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Revision of UNECE standards

Proposal to amend the UNECE Standard for Fresh Figs ^{*}

The following proposal to amend the UNECE Standard for Fresh Figs was submitted by the delegation of Brazil.

^{*} Submitted on the above date in order to finalize the text.

Proposal to amend the UNECE Standard for Fresh Figs

Brazil would like to propose the insertion below, of a footnote to the third bullet of the Provisions Concerning Quality (II), Minimum Requirements (A.):

- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter

The proposed insertion/footnote should state:

“Some figs intended for direct consumption are generally not washed after harvest and may present a white coat as regard to primary production practices.”

Rationale

Figs do not ripen further once picked from the tree. After harvest, ripe figs usually last up to 6 days in cold storage (e.g. refrigerator).

Similar to fresh berries, ripe figs have a delicate skin and have high respiration rates making them more perishable.

The Annex on Berries of the Code of Hygienic Practices of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables of the Codex Alimentarius (CAC/RCP 53-2003 - ANNEX V) at its Section 5.2.2.1 Post-harvest water use, establishes that "Most berries intended for direct consumption are generally not washed after harvest."

Brazil is of view that the same holds for fresh ripe figs, which are highly perishable and cannot undergo a washing step prior to packing.

Washing figs could lead to increased perishability of the product and has proven to be an unfeasible practice.

The use of Bordeaux Mixture in figs is a common producing practice in Brazil and has been adopted for figs as well as for grapes' primary production.

Contrary to figs, grapes may be washed prior to packing and trading, and can therefore meet the cleanliness provision of the UNECE's standard for fresh grapes.

Brazil would therefore like to draw the attention of the other delegates to the point that the provision on Cleanliness may be more related to fruits that undergo cleaning/washing prior to packing which is not the case of figs as well as berries and other delicate skinned fruits.
