

Potato Certification Service South Africa UNECE Bureau and Rapporteurs Meeting on Seed Potatoes

Kimberly, South Africa, 15, 17 and 18 March 2016

Report of the Meeting

Technical Visits

First field visit day

Meeting with Griekwaland-Wes Korporatief (GWK) in Douglas, testing facility, mini tuber production facility and seed potato production farms.

The group received an introduction to the GWK system from André Coetzee and Ruben Rens, including their vision that farmers make rockets which is to say all of human activity can only happen because people are well fed.

The group also visited the farm of Frank Lawrence where we saw a seed potato centre pivot and the group discussed sampling to assure freedom from bacterial wilt (brown rot, *Ralstonia solanacearum*). The group also discussed eligibility of fields in particular crop rotations, isolation distances and volunteer control. Gideon Truter (regional manager) and Frank Osler (technical manager) for Potato Certification Service explained the field inspection process as well as the post haulm destruction field tuber sampling process.

The group then visited the Northern Cape Laboratory where Anél Esbach Technical Manager of Plantovita (the official supervisory testing laboratory) explained the virus and bacterial wilt testing process. The group toured the lab and had a discussion on testing methods.

The group also visited the GWK minituber production facility (tunnel houses) which was introduced by the manager Nico DuToit.

Second field visit day

Technical visit to Wesgrow, quarantine and tissue culture facility, mini tuber production plant, visit to a seed potato production farms and packing facility.

The group visited the Rascal Nuclear Stock facility. This facility is the quarantine, genebank, micropropagation and minituber production site for the WesGrow group. The group toured the contained microplant handling facility with Margaret Rebombo the lab manager and then the minituber production tunnels with Dawie Ras, the managing director, and DD Joshi, the production manager. They have two systems for minituber production: aeroponics and vermiculite based production.

We went to the Agrivan farm field production and pack house (part of the WesGrow farming group) where Werner Du Plessis explained their operation. Gerhard Posthumus explained the WesGrow group operation including how they voluntarily control the quality and diligence of their growers particularly with regard to volunteer control. In South Africa the growers produce high yielding crops where the crop is used for both seed and ware production.

I. Rapporteurs meeting

1. Specialized Section Publications:

(a) Guide to Seed Potato Tuber Inspection:

The group finalised the guide and will submit it to the Specialised Section for approval (Post session document "DraftGuide_SeedPotatoTuberInspection SA edit")

(b) Guide to Operating a Seed Potato Certification Service:

The group finalised the guide and will submit it to the Specialised Section for approval (Post session document "DraftGuide_OperatingCertificationService South Africa Edit")

2. Risk-based inspections

The delegation of the Netherlands gave an update on risk based inspection. The Dutch industry and certification service is having discussions about the Scheme in the Netherlands and about where more or less frequent intensity or frequency can be applied to field and tuber inspection according to risk. The group asked that the Netherlands provide further information at the next meeting.

3. Sample sizes:

The group discussed field inspection sample sizes in relation to Annex IX of the standard and proposed the working group add a table for field inspections to the Standard at Annex IX. The working group is New Zealand (rapporteur), EU Commission, USA and UK.

4. True Potato Seed:

The delegations of the EU Commission and the Netherlands updated the group on developments regarding the listing and marketing of potential varieties derived from true potato seed. The EU has no legislation to cover the marketing of true potato seed. The group also noted that the scope of the UNECE standard does not cover true potato seed. The delegations of the EU Commission and the Netherlands agreed to update the group of further developments at the next meeting.

5. Promotion of the Standard, and capacity-building activities

- I. The promotional leaflet is available on the web site and from the Secretariat in hard copy in English, French and Russian. The secretariat is taking forward translation into further languages including Spanish. The Chair undertook to check whether an Arabic translation is available. Secretariat and Chair to report at the next meeting.
- II. The group discussed attendance at the World Potato Congress in Peru in 2018. The Chair and Vice Chairs will pursue this in conjunction with the Secretariat and report to the next meeting.
- III. The delegation of Kenya indicated that the East African region is currently discussing customisation of seed marketing legislation for the region and it would be helpful to have further input from the UNECE group. The Chair undertook to work with the delegation of Kenya to promote use of the UNECE standard in East Africa.
- IV. The delegation of Australia gave an update on converting the Tuber Disease Guide into a mobile device app (Windows, Android and Apple).

6. Specialized Section's website

- I. The group discussed the trilingual list of pests and concluded that this should be kept as it is with no further work on formatting.
- II. The delegation of Germany informed the group that the EU countries were in the process of updating the comparison tables of scheme tolerances and were reporting to the European Seed Certification Agencies Association (ESCAA) meeting. The group wished to be informed of the conclusion of this work and would then consider conducting a similar exercise of the non-EU schemes.
- III. The group discussed collection and publication of each DA's scheme rules or a link to these rules via the UNECE web pages.
- IV. The group noted that the List of DAs and the contact details therein was not up-to-date and asked that the secretariat review the list.
- V. The Delegation of the USA suggested that the group conduct a survey of the DAs to update the work done in 2001 and undertook to work with the delegation of Italy to introduce this work at the next meeting. Note that this covers items III and IV above.

7. PCR techniques for virus testing

The delegation of Finland presented the work of the working group on the PCR survey. The group revised the document and asked the working group to finalise the survey and present it to the next meeting. The working group is Finland (rapporteur), Sweden, Czech, Australia and UK.

8. Future work and other business

1. Specialized Section Publications:
 - a. Guide to Seed Potato Tuber Inspection
 - b. Guide to Operating a Seed Potato Certification Service
 - c. The group discussed the printing of the guides and would seek an update from the Secretariat at the next meeting.
2. PCR techniques for virus testing
3. Risk-based inspections
4. Sample sizes
5. True Potato Seed
6. Promotion of the Standard, and capacity-building activities
7. Specialized Section's website
8. Discussion paper on the need for a guide on Tissue Culture and Minituber production with particular reference to ISPM 33. New Zealand (rapporteur) with USA, Australia South Africa and UK
9. The group noted that we may wish to conduct a survey of bacterial testing methodologies to follow on from the work on virus methods. Agenda item for general discussion.

8. Future meetings

31 August – 2 September 2016 Geneva

29 – 31 March 2017 Geneva

Autumn 2017 Germany or France, to be confirmed.

Meeting possibly to coincide with the World Potato Congress in Peru 2018.