

## **Economic Commission for Europe**

### **Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards**

#### **Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards**

#### **Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat**

**Twenty-sixth session Geneva,**

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Item 4 of the Provisional agenda

#### **Eating Quality**

### **Information Paper on the International Eating Quality Foundation**

The following information was submitted by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) to inform the Specialized Section on the progress towards developing an international beef eating quality foundation.

#### **1. Purpose**

This paper provides the UNECE Specialised Section on Meat, an update on the progress towards developing an international beef eating quality foundation.

**Recommendation:** The UNECE acknowledge and support the principles being used to guide development of an international eating quality foundation.

#### **2. Key points**

- The Foundation is proposed as a collaborative, independent, not-for-profit international eating quality research platform linked to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Specialized Section on Meat
- Enabling standardized consumer sensory testing protocols applied for continuous improvement in beef quality systems
- Development of software and data collection protocols to facilitate sharing of complimentary data from compatible international sources
- Scientific working group will sit below the foundation board an enable international collaboration on common issues.

#### **3. Relevant and necessary background**

From an Australian perspective, common global standards for description of meat have been supported by MLA and AUS-MEAT over many years through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) specialised section on meat, with the Handbook of Australian Meat (HAM) forming the base for international product description. Over recent years, there has been a move to expanding the basic language to include standardised description for beef grading inputs and consumer sensory standards. Appendix 2 illustrates the timeline of these developments.

At the UNECE meeting in Geneva in 2016, MLA agreed to lead the initial scoping of a common global database structure and associated software as a collaborative activity for ongoing eating quality research. Since then, a number of IT meetings have been held to develop an architectural framework for the global database and associated research 'tools' database. The results of this initial scoping study were then presented to UNECE members with compatible eating quality databases at an agricultural conference in Milan in February 2017.

At a meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2017 in Dublin, Ireland, a small working group with representatives from countries who own consumer data collected using MSA research protocols agreed to progress the development of an international, not-for-profit, independent eating quality foundation.

#### **4. Discussion – Foundation formation and Structure**

The aim of the Foundation is to improve consumer satisfaction of meat products through facilitating the application of global collaborative meat research knowledge throughout supply chains. The purpose of establishing the Foundation is to provide an independent international eating quality research data collection and management system enabling the aims to be realised. The independence comes from the foundation sitting beneath the UNECE specialised section on meat where the international language standards are housed. The foundation will be not-for-profit and is being progressed by countries that have invested in consumer research using MSA protocols.

A simple structure is proposed:

**Board:** The Foundation board (or council) will comprise up to 7 individuals or companies (with nominated individuals). MLA have volunteered to develop the terms of agreement for the board members. The board will have decision making authority and board decisions will feed through to the UNECE Specialised Section on Meat.

**Scientific Reference Group:** The Scientific Reference Group will be a less formal membership type arrangement whereby interested organisations and individuals can collaborate, debate issues and make recommendations to the foundation board. The reference group may be delegated project management responsibilities along with other operational tasks.

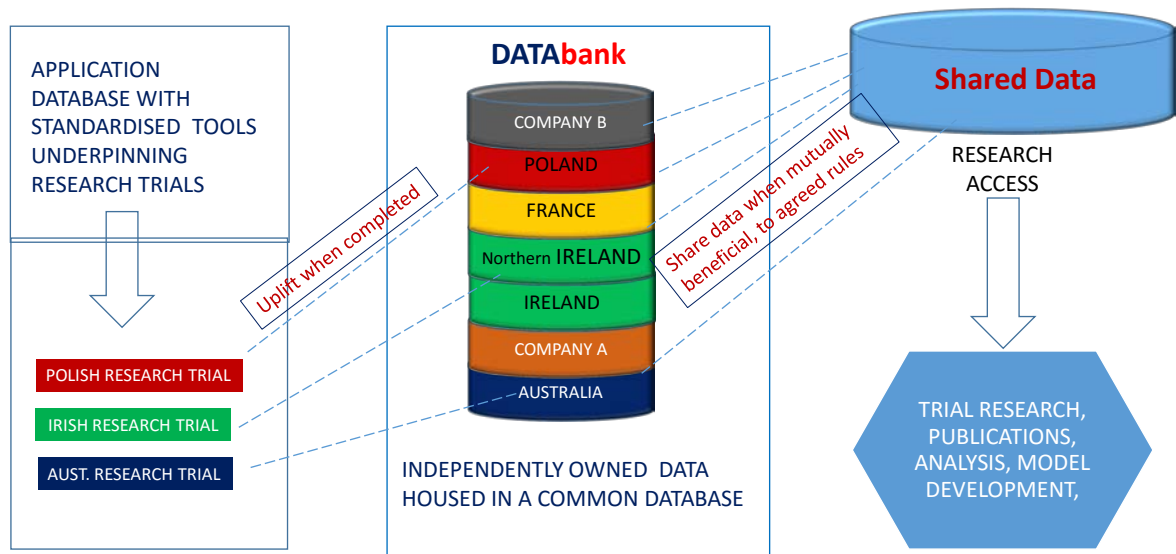
#### **Next Steps:**

To provide further detail of the objectives, impact and scope of the Foundation, it was agreed that MLA would also lead the development of a Foundation prospectus that would form the basis of charter of operations of the Foundation and the core principles that would underpin the development of a strategic plan once the Foundation is operational.

It is proposed that the Foundation Terms of Agreement be drafted by the end of October 2017 and the Foundation Prospectus be drafted by the end of November 2017.

#### **Appendix 1: DATAbank Concept Structure**

## BROAD CONCEPT FOR DATA STRUCTURE & APPLICATION



## Appendix 2. Timeline of UNECE developments

### UNECE – Agricultural Quality Standards, United Nations, Geneva - TIMELINE

**2001** HAM adopted as basis of UNECE Bovine Language

**2014** – UNECE, Geneva

- UNECE meeting of the 'Specialized Section on Standardisation of Meat' held in conjunction with an Eating Quality Seminar
- Agreement on the need to develop a collaborative way to collect and record information for meat eating quality research
- Recommended the Formation of a Scientific Reference Group on Eating Quality, to be co-ordinated by UNECE Secretariat with Poland as Lead Rapporteur . This group was tasked with putting forward proposals for the 2015 meeting around outcome (b).

**2015** UNECE, Geneva - The 'Specialised Section of Standarization of Meat' - Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

- Discussion paper on developing a draft proposal for sharing information relating to beef eating quality presented to the symposium by the Scientific Reference Group on Eating Quality.

**2016** – UNECE, Geneva

- Agreement to accept Scientific Reference Group recommendations to add MSA grading inputs and MSA consumer testing protocols to the UNECE language
- AUS-MEAT agreement to provide OSCAP & training via the European Reference Centre, Warsaw, Poland
- MLA offer to facilitate data development project to ensure data compatibility

**2017** – UNECE members using MSA consumer testing protocols to underpin their research databases meet in Milan. Agree to development of a global DATAbank under the auspices of a Scientific Reference Group structured within a Not for Profit Foundation.