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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of  
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat  
27-29 March 2000, Geneva

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING SINCE THE EIGHTH SESSION

Note by the secretariat

This document summarizes the outcome of the third session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and the fifty-fifth session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development.

### THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Committee (ECE/TRADE/231, paragraphs 34 to 37):

#### 6(b) Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Documentation:           TRADE/WP.7/1998/9   Report of the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development  
                                   TRADE/1999/3       Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development: Note by the secretariat

34.     The Vice-Chair of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7), Mr. David Priester (United States), gave an overview of the results of its November 1998 session, as well as of the sessions of its specialized sections on early and ware potatoes and meat which had taken place since then. In addition, he reported on cooperation with the European Union and various international organizations (the OECD and the WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission) and informed the Committee of the new Internet World Wide Web site created by the secretariat, which contains the texts of the standards, as well as information on meetings (<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>). The Committee then endorsed this report of the fifty-fourth session of the Working Party.

35.     The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Vilchez-Barros, who also serves as Chair of the Working Party, informed the Committee of the efforts being undertaken to promote UN/ECE commercial produce standards internationally to increase their use and avoid duplication which can occur when existing work is not known:

- Spain would provide unofficial translations of UN/ECE standards into Spanish to promote their dissemination in Latin America.
- The Working Party had been represented at an expert group meeting on agricultural standards organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). For this meeting, ESCWA had translated 25 UN/ECE standards into Arabic and these were currently being examined by Governments for adoption as ESCWA standards.
- Contacts had also been established with the other United Nations regional commissions (for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific).

36.     The delegation of the European Community, speaking also on behalf of the 15 EU Member States, stated that the Community continued to place high priority on UN/ECE work on agricultural standards. The European Community further proposed that the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development consider a possible transfer to the UN/ECE of the work being done by the OECD on interpretative brochures for UN/ECE standards. The delegation invited the secretariat to prepare a working document to define the modalities for undertaking this work, including a clear description of the costs (extra personnel, production of the brochures) and how these costs might be financed. This document should be prepared in time for discussion at the next session of the Specialized Section on Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables from 25 to 28 October 1999 and for consequent consideration by the Working Party, which will

meet from 3 to 5 November 1999. The delegation of the United States supported this request. The Committee then approved the request for this study.

37. The Director of the Trade Division said that the secretariat would undertake the study requested but that it was of the highest importance to the UN/ECE not to jeopardize its excellent institutional relationship with the OECD. She then invited member States to keep the OECD and its secretariat informed of their requests to the UN/ECE, as well as of further developments. The delegation of the European Community noted that they had already, repeatedly, stated their opinion on this matter in OECD meetings and would continue to do so. The delegation of the United States said that they would keep the OECD secretariat informed on this issue.

## **55<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON STANDARDIZATION OF PERISHABLE PRODUCE AND QUALITY DEVELOPMENT (WP.7)**

The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Working Party (TRADE/WP.7/1999/7):

### **Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (Porcine, Bovine and Poultry)**

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/5

28. The Secretariat gave a short summary of the work done at this years session of the Specialized Section:

- The group continues work on a standard for beef. The general requirements were separated from beef specific requirements in the standard so that they can be reused when discussing other types of meat (ovine and caprine).
- It was decided to review the porcine standard to integrate it into the new framework.
- The group prepared the meeting of rapporteurs (which was held in Brisbane 5-7 October 1999) to finalize the beef specific requirement.
  
- The Specialized Section decided to cooperate with the Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies in the creation of a UN/ECE quality trade mark for meat. The rapporteurs will prepare a draft protocol

29. The group intends to finalize the beef specific requirements at its next session and present it to the Working Party for adoption.

30. As proposed by the Specialized Section the Working Party adopted the General Requirements for beef as contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.11/1999/5, Annex 4 and approved to delete the words “(Porcine, Bovine and Poultry)” from the name of the Specialized Section. The General Requirements will be published in TRADE/WP.7/1999/7/Add.6.

31. The Working Party approved the report of the Specialized Section including the future work.

32. The Chairman welcomed the very active participation of the private sector in this group.

*Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies*

93. The secretary of the UN/ECE Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies (WP.6) reported on the activities of this Working Party and in particular on preparation of an international agreement on technical harmonization. The purpose of the agreement is to harmonize principles, methods and means of elaboration, presentation, implementation and confirmation of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures. The proposed agreement will be of a general nature (a framework agreement) with concrete obligations on specific subjects to be elaborated in protocols to the agreement. It was suggested that one of such protocols could be devoted to a quality mark on meat which is currently prepared by the specialized section on standardization of meat.

94. The Working Party welcomed the idea of cooperation with Working Party 6. After discussions it was decided that the first draft a quality mark after its preparation by the specialized section on standardization of meat will be submitted for comments to WP.6 and then for further discussions and approval to the Working Party meeting in November 2000.