Working Party on Agriculture Quality Standards

Report: Twenty-ninth session Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat 2021
The eating quality group’s work as an extension of the Specialized Section’s work on the UNECE’s Standard for Bovine Meat.

The Rapporteur for eating quality (Poland) provided a brief update on the work of the UNECE scientific reference group for eating quality.

Australia provided an update on the International Meat Research 3G Foundation (IMR3GF) and the completion of the DATAbank software allowing for efficient and safe data collection, management and analysis.

The database consists of seven categories where countries and organizations can enter data on live animals supplied from the farm/feedlot; slaughter floor data from abattoir files; grading data; primal cut and sample ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2021/2 3 data including all ID linkages; consumer sensory data; individual cut pH data; and specialized category.
Once the system is fully operational, it will have a combined database of animal and consumer sensory data collected over a 25-year period in 11 countries.

Update was provided on recent and upcoming training activities aimed at ensuring a common data-collection approach as well as updates on software design and the protocols for adding members and controlling access at multiple levels.

The ongoing work and data-sharing agreements are all currently based on scientific research hence, participation is primarily Research Institutes around the World.

The potential benefits of the collaborative / combined research being for a future commercial grading model to enhance eating quality outcomes for the Consumer.
Previous sessions had raised the potential alignment of the Economic Commission for Europe cut codes with the Harmonized Commodity Descriptions/Coding System used by the World Customs Organisation.

The Specialized Section took note of a meeting with the World Customs Organization (WCO) held in July 2021 where WCO representatives indicated their interest to work together.

The delegate from Australia presented a paper reflecting discussions of last year and demonstrating the degree of possible alignment within existing cut codes and HS descriptions.

He demonstrated how mapping the UNECE cut codes to the six-digit HS codes could be implemented in the case of Australia, emphasizing that achieving an alignment across all countries might be challenging however, performing a similar data-collection exercise with countries would help to determine feasibility of the project and pave the way forward.
**Specialized Section agreed to establish a Rapporteur’s group (Australia, Poland, United States) and to capitalize on the opportunity of closer collaboration with the WCO on the topic.**

**Subsequent meetings have been held with the WCO and the work is ongoing.**
Previous Symposia had raised the potential need to development international minimum sustainability guidelines for the meat sector.

Delegations continued the discussion on the possible development of a sustainability framework.

Noting the number of sustainability initiatives globally the Specialized Section agreed to establish a forum for sharing best practice and expertise as well as collecting contributions around the sustainability model.

The Specialized Section decided to advance this topic and to establish a Rapporteur’s group that would also serve as a “sustainability response team” moving forward.

The Specialized Section also decided to organize a seminar/webinar either in conjunction with or prior to the next session.
Discussion on the possible development of a Livestock Language. The different terms in describing livestock was one of the challenges identified as part of the supply chain.

Australia agreed to share the review of their Livestock Language once completed.

In developing guidelines harmonizing the guidelines with the use of meat terminology and livestock nomenclature with the International Organization for Standardization ISO is considered important.

It was decided to explore the ISO equivalent process and engage with any other international forums to maintain the momentum.

To provide and update at the next session.
Porcine Meat:
- Revision of the standard for porcine meat (marbling and fat content).
- No documents were received for the 2021 session. The United States representative reported about ongoing work and a document forthcoming. It was proposed to expand the group. Australia expressed an interest to participate.

Animal Protein:
- International standard for animal protein derived from connective tissue.
- The Rapporteurs led by the Russian Federation. No document for this session hence held over until 2022.
Future items for the 2022 agenda included:

- Revision of the Standard for Porcine meat (marbling and fat content); ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2021/2 5
- International standard for animal protein derived from connective tissue;
- An update on development of sustainability framework for the meat sector;
- An update on eating quality;
- An update on the alignment of the UNECE cut codes with the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS codes);
Thank you!

Ian King
Chair Specialized Section on Meat

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