

The position of the Specialized Section on cutting seed potatoes

(Agreed at forty-first session in March 2013 and amended in October 2014)

- Cutting seed potatoes is a common practice in areas or cases where potato varieties with large tubers are in demand. Cutting facilitates the production of varieties with large tubers and reduces seed costs. However, marketing cut seed is not allowed in some parts of the world, because seed cutting increases the risks of disease spread and seed piece decay. It also may reduce emergence.
- In countries where cut seed is accepted into a certification programme, the countries may enforce provisions to minimize the risk of spread of diseases. Cutting seed potatoes is recommended to be done in a closed chain if possible, because cutting by third parties creates a greater risk.
- Extreme temperatures and difference in temperature between soil and cut seed tubers generally cause poorer emergence and plant growth. The risks of seed cutting can be mitigated by pre-cutting and allowing the cut surfaces to suberize. It is important to take proper measures to prevent the spread of diseases between seed lots by thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting all equipment.
- Cut seed is considered a “defect”. Under the UNECE Standard, however, “defects” are only countable when they are expected to have a negative impact on yielding capacity or storability or if they are likely to lead to secondary infection.
- Cut tubers may be acceptable for a designated authority for entrance into their certification programme if the inspection certificate of the seed lot before cutting indicates that the lot meets the designated authority’s requirements and lot identity has been maintained, or the cutting has been done at the farm producing the next generation.
- Seed growers accept the risks and responsibilities of using cut seed.
- When cutting seed of protected varieties, permission may be required from the breeder rights holder.