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Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

Thirty-first session

Geneva, 28 and 29 August 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Revised annotated provisional agenda*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Matters arising since the last session:
 - (a) Recent developments in the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its subsidiary bodies;
 - (b) Recent developments in other organizations.
3. Terms of Reference and Working Procedures of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections.
4. Survey on standards implementation.
5. Revision of standards: Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts.
6. Digitalization of the Standard for Bovine Meat – proposal by the delegation of Poland.
7. Discussion on the possible development of a livestock language.
8. Alignment of the Economic Commission for Europe cut codes with the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System.
9. Eating quality.
10. Capacity-building and promotional activities.
11. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable food systems: sustainability issues and considerations in the meat sector.
12. Other business.

* Official documents for the meeting will be made available six weeks before the meeting at: <https://unece.org/info/Trade/events/wp7/ge11-31st-2023>. Delegates attending the meeting are required to register online at <https://indico.un.org/e/wp7/ge11-31st-2023>. In the event of difficulties with electronic registration, please contact the secretariat by email: olga.kharitonova@un.org.



13. Future work.
14. Election of officers.
15. Adoption of the report.

II. Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda

The delegations will adopt the agenda.

Documentation: Annotated provisional agenda (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/1)
Revised annotated provisional agenda
(ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/1/Rev.1)

2. Matters arising since the last session

(a) Recent developments in the United Nations, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and its subsidiary bodies

The secretariat will present recent matters arising from the United Nations secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS) and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) having an impact on the work of the Specialized Section.

Documentation: Report of the seventy-seventh session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/2)

(b) Recent developments in other organizations

Representatives of other organizations and country delegations will inform the Specialized Section about activities taking place in their agencies that are of relevance to the work of the Specialized Section.

3. Terms of Reference and Working Procedures of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections

As per its Terms of Reference, the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards shall review its Terms of Reference every five years and submit them for approval to SCTCS and the Executive Committee of ECE. At its meeting in November 2022, the Working Party established an open working group consisting of Brazil, Poland, Spain and the United States of America, and open to other countries expressing interest. The open working group is reviewing the Terms of Reference and Working Procedures and will submit a proposal for consideration of the Working Party at its meeting in November 2023.

The secretariat will brief the Specialized Section on the current status of discussions in the open working group. Delegations are invited to comment on the proposed revisions and provide additional suggestions.

Documentation: Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (2018) (ECE/CTCS/2019/12)

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: Working Procedures

Proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards – comparison to the 2018 version (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/INF.1)

4. Survey on standards implementation

To document the impact of ECE standards, in early 2023 the ECE secretariat and the WP.7 Bureau launched a survey on the application of ECE standards and their link to relevant legislative frameworks in participating countries.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the findings of the survey. Additional information and suggestions for data and references to assess and document the impact of the standards are also welcome.

Documentation: Preliminary survey findings (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/INF.2)

5. Revision of standards: Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts

At its 2022 session, the Specialized Section agreed to integrate Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System codes (HS codes) into the cut codes of the ECE Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts. The secretariat also informed delegations about changes to the Russian language terminology in the multilingual table that is part of the standard, which had been done to align it with the terminology used in more recent meat standards in the Russian Federation. The proposed changes, as contained in document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/18, were subsequently approved by the Working Party at its meeting in November 2022.

The Specialized Section also agreed to initiate a review of the entire Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts. In 2023, the standard has been discussed in a rapporteur's group led by the delegation of Australia.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the proposed changes to the Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts.

Documentation: Proposed revisions to the Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/3)

Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts: comparison to the 2014 version (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/INF.3)

Proposed revisions to the Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts – text on meat quality standards with images (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/INF.5)

6. Digitalization of the Standard for Bovine meat – proposal by the delegation of Poland

At the 2022 session of the Specialized Section, the delegation of Poland proposed to include as future work the establishment of a rapporteur's group to consider the digitalization of the ECE Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts. They volunteered to take the lead to develop a proposed work plan and initiate the establishment of a rapporteur's group. During 2023, three informal meetings were held to discuss the suggested scope of the work.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the proposal by the delegation of Poland.

Documentation: Proposal by the delegation of Poland on digitalization of the Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/4)

7. Discussion on the possible development of a livestock language

At the 2022 session of the Specialized Section, the delegation of Australia provided an update of the work to develop National Bovine Livestock Language Guidelines of Australia. The guidelines, which had been developed through a consultative process, would work as a voluntary standard, providing a harmonized language for describing live cattle.

The Specialized Section decided to initiate a discussion on the possible development of guidelines for livestock language based on the experience of Australia and to include it in its agenda for 2023. The Specialized Section is invited to consider if it would be desirable to develop a livestock language under the auspices of ECE.

Documentation: National Bovine Livestock Language Guidelines of Australia
(ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/INF.4)

8. Alignment of the Economic Commission for Europe cut codes with the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System

At its 2022 session, the Specialized Section agreed to the proposal by the rapporteur's group to include six-digit HS codes in the ECE Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts, with the change subsequently approved by the Working Party at its meeting in November 2022.

The Specialized Section also agreed to continue to work on the alignment of the ECE cut codes with the HS codes, as proposed by the rapporteur's group (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2022/17). The Specialized Section is invited to discuss next steps for this work.

9. Eating quality

The Specialized Section will be updated on new developments in eating quality research and on the eating quality database by the Scientific Reference Group for Eating Quality. The Specialized Section is invited to discuss these updates, share additional information and exchange views.

10. Capacity-building and promotional activities

The Specialized Section will share information about capacity-building and promotional activities, and new tools and methodologies facilitating the implementation of standards.

Delegations are invited to share information about ongoing activities, as well as needs for future capacity-building.

11. Sustainable Development Goal 12 and sustainable food systems: sustainability issues and considerations in the meat sector

At its 2022 session, the Specialized Section held a seminar which discussed sustainability issues in the meat sector, including assessments of the benefits and impact of livestock production. This agenda item will consist of a follow-up seminar on sustainability issues and considerations in the meat sector, and a discussion on the potential role and actions of the Specialized Section in this regard.

12. Other business

Any other issues of interest for the work of the Specialized Section can be discussed under this agenda item.

13. Future work

The Specialized Section will discuss its future work.

14. Election of officers

The Specialized Section will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair(s) for a one-year term.

15. Adoption of the report

The Specialized Section will adopt the report of the session.

Documentation: Report of the thirty-first session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/2)

III. Tentative timetable

Monday, 28 August	10:00–13:00	Items 1–5
	15:00–18:00	Items 6–8, 10
Tuesday, 29 August	10:00–13:00	Item 11
	15:00–18:00	Items 9, 12–15
