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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-second session

Geneva, 28-30 August 2024

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

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. Working Procedures of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections.
4. Revision of standards:
 - (a) Ovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts.
 - (b) Chicken Meat – Carcasses and Parts.
5. Alignment of the Economic Commission for Europe cut codes with the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System.
6. Digitization of the standard for Bovine Meat – carcasses and cuts.
7. Eating quality.
8. Capacity-building and promotional activities.
9. Sustainable food systems, resource efficiency and digitalization.
10. Survey on standards implementation.

* Official documents for the meeting will be made available six weeks before the meeting at: <https://unece.org/info/Trade/events/wp7/ge11-32nd-2024>. Delegates attending the meeting are required to register online at <https://indico.un.org/event/1007224>. In the event of difficulties with electronic registration, please contact the secretariat by email: nilsesm@un.org.

11. Other business.
12. Future work.
13. Election of officers.
14. 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.11/2024/1)

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-eighth session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2023/2)

(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. Working Procedures of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its Specialized Sections

The Working Party at its 2022 session decided to establish an open working group to conduct a review of its Terms of Reference and Working Procedures. At its 2023 session, the Working Party agreed on revisions to its Terms of Reference, which has been submitted to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards for approval at its meeting in June 2024. The Working Party further decided to continue the review of its Working Procedures and to invite the views of Specialized Sections in the process.

The Specialized Section is invited to consider the proposed revisions to Working Procedures and to provide additional suggestions to the open working group.

Documentation: Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: Working Procedures

Revised Working Procedures for the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2023/4)

Revised Working Procedures for the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards – comparison to the 2018 version (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2023/INF.2)

4. Revision of standards:

(a) **Ovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts**

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section agreed to initiate a review of the Standard for Ovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts, last revised in 2018. It further agreed that the work would be led by the delegation of Australia.

During the first half of 2024, the standard was reviewed by a rapporteur's group consisting of representatives from Australia (rapporteur), Malta, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Uruguay, the United States and the International Meat Research 3G Foundation in three online meetings.

The Specialized Section is invited to review the initial proposals for revisions to the Standard for Ovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts, and to suggest additional changes to the rapporteur's group, which plans to submit a final proposal to the 2025 session of the Specialized Section.

Documentation: Proposed revisions to the Standard for Ovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2024/3)

(b) **Chicken meat – Carcasses and Parts**

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section agreed to initiate a review of the Standard for Chicken Meat – Carcasses and Parts, last revised in 2012. It further agreed that the work would be led by the delegation of the United States.

During 2024, a call was made for members of the rapporteur's group, with nominations received from the delegations of Malta and Russian Federation. The group plans to start working on the review after the Specialized Section session.

The Specialized Section is invited to provide initial proposals for revisions to the Standard for Chicken Meat – Carcasses and Parts. Delegations are invited to volunteer for the rapporteur's group.

Documentation: UNECE Standard for Chicken Meat – Carcasses and Parts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2012/4)
ECE/TRADE/355/REV.1 (2012 edition)

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

Following discussions at its 2021 and 2022 session, the Specialized Section in 2023 agreed to continue work on integrating Harmonized System (HS) codes into the meat standards, as had been done for the ECE Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts in 2022. It further agreed that the delegation of Australia would take the lead, supported by the delegations of Poland and the United States. During 2024, HS codes have been integrated into the revisions of the ECE Standard for Ovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts, (as reflected in document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2024/3 discussed under agenda item 4).

The secretariat will provide an update on related discussions on this topic held at the 2024 sessions of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce. The Specialized Section is invited to discuss next steps for this work.

6. **Digitization of the Standard for Bovine meat – carcasses and cuts**

At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section discussed a proposal by the delegation of Poland to fully digitize the ECE Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2023/4). It proposed to establish a standardized and effective method for encoding the optional parameters listed under each cut code under the standard as "To be specified" into the AI(7002) GS1 128 format, facilitating precise identification and description of meat items in line with ECE standards. This would enable better identification,

description, and tracking of meat products in trade, while also enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accuracy within the industry. It would also facilitate interoperability and communication between buyers and sellers, thus potentially removing barriers to e-trade.

The Specialized Section agreed to establish a rapporteur's group led by Poland, and including delegations of Australia and the United States, to take this work forward. In 2024, this issue was discussed in two meetings of the rapporteur's group.

The Specialized Section is invited to discuss the proposal by the rapporteur's group.

Documentation: Proposal for digitization of the Standard for Bovine Meat – Carcasses and Cuts (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2024/4)

7. Eating quality

The Specialized Section will be updated on new developments in eating quality research by the International Meat Research 3G Foundation. The Specialized Section is invited to discuss progress in eating quality research and application of results, and to share additional information.

8. Capacity-building and promotional activities

Delegations are invited to share information about capacity-building and promotional activities, and new tools and methodologies facilitating the implementation of standards.

The Specialized Section is invited to propose other capacity-building activities and discuss related resource mobilization.

9. Sustainable food systems, resource efficiency and digitalization

The United Nations Food Systems Summit, held in 2021, emphasized the importance of adopting a food systems approach for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To realize SDGs and deliver healthy and nutritious diets for all, the global food system needs to become more productive, inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and resilient.

At its 2022 and 2023 sessions, the Specialized Section included seminar sessions to discuss sustainability issues related to meat and livestock, with a focus on impacts and measurement issues as regards greenhouse gas emissions from beef, and the role of meat in a circular food system.

Moreover, on 18 and 19 April 2023, the seventieth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe was held on the theme “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the ECE region”. It requested that the relevant Sectoral Committees and their subsidiaries “consider how to enhance the impact of relevant existing ECE instruments, in order to foster digital and green transformations, including by proposing ways to identify, assess and fill gaps in governance and good practices”. It invited subsidiary bodies to consider developing proposals in their respective programmes of work [...] for impactful and measurable solutions that promote digital and green transformations and that can facilitate attaining the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In response, this agenda item will consist of panel/roundtable discussions focused on three aspects of sustainable food systems:

- (a) Animal raising claims
- (b) Animal welfare
- (c) Digitalization of meat trade processes

Delegations are invited to discuss the potential role and actions of the Specialized Section in relation to these topics.

10. Survey on standards implementation

In early 2023 the ECE secretariat in consultation with the WP.7 Bureau launched a survey on the application of ECE standards and their link to relevant legislative frameworks in participating countries. At its 2023 session, the Specialized Section discussed the results of the survey. The Specialized Section suggested it would be useful to include questions on what was preventing adoption of the standards, and to also reach out to industry bodies to enquire about the use of the standards.

Delegations are invited to provide more information on the use of the standards in their country and to propose relevant industry bodies to survey.

11. Other business

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

12. Future work

The Specialized Section will discuss its future work.

13. Election of officers

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

14. Adoption of the report

The Specialized Section will adopt the report of the session.

Documentation: Report of the thirty-second session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat (ECE/CTCS/WP.7/GE.11/2024/2)

III. Tentative timetable

Wednesday, 28 August	15:00–18:00	Items 1–5
Thursday, 29 August	10:00–13:00	Items 6–8
	15:00–18:00	Item 9
Friday, 30 August	10:00–13:00	Items 10-13
	15:00–18:00	Item 14
