



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17
24 November 1998

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Meeting of Experts on Co-ordination of
Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
Forty-fourth session, Geneva, 2 to 6 November 1998

REPORT ON THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Executive summary:

- Revisions to the following standards were adopted: Beans, Carrots, Citrus Fruit, Garlic, Melons, Shelling Peas, Plums, Watermelons, Avocados and Broccoli.
- Maturity requirements and sizing provisions for Citrus Fruit were discussed but will be rediscussed at the next session because no consensus could be found.
- Principles for the inclusion of asparagus grown under certain climatic conditions were adopted. A proposal will be drawn up by the Codex and UN/ECE secretariats.
- Informal working groups were formed on the following subjects:
 - review of the proposals for amendments to the standard on Cultivated Mushrooms;
 - revision of the standard for Kiwi Fruit.
- Several proposals made by the UN/ECE/OECD working group on Apples were adopted in principle, including the revision of the list of varieties. Opinions differed on the inclusion of an alternative method for sizing. The group invited proposals and comments from delegations and will present a new proposal for the next session.
- The usefulness of sizing provisions was discussed in principle.
- The new homepage on UN/ECE's work on agricultural standards was presented:
<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>

Opening of the session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 2 to 6 November 1998. The session was opened by the Deputy-Director of the UN/ECE Trade Division and Chief of the Trade Facilitation Section, Mr. Hans Hansell, who welcomed the delegates to Geneva. He outlined the events that had taken place within UN/ECE since the last session which in his view clearly show the commitment of UN/ECE to the work on agricultural standards:

- Since last year the work of WP.7 and related groups is situated in the Trade Facilitation Section of the Trade Division and reports to the newly created Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development
- At its first session (December 1997), the new Committee elected the Chairman of WP.7, Mr. Vilchez-Barros (Spain), as its Vice-Chairman.
- At its second session (June 1998), it accorded the highest priority to the work of WP.7 among its subsidiary bodies.
- At this year's spring session, the Economic Commission for Europe confirmed the permanent mandate of the Meetings of Experts working under the auspices of WP.7. At the same time these groups were renamed "specialized section".
- A new post allocated to the service of WP.7 and its specialized sections was created within UN/ECE and filled on a permanent basis as of 1 July 1998.

Participation

2. The session was attended by delegations of the following countries: Austria; Belgium; Czech Republic; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Slovak Republic; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; and European Union.

3. The following countries participated under the provisions of Article 11 of the UN/ECE Terms of Reference: Chile; Mexico; New Zealand; South Africa and Thailand.

4. The following specialized agency of the United Nations was represented: Food and Agriculture Organization, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

5. On the invitation of the secretariat, a representative of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables participated in the session.

6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations participated in the session: C.L.A.M. (Comité de Liaison de L'Agrumiculture Méditerranéenne) and E.U.C.O.F.E.L. (European Union of the Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale, Import and Export Trade).

Adoption of the agenda

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/1 and TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.3

7. The updated provisional agenda as contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.3 was adopted with the following changes under agenda item 4 (b): withdrawal of the German proposal on garlic contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/4 and the Dutch proposals on onions and cucumbers contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/4 and /Add.1.

Election of officers

8. The Meeting unanimously re-elected Mr. D.L. Priester (USA) as Chairman and Ms. U. Bickelmann (Germany) as Vice-Chairperson.

Matters of interest arising since the forty-second session

9. The Meeting took note of document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/2 summing up the relevant discussions of the Working Party at its 53rd session.

Consideration of proposals for revisions of standards

Shelling Peas

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/3 (Germany, Canada, Spain)

10. The meeting adopted the proposal from Spain with minor amendments from the United Kingdom and decided to propose it to the Working Party as a revision of the UN/ECE standard on Shelling Peas. The consolidated text is reproduced in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.12.

Beans

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/3 (United Kingdom, Spain)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/3/Add.1 (United Kingdom)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.8 (Secretariat)

11. The discussion was held on the basis of TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.8 in which the proposals from Spain and the United Kingdom had been combined. The main goal of both proposals is the integration of the classification criteria for needle beans and other beans and also to address the problem of damage at the stalk end of a certain percentage of beans.

12. The major difference between the proposals concerned sizing. While in the proposal from the United Kingdom sizing is only compulsory for needle beans, in the Spanish proposal it is compulsory for all beans in classes "Extra" and I. Several delegations felt there might be problems with sizing of beans other than needle beans and in the end it was decided to leave sizing compulsory only for needle beans. The Spanish delegate said that they might come back to the question of sizing of other beans after having received more reactions from the trade.

13. Some delegations regretted the fact that it was necessary to make concessions in quality criteria because of new harvesting methods but it was generally accepted that the standard had to reflect the effects of these methods. It was mentioned that "Extra" class existed for the classification of high-quality produce.

14. The meeting adopted the text of TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.8 with minor amendments and decided to propose it to the Working Party as a revision of the UN/ECE standard on Beans. The consolidated text is reproduced in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.14.

Garlic, Melons and Watermelons

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/16 (European Union)

15. The amendments to the UN/ECE standards on Garlic, Melons and Watermelons proposed by the European Union were adopted. The amendments are reflected in annex I to this report and will be transmitted to the Working Party.

Plums

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/6 (Germany)

16. The document contained amendments to the definition, the sizing provisions and the list of varieties which were partly adopted. The amendments are reflected in annex I to this report and will be transmitted to the Working Party.

17. The proposal to split the sizing provisions for large fruit varieties into those for *p. salicina* and *p. domestica* and to require a higher minimum size for *p. salicina* was not adopted. It was felt by some delegations that a higher minimum size might increase the possibility of broken stones in plums, others said that their trade representatives were against higher minimum sizes.

18. The list of varieties had been split into large fruit varieties of *p. domestica* and *p. salicina*. It was felt by several delegations that this list needed more work before it could be integrated into the standard. Italy offered to send comments to Germany who would then propose a new list at the next session.

Peaches and Nectarines

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/7 (Italy)

19. The meeting took note of TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/7 in which the delegation of Italy reported on an experiment to test the possibility to ship peaches and nectarines packed in bulk.

20. Owing to adverse weather conditions in 1997, production was reduced by more than 50% and only a small number of shipments were made in bulk (about 15). Because this number is not statistically relevant a practical assessment regarding this type of packaging had not been possible. Similar adverse weather conditions in 1998 resulted in traders not wishing to participate in the experiment.

21. Several delegations said that while they were not against the experiment the reaction from the trade showed that the produce was not suitable to be packed in bulk.

22. The delegation of the United States said that there was some experience on bulk transport of this produce in their country and that several universities had studied this problem because it involved special containers, special packing on the trailer and maturity requirements for the produce.

23. The group agreed that Italy could try to hold the experiment again in 1999 and the delegation of the United States offered to provide Italy with further information on the experiences gathered in his country on this matter.

Kiwi Fruit

24. The delegation of New Zealand recalled that there had been an initial discussion on a possible revision of the Kiwi Fruit standard at the last session. The result had been that a need was seen for a revision and New Zealand had offered to serve as rapporteur. He said that he had already had consultations with the International Kiwi Fruit Organization and he intended to form a small working group uniting all interested parties (producers, traders, importers). The delegations of Chile, Germany, Italy and the United States offered to participate in that group.

Citrus Fruit

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/11 (Israel)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/11/Add.1 (South Africa)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.4 (Secretariat)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.9 (United States)

25. The subject had already been discussed at the last two sessions (see AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/47 paras. 43-55 and AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/50 paras. 16-45). Progress had been slow due to conflicting positions on several topics held by European producer countries and producer organizations on the one hand and several European importing countries and non-European producer countries on the other.

26. The rapporteurs from Germany and Israel had prepared a revised working document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/11 including comments from the last sessions. On the basis of this document the secretariat had prepared TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.4, a consolidated text of the standard marking all changes proposed to the original standard which served as a guideline for the discussions.

27. The representative of the Spanish Citrus Industry gave a brief overview of the evolution of the market for citrus fruit in the last 30 years, noting that the amount of fruit produced and traded had multiplied in that period. He said that the present UN/ECE Standard which set minimum requirements had contributed to the positive development of the market and was still adequate. He said that he preferred not to revise the standard because he did not want to endanger this success. This view was supported by the delegations of Greece, Italy, Portugal and C.L.A.M.

28. The rapporteur from Israel recalled the reasons why a proposal for a revision of the citrus fruit standard had been prepared by him in cooperation with Germany. During the work on the explanatory brochure for this standard at the OECD Scheme it had become obvious that the current standard no longer reflected modern trade because trends in trade and the general economic situation of the consumers had changed over the last 30 years.

29. He said that consumers today demanded much higher quality than before. The principles used in the revision had been to open the standard as wide as possible and the group had to decide between drawing up a modern standard which would help the trade or to stay with minimum requirements that were no longer relevant.

30. Modernization of the standard was supported by Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States.

I. Definition of produce

31. The meeting adopted the proposal on this chapter with the deletion of the last indent concerning kumquats and its hybrids because they belong to the gender *fortunella* and not to *citrus* (the adopted text is reproduced in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16). Minor problems concerning translation of the common name for grapefruit will be solved by the rapporteur using the principles in the draft Codex standards for these products (currently at step 6).

II. Provisions concerning quality

A. Minimum requirements

32. The proposal on this part of the chapter was adopted with minor amendments (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16).

B. Maturity requirements

33. The general structure of this part was adopted with some amendments including the deletion of the paragraphs for kumquats and limequats.

34. Disagreement remains on the criteria used to determine maturity. While there was agreement on the use of “minimum juice content” and “colouring”, no agreement could be reached on the use of “minimum sugar content” and “minimum sugar/acid ratio” as well as on the figures for these criteria and figures for “minimum juice content” for certain products.

35. Some delegations said that if “minimum sugar/acid ratio” was used as a criterion they preferred the figures to be given per variety. They also preferred to keep the present text of the standard with respect to “minimum juice content”. They said that other maturity criteria might be envisaged like thin skin, quality of the membrane and minimum acidity. Cyprus pointed out in a written comment that a higher acidity better preserved the vitamin C content of the fruit, which was higher in fruit grown in temperate areas as opposed to fruit from tropical regions.

36. It was decided not to include the criterion “minimum sugar content” and “minimum sugar/acid ratio” in the revision of the standard and also to retain the present text concerning “minimum juice content”. Delegations were invited to consult their industry on these issues and send proposals to the rapporteur from Israel.

Lemons

37. The proposed text was adopted with minor amendments (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16).

Limes

38. The text was adopted (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16)(and is harmonized with the Codex standard) but no agreement on the figure for minimum juice content (proposed: 45%, Codex: 40% in square brackets) could be found. The United States, supported by Chile, maintained their reservation (42%) because when testing 100 samples only 8 with a juice content of more than 42% had been found. The rapporteur agreed to review the figure of 42% minimum juice content for the next session.

Satsumas, clementines, other mandarin varieties and their hybrids

39. Only the proposed text for colouring and consequential amendments due to the changes in chapter I was adopted. (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16).

Oranges

40. Only the proposed text for colouring was adopted. The footnote concerning green oranges was not adopted (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16).

41. Several countries including Germany, Israel, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom felt that as green oranges were obviously traded, provisions should be included in the standard. The setting of maturity requirements for green oranges would prevent the trade of inferior produce.

42. The Chairman stressed that standards should not become barriers to trade, especially in the light of the WTO TBT Agreement, but rather facilitate trade. He said that green oranges were traded, and therefore the issue should be mentioned in the Standard otherwise the standard would not reflect global trade but only regional trade.

43. The representative of FAO said that a footnote dealing with green oranges had been included in the draft Codex Standard for Oranges. The draft Codex standard had been held up in order to harmonize with the UN/ECE standard and if no new text was available from UN/ECE in March for the 8th Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, the discussion would be based on the existing UN/ECE standard.

44. The representatives of Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and C.L.A.M. stressed that markets could be disturbed and the whole industry negatively affected by allowing green oranges. They said that the Mediterranean producers were not worried by competition from third parties but concerned about a possible impact on the quality of Mediterranean fruit. They said further that de-greening was a perfectly natural process which only brings out the colour in fruit which are already ripe. The importance of the outside appearance of citrus fruit for consumers, including the colour, was stressed in a written comment from Cyprus.

45. The delegation of Sweden said that in the case of oranges ethylene has no major part in the maturity process and thought it unnecessary to require treatment of fully mature oranges with ethylene which promotes ageing and shortens shelf life.

46. It was finally agreed that the problem needed further discussion in a small technical working group including parties concerned also taking into account the expected volume of trade in green oranges. The representative of FAO offered to provide statistics on the trade of this fruit.

Grapefruits, pummelos

47. Only the proposed text for colouring was adopted (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16).

C. Classification

48. The text was adopted with the deletion of several passages which had been in square brackets and related to individual types of citrus fruit (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16).

III. Provisions concerning Sizing

49. The delegation of the United States presented an alternative proposal on sizing contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.9. As the present size scales basically served to ensure that fruit were uniform in size he proposed to define the term "uniform in size" and leave it up to the professionals how they would actually size the fruit. He said that a market news report had shown that only very few countries actually used size scales. It was therefore important to ensure transparency of the standard to avoid possible conflict with countries that might see the prescription of size scales as a technical barrier to trade.

50. The delegations of Israel and the Netherlands welcomed the principle of the proposal but felt that it needed to be further developed before it could be included in the standard. They said that changes to other chapters of the standard, especially on marking, would be necessary.

51. The delegations of Spain and Greece were not in favour of the proposal and said that the present size scales had worked well in practice and they would prefer to retain them. The representative from C.L.A.M. said that he would transmit the proposal to his industry to get their reactions on this new principle.

52. The meeting went on to discuss the sizing provisions proposed in document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.4. No consensus could be found on these provisions especially for those on mandarins, and it was decided to maintain the present text of the standard with minor revisions due to the changes in chapter I and the inclusion of a size code 0 for oranges (see TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16).

C. Uniformity

IV. Provisions concerning Tolerances

V. Provisions concerning Presentation

VI. Provisions concerning Marking

53. The texts were adopted with amendments as reflected in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16.

54. The revised proposal TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16 will be proposed to the Working Party as a revision of the UN/ECE standard on Citrus Fruit and will also be made available to the 8th CCFFV for harmonisation with the draft Codex standard on oranges.

55. TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.4 will be amended by the secretariat and the rapporteur from Israel taking into account the discussions at this session and will be produced as a regular document for the next session

Cultivated Mushrooms

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/13 (Germany)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/13/Add.1(United Kingdom)

56. The delegation of Ireland informed the meeting that Germany, France, Ireland, Netherlands and the United Kingdom had agreed to form an informal working group in order to take this subject further. The group agreed to send written proposals on the existing documents to the rapporteur from Germany by February 1999. The group has tentatively agreed to meet in the Netherlands in May 1999 to draw up a consolidated proposal which would be presented to the Specialized Section in October 1999.

Asparagus

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/14 (Thailand)

57. This subject had already been discussed at the last session of the Meeting of Experts (see AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/50 para. 75). The problem is how to include provisions on asparagus grown under certain climatic conditions in the standard. At the last session a text for sizing of this type of asparagus had been adopted. This text had been taken into account at the 7th CCFFV. The draft Codex standard had been returned to step 3 to allow for collaboration of the secretariats of UN/ECE and Codex in order to arrive at a revised sizing table that truly reflects all diameters and colour groups of asparagus marketed in international trade (see ALINORM 99/35 para. 55).

58. The delegation of Thailand proposed in his document a separate size table for asparagus grown under certain climatic conditions. As the sizing table in the current UN/ECE standard combines size and quality it was not possible to include this type of asparagus in the table. He clarified that his main goal was to introduce this kind of asparagus in the UN/ECE standard in a way that allows it to be marketed in all three quality classes.

59. While no text for a solution could be drafted during the discussion the following points were made which should be taken into account when drafting a proposal for the next session:

- A sentence needs to be added to "I. Definition of Produce" to indicate that for this special case, asparagus with a minimum diameter of 3 mm is covered by the standard (possibly along the lines of the text proposed in the draft Codex standard).
- Diameter and quality are linked only in the case of white and white and violet asparagus.
- The size table as proposed by Thailand was adopted without the size codes.
- A change in the standard should not result in confusion of violet/green and green asparagus grown in temperate regions with green asparagus grown under certain climatic conditions.
- Provisions concerning measuring the diameter at the cut end as well as on maximum variation need to be added (along the lines of the text contained in AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/50 para. 75).
- Provisions concerning marking and labelling for asparagus grown under certain climatic conditions may need to be added.

60. The Codex and UN/ECE secretariats will try to come up with a wording based on these principles which will be proposed to the 8th CCFFV.

Apples and Pears

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/9 (Secretariat)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/10 (Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland, Czech Republic)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.10 (New Zealand)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.11 (New Zealand)

61. The delegation of New Zealand presented a revised working document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.10 on the Apple and Pear standard on behalf of the UN/ECE/OECD working group on apples (Belgium, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom).

62. The group had introduced a few minor amendments to the text adopted at the last session (contained in TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/9) which were agreed by the Meeting of Experts.

63. The group also proposed to introduce a table of suggested weight ranges as an alternative method of ensuring uniformity of fruit within a package. Comments on the principle of that proposal were invited and should be forwarded to the delegation of New Zealand.

64. Several delegations stated that weight sizing was used effectively in their countries and uniformity could be ensured by this method.

65. The delegations of Greece, Italy and Spain commented mainly on the proposed table and said that they doubted that it would be consistent with the existing reference in millimetres.

66. The delegation of New Zealand stressed that weight sizing was used and that trade would move on without the UN/ECE standard if it did not address this issue. Replying to the concerns of Greece, Italy and Spain he said that the table was only meant as a guideline and that it was possible to develop other tables taking care of the specific weight of different varieties. He invited them to send written comments to the working group, which would then develop a new proposal for the next session.

67. In document TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.11, the working group proposed a simplified version of the list of varieties. The present list is split into three tables depending on the colour group. In the new table the varieties are listed alphabetically and for each entry the information on colour group and russeting is given coded in a letter. The group agreed on the principle of revising the list of varieties as proposed by the working group. Comments on the list were invited and should be sent to Belgium and New Zealand directly.

Avocados

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/15 (Spain)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/15/Add.1 (Israel)

68. Several amendments proposed in the document from Spain were adopted with minor changes. The adopted texts are reflected in annex I to this report.

69. The Spanish proposal on a new text for the paragraph on maturity was not adopted. The group was not opposed to the principle of having more detailed provisions on maturity and the figure of 21% for the minimum dry-matter content for the important cultivar “Hass” was generally accepted, but several delegations felt that if “Hass” was included, then other varieties that were traded in their countries would also have to be included. This was not accepted by other delegations because the dry-matter content for other varieties was too variable.

70. The Spanish proposal concerning sizing was not adopted. Several delegations said that small avocados (125-135g) were traded in their countries and were of good quality.

Carrots

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.5 (OECD Scheme)

71. The OECD working group on carrots was of the opinion that marking of sizing should be optional as sizing for carrots was only used to ensure uniformity. The amendment was adopted and is reflected in annex I to this report.

Broccoli

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.6 (OECD Scheme)

72. The amendments concerning hollowness of the stem were adopted in an amended form. It was noted that the English and French versions differed and needed to be aligned. The amendments are reflected in annex I to this report.

Questions concerning consumer packages

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/5 (Chile)

73. The delegation of Chile proposed not to have minimum sizes for bunches of table grapes sold to the consumer in fixed weight sealed packages in all classes, in order to allow smaller bunches to be included to adjust the weight. It was clarified by other delegations that the existing standard already addressed this problem in chapter III.

74. He proposed further not to require Plums, Peaches or Nectarines to be separated from their neighbours in packages sold directly to the consumer. It was clarified by other delegations that this requirement did not exist for plums and only for “Extra” Class for Peaches and Nectarines.

Usefulness of sizing provisions

Document: AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/R.157 (Netherlands)

75. The delegation of the Netherlands presented her proposal on simplification of sizing provisions for a discussion on the principle. She said that in her view the aim of the standards was to exclude inappropriate produce and to facilitate trade through definition of a common language and that to that end, minimum size and uniformity were more important than the prescription of size scales.

76. The delegations of Chile, Finland, Israel, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden supported this view because a simplification of sizing methods would increase transparency of the standards and ease their international application.

77. The delegations of France, Greece, Italy and Spain stressed the importance of sizing provision as a point of reference and for comparing different produce present on the market.

78. The meeting agreed that one should try to simplify the standards wherever possible but that there would probably be no simple solutions. New ideas would have to be brought in separately for each product, taking care that trade would not be disrupted.

79. The delegation of the Netherlands was not in favour of creating a working group to discuss this question further.

Geisenheimer Tagung

80. The German delegation informed the meeting that the "Geisenheimer Tagung" would be held from 22 to 24 February 1999 with the theme "Harmonisation of quality control and interpretation of quality standards". Translation in English and French would be available and invitation letters will be sent out in December.

Matters of interest arising from the activities of other international bodies

OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables

81. The Explanatory Brochures are now available on the Scheme's web site (see <http://www.oecd.org/agr/code/index.htm>) and the brochure on Carrots was adopted and will be available on CD Rom following the WP.7 session 9-11 November. The colour gauge for Cauliflower will be reproduced by CTIFL.

82. Proposals concerning several aspects of the scheme elaborated by a working group on the future of the Scheme were adopted at the 58th Plenary meeting and are reflected in AGR/CA/FVS(98)1/Rev1:

- A new primary objective was adopted: "to promote the establishment of one single international grade standard setting body" and in the interim continue its present activities.
- The development and revision of explanatory material will be done by working groups outside of the Plenary Meetings.
- Features of membership were relaxed to ensure there is no distinction between OECD member countries and participating countries.

- The scale of contributions has been re-vamped and based on a two stage system which involves a flat fee of the same amount to be paid by everyone and the second stage based on the OECD calculation method.
83. The 9th Meeting of Heads of Control services will be hosted by Israel from 11 to 13 October 1999.
84. Three countries have formalized their withdrawal from the Scheme, USA, United Kingdom and Denmark.

European Union

85. The delegation of the EU said that the EU working group continued to take UN/ECE standards into account when discussing EU standards and to harmonize EU and UN/ECE standards. If during this work the need for amendments to UN/ECE standards arises the group proceeds as follows:

- if the amendments are minor or less strict than the UN/ECE standard, then they are adopted by the EU working group and sent to UN/ECE for harmonization;
- if necessary they are first presented to UN/ECE before they are adopted by the EU working group (e.g. as in the case of melons).

Codex Committee on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

86. The representative from FAO stated that the 45th session of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC):

- assigned the revision of the Codex Standard for Fresh Fungus "Chanterelle" to the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables;
- abolished the Joint ECE/Codex Groups of Experts on the Standardization of Fruit Juices and on Quick Frozen Foods;
- referred the consideration of the possible elaboration of proposed draft Codes of Hygienic Practice for Primary Production, Harvesting and Packaging of Fresh Produce and for Pre-Cut Fruits and Vegetables to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene to decide whether further work was needed.

87. He also reported the conclusions of the seventh Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables:

- advanced draft Codex Standards for Limes, Pummelos, Guavas and Chayotes to the Commission for adoption at Step 8;
- advanced the proposed draft Codex Standards for Mexican Limes and Ginger for adoption by the Commission at Step 5/8, with a recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7;
- advanced proposed draft Codex Standards for Pineapples (Revised), Grapefruits, and Longans to the Executive Committee for adoption at Step 5; (adopted by the 45th CCEXEC in June 1998)
- suspended consideration on the Draft Code of Practice for the Quality Inspection and Certification of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and annex II (Inspection Site Requisites) at Step 7 in order to evaluate the need for a Code specific to the inspection and certification of fresh fruits and vegetables;
- forwarded proposals to elaborate Codex Standards for Tiquisque (Lilac and White), Yucca, Uchuva, Yellow Pitahaya and a proposed draft revised standard for Papaya, to the Executive Committee for approval as new work; (approved as new work by the 45th CCEXEC in June 1998)
- returned the proposed draft Codex Standards for Oranges including a Guide for Use in Scoring Freezing Injury, to Step 2 so that Codex and UN/ECE secretariats could elaborate a harmonized Codex Standard

- based on the quality provisions of the UN/ECE Standard for Citrus Fruit for circulation and comment at Step 3 prior to the Committee's next Session;
- returned the proposed draft Codex Standard for Asparagus to Step 3 for additional comments including consideration by the UN/ECE in arriving at a harmonized text, for discussion at its next meeting;
 - discontinued the consideration of the Application of Quality Tolerances at Import and the Use of Objective Indices of Maturity in Commercial Transactions of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables;
 - agreed that two discussion papers concerning the establishment of size tolerances and definitions for terms used in the establishment of fresh produce standards to be prepared for consideration at its next Session.

Demonstration of the new homepage of the Agricultural Standards Unit

88. The secretariat gave a demonstration of the new homepage on UN/ECE's work on agricultural standards which had been established on the world wide web (<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>). This page allows delegates and other interested parties to download and print the UN/ECE standards as well as the working documents of WP.7 and its Specialized Sections. It is also envisaged to create electronic discussion groups to facilitate the exchange of information between delegates on special topics in order to prepare the discussions in the Specialized Section.

Future work

89. The items which could not be discussed at the present session will be placed on the agenda of the next session:

- Proposal to include provisions for miniature fruit and vegetables in UN/ECE Standards AGRI/WP.1/GE.1/R.146, (Secretariat, Germany, United Kingdom)
- Establishment of a list of countries using code marks
- Consideration to elaborate a UN/ECE Draft Standard for Pineapples
- Consideration to discuss the elaboration of a working document on exchange of information on non-conformity cases
- Drafting of a circular letter to increase participation
- Preparation of a document concerning acceptances

90. The following items remain on the agenda:

- Proposals for standards on Apples and Pears (including list of varieties), Asparagus, Citrus Fruit (sizing maturity requirements), Cultivated Mushrooms, Kiwi Fruit, Peaches and Nectarines (transport in bulk), Plums (list of varieties only).

Date and place of the next session

91. The 45th session has been scheduled to take place in Geneva, 25-28 October 1999. The deadline for submission of documents is 16 August 1999.

Adoption of the summary report

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.1 and Add.1 to Add.5
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.2 and Add.1

92. The meeting adopted the report, annex I and the revisions to the standards on shelling peas, beans and citrus fruit to be transmitted to the Working Party (TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.12, ../CRP.14 and ../CRP.16). Annex II contains a list of follow-up actions to this session.

ANNEX I
AMENDMENTS TO STANDARDS ADOPTED BY THE MEETING OF EXPERTS

UN/ECE Standard FFV-06 for Beans

Amendments according to TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.14.

UN/ECE Standard FFV-10 for Carrots

VI. Provisions concerning marking

D. Commercial specifications

In the second indent delete the words “(if sized)” and add at the end “(optional)”.

UN/ECE Standard FFV-14 for Citrus Fruit

Amendments according to TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.16.

UN/ECE Standard FFV-18 for Garlic

(Doc. Ref. TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/16)

I. Definition of Produce

Replace the second part of the sentence after “consumer” with the following text:

“Green garlic with full leaves and underdeveloped cloves and garlic for industrial processing being excluded”

V. Provisions concerning Presentation

Replace the text of point C. Presentation by the following text:

“Garlic must be presented as follows:

- (I) loose in the package, with cut stems, the length of the stem not to exceed:
 - 10 cm in the case of fresh and semi-dry garlic,
 - 3 cm in the case of dry garlic

- (ii) in bunches by:
 - number of bulbs,
 - net weightThe stems must be evened off.

- (iii) in the case of dry and semi-dry garlic only, in strings by:
 - number of bulbs, there being at least six bulbs per string
 - net weight.

In the case of presentation in bunches or strings, each package must have uniform characteristics (number of bulbs or net weight).

Irrespective of the type of presentation, the stems must be cut cleanly, as must the roots in the case of dry garlic classified in the "Extra" class.”

UN/ECE Standard FFV-23 for Melons

(Doc. Ref. TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/16)

In the French version of footnote 1, replace the term "balafre cicatrisée" by "cicatrice sèche".

III. Provisions concerning Sizing

Add Galia type to the Ogen type;

Replace the text of the third and fourth indents by the following text:

"When the size is expressed in terms of weight, the largest melon may not weigh over 50 per cent (30 per cent for the Charentais type melons) more than the smallest.

When the size is expressed in terms of diameter, the diameter of the largest melon may not be over 20 per cent (10 per cent for Charentais type melons) more than the diameter of the smallest."

V. Provisions concerning Presentation

Delete the text between brackets in the first indent.

UN/ECE Standard FFV-27 for Shelling Peas

Amendments according to TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.12.

UN/ECE Standard FFV-29 for Plums

(Doc. Ref. TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/6)

I. Definition of Produce

Amend the first paragraph to read:

" This standard applies to plums of varieties (cultivars) grown from

- *Prunus domestica* L. ssp. *domestica*
- *Prunus domestica* L. ssp. *insititia* (L.) Schneid.,
- *Prunus domestica* L. ssp. *italica* (Borkh.) Gams,
- *Prunus domestica* L. ssp. *syriaca* (Borkh.) Janchen and
- *Prunus salicina* Lindl.

to be supplied fresh to the consumer, plums for industrial processing being excluded."

III. Provisions concerning Sizing

Delete "Plums of Dro" from the last group as this variety is identical with the German Quetsche (Hauszwetsche) which falls under "other varieties"

Title of the Annex

Add the words "non-exhaustive" to the title.

UN/ECE Standards FFV-37 for Watermelons
(Doc. Ref. TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/16)

I. Definition of Produce

Replace the botanical name by "*Citrullus lanatus (Thunb.) Matsum, et Nakai*".

III. Provisions concerning Sizing

Replace the text of the second indent by the following text:

"When watermelons are presented in packages, the difference between the lightest and the heaviest unit in the same package should not exceed 2 kg or 3.5 kg if the lightest unit exceeds 6 kg."

UN/ECE Standard FFV-42 for Avocados

II. Provisions concerning quality

A. Minimum requirements

Amend the sentence immediately after the indents to read: "Avocados must be firm and carefully picked."

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Delete footnote 2.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

In the first sentence after "quality" insert ", colouring²".

Add the following footnote:

² A change in the colour of the dark-skinned varieties is not considered as a defect, but the colouring of the fruit in each package must be uniform at the point of dispatch."

UN/ECE Standard FFV-48 for Broccoli

II. Provisions concerning quality

A. Minimum requirements

After the sentence "The cut of the floral stem must be clean and as square as possible." add:

"Hollowness is not considered a defect provided the hollow part is sound, fresh and not discoloured."

B. Classification

(ii) Class II

Delete the words "and may be hollow" at the end of the sentence beginning with "The floral stem...".

VI. Provisions concerning marking

D. Commercial specifications

In the second indent in the English text, add a second sentence reading:

"The indication of the size is not required in case of pre-packed broccoli."

ANNEX II
List of follow-up actions

Action	Responsible	Date
Elaborate a harmonized proposal for a Codex standard for oranges based on the quality provisions of the UN/ECE standard for citrus fruit	Codex and UN/ECE secretariats	January 1999
Revise the sizing table for asparagus based on the principles decided at the session	Codex and UN/ECE secretariats	January 1999
Prepare an updated list of varieties for plums	Germany, Italy	16. August 1999
Report on an experiment on bulk transport of peaches and nectarines	Italy	16. August 1999
Prepare a revision of the standard for Kiwi Fruit	New Zealand (with Chile, Germany, Italy and the United States)	16. August 1999
Update the proposal for citrus fruit on the basis of TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.4	Israel, UN/ECE secretariat	16. August 1999
Provide statistics on the trade volume of green skinned oranges	Codex secretariat	16. August 1999
Prepare a revision of the standard for Cultivated Mushrooms	Ireland (with Germany , France, Netherlands and the United Kingdom)	16. August 1999
Elaborate proposals on sizing and the list of varieties for apples and pears based on comments received from other delegations	New Zealand (with Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom)	16. August 1999