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**Economic Commission for Europe**

Committee on Trade

**Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards**Specialized Section on Standardization  
of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Fifty-eighth session

Geneva, 1-3 November 2010

**Report of the Specialized Section on  
Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables on  
its fifty-eighth session***Summary*

The Specialized Section decided to submit to the Working Party for approval:

- The revised texts of the standard layout and the standards for the following fruit and vegetables: apricots, artichokes, asparagus, aubergines, beans, Brussels sprouts, headed cabbage, carrots, cauliflowers, ribbed celery, cherries, citrus fruit, cucumbers, fennel, fresh figs, garlic, table grapes, leeks, lettuces and endives, melons, cultivated mushrooms, onions, peaches and nectarines, peas, sweet peppers, plums, strawberries, tomatoes, watermelons, witloof chicory, sweet chestnuts, rhubarb, courgettes, avocados, Chinese cabbages, mangoes, kiwifruit, annonas, broccoli, apples, pears, early and ware potatoes, truffles, ceps and chanterelles.
- The new standards for shallots, berry fruit, leafy vegetables, and root and tubercle vegetables.
- The withdrawal of the standards for raspberries, bilberries and blueberries, spinach, radishes, horse radish and scorzonera.

**I. Introduction**

1. The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Ulrike Bickelmann (Germany).

## **II. Attendance**

2. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

3. The European Union was also represented.

4. The following specialized agencies/programmes participated in the session: Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

5. A representative of the following intergovernmental organizations participated in the session: the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables.

6. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations participated in the session: COLEACP (Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee); CLAM (Comité de Liaison de l'agrumiculture méditerranéenne); AILIMPO-Freshfel Europe; INTERCITRUS.

## **III. Adoption of the agenda**

*Documentation:* ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.1/2010/5

7. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda with proposed changes and amendments.

## **IV. Matters of interest since the last session**

### **(a) UNECE and subsidiary bodies**

8. The secretariat informed the delegates about the attention that the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) was paying to the UNECE work on explanatory brochures and to the need of coordinating this work with the OECD Scheme. The EXCOM has requested to be regularly informed about the developments in this matter.

### **(b) Other organizations**

9. The representative of the Secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme informed the meeting on the relevant outcome of the 33rd session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission held in Geneva from 5 to 9 July 2010. The Commission adopted:

- The new Codex Standard for Bitter Cassava
- The new Codex Standard for Apples with an amendment inserting a footnote for clarification by which the tolerances applied for presence of internal feeding insects/pests or damage to the flesh caused by pests should apply without prejudice to the applicable plant protection rules
- The draft revision to the Codex Standard for Avocados
- The draft Standard for Tree ("Tamarillo") Tomatoes

- The Annex on Leafy Green Vegetables to the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003)
- A revision of Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin in Tree Nuts (Additional Measures for Brazil Nuts)
- New work on a Codex Standard for Pomegranate.

10. The Commission agreed that a circular letter would be issued requesting Members' views on the need for conversion of the Regional Standard for Chanterelles into a worldwide standard for consideration by the next session of the CCFFV and further action by the Commission, as appropriate.

11. The representative of the European Commission reported on their intention to update the EU specific marketing standards to bring them in line with the corresponding revised UNECE standards. This update could potentially be integrated into the EU legislation via the recast of Regulation 1580/07, which contains amendments to marketing standards of both substantive and editorial nature. It was expected that the recast of the Regulation should be finalized by summer 2011.

12. The technical work on the study to assess the impact of the 2008 reform of the EU rules on marketing standards has been finalized and should be published before the end of 2010.

### (c) Coordination of work between UNECE and OECD Scheme

*Documentation:* Guidelines for MoU (INF.34, Informal document)

13. The delegates reviewed the guidelines for an MoU between UNECE and the OECD Scheme. The Specialized Section asked the Bureau of the Specialized Section to present the guidelines to the Working Party and to the December 2010 OECD Scheme plenary meeting. It also asked the UNECE secretariat to transmit the revised document to the OECD secretariat.

14. The revised text of the guidelines, as well as all other texts revised by the Specialized Section, will be placed on the UNECE website as post-session documents.

## V. 2009 Standard Layout

*Documentation:* 2009 Standard Layout

Documents under item 3 in the provisional agenda

15. The delegations reviewed the 2009 Standard Layout. The Specialized Section decided to use only two terms to refer to different types of packages in the standards: "packages" and "sales packages" defined as follows:

"Packages are individually packaged part of a lot, including contents. The packaging is conceived so as to facilitate handling and transport of a number of sales packages or of products loose or arranged, in order to prevent damage by physical handling and transport. The package may constitute a sales package. Road, rail, ship and air containers are not considered as packages."

"Sales packages are individually packaged part of a lot, including contents. The packaging of sales packages is conceived so as to constitute a sales unit to the final user or consumer at the point of purchase."

16. The wording for mixed packages was amended in accordance with the above definitions. For mixtures not visible from outside, the quantity of each component has to be indicated.
17. The Specialized Section asked the secretariat to inform the OECD Scheme about the amendments made to the original OECD definitions.
18. The Specialized Section decided to change the footnote in the section on marking provisions to read: "These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages." It also clarified in a footnote that "The full or a commonly used name should be indicated" as the country of origin.
19. Other changes to the Standard Layout agreed upon by the Specialized Section are shown in the post-session version of the document.
20. All UNECE standards will be aligned with the revised 2010 Standard Layout.

## **VI. Alignment of standards with the 2009 Standard Layout and minor changes to the texts of standards**

*Documentation:* Documents under items 4, 5 and 6 in the provisional agenda

21. The Specialized Section reviewed the standards listed under items 4-6 of the agenda with the exception of lambs lettuce and fresh chilli peppers. In addition the standards for cherries, tomatoes and root and tubercle vegetables have been amended on request from countries. The texts of the standards containing the changes introduced by the Specialized Section can be found on the website as post-session documents. Only those issues that raised an important discussion are reflected in this report.
22. The delegations could not reach an agreement on adding the following paragraph to the section on maturity requirements in the Standard for Citrus Fruit:  
  
"With respect to colouring, green-skinned fruit may be marketed provided they meet the limits as set out for juice content, minimum sugar content and minimum sugar/acid ratio, as specified for the species concerned and the fruit is labelled "Green-skinned fruit".
23. One group of countries opposed the modification of the provisions on colouring in the 2009 version of the Standard, considering that the minimum percentage of the surface colour is an important quality parameter reflecting the internal maturity of citrus fruit. If allowed, green-skinned fruit not meeting the maturity requirements, particularly at the beginning of the season, may mislead the consumers and have a negative impact on demand and prices.
24. Another group of countries was in favour of including the paragraph on colouring in the Standard. For them, since the colour can be manipulated by human action, it cannot be considered as a parameter of quality. Green-skinned citrus fruit, for which there is a demand, should be allowed on the markets as long as it meets maturity requirements measured by Brix and juice content values.
25. The Specialized Section decided to submit the text of the Standard for Citrus Fruit to the Working Party for approval without the above-mentioned paragraph on green-skinned fruit.
26. In the Standard for Cherries the Specialized Section decided to use the wording of the 2009 Standard Layout for the provisions on tolerances. The delegations of Spain and the United States said they would need to consult with the industry on these changes.

27. The Specialized Section agreed to incorporate provisions on sizing by weight in the Standard for Pears.
28. The Specialized Section could not agree on the proposal by the delegation of France to change Brix level from 16° to 14° in the maturity requirements and to delete the sugar/acid ratio requirement in the Standard for Table Grapes. These parameters remained unchanged in the Standard. The delegation of France placed a reservation in the Standard concerning the maturity requirements.
29. In the Standard for Mangoes the Specialized Section decided to reduce the minimum weight of mangoes to 150 g and to allow sizing by count. In addition, the maximum size was increased and a new size group was introduced in the section on sizing and with regard to skin defects.
30. In the Standard for Garlic the Specialized Section moved the following provision from the section on presentation to the section on minimum requirements: "For dry garlic, if trimmed, the stem length should not exceed 3 cm". Some delegations wanted to check this provision with the industry.
31. In the Standard for Carrots the Specialized Section moved the following provision from the section on presentation to the section on minimum requirements: "In case of topped carrots the leaves must be evened off or cut off at the top of the root." The following provision was included in the classification section for Classes "Extra" and I: "If presented with leaves, leaves must be fresh in appearance".
32. The delegations noted that the text of the Standard for Melons might be modified in the context of the work on the OECD explanatory brochure.
33. The Specialized Section agreed to the proposal to add the marking "Champignons de Paris" to the section on marking in the French version of the Standard for Cultivated Mushrooms.
34. In the Standard for Strawberries the Specialized Section agreed to increase the tolerances for decay in Class I from 1 to 2 per cent.
35. Upon the request of the delegation of France the minimum sizes in the standards for Brussels sprouts, broccoli and fennel were retained and the minimum requirement "positively identifiable" was included in the Standard for Truffles.
36. The delegations reviewed and amended the standards for artichokes, asparagus, aubergines, beans, Brussels sprouts, headed cabbage, carrots, cauliflowers, ribbed celery, cherries, citrus fruit, pears, table grapes, tomatoes, mangoes, cucumbers, fennel, fresh figs, garlic, leeks, lettuces and endives, melons, cultivated mushrooms, onions, peas, plums, strawberries, watermelons, witloof chicory, edible sweet chestnuts, rhubarb, courgettes, Chinese cabbages, kiwifruit, annonas, broccoli, truffles, and ceps. The Specialized Section submitted these standards to the Working Party for approval.
37. The Specialized Section submitted the standards for berry fruit, leafy vegetables, root and tubercle vegetables and shallots to the Working Party for approval as new standards and asked the Working Party to withdraw the standards for raspberries, bilberries and blueberries, spinach, radishes, horse radish and scorzonera. The delegation of France was not in favour of withdrawing the standards for radishes, horse radish and scorzonera.
38. The Specialized Section asked the Bureau and the secretariat to align the standards for apples, peaches and nectarines, sweet peppers, avocados, apricots, early and ware potatoes and chanterelles with the 2010 Standard Layout, particularly with regard to the definitions of packages and sales packages, and the two new footnotes in the marking provisions. The Specialized Section asked the Working Party to approve these standards.

## **VII. Future work**

39. The Specialized Section decided to discuss at its next session: revision of the standard for pineapples, the new standards for lambs lettuce and fresh chilli peppers, the inclusion of mixed sizes/varieties in the standard for mangoes, and the glossary of terms.

## **VIII. Adoption of the report**

40. The Specialized Section adopted the report of the session.

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