

**Statement of the OECD Secretariat
at the 52nd session
of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**

On item 2 (b) of the draft agenda: Matters of interest from the other organizations since the last session

The Secretariat of the OECD would like to draw the attention of the distinguished Delegates to the following developments on the OECD Scheme for Fruits and Vegetables.

1. Since the 2005 Meeting of the Specialized Section, **explanatory brochures** on the standards for **Strawberries, Cultivated Mushrooms, Beans**, the brochure on **Commercial types of melons** and the **Guidelines** on objective tests to determine quality of fruit and vegetables and dry and dried produce have been published. These publications can be found on the OECD Scheme website: www.oecd.org/agr/fv

2. Work on the **explanatory brochures** for the standards for Citrus Fruit, Apples, Pears, Kiwifruit, Peaches/Nectarines, Apricots, Melons, Pistachios, Hazelnuts, Prunes, Cucumbers and Potatoes is ongoing and is expected to be completed by mid-2007. The brochure on Table Grape will be published in July 2006.

3. At the 2005 Plenary Meeting of the Scheme it was agreed to make a proposal to UNECE to officially formalize and strengthen co-operation between the OECD Scheme and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7). :

(a) Proposing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** to mutually recognise the outputs of each Organisation, to underline the confidence that has been built in the two Organisations, to intensify the cooperation and to better promote the work of both Organisations.

(b) Endeavour to optimise the organisation of sessions of the meetings of the UNECE Specialized sections (especially GE.1) and the Plenary Meeting of the OECD Scheme.

At the Plenary Meeting, it was hoped that WP.7, to which the proposed agreement will be presented, will respond positively to the proposal for strengthening co-operation between the two Organizations.

4. The International Annual Training Course on “**Harmonization of Fruit and Vegetables Quality Assessment**”, sponsored by OECD and organized by Slovakia will be held on 19-21 June 2006 in Mojmirovce, Slovakia.

5. An OECD-funded capacity building Workshop on Fruit and vegetable standards and inspection will be held in Tbilissi, Georgia, on 3-7 July 2006, with participation of UNECE and EC experts.

6. The next session of the OECD Plenary Meeting will be held on 30 November-1 December 2006 in Paris. At this session, the Plenary Meeting will continue to make progress on implementing the reforms the Scheme that were adopted in 2004 and covering the period 2004-2008. These reforms provide for an expansion of the programme of work to include aspects related to economic analysis, in order to increase the added-value for participating countries. Additional work areas relate to support to National Inspection Services through the process of peer reviews and working guidelines, technical training programming to increase the capacity of countries participating in the Scheme, as well as overall policy recommendations.

7. The next Heads of National Inspection Services Meeting of the Scheme will be held on 4-6 December 2006 in Agadir, Morocco.

8. The Draft Agenda for the OECD Plenary Meeting in November/December will be circulated to all delegates by 15 June 2006, while the Draft Agenda for the Meetings of Heads of National Inspection Services will be distributed by 20 June 2006.

On item 2 (c): Concentration of agricultural quality standards work in the UNECE

The Secretariat of the OECD would like to stress that a possible transfer of work of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables to the UNECE had been discussed by the Plenary Meeting of the Scheme in October 2003, on the basis of the results of an independent review of the Scheme. The **Plenary Meeting concluded** that the Scheme mission would be best fulfilled by keeping and strengthening its activities within the OECD.

Any transfer of work from the OECD to UNECE or another international organisation would have to be agreed by consensus by all Member countries of the OECD Scheme.