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Eighth session, 11, 13 and 14 May 2004

Item 5.7 of the provisional agenda

WORK ON AGRICULTURAL QUALITY STANDARDS

DOCUMENT FOR DECISION

Note by the secretariat

This document supplements the report of the Working Party (TRADE/WP.7/2003/6). It highlights the most important achievements in 2003 and **the decision** requested from the Committee concerning the abolishment of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes (see paragraph 2). It also gives a brief overview of the proposed activities for the 2006-7 budget.

1. Achievements 2003

1.1 Support for the Committee's overall objectives

The Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards and its five Specialized Sections worked to contribute directly to the Committee's overall objectives on trade facilitation by:

- Creating internationally harmonized commercial quality standards for different produce;
- Updating existing standards as necessary;
- Cooperating with other international organisations and the private sector to avoid any duplication and promote application of the standards;
- Organising and participating in capacity building activities.

1.2 Work on standards

In 2003, two new standards were adopted and 20 standards updated. The standards for bovine and ovine meat were reformatted completely and prepared for publication.

New UNECE Standards for:

Pineapples

Chicken Meat

Revised UNECE Standards for:

Artichokes

Peaches and Nectarines

Apples

Avocados

Citrus Fruit

Courgettes

Onions

Pears

Table Grapes

Plums

Almond Kernels

Prunes

Inshell Almonds

Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels

Inshell Pistachio Nuts

Seed Potatoes

Bovine Meat

Ovine Meat

Dry and Dried Produce

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

1.3 Cooperation

The European Community recognised the quality of UNECE standards by moving toward the complete harmonization of 36 of their marketing standards with UNECE standards.

The Working Party contributed to the development of a WHO strategy on diet, physical activity and health.

The secretariat initiated cooperation with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Council (BSEC) and the St. Petersburg customs academy and continued its successful cooperation with EAN International in conferences/seminars in South Africa and Istanbul.

1.4 *Participation*

Interest in the activity has increased, in the 2002-2003 biennium around 10% more delegates and countries participated in the work compared to the 2000-2001 biennium

1.5 *Capacity building*

The Working Party organized with the Government of the Russian Federation, an International seminar on implementation of the UNECE standard for bovine meat (Moscow, 18-19 September 2003) with close to 100 participants from 9 countries. Two further expert meetings on chicken, meat and pork were organized in Moscow and St. Petersburg

2. Abolishment of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes. (see TRADE/WP.7/2002/6, paras. 94 to 98)

Following the recommendation of the relevant specialized sections, the Working Party proposes to the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development to abolish the Specialized Section on Standardization of Early and Ware Potatoes (GE.5). The work of this specialized section will be included into the work of the Specialized Section on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.

3. Overview of the proposed activities for the 2006-7 budget

The Working Party will continue to support the overall objectives of the Committee with an even greater focus on implementation activities, but without neglecting the important work on standard development and maintenance. The development of a workshop program targeted to different audiences will be finalized in the 2006-7 biennium enabling the group, together with partner organizations, to offer a comprehensive range of courses:

- Seminar on managing the global food supply chain;
- Workshop on trade facilitation through the international harmonization of agricultural quality standards; building fair competitiveness;
- Workshop on the national implementation of agricultural standardization policy
- Training program for quality inspectors (train the trainers)

The Working Party will also increase its efforts to secure extra-budgetary funding for these activities.

4. Meetings of Specialized Sections and the Working Party to be held in 2003

Seed Potatoes (GE.6)	22 to 24 March
Meat (GE.11)	19 to 22 April
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (GE.1)	10 to 14 May
Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit) (GE.2)	14 to 18 June
Working Party (WP.7)	8 to 10 November

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