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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Standardization of
Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Specialized Section on Co-ordination of
Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
Forty-fifth session, 26 to 29 October 1999, Geneva

Item 2 of the Provisional Agenda

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING SINCE THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Note by the secretariat

This document summarizes the outcome of the third session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development and the fifty-fourth session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development.

Third session of the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development

The following excerpt is taken from the report of the Committee (ECE/TRADE/231, paragraphs 34 to 37):

6(b) Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Documentation: TRADE/WP.7/1998/9 Report of the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development
TRADE/1999/3 Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development: Note by the secretariat

34. The Vice-Chair of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development (WP.7), Mr. David Priester (United States), gave an overview of the results of its November 1998 session, as well as of the sessions of its specialized sections on early and ware potatoes and meat which had taken place since then. In addition, he reported on cooperation with the European Union and various international organizations (the OECD and the WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission) and informed the Committee of the new Internet World Wide Web site created by the secretariat, which contains the texts of the standards, as well as information on meetings (<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>). The Committee then endorsed this report of the fifty-fourth session of the Working Party.

35. The Chair of the Committee, Mr. Vilchez-Barros, who also serves as Chair of the Working Party, informed the Committee of the efforts being undertaken to promote UN/ECE commercial produce standards internationally to increase their use and avoid duplication which can occur when existing work is not known:

- Spain would provide unofficial translations of UN/ECE standards into Spanish to promote their dissemination in Latin America.
- The Working Party had been represented at an expert group meeting on agricultural standards organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). For this meeting, ESCWA had translated 25 UN/ECE standards into Arabic and these were currently being examined by Governments for adoption as ESCWA standards.
- Contacts had also been established with the other United Nations regional commissions (for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific).

36. The delegation of the European Community, speaking also on behalf of the 15 EU Member States, stated that the Community continued to place high priority on UN/ECE work on agricultural standards. The European Community further proposed that the Committee for Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development consider a possible transfer to the UN/ECE of the work being done by the OECD on interpretative brochures for UN/ECE standards. The delegation invited the secretariat to prepare a working document to define the modalities for undertaking this work, including a clear description of the costs (extra personnel, production of the brochures) and how these costs might be financed. This document should be prepared in time for discussion at the next session of the Specialized Section on Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables from 25 to 28 October 1999 and for consequent consideration by the Working Party, which will meet from 3 to 5 November 1999. The delegation of the United States supported this request. The Committee then approved the request for this study.

37. The Director of the Trade Division said that the secretariat would undertake the study requested but that it was of the highest importance to the UN/ECE not to jeopardize its excellent institutional relationship with the OECD. She then invited member States to keep the OECD and its secretariat informed of their requests to the UN/ECE, as well as of further developments. The delegation of the European Community noted that they had already, repeatedly, stated their opinion on this matter in OECD meetings and would continue to do so. The delegation of the United States said that they would keep the OECD secretariat informed on this issue.

Fifty-fourth session of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development

Excerpt taken from the report TRADE/WP.7/1998/9, paras. 33-34:

Report of the Meeting of Experts on Coordination of Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Documents: TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/17
TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/1998/CRP.12, ../CRP.14, ../CRP.16

33. The chairman of the group Mr. D. Priester (United States) presented the report of the group:

- 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 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.
- The new homepage on UN/ECE's work on agricultural standards was presented:
<http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm>

34. The Working Party adopted the revisions as proposed by the Meeting of Experts. The revised standards will be published in addenda to this report.
