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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of
Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)

Fifty-second session, 14-17 June 2005, Geneva

REPORT ON ITS FIFTY-SECOND SESSION

Executive Summary:

Inshell Almonds: The Specialized Section proposed to extend the trial period for one further year. Open questions concern the scope and uniformity of the crop year. These questions will be treated during the revision of the standard layout

Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels: A compromise solution on the colour classification was found.

Blanched Almonds: All delegations were invited to study the text for a further year in cooperation with their industry and to send comments to the rapporteur (Spain).

Inshell Macadamia Nuts: All delegations were invited to study the text for a further year in cooperation with their industry and to send comments to the rapporteur (United States). Open questions concern the scope and sizing provisions.

Executive Summary (cont'd):

Inshell Hazelnuts, Inshell Walnuts: The rapporteur (Germany) will prepare a new proposal based on the future revision of the standard layout.

Inshell Peanuts, Peanut Kernels: The working group (Germany, United States) will align the texts with the standard layout and take into account the existing Codex standard. The texts will then be sent out to other countries for comments (e.g. Brazil, Chile, China).

Dried Peaches: The group developed a new text for the definition of the moisture content. Delegations were invited to discuss the amended text with their industry and send comments to the rapporteur (Spain).

Dried Tomatoes: The Specialized Section was of the opinion that the text should be tried out in practice and decided to propose to the Working Party to adopt it as a new UNECE Recommendation for Dried Tomatoes for a two-year trial period. The text is reproduced as addendum 3 to this report.

Inshell Pecans: The United States will present to their industry the changes made by the Specialized Section and prepare a new document for the next session.

Dried Peppers: No proposal was available. The working group (Spain, Hungary, Greece) will inform the Specialized Section at the next session of any progress made.

Revision of the standard layout: The next session will be dedicated to the revision of the standard layout to take into account problems with the application of the standards. The Specialized Section will also discuss how to increase work efficiency.

Opening of the Session

1. The meeting was held in Geneva from 14 to 17 June 2005. It was chaired by Mr. Bruno Cauquil (France). Informal meetings were held on 13 June.
2. Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos, Chief of the Trade Policy and Governmental Cooperation Branch of the UNECE Trade Development and Timber Division, opened the session. She said that UNECE highly valued the contribution of the group to the trade of dry and dried produce as nutritious and tasty foods.
3. She wished the group success for progress on the work that it had begun on a number of new products. She also recognized that some of the standards had now become mandatory for application in all stages of trade in the European Union, which had caused the group to revisit the standard layout to make the application of the standards easier.

4. She announced that Mr. Tom Heilandt, who had been secretary to the group for seven years, was leaving UNECE at the end of June to take on a new post at the FAO in Rome. While being sad to see him go she was happy for him for this opportunity. She said that she had already undertaken steps to recruit a successor and would do everything to ensure that there would be no gap in secretariat services. She said that if there were any questions concerning the work during the interim period delegations should not hesitate to address them to her.

5. She closed by saying that this was a period of change for UNECE, as an independent review would be published soon and the present Executive Secretary has been appointed to a new position. She was confident that the work on Agricultural Quality Standards would receive a high rating in the review.

Participation

6. The session was attended by the delegations of the following countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America.

7. The European Community was also represented.

8. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations also participated: International Nut Council.

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

9. The Specialized Section adopted the agenda, with the following deletions: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/3, 5, 11, 12, 16 and 18.

10. The following documents were added to the agenda:

Number	Subject	Author
INF.1	Acceptances	Secretariat, Germany
INF.2	Point of application	Secretariat
INF.3	Inshell Almonds	Working group
INF.4	Pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels	Working group
INF.5	Inshell walnuts	Germany
INF.6	Inshell hazelnuts	Germany

Item 2: Matters of Interest Arising Since the Last Session

Document: TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/2

UNECE

11. The Specialized Section took note of the discussion of its work that had taken place at the last Working Party session.

OECD Scheme

12. Since the last session the explanatory work on hazelnuts and pistachio kernels had continued. The OECD Scheme is waiting for the revisions to be approved by WP.7. Because it was not supported by the industry, the proposal to elaborate an explanatory brochure for prunes has been withdrawn.

13. Measures to improve the efficiency and visibility of the Scheme have been adopted and will be implemented by the OECD secretariat.

European Union

14. Since the last session, no new dry and dried fruit standards had been adopted and no changes had made to the existing standards.

Item 4: Review of UNECE Recommendations

15. See http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/standard/dry/dry_e.htm for the recommendations in force.

(a) Inshell Almonds

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/4 (Spain)

16. At the last session this text had been amended extensively to create an example of how the standards could be restructured to simplify their application. The main changes had been the integration of the definitions contained in the annex into the minimum requirements and the closer connection between the quality classes and the table of tolerances.

17. The present document was prepared by Spain and had been reviewed in detail by an informal working group prior to the Specialized Section meeting.

18. The main proposals of the group were:

- To open the standard to include inshell almonds for industrial processing and the food industry in order to extend its applicability;
- To delete all provisions in the quality classes except for a general statement linking the definition of the classes to the tolerance table: this was seen as a logical consequence of the process started last year;
- To delete provisions concerning uniformity in size; the industry should decide which type of uniformity was needed for the product.

19. The group also proposed to delete “crop year” from the uniformity provisions as some delegations were of the opinion that this requirement could not be controlled. They said that the standard should only contain provisions that could be checked.

20. Other delegations felt that mixing produce from different years in the same package was bad practice and should be discouraged by the standard. They said that as the standards were also used by packers, they should give them an indication of what was acceptable.

21. It was mentioned that to consume dry produce within a year of its production was a good traditional practice to ensure satisfactory products.

22. There was no consensus on this question and the term “crop year” was put in square brackets.

23. The Specialized Section decided to propose to the Working Party to extend the trial period for the recommendation for one further year.

24. The Specialized Section decided to transmit the amended text to the Working Party and propose to extend the trial period for one further year until November 2006. The amended text is reproduced as addendum 1 to this report.

(b) *Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels*

INF.4

25. The informal working group had reviewed this recommendation in detail. It proposed to change the application of the colour classification in the following way:

- Not to have any colour classification for pistachio kernels as the colour would not be visible;
- To make the colour classification for peeled pistachio kernels optional, as this classification was not used in all markets as a quality indicator.

26. Other delegations said that in their countries colour classification was important for the determination of the quality of the produce as a traditional practice in trade.

27. A working group of the interested parties discussed the colour classification and developed a compromise solution.

28. The Specialized Section decided to transmit the amended text to the Working Party and to propose the extension of the trial period for one further year until November 2006. The amended text is reproduced as addendum 2 to this report.

Item 5: Draft new UNECE Standards

(a) *Blanched Almonds*

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/6 (Spain)

29. The rapporteur (Spain) had prepared a new text based on the comments made at the last session.

30. The delegation of the United States questioned the need for this standard. They said that in their country all blanched almonds are used for processing. At present the text allows products for direct consumption only. They suggested that the industry should have the possibility to study the standard in more detail to verify if the text reflects the trade practices of different regions.

31. All delegations were invited to study the text for a further year, in cooperation with their industry, and to send comments to the rapporteur.

(b) *Inshell Macadamia Nuts*

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/7 (United States)

32. The rapporteur (United States) had prepared a new text based on the comments made at an informal working group during the last session. The Specialized Section discussed the text in detail.

33. The proposed text excludes inshell macadamia nuts intended for use in further processing or in the food industry. Some delegations felt that this would restrict the application of the standard to a very small trade volume. Others felt that opening the standard might lead to problems in trade because all consignments would then have to be inspected.

34. In the discussion, the following points were made:

- The UNECE standard layout allows either inclusion or exclusion of products intended for further processing or the food industry;
- The standards should only apply to products intended for human consumption.
- Repacking is not considered as processing.
- A general discussion on the definition of processing and the scope of the standards is necessary, possibly in the context of discussing the standard layout.

35. The Specialized Section decided to leave the text in square brackets and to return to it at a future session.

36. There was some discussion on the sizing provisions as the measures in inches used in the United States do not convert easily into size groups in the metric system. Some delegations proposed to simplify the section by only ensuring uniformity. The text was put in square brackets to allow further discussion with the industry.

37. A number of further amendments were made to the text, which the rapporteur will include in a new proposal for the next session.

38. The proposal for macadamia kernels was not discussed due to lack of time.

Item 3: Review of UNECE Standards

Inshell Hazelnuts and Inshell Walnuts

INF.5, INF.6

39. The delegation of Germany presented proposals to amend these standards to align them with the amendments made to the text for Inshell Almonds. They said that when applying them in the European Union the need for some further amendments had become apparent, one example being the simplification of the sizing method to take into account the different practices and units used in different countries.

40. The texts were not discussed in detail as the documents had been available only at the session. Delegations were invited to study the text with their industry and to send any comments to the delegation of Germany. They will prepare new texts for the next session. The new proposals will clearly differentiate between the proposals to align the text with the decisions for inshell almonds and new proposals.

5(c) Inshell Peanuts and Peanut Kernels

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/9 (United States)

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/10 (United States)

41. The delegation of the United States introduced the documents. They said that only around 20% of the world peanut production came from the United States. Other important producer countries included Australia, Brazil and South Africa, where varieties and trade practices might be different. They considered it important to consult with these and other countries before discussing the project in detail in the Specialized Section.

42. The Specialized Section decided that the working group (Germany, United States) would draft the texts with the standard layout and take into account the existing Codex standard. The texts would then be sent out to other countries with the help of the UNECE secretariat.

5(e) Dried Peaches

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/15 (Spain)

43. The Specialized Section discussed in detail the new proposal from Spain for this standard. As for other standards, there was some discussion on the inclusion of dried peaches intended for further processing or the food industry. It was decided to discuss this problem in the context of the revision of the standard layout.

44. The delegation of the United States said that their country had a growing market for dried peaches with up to 32 per cent moisture content. The present text only allowed such amounts of moisture for re-hydrated products.

45. After some discussion the Specialized Section provisionally agreed on a simplification of the provisions for moisture content. The new text distinguishes only two groups, untreated dried peaches with a moisture content of not more than 20 per cent and preserved dried peaches (re-hydrated or not) with a moisture content of between 20 and 37 per cent.

46. The Specialized Section also discussed allowing further colours (green, yellowish-green, brown and dark brown) in all classes so as to take into account different commercial types including unsulphured peaches and to facilitate entry of untreated peaches into the higher classes. The footnote allowing brown colour only in case of low sulphur content in class II was deleted.

47. The sizing provisions were simplified to allow different practices.

48. Delegations were invited to discuss the amended text with their industry and send comments to the next session.

5(g) Dried Tomatoes

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/17 (United States)

49. The Specialized Section discussed the new text from the United States in detail.

50. Following a proposal from Germany the maximum moisture content for the “high moisture” group was increased from 35 to 50 per cent to take into account new products on the market.

51. Other amendments were made to align the text with the standard layout.

52. The Specialized Section felt that the text should be tried out in practice and decided to propose to the Working Party to adopt it as a new UNECE Recommendation for Dried Tomatoes for a two-year trial period. The text is reproduced as addendum 3 to this report.

5(d) Inshell Pecans and Pecan Kernels

TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/13 (United States)

53. The Specialized Section discussed the text in detail and made a number of amendments to align the text with the standard layout.

54. The provisions concerning the colour of the shell were moved to the section on the definition of produce.

55. There was some discussion on the necessity of provisions for colour for the kernel as these were not visible in an inshell product. If colour was important it could be left to the contract between buyer and seller. The delegation of the United States said that this was important information for the trade of this product. They would consult their industry on this question.

56. Several delegations felt that the total quality tolerances for kernels were too high and should be aligned with those used in other tree nut standards. The delegation of the United States said that such an alignment was not possible as all products were different. Other delegations said that the tolerances were not only depending on the product but also on what was acceptable on the markets. They were also meant to serve as an incentive for growers to improve their methods.

57. The delegation of the United States would present the changes made by the Specialized Section to their industry and prepare a new document for the next session.

58. The proposal for pecan kernels was not discussed due to lack of time.

5(f) Dried Peppers

59. No new proposal was available from the working group (Greece, Hungary, Spain). The delegation of Hungary hoped that a proposal could be presented at the next session.

Item 6: Revision of the Standard Layout/General Changes Standard Layout

60. The Specialized Section agreed that the first priority for the next session should be to revise the standard layout. The informal session on the first day should be entirely devoted to this topic. The revision of individual standards could then be started with inshell dry produce followed by kernels and then dried fruit. Topics identified for the revision include the following:

- Definition of produce: How to define the scope of the standards; general inclusion or exclusion of products intended for further processing or the food industry; definition of “processing”.
- Minimum requirements: Inclusion of the definitions that are now contained in the annex in the minimum requirements to make them self contained and more easily readable.
- Quality classification: Simplification of the provisions by creating a link to the tolerance table.
- Sizing: Simplification of the provisions to allow different sizing methods that are used in different markets.
- Uniformity/ commercial specifications: Issues relating to crop year.

61. The delegation of the European Commission said that to use time more efficiently during the meetings, some rules should be followed when preparing draft texts:

- The rapporteur should follow the standard layout closely and give reasons if there is a need to diverge from it.
- The secretariat should check all proposals for conformity with the standard layout.
- For each new or revised text there should be a rapporteur and, in addition, it should be checked by at least two more delegations before being discussed in the Specialized Section.
- All standards could be introduced into a database, which would allow easy checking if the same terms had been used in all standards.

62. The delegation of the United States said that the application of the method for establishing standardization work priorities in the UNECE should be reviewed.

63. Delegations should send proposals for this item well in advance of the next session.

64. Deletion of the word "(fruit)" from the name of the Specialized Section

65. The Specialized Section agreed to propose to the Working Party to delete the word "fruit" from its name to enlarge the possible scope of the Specialized Section.

Item 7: Pulses

66. At the last session interest had been expressed in creating standards for pulses, as the trade volume of these products was high. The secretariat reported that the relevant Codex Committee, which had been hosted by the United States, had been adjourned sine die but was working by correspondence. Any request to update or amend the relevant Codex standard CODEX STAN 171-1989 (Rev. 1 - 1995) should be directed to the Codex Secretariat.

Item 8: Elaboration of a Sampling Plan – Review of the Work Done by the OECD Scheme

67. A member of the bureau of the OECD Scheme informed delegations that due to the restructuring of the Scheme there had been no time at the last plenary session to discuss the text on sampling that had been submitted by the Specialized Section.

68. The delegation of the United States said that care should be taken that the sampling plan was a generic document that could be used for different produce as an indication of how sampling should be organized. For each individual produce it would have to be supplemented with specific instructions.

Item 9: UNECE General Conditions of Sale for Dry (shelled and unshelled) and Dried Fruit

69. The general conditions of sale of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as the arbitration rules have been scanned and are available on the Internet. The general conditions of sale for dry and dried produce will be scanned shortly.

Item 10: Efforts to Increase Participation

70. The Specialized Section felt that it was important to increase participation especially from producer countries (including Brazil, China, South Africa). It was suggested to contact the UNDP on this matter and to explain to producer countries the benefits of participation.

Item 11: Application of UNECE Standards

INF.1

71. At its last session, the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables discussed a new format for reporting acceptances. The secretariat distributed the relevant document and the excerpt of the report of that session.

72. The new format concentrates on the relevant information. It was pointed out that the list of countries for the dry and dried fruit standards was incorrect. Instead of the list of EU members it should be the list of members of the OECD Scheme for all standards except those for Inshell Hazelnuts and Inshell Walnuts.

73. Representatives of the secretariat pointed out that it was difficult to ensure accuracy of the information because countries do not regularly report on the use they make of the standards. He said that this was important information as it had been decided that the measure of acceptance/ implementation of the standards would form the basis for evaluating the results of the work on agricultural quality standards in the United Nations budgeting process.

74. Several delegations recognized that the number of countries using UNECE standards was higher than the number known.

75. The delegation of the European Commission suggested to check the number of downloads from the UNECE website and through this identify countries that use the standards. This information could then be confirmed with the relevant ministry. The secretariat replied that this was currently not possible technically but, perhaps, would be possible in the near future.

76. The delegation of the United States proposed to take the percentage of produce worldwide that was inspected according to UNECE standards as a measure for the success of the work. Other delegations felt that this number was too difficult to determine.

Item 12: Capacity Building for the Application of Quality Standards

77. The secretariat informed the Specialized Section that a joint OECD/UNECE workshop on the implementation of quality standards would take place in Georgia in July, with a focus on fresh produce. The secretariat remains in touch with the Moldovan authorities concerning the possible organisation of a workshop on walnuts in the Republic of Moldova

Item 13: Other Business

78. The Director of the Trade Development and Timber Division, Ms. Cosgrove-Sacks, introduced the new secretary, Mr. Claudio Meza, to the group. Mr. Meza will take over the work on 1st July 2005. The Director was happy that it had been possible to appoint Mr. Meza quickly so that there would not be a gap in secretariat services. She said that Mr. Meza had a long experience in the United Nations secretariat, first in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and for the past seven years in UNECE.

79. Mr. Meza who is presently working with UN/CEFACT on the elaboration of standards for electronic business said that he looked forward to cooperating with the Specialized Section and to bringing his experience from other areas to the work.

Item 14: Future Work and Meetings

(a) *Date and Place of the Next Session*

80. The next session of the Specialized Section has been tentatively planned to take place from 12 to 16 June 2006.

(b) *Future Work*

81. A draft agenda for the next meeting is contained in the annex to this report.

82. The Specialized Section reiterated that the main priority for the next session was to revise the standard layout. No new work on standards should be undertaken before this revision was completed. The priority for the following sessions would be the alignment of existing standards and recommendations with the revised layout (see under item 6 above).

(c) *Preparation of the Next Session of the Working Party*

83. The secretariat will transmit to the Working party the proposals of the Specialized Section to:
- Extend the trial period for the recommendations for Inshell Almonds and Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels, as amended for one year until November 2006.
 - Adopt the draft text for dry tomatoes as a new UNECE Recommendation for a two-year trial period until November 2007.
 - Delete the word "fruit" from the name of the Specialized Section.

Item 15: Election of Officers

84. The Chairman, Mr. B. Cauquil and Vice-Chairman, Mr. P. Marzabal, had announced that they would not be able to continue participating in the Specialized Section as they had taken on different functions.

85. The Specialized Section thanked Mr. Cauquil and Mr. Marzabal and the outgoing secretary, Mr. Heilandt, for their outstanding contribution to the work of the group and wished them all the best for the future.

86. Following a proposal from Germany the meeting elected Mr. C. Gaspar (Hungary) as Chairman and Mr. I. Köksal (Turkey) as Vice-Chairman.

Item 16: Adoption of the Report

87. The Specialized Section adopted the report of its fifty-second session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

Texts published in addenda to this report:

Symbol	Title
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.1	Inshell Almonds (amended recommendation)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.2	Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels (amended recommendation)
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2005/19/Add.3	Dried Tomatoes (new recommendation)

Annex

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

to be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10.00 on Tuesday, 13 June 2006*

*Informal working groups have the possibility of meeting on 12 June.

1	Adoption of the agenda	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/1
2	Matters of interest arising since the last session	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/2
3	Revision of the Standard Layout	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/3 TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/3/Add.1
4	Review of UNECE Standards	
	(a) Inshell Hazelnuts	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/4
	(b) Inshell Walnuts	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/5
5	Review of UNECE Recommendations	
	(a) Inshell Almonds – proposals	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/6
	(b) Pistachio Kernels and Peeled Pistachio Kernels – proposals	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/7
6	Draft new UNECE Standards	
	(a) Blanched Almonds	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/8
	(b) Inshell Macadamia Nuts and Macadamia Kernels	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/9 TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/10
	(c) Inshell Pecans and Pecan Kernels	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/11 TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/12
	(d) Dried Peaches	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/13
	(e) Dried Peppers	TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2006/14
7	Elaboration of a sampling plan – review of the work done by the OECD Scheme	
8	Efforts to increase participation	
9	Application of UNECE Standards	
10	Capacity-building for the application of quality standards	
11	Other business	
12	Future work and meetings	
	(a) Date and place of the next session	
	(b) Future work	
	(c) Preparation of the next session of the Working Party	
13	Election of officers	
14	Adoption of the report	