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Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce

Fifty-sixth session
Geneva, 22-26 June 2009

**REPORT OF THE SPECIALIZED SECTION ON STANDARDIZATION
OF DRY AND DRIED PRODUCE ON ITS FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting was opened by the Director of the Trade and Timber Division and was chaired by Mr. Dorian LaFond (United States of America).

II. PARTICIPATION

2. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Czech Republic, France, Germany, Mexico, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and United States of America.

3. A representative of the following non-governmental organization participated in the meeting: International Nut and Dried Fruit Council Foundation (INC).

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2009/1

4. The delegations adopted the revised provisional agenda with proposed changes and amendments.
5. The revised documents prepared by the Specialized Section can be obtained as post-session documents at: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/meetings/ge.02/2009-in-session.htm>

IV. MATTERS OF INTEREST SINCE THE LAST SESSION (Agenda item 2)

A. UNECE and subsidiary bodies (Agenda item 2(a))

Documentation: Report of the Committee on Trade (ECE/TRADE/C/2009/12)
Terms of reference (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/23)
Working procedures (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/24)
Report of the Working Party (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/25)
Proposals on restructuring the Working Party (Informal document no. 1)

6. The delegations were informed about the decisions of relevance to the work of the Specialized Section taken by the Committee on Trade at its February 2009 session (ECE/TRADE/C/2009/12, paras. 48-52) and by the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) at its sixty-fourth session (document ECE/TRADE/WP.7/2008/25, paras. 34-37).
7. The delegations took note of the proposals on restructuring the Working Party to accelerate the development and adoption of standards, taking into consideration implications of the proposed transfer of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme work to UNECE and of the new Commission Regulation on marketing standards for fruits and vegetables on the work of UNECE.

B. Other organizations (Agenda item 2(b))

Documentation: Activities of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme since the last session of the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce (Informal document no. 5)

8. The Specialized Section took note of the summary report submitted by the OECD secretariat on the main activities carried out by the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme in 2008.

The delegations were informed of the adoption of the explanatory brochure on inshell hazelnuts by the Scheme.

V. REVISION OF THE STANDARD LAYOUT (Agenda item 3)

Documentation: 2008 Standard Layout

Proposal submitted by France (Informal document no. 3)

9. The delegation of France submitted a proposal requesting the amendment of section A, Minimum requirements of the kernel, since they consider that it is inappropriate and difficult to control that large package units may be free of dead insects and/or mites. In any case, this requirement should be kept for small packages. Since the introductory paragraph of the Standard Layout allows the use of optional texts for specific commodities, the Section decided that the text should be left unchanged.

10. The delegation of France also proposed the amendment of section D, Commercial specification, requesting that crop year should be mandatory for all products, especially for packing in bulk or large packages (greater than 10 kg). The Specialized Section decided to keep the existing text since the aim of the standard is to trade good products regardless of the crop year. Moreover, this requisite can be included in the contract between buyer and seller. Based on this decision, the delegation of France requested the use of a reservation specifying that products shipped to France in large packages must include the crop year.

11. The Specialized Section agreed to add a new defect to the list of defects of the kernel contained in annex III, section (b), Specific definitions for nuts (inshell nuts and nut kernels). The following definition should be used: “Adhering skin: When the pellicle or pieces of pellicle are attached to the kernel (edible parts)”.

12. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amended text to the Working Party for approval as a revised Standard Layout.

VI. REVIEW OF UNECE RECOMMENDATIONS (Agenda item 4)

A. Pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels (Agenda item 4(a))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-10: Pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels) (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/15)

Proposal submitted by France (Informal document no. 3)

13. The delegations agreed that to avoid inconsistencies between the section V.A, Uniformity and the table of tolerances, the following text should be removed from the Recommendation:

“If indicated, the lot is considered to be uniform:

Whole: 80 % whole kernels

Split: 75 % halves

Whole and broken: any combination.”

14. Since the definitions of terms and defects already appear in the Standard Layout, the Specialized Section decided to remove the annex.

15. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amended text to the Working Party for approval as a new UNECE standard for pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels.

B. Hazelnut kernels (Agenda item 4(b))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-04: Hazelnut kernels)
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/18)

16. The Specialized Section revised the text of the Recommendation for hazelnut kernels and agreed to remove the square brackets and footnote no. 8 “Net weight has to be indicated at the request of the importer or the importing country”.

17. The delegation of Turkey withdrew their remarks in sections Provisions concerning tolerances (A. Quality tolerances) and Provisions concerning marking (D. Commercial specifications).

18. Based on the request that crop year should be mandatory for products shipped in bulk to France, the delegation requested its inclusion in the Reservation requesting that the crop year be marked in section VI.D, Commercial specifications.

19. The delegation of Turkey informed the Specialized Section that they had started work on the interpretative brochure, and expects to present the brochure at the meeting of the Working Party in November.

20. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amended text to the Working Party for approval as a new UNECE Standard for Hazelnut Kernels.

C. Blanched almond kernels (Agenda item 4(c))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-...: Blanched almonds kernels)
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/17)
Proposal submitted by France (Informal document no. 3)

21. The delegations agreed with the proposal of the United States to include in the Table of tolerances, the possibility to recognize not only varieties but also commercial types.

22. The Specialized Section discussed sizing of blanched almonds. The delegation of France proposed that sizing should be mandatory for Extra Class and optional for classes I and II. Since this amendment could exclude a good product from trading, the Section decided that the text should be left unchanged and sizing for blanched almonds kept as optional.

23. At a request of the delegation of France, a footnote had been added to the section Commercial specifications, with the reservation that the crop year be marked in products shipped in large packages to France.

24. The Specialized Section decided to submit the amended text to the Working Party for approval as a new UNECE standard for blanched almond kernels.

VII. REVISION OF UNECE STANDARDS (Agenda item 5)

A. Inshell walnuts (Agenda item 5(a))

Documentation: The Standard (DDP-01: Inshell Walnuts)
UNECE Standard for Inshell Walnuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/16)
Proposal on the revision of the Standard for Inshell Walnuts (France)
(Informal document no. 2)

25. The Specialized Section agreed on the proposal prepared by the Working Group, which, following the recommendation of the Working Party in 2008, had met and discussed the Standard, and reached the following compromise position:

(a) The 2002 version of the Standard for Inshell Walnuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/16) remains in force. Within five years, which includes the trial period, the text will be placed in the new Standard Layout.

(b) The Working Group (France, Germany, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the United States of America) began working in adapting the Standard for Inshell Walnuts to the 2008 version of the Standard Layout by reviewing the document proposed by Germany in 2007 (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/21). They highlighted new and/or different sections for consideration by members.

B. Dates, whole (Agenda item 5(b))

Documentation: The Standard (DDP-08: Whole Dates)
Revised UNECE Standard for Dates
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2006/10/Add.2)

26. The delegations reviewed the revised version of the Standard for Whole Dates prepared by Germany and aligned with the new Standard Layout.

27. The Specialized Section decided to change the name of the standard from Whole Dates to Dates.

28. The delegation of Tunisia asked the delegations concerned to remove their reservations from the Standard. In cooperation with the secretariat, Tunisia will prepare the procedure to address the request to countries to withdraw reservations 4 and 5. The delegation of Germany removed its reservation.

29. The Specialized Section asked the secretariat to contact main producer countries to obtain their comments on the revised Standard. All delegations were invited to study the text for a further year, in cooperation with their industry, and to send comments to the secretariat by mid-March 2010.

30. The Specialized Section decided that if there were no disagreements on the Recommendation during the inter-sessional period 2009-2010, the Section would submit the revised Standard for adoption at the meeting of the Working Party in 2010.

31. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text of the Standard for Dates to the 2009 session of the Working Party as a recommendation for trial use until the end of 2010.

VIII. NEW UNECE STANDARDS (Agenda item 6)

A. Inshell macadamia nuts and macadamia kernels (Agenda item 6(a))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-...: Inshell macadamia nuts)
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/19)
The Recommendation (DDP-...: Macadamia kernels)
(ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2008/20)
Proposal submitted by France (Informal document no. 3)
Proposed international macadamia specification (raw kernel) (INC)
(Informal document no. 6)

32. The representative of INC informed the Specialized Section about the meeting held in Monte Carlo last May and on the activities of the Working Group on Macadamia Kernels. The group had prepared its guidelines referencing the UNECE Standard for macadamia kernels, but its goal is to define a more detailed standard with references to maximum residue levels and food safety issues. In any case, the minimum requirements will follow those provisions contained in the UNECE standard.

33. The representative of Germany to INC asked the Specialized Section to consider using the sizing figures agreed for macadamia kernel styles in the definition of section III provisions concerning sizing. The Rapporteur (United States) will be holding consultations with the industry and report its findings to the Specialized Section.

34. The representative of Germany to INC will also conduct consultations with the INC Working Group (Australia, Brazil, Kenya, Malawi, and South Africa) about moisture content and sizing provisions. He will report its findings at the session of the Specialized Section in 2010. The delegations agreed on holding a Working Group meeting in 2010.

35. The Specialized Section revised the text of the recommendation for inshell macadamia nuts and agreed to remove from the table of tolerances the defect "Unopened cracks".

36. The Specialized Section revised the text of the recommendation for macadamia kernels and agreed to change the moisture content value from 1.5 to 1.8 per cent. Delegations will conduct consultations with their industry and report to the Section on this issue. The delegations also decided to remove defects "Loose extraneous material" and "Pest damage" from the table of tolerances since they were already covered by other tolerances. Section c) of the table of tolerances was amended to accept the defect "particles of the shell".

37. The delegations deleted the annex "Definition of terms and defects for macadamia kernels" to align the recommendation for macadamia kernels with the Standard Layout.

38. Based on the request that crop year should be mandatory for dry and dried produces shipped to France, the delegation of France requested that a reservation should be included in section crop year of the commercial specifications for both inshell macadamia nuts and macadamia kernels standards.

39. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended texts of the Recommendations for Inshell Macadamia Nuts and Macadamia Kernels to the Working Party for trial use for one further year until the end of 2010. All delegations were invited to study the texts during this period and to send comments to the secretariat.

B. Whole dried chilli peppers (Agenda item 6(b))

Documentation: Draft standard for whole dried chilli peppers (Informal document no. 4)

40. The Specialized Section reviewed the revised draft standard for whole dried chilli peppers presented by Mexico.

41. The delegations made the following suggestions for further work on the text of the draft standard:

- (a) Simplify sizing provisions. Although table 4 was simplified, it needs further work;

For the table of tolerances:

- (b) Make description of defects more understandable to non-experts applying the standard. In addition to the colour, find new ways to identify those products which are not sufficiently developed;

- (c) The table of tolerances should be carefully revised with experts. Tolerances of 0 per cent for mouldy produce in classes Extra, I and II means that the presence of this defect may cause the rejection of the whole consignment;
- (d) Consider using rounded values of percentage of defective produce;
- (e) Consider using more balanced tolerances in section b) size tolerances “for produce not conforming to the size indicated, if sized”. The difference between 5 per cent for class Extra and 15 per cent for class I appears be too big;
- (f) Consider increasing values of tolerances for other defects, option “Foreign matter, including rachis ...”. The value of 1 per cent for classes Extra, I and II seems to be too restrictive;
- (g) Consider simplifying section c) tolerances for other defects, options “Slight defects: stains, burns ...”, “Serious defects in guajillo chillies: stains...” and “Serious defects in all other chillies (ancho, mulato...”.

42. The Specialized Section requested the delegation of Mexico to start collecting material for an explanatory brochure, which would facilitate the practical application of the standard.

43. To advance in developing the standard, the delegations agreed on having a Working Group meeting on Monday 28 June at the 2010 session of the Specialized Section.

44. The Specialized Section requested the delegation of Mexico to finalize the text of the draft standard and submit it for consideration at the 2010 session. The text could then be submitted to the Working Party for approval as a recommendation.

IX. UNECE COLOUR GAUGE FOR INSHELL WALNUTS AND WALNUT KERNELS (Agenda item 7)

Documentation: UNECE colour gauge for walnut kernels (ECE/TRADE/316/Rev.1)

45. The delegation of the United States officially presented the UNECE Colour gauge for walnut kernels to the Specialized Section. The gauge had been approved by the Working Party at its 2008 session and had been prepared and printed by the United States as a contribution to the work of the United Nations. The Specialized Section thanked the delegation of the United States and the California Walnut Commission for their contribution.

X. WORK BY THE OECD SCHEME ON THE SAMPLING PLAN (Agenda item 8)

Documentation: Draft sampling and inspection procedure
(TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2003/15/Add.2)

46. The delegations reviewed the draft sampling and inspection procedure, as set out in the document that had been prepared in 2003. The Specialized Section decided to focus the discussions on the following:

- (a) Revising the definitions appearing in the sampling plan that are appropriate for dry and dried produce.
- (b) Determining sample sizes that are appropriate for dry and dried produce.
- (c) Defining methods describing nuts in shell and dried produce.

47. The delegations agreed that there should be a method of sampling for nuts and one for dried produce, which must take into account the size of the lot. They also discussed about the definition of bulk in primary and secondary packages.

48. The delegations were invited to submit comments to the Rapporteur (Germany) on the sampling plan and on the way to treat samples after the sampling process and send copies of conformity certificates for dry and dried produce and fresh fruit and vegetables.

49. The Specialized Section discussed how to define type of packages. They agreed on the following list:

- (a) Packages of no more than 10 kg - product being loose in the package.
- (b) Packages of more than 10 kg - product being loose in the package.
- (c) Packages containing sales units destined for final consumer.

50. The Specialized Section decided to amend section 2, Implementation of conformity check, by adding two new definitions:

- (a) Appeal inspections: A process where the samples or reference samples from the original inspection should be kept for reevaluation. Such samples should be handled and stored appropriately to preserve their integrity.
- (b) Handling samples after inspection (food safety/food defence (the delegation of the United States will provide more information on the food defence concept)). The samples will not be reincorporated into the original containers, but clearly marked and placed separately.

51. The Specialized Section agreed to continue working on sampling procedures.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 9)

52. No comments were made under this agenda item.

XII. FUTURE WORK (Agenda item 10)

53. The Specialized Section discussed several proposals for future work. They have agreed on the following items, which will be led by the Rapporteur designated in brackets:

- (a) Revision of the Standard for Dried Pears (United States).
- (b) Revision of the Standard for Dried Apples (France).

- (c) Revision of the Standard for Inshell Walnuts (Germany).
- (d) Revision of the Standard for Cashew Kernels (the delegation of the United States will contact the delegation of India to invite them to take part and lead this revision as they did it in the past).
- (e) Sampling and inspection procedure for dry and dried produce (Germany).
- (f) UNECE explanatory brochure for walnut kernels (United States).

54. The Section asked the secretariat to contact main producer countries from other regions to invite them to take part in the activities of the Specialized Section (especially Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda).

55. The rapporteur for the explanatory brochure on walnut kernels proposed to conduct electronic and physical meetings of working groups to prepare the publication. He suggested that Rapporteurs' meetings might be carried out in Europe and in the United States, preferably before the next session of the Section.

56. The Section considered that new standards should be envisaged in view of growing international trade in dried products, together with new products appearing on the market. It was mentioned that dried pineapples, dried mangos, dried ginger and some forest products should be considered when developing new standards.

57. The fifty-seventh session of the Specialized Section has been tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva from 28 June to 2 July 2010. Monday 28 June will be reserved for meetings of the working groups.

58. Further proposals for inclusion in the agenda should be submitted to the secretariat at least 12 weeks before the next session. The deadline for submitting documents is 15 March 2010.

XIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Agenda item 11)

59. The Specialized Section re-elected Mr. Dorian LaFond (United States) as Chairperson and Mr. Joaquim Bellmunt as Vice-Chairperson (Spain).

XIV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 12)

60. The Specialized Section adopted its report.