

C O D E X A L I M E N T A R I U S C O M M I S S I O N



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of
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**World Health
Organization**

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Agenda Item 2(b)

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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

**16th Session
Mexico City, Mexico, 2 – 6 May 2011**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

This document is divided into two parts: Part I refers to the UNECE work in the field of standardization of fresh fruits and vegetables and Part II to the activities of the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruits and Vegetables.

PART I: UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)**Activities of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards since the last session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables****Work on standards**

1. At its 62nd, held from 4 to 5 November 2010, the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards:
 - adopted the revised 2010 Standard Layout for UNECE standards on fresh fruit and vegetables. It revised the definitions of "packages" and "sales packages" and transmitted them to the OECD Scheme for inclusion in the OECD guidelines on conformity checks;
 - adopted the aligned texts, including minor changes, of the standards for artichokes (FFV-03), asparagus (FFV-04), aubergines (FFV-05), beans (FFV-06), Brussels sprouts (FFV-08), headed cabbages (FFV-09), carrots (FFV-10), cauliflowers (FFV-11), ribbed celery (FFV-12), cherries (FFV-13), citrus fruit (FFV-14), cucumbers (FFV-15), fennel (FFV-16), fresh figs (FFV-17), garlic (FFV-18), table grapes (FFV-19), leeks (FFV-21), lettuces and endives (FFV-22), melons (FFV-23), cultivated mushrooms (FFV-24), onions (FFV-25), peas (FFV-27), plums (FFV-29), strawberries (FFV-35), tomatoes (FFV-36), watermelons (FFV-37), witloof chicory (FFV-38), edible sweet chestnuts (FFV-39), rhubarb (FFV-40), courgettes (FFV-41), Chinese cabbage (FFV-44), mangoes (FFV-45), kiwifruit (FFV-46), annonas (FFV-47), broccoli (FFV-48), pears (FFV-51), truffles (FFV-53) and ceps (FFV-54);
 - approved the alignment of the following standards with the 2010 Standard Layout: for apricots (FFV-02, version 2009), peaches and nectarines (FFV-26, version 2009), sweet peppers (FFV-28, version 2009), avocados (FFV-42, version 2009), apples (FFV-51, version 2009), early and ware potatoes (FFV-52, version 2009) and chanterelles (FFV-55, version 2009).
 - adopted new standards for shallots (FFV-56), berry fruit (FFV-57), leafy vegetables (FFV-58), root and tubercle vegetables (FFV-59) and withdrew the standards for bilberries and blueberries (FFV-07), raspberries (FFV-32), horse radish (FFV-20), scorzonera (FFV-33), radishes (FFV-43), and spinach (FFV-34) which had become part of the new "group standards".
2. Texts of standards as well as documents with the revisions introduced by the delegations can be found at: www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm

Explanatory brochures

3. The Working Party published in English, French and Russian its first explanatory brochure for the Standard on Sweet Peppers and started work on the UNECE Brochure for Pineapples in parallel with revising the Standard.
4. The Working Party adopted the guidelines for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNECE and the OECD Scheme and forwarded the text to the OECD as its position on recommended ways for UNECE and OECD to work together on explanatory material. It formed a working group, composed of France, Germany, Israel, United States, United Kingdom and the European Commission to assist in exploring in more detail the issues to be covered by the MoU, should the OECD Scheme decide to have an MoU with UNECE. The UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) attaches great importance to the UNECE work on explanatory brochures and to the need of coordinating this work with the OECD Scheme.

Promotion of standards and capacity-building

5. The UNECE held regional workshops in April 2010 in Cape Town (South Africa) for African countries, in October 2010 in Anapa (Russian Federation) for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, and in February 2011 in Santiago de Chile for Latin American countries. The demand for UNECE training and capacity-building activities remain very strong. In 2011, UNECE will hold regional workshops in Tajikistan (August), Ghana (September), Moldova (October), Croatia (October) and Thailand (November). Reports, recommendations and training material of the workshops are available at www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm under "Promotion/Capacity-building".

Other activities and decisions

6. The Working party:
 - decided to retain "UNECE" in the title of UNECE standards and to withdraw "United Nations Economic Commission for Europe" from the upper part of the cover page of the standards. This decision was based on the legal advice received from the Senior Legal Adviser of the UN Office at Geneva;
 - asked the specialized sections to start work on revising the Geneva Protocol and to report to the 2011 session on the progress made.
7. The 59th Session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables will be held from 23 to 27 May 2011. Among other topics, the delegations will consider the draft glossary of terms used in the UNECE and Codex standards.

**Activities of the OECD Fruit And Vegetables Scheme since the last session of the
Codex Committee On Fresh Fruit And Vegetables**

The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme would like to strengthen and enhance the cooperation with the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. The Members of the Scheme are seeking collaboration and cooperation on the development of joint projects in the following areas:

- Development of an OECD brochure on Bananas jointly with Codex Committee on FFV.
- Development of an OECD brochure on Pomegranate in parallel of the standard development in the Codex Committee on FFV.

The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme would also like to cooperate with the Codex Committee and FAO, on the development of distance learning tools on quality inspection, and on capacity building activities.

Introduction

The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables was set up by the OECD Council in 1962. The Scheme's objective is to facilitate international trade in fruit and vegetables through the harmonized application and interpretation of international marketing standards. It provides best practices to the Members on the area of fruit and vegetables quality inspection. The Scheme is well known for its inspection procedures and for its explanatory brochures that are recognized in many countries. The Scheme also organizes peer reviews and sponsors training courses, workshops and capacity building activities.

The Scheme is open for OECD, UN or WTO Member Countries, which willing to fulfill the rules of the Scheme. Currently, 25 countries participate in the Scheme. The Secretariat of the WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission is a regular participant in the annual OECD Plenary Meeting of the Fruit and Vegetables Scheme and the OECD Secretariat regularly participates in Codex and FAO Meetings.

Activities

Standards

The OECD standards are adopted from other international standardisation bodies such as the UNECE or the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission.

In 2010, The Scheme approved the Codex Standard for Bananas under the Scheme without Sections 7 and 8 on Contaminants and Hygiene. The Scheme is seeking cooperation in the development of an OECD brochure on bananas with the Codex Committee on FFV.

Inspection rules and certification

The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme establish inspection rules for the implementation of conformity checks and a certification system. The purpose of the rules is to ascertain that the quality and the classification of the exported product are in conformity with the OECD Standard. These rules are unique in international level and serve as a basis of many national fruit and vegetables inspection system.

In 2010, the Scheme adopted the revised OECD Sampling Methods.

The full revision of the OECD Operating Rules for the Conformity Checks of Produce Exported under the Scheme (Inspection Methods) is expected to be finalised in 2011.

Peer reviews

The Peer Review is a systematic examination and assessment of performance of national fruit and vegetables quality inspection systems by experts from other countries under the umbrella of the OECD. The ultimate goal of the peer review is to help improve policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established international standards and principles.

Since the last session of the CCFFV, the Scheme undertook a Peer Review on the Moroccan (2009) and the Turkish (2010) fruit and vegetables quality inspection system.

In 2011, The Netherlands volunteered to undertake an OECD Peer Review on their national fresh fruit and vegetables quality inspection system.

The OECD Meeting of Heads of National Inspection Services facilitates discussions between inspection services on major problems, developments and challenges in the fruit and vegetables sector and quality inspection system. It provides an update on the latest developments in inspection techniques and tools. The Meeting is open to all Members of the Scheme, and any other country and organizations invited by the OECD Secretariat and/or Host Country.

The 15th Meeting of the OECD Heads of National Inspection Services was held in Budapest, Hungary on 8-10 March 2011. The Meeting was focused on the new market situation and challenges in the international fruit and vegetables trade due to the recent reform of the EU quality inspection system. The Meeting also discussed the feasibility of an integrated quality inspection system. The Proceeding of the Meeting will be published in 2011.

Publications

Explanatory brochures

The OECD explanatory brochures comprise explanatory notes and illustrations to facilitate the common interpretation of the standards. They are valuable tool for the inspection authorities, professional bodies and traders interested in the international trade of fruit and vegetables. The newest publications also include a USB key with the high quality electronic version of the brochures. Currently the OECD explanatory brochures are available for 22 products in hard copies as well as in electronic versions.

Since the last session of the CCFFV, the Scheme published the OECD explanatory Brochures on Pears, Potatoes, Apples, Apricots, Peaches & Nectarines and Citrus Fruits. The OECD explanatory brochures of the Hazelnuts, Asparagus (update) and Mangoes (updated e-version) will be published in 2011.

The Scheme is currently working on the draft OECD Brochures on Onions, Garlic, Melons and Watermelons.

The Members of the Scheme are looking for cooperation in the development of an OECD brochure on Pomegranate in parallel of the standard development in the CCFFV.

Guidelines

The OECD guidelines provide tools for the inspection services as well as to the private sector as regards the implementation of a quality inspection system, such as inspection methods for internal quality, notification of nonconformity etc.

The Scheme published the OECD guidelines on the Training of Quality Inspectors on Quality Inspection in 2010.

The OECD Scheme is currently developing the OECD Guidelines on Quality Inspection. It will be an illustrated publication with explanatory notes on the rules of inspection.

International Training Courses and Workshops

The Scheme organizes International Training Courses and workshops upon request and subject to available funds. These training courses are focused on the interpretation of international standards by the OECD explanatory tools, the introduction of inspection authorities and latest developments and challenges in the quality inspection. The OECD Secretariat and the FAO Secretariat is discussing the possibility for joint workshops and capacity building activities in developing countries.

Distance Learning Tools

The Scheme is exploring the possibility to develop distance learning tools on quality inspection. The aim of the project is to provide advice, assistance and sufficient training tools on standards, guidelines, methodologies for the countries. The OECD and the FAO Secretariat is examining the possibility to develop jointly an e-learning tool on quality inspection based on the OECD Guidelines on Quality Inspection.

Information on the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme

All Information on the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme is available on its official website (www.oecd.org/tad/fv). All rules, guidelines and explanatory brochures and information on upcoming meetings and training courses are uploaded there.