

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



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
21st Session

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 refers 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

The UN Sustainable development Goals and the work of the Working Party:

During the past three years, the Working Party's work on helping countries implement SDG's related to its area of expertise the work undertaken has intensified. The Terms of Reference and the Working procedures of the Working Party were revised to reflect the new focus. Particular efforts have focused on:

1. Revising existing standards and helping countries keep quality along the entire food supply chain
2. Food loss and waste prevention and reduction through a "**UNECE Code of Good Practice: Reducing food loss in handling fruit and vegetables**"; the work on "**Minimum Marketing Quality Guidelines**" to drive sustainability and quality food production and consumption by ensuring the supply of quality, non-classified, edible produce.
3. Food loss and waste prevention and reduction through a simple **UNECE food loss methodology** and the design of a **Smart food loss/waste management system**.
4. A new **food loss/waste resource page** at: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/unece-foodlosschallenge.html>
5. Food loss and waste prevention and reduction through intensified collaboration with FAO and other international and national stakeholders.

The Working Party's standardization work resulted in:

74th **Working Party** session (12 - 14 November 2018), adoption of:

- **New Working Procedures and Terms of Reference** which newly define the tasks of the Working Party to include the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets.
- **Revised UNECE standard for Sweet Peppers.**
- **Glossary of Terms used in UNECE standards.**

Note: Comments by the UNECE on the standard for ware potatoes were submitted to the Codex CCFFV electronic working group in May 2018.

75th **Working Party** session (19-21 November 2019), the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (13-15 May 2019) will submit the following standards and documents, for adoption:

- **Revised UNECE standards for Cherries; Cauliflower; Broccoli; Annonas; Avocado; Berry fruit, Onions; Root and Tubercle Vegetables; Table Grapes; and Watermelon.**
- **Electronic quality certificate – developed in cooperation with UN/CEFACT**

For further information on the above and the texts of the UNECE standards, please refer to the following web page: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html>

Explanatory brochures and posters:

The UNECE explanatory brochure for sweet peppers was updated in accordance with the revised standard. Copies of the UNECE explanatory brochures for chilli peppers, persimmons, pineapples, and sweet peppers, are now available free of charge in English, French and Russian from the UNECE secretariat and online at <https://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html>. In addition, UNECE has published explanatory material for whole dried chilli peppers, dried apricots, inshell walnuts, and walnut kernels. In addition, explanatory posters have been prepared for dried apricots, pistachio kernels with 4 more forthcoming in 2019 for walnut kernels, walnut inshell, dried grapes, and dried figs.

Capacity-building and promotion

The Working Party 7 had an active pool of 600 experts and outreach to more than 1000 experts. Apart from its 5 regular annual meetings with an annual attendance of 250 experts from United Nations member states (UNECE and beyond), the following capacity-building and promotional events were organized:

- **April 2018 Asian Development Bank (ADB) Cross-border Trade Workshop, Pingxiang, China –** focus quality of fruit and vegetables and trade (analysis of rules and regulations)

- **September 2018 - 3rd Workshop on “Quality matters – sustainable trade of fruits, vegetables and nuts” - Tashkent, Uzbekistan**, intensive produce training for Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; Advised the Central Asian Working Group which coordinates solutions to issues related to the implementation of UNECE agri quality standards – both co-financed and organized UNDP, GIZ Hilfswerk International Austria with FAO and UNCTAD. UNECE experts: Germany, Sweden, Turkey, private sector (INC and FFV trader)
- **April and September 2018 USDA-funded project (“Exporta Calidad (Exporting Quality”) Dominican Republic** - three workshops – 2 in April 2018 and 1 in September 2018 – total participation: 180 with UNECE experts from Belgium, Slovakia, UK; Costa Rica, South Africa, Spain and private sector
- **November 2018 UNECE/FAO conference on “Redefining the Food Loss - Challenge for Sustainable impact: Prevent!Reuse!Repurpose!Redistribute”**
- **September 2019 Intensive produce training, Tashkent, Uzbekistan**; for Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
- **November 2019 UNECE/FAO conference on SDGs and Food Loss**

UNECE established new partnerships with international organizations and donor agencies while continuing to strengthen its collaboration with traditional partners.

Upcoming Regular Meetings 2019/2020 (Geneva, Switzerland):

- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: 19-21 November 2019
- Conference on Sustainable Development Goals and Food loss: 20 November 2019
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes: 16-17 March 2020
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: 6-8 May 2020
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce: June 2020 (venue tbc)
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat: June 2020

Contact

For further information on UNECE’s work on agricultural quality standards, please contact Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab, Head, Agricultural Standards Unit, UNECE, Geneva, Switzerland (liliana.annovazzi-jakab@un.org)

PART II: ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

Activities of the Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables since the last Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

1. The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme provides a complete and internationally harmonised export quality inspection system for member countries. The mutual recognition of inspections is strengthened through implementation of peer reviews on national quality inspection systems, organisation of meetings for the heads of national inspection services and workshops for the inspectors. Frequent meetings also allow for a comprehensive dialogue amongst stakeholders in reviewing and elaborating the OECD standards' interpretation, as well as defining inspection procedures.
2. The Scheme is well known for its explanatory brochures on standards. Currently there are 33 explanatory brochures and new material is added each year.
3. The Scheme is currently working on four new Explanatory Brochures. Three based on CODEX standards and one based on UNECE standards:
 - Explanatory Brochure on Passion Fruit, Rapporteur-> Kenya [CODEX Standard]
 - Explanatory Brochure on Green Bananas, Rapporteur -> Spain [CODEX Standard]
 - Explanatory Brochure on Papayas, Rapporteur -> Brazil [CODEX Standard]
 - Explanatory Brochure on Cauliflowers, Rapporteur-> Hungary [UNECE Standard]

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

4. The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme is open to any OECD or non-OECD country that is a member of the United Nations, or of the World Trade Organisation. There is also close co-operation with the UN family especially the FAO, WHO, UNECE, and UNESCAP as well as non-governmental and farmer organisations.
5. **Brazil** joined the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme on February 23, 2018, which set the number of participating countries to 26: **Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.**

The OECD Secretariat invited Chile and Costa Rica as observers.

OECD FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SCHEME MEETINGS

- *Working Group Meeting on Leeks, Tomatoes and Guidelines on inspection*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2 May 2018
- *Heads of National Inspection Services meeting*, Seville, Spain, 9-11 May 2018
- *Working Group Meeting on Leeks and Guidelines on inspection*, Kwaliteits Controle Bureau (KCB), Zoetermeer, The Netherlands, 14 June 2018
- *Working Group Meeting on Berry fruit, Root vegetables and Figs*, Boulogne, France, 4 December 2018
- Working Group meeting on internet sales and food waste, Bonn, Germany, 27 March 2019
- *Working Group Meeting on Papayas*, Mojmirovce, Slovak Republic, 12 June 2019
- *Working Group on Papayas, cauliflower and bananas*, Paris, France, 3 December 2019
- *Plenary Meeting*, Paris France, 4-5 December 2019.

MISSIONS AND OTHER MEETINGS

- *Session of the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables*, Geneva, Switzerland, 30 April 2018
- *Harmonisation meeting 2018*, Zoetermeer, The Netherlands, 12-14 June 2018
- *International Training course*, Mojmirovce, Slovak Republic, 11-13 September 2018
- *Peer Review, Kenya*, 22-24 August 2018

- *Brazil - OECD Joint International Seminar* on “The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme”, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 6-7 November 2018. The OECD sent one staff and three experts from Belgium, Spain and South Africa.
- *International Meeting on Quality Control of Fruit and Vegetables, Bonn, Germany - 32nd, 25-27 March 2019*
- *Session of the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, Geneva, Switzerland, 13-15 May 2019*
- *International Training Course, Mojmirovce, Slovak Republic -11-13 June 2019*
- *Costa Rica - OECD Joint International Seminar* on “The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme”, San Jose, Costa Rica, 4-5 September 2019. The OECD will send one staff and three experts from Belgium, Spain and Germany.
- *Session of the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, Geneva, Switzerland, 20 - 21 November 2019*

PEER REVIEWS

6. The Scheme regularly undertakes Peer Reviews on national fruit and vegetables quality inspection systems on a voluntary basis, to examine and assess its performance by experts from other countries under the umbrella of the OECD. The ultimate goal is to help improve policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established international standards and principles. Last year the OECD Scheme undertook a Peer Review on the Kenyan fruit and vegetables quality inspection system. A final report is now available on our webpage: <http://www.oecd.org/agriculture/fruit-vegetables/>

GUIDELINES

7. The scheme also develops and updates guidelines for fruit and vegetables inspectors. This helps harmonise interpretation and enhance trade amongst member countries. The following guideline ad recommendations are available from the official website of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme free of charges:

- Quality Inspection (2018)
- Recommendation of the OECD FVS Scheme on the verification of the country of origin (2018)
- Objective tests to determine quality of Fruit and Vegetables (updated 2018)
- Notification of Non-conformity
- Risk Analysis
- Inspector’s trainings

MEETINGS OF HEADS OF NATIONAL INSPECTION SERVICES

8. The Scheme also holds Meetings of Heads of National Inspection Services (HNIS) of its Members Countries every two years. The objective of these meetings is triple: to facilitate discussions between inspection services on major problems, developments and challenges in the fruit and vegetables sector and quality inspection system; to share and harmonise the application of the OECD Scheme; and to present developments in the fruit and vegetables sector and quality inspection system in the Host Country. The proceedings are available upon request. The latest HNIS meeting was hosted by Spain in May 2018 and the Codex Secretariat attended as Observer.

CHALLENGES FOR 2019-20

9. Each year member countries decide, by consensus, new areas of work for the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme.

- Internet Sales of Fruit and Vegetables
(Sub-Working Group): Belgium, France, Germany, Kenya, Netherlands, and Spain.
- Tolerances
- Food Waste

10. The OECD explanatory brochures, guidelines and peer review reports are available from the official website of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme free of charges. <http://www.oecd.org/agriculture/fruit-vegetables/>

Contact

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