

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
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**

**17th Session
Mexico City, Mexico, 3 – 7 September 2012**

**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 67th session, held from 8 to 10 November 2011, the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards:
 - adopted the revised 2011 Standard Layout for UNECE standards on fresh fruit and vegetables. The new version clarified the use of terms “varieties” and “trademarks” in the standards;
 - adopted the revised texts of the standards for early and ware potatoes (FFV-52), plums (FFV-29), apples (FFV-51), pears (FFV-51) and garlic (FFV-18);
 - adopted the text of the standard for fresh chilli peppers as a recommendation for a one-year trial period.
2. At its 60th session, held from 29 May to 1 June 2012, the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables:
 - started work on new standards for persimmon and quince. Both standards were expected to be adopted as recommendations in 2013;
 - submitted the text of the new standard for lambs lettuce to the Working Party for approval as recommendation for a one-year trial period;
 - recommended to the Working Party to extend for one more year the trial period of the 2011 recommendation for fresh chilli peppers;
 - reviewed and submitted revised texts of the standards for the following products to the Working Party for approval in November 2012:
 - o Pears (sizing provisions)
 - o Witloof chicory (definition of produce, classification, sizing provisions)
 - o Tomatoes (sizing provisions)
 - o Leafy vegetables (classification)
 - o Plums (list of varieties)
 - o Mangoes (classification, sizing provisions)
 - o Watermelons (sizing provisions)
 - o Cultivated mushrooms (classification)
 - o Citrus fruit (marking provisions)
 - o Melons (inclusion of mixtures of distinctly different varieties and/or commercial types)
 - o Leeks (commercial specifications)
 - o Lettuces (nature of produce)
 - o Pineapples (complete revision of the standard).
3. The texts of the standards as well as documents with the revisions introduced by the delegations are available at: www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm

Explanatory brochures

4. The Working Party made good progress on developing the UNECE explanatory brochures for the standards on pineapples and fresh chilli peppers together with revising the standards. The draft brochures and standards were discussed at the regional workshops in Ghana and Thailand, which allowed the growing and trading practices in these two important regions be reflected in the draft texts. The brochure for pineapples will be submitted to the 2012 session of the Working Party for approval. It is expected that the work on the brochure for fresh chilli peppers will be completed in 2103.
5. The Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables may wish to consider reviewing the Codex standards for mangoes, pineapples, tomatoes and fresh chilli peppers in the light of the revisions of the corresponding UNECE standards and the work done by UNECE on explanatory brochures for pineapples and fresh chilli peppers.

Part I

Promotion of standards and capacity-building

6. The UNECE held regional workshops on standards for fresh fruit and vegetables in August 2011 in Tajikistan for Central Asian countries, in Ghana in September for African countries, in Moldova in October for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, in Croatia in October for south-east European countries, and in Thailand in November for Asian countries. 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

7. At its November 2012 session, the Working Party will consider the issue of periodicity in revising the standards. To ensure stability of the texts and to facilitate their practical application, the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables recommended to the Working Party to include in its Working Procedures a provision stipulating that the standards should not be revised earlier than three years after the latest revision unless there was an urgent and well-substantiated need to do so.

8. The Working party will also discuss progress on revising the Geneva Protocol. At its 2011 session, the Working Party did not approve the draft Geneva Agreement, as some delegations said they needed more time to clarify the legal status and practical implications of the proposed text. The Working Party asked: (a) the UNECE's legal office to clarify the legal status of the current (1985) version of the Geneva Protocol; and (b) the secretariat to provide in writing the legal opinion of the legal service on that matter to the Working Party.

9. The 68th session of the Working Party will be held from 5 to 7 November 2012 and the 61st session of Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables will be held from 30 April to 3 May 2013.

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

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

Table 1

The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme would like to maintain and further enhance the cooperation with the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. In this context, the following actions and activities were implemented since the last session of the CCFV:

- At the 2011 OECD Plenary Meeting, Members agreed to include a reference to fruit and vegetables standards adopted by the WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission in the Preamble of the Scheme's Rules [C(2006)95];
- Members also agreed to start developing OECD Brochures based on Codex Standards. The OECD brochure on Pomegranate will be developed in parallel with the standardisation work at Codex and in close cooperation with Codex Members. The work on the OECD Banana Brochure will begin in 2013;
- The Codex Secretariat participated and made a presentation in the OECD Workshop on Fruit and Vegetables Quality and Inspection held on 19-21 June 2012 in Podgorica, Montenegro.

Introduction

1. The OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2012. The Scheme's objective is to facilitate international trade in fruit and vegetables through the harmonized application and interpretation of international marketing standards. It shows best practices in 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 training courses, workshops and capacity building activities.

2. The Scheme is open to OECD, UN or WTO Member Countries, which willing to fulfil 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

3. The OECD standards are adopted from other international standardisation bodies such as the UNECE or the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. Currently the OECD applies the Codex Standard on Bananas (without sections 7 and 8 on Contaminants and Hygiene).

Table 2

In 2011, The Members agreed to include a reference to fruit and vegetables standards adopted by the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission in the Preamble of the Scheme's Rules [C(2006)95].

The Scheme updated the List of Standards Applicable under the Scheme. Now it is in line with available UNECE standards.

Inspection rules and certification

4. The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme establishes inspection rules for the implementation of conformity checks and a certification system. The purpose of the rules is to ensure that the quality and classification of the exported product are in conformity with the benchmark international standard applied by the OECD. These rules are unique in international level and serve as a basis of many national fruit and vegetables inspection systems.

Table 3

The Scheme made good progress in the revision of the OECD Operating Rules for the Conformity Check of the Produce Exported under the Scheme (Annex II of C(2006)95). The 71st Plenary Meeting to be held in 2012 will discuss the revised draft proposal with the view to its adoption.

Part II

Peer reviews

5. 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.

Table 4

Since the last session of the CCFFV in 2011, the Scheme undertook a Peer Review on the national fruit and vegetables quality inspection system in the Netherlands. The Review was published in early 2012 and the electronic version is available from the Scheme's official website.

Meeting of Heads of National Inspection Services

6. 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.

Table 5

The next Meeting of the OECD Heads of National Inspection Services is scheduled to be held in 2013. The Host country and the date and the place are under consideration. The Codex Secretariat will be informed as soon as the information is available.

Publications**Explanatory brochures**

7. 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 23 products in hard copies as well as in electronic versions.

Table 6

Since the last session of the CCFFV, the Scheme published the OECD explanatory Brochures on Asparagus, Mangoes (e-brochures), Hazelnuts (inshell and kernel) in 2011 and the Onions Brochure in 2012. The OECD explanatory brochure on Watermelons will be published in September 2012.

The Scheme is currently working on the draft OECD Brochures on Melons, Shallots, Garlic, Figs, Pomegranates and Bananas and the revision of the OECD Brochures on Broccoli and Witloof Chicory.

The OECD Brochure on Pomegranate is the first OECD brochure to be developed on the basis of a Codex Standard and in cooperation with Codex Member Countries. In 2011, the Secretariat invited Codex Member Countries to participate in the development of the OECD Brochure on Bananas and an OECD Brochure on Pomegranate. The first discussions on the Pomegranate brochure are expected to begin in September 2012 through an electronic fora and working group meeting. The work on the Banana Brochure will begin in 2013.

Guidelines

8. 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.

Table 7

The OECD Scheme is currently developing the OECD Guidelines on Quality Inspection and this will be finalized in 2012. It will be an illustrated publication with explanatory notes on the rules of inspection.

International Training Courses and Workshops

9. The Scheme organizes International Training Courses and Workshops subject to available funds. These training courses are focused on the introduction of the OECD quality inspection system, 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/Codex Secretariat is discussing the possibility of joint workshops and capacity building activities in developing countries.

Table 8

The OECD organized the following Training courses since the last CCFFV session:

- 2011 International Training Course, 21-23 June 2011, Mojmirovce, Slovakia;
- Annual Workshop on Application of Commercial Quality Standards for Fruits and Vegetables in Eastern Africa, 23-27 April 2012, Nairobi, Kenya;
- OECD Workshop on Fruit and Vegetables Quality and Inspection, 19-21 June 2012, Podgorica, Montenegro.

The Codex Secretariat participated and made a presentation at the OECD Workshop on Fruit and Vegetables Quality and Inspection held in Podgorica, Montenegro.

Distance Learning Tools

10. 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

11. 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.