

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 7

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

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PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON A CODEX STANDARD FOR WARE POTATO

Comments in reply to CL 2013/21-FFV
(Submitted by Costa Rica, Egypt and Kenya)

COSTA RICA

Costa Rica appreciates the attention to the following comments:

General Comments:

As a contribution to the country information, in Costa Rica the potato is part of the daily diet of Costa Ricans for its high nutritional value, culinary flexibility and the features for its process of becoming industrialized.

The country has a national program for the potato, which in turn has a research program whose objective is to maintain a number of cultivars suitable for warm weather, and there are studies for producing potatoes in hot weather (adapted to the climatic changes).

In Costa Rica 2,500 hectares of potato are sown, focusing on 80% in the Central Eastern Area and 20% in Zarcero, producing more than 55 million of kilos per year.

Therefore, Costa Rica considers that making a quality standard for ware potatoes is relevant because our country is a producer of potatoes and self-sufficient in their production. This is the reason for which a quality standard with CODEX should be useful to export to other markets and standardize the quality criteria of the vegetal product.

(1) Purpose and scope of the Standard

This Standard is applied to commercial varieties of ware potato, which must be supplied fresh to the consumers after preparation and packaging.

(2) Relevance and timeliness

Potato is a world production and high consume product. Therefore, it is necessary to establish standards regulating the identity and quality, including nutritive value, safety, quality, hygiene. Also, making a standard for ware potato will help protecting the consumers' health and promoting fair trade practices according to the international agreements in force.

Ware potato crop is a native of the Andes region in South America and has been cultivated and improved at least during eight thousand years. Two thousand species of Solanum variety are known, to which potato belongs. Approximately, one hundred and eighty species of potato produce tubers, from which eight species are grown as food, but only Solanum tuberosum is distributed on the world.

Regarding varieties, the ware potato, whose peak was between 1930 and 1940, was replaced by other varieties of higher performance, size, texture and appearance such as the black purple, white purple, star, Boston, English, German and Chicua among many others. While with the introduction of at least fifty varieties, a considerable effort has been made to increase the production in the potato growing. This has brought some disadvantages such as loss of hardiness of the crop. This combined with the expansion of the planted area should have caused the appearance of the first phytosanitary problems that justified the use of pesticides, coinciding in time with the rise and commercialization of the first synthetic pesticides.

Today, the potato plays an essential role in human nutrition and is mentioned as the fourth most important crop for the consumption of the world's population, after wheat, corn and rice. Currently, more than eighteen million hectares are grown in more than one hundred twenty five countries with a gross annual production of about two hundred and fifty million metric tons, with an average production of about 14 tons per hectare. About 22 German, Dutch, French and Canadian varieties of potato of high performance are grown.

Eating a serving of potatoes with skin on a regular base will result the following nutrients that allow developing a healthy life: 22 mg of vitamin C, 1.6 mg of niacin, 120 calories, 3 g protein, 27 g of carbohydrates, 16 mg of calcium, 1 mg of iron. The potato is one of the six most energetic foods in the human diet, along with wheat, corn, quinoa, rice and barley.

(3) Main aspects to be covered

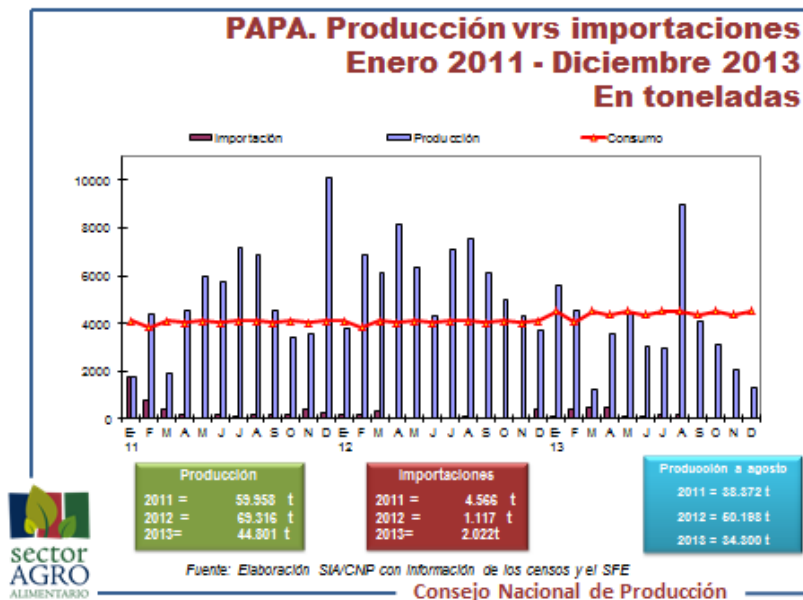
The standard shall cover aspects related to the identity, quality in all items (vgr.: nutritive value, safety, and hygiene), size and labeling, in order to provide a product with all proper characteristics and protect the consumer health. In this sense, the standard shall consider the following:

- Establish the minimum requirements of ware potato, including parameters of quality class and other conditions.
- Define the categories to classify the ware potato in accordance with its characteristics.
- Establish the tolerance limits as regards the quality.
- Include the provisions to be considered relating to the uniformity of the packaged product and the package used.
- Include provision for contaminants with reference to the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed.
- Include provisions for hygiene with reference to the Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene.

(4) Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

Protection of the consumer since the point of view of health and prevention of dishonest practices. The product quality shall cover the consumer's needs and the minimum requirements in matter of food safety.

Position of the potato's market in Costa Rica.



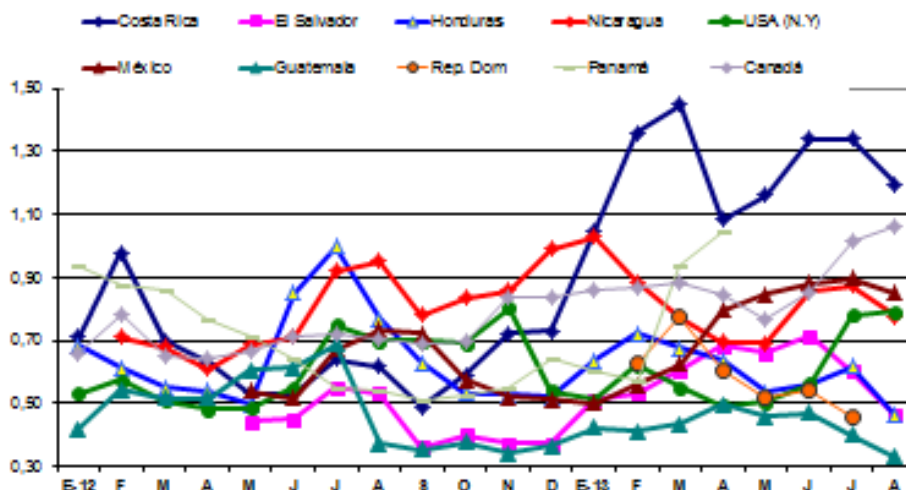
Papa. Importación por país de origen. 2013. En kg.

	Canadá	Estados Unidos	Importación total mensual
Enero	75.000		75.000
Febrero	396.597		396.597
Marzo	481.620		481.620
Abril	480.076	25.000	505.076
Mayo	74.846		74.846
Junio	51.948	48.820	100.768
Julio		196.000	196.000
Agosto		192.260	192.260
Total	1.560.087	462.080	2.022.167



Consejo Nacional de Producción

PAPA. Precios mayoristas internacionales Enero 2012 - Agosto 2013 En \$/kg



Fuente: SIA/CNP con datos de PIMA, MAG-ES, SIMRAH, MAGFOR, USDA, SNIMM, MAGA, SEA-Rep. Dom.

Consejo Nacional de Producción

(5) Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives;

The proposed standard directly related to the objective of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, according to its clause about protecting the consumers' health and ensuring fair practices on the food trade. This proposal is relevant to Activity 1.2.2 of the Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission 2014 -2019. *“Develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade”*.

Criteria applicable to commodities**(b) Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade;**

There is a technical rule in Costa Rica whose objective is to define the quality characteristics of the potato for local consumption both, national and imported, to be supplied fresh to the consumers including those for industrial processing.

Costa Rica considers that this work should provide a specific standard recognized worldwide in order to maximize the international trade of a marketed and worldwide known product, taking into account that importing countries require the application of Good Practices in all vegetable produces provided from third countries.

Since, neither an international standard for ware potato nor works performed by other organizations exist, the proper establishment of a Codex Standard in order to integrate the criteria into a single standard is deemed necessary.

Thus, the potential barriers to trade shall be reduced and a comprehensive legal framework that stipulates the minimum acceptable standards for ware potatoes grown at regional and international levels shall be obtained.

(d) Amenability of commodity to standardization;

Cultivation of potato represents the fourth world staple after corn, wheat and rice, with a production of more than 323 million tons in 2005. The 10 major potato producing countries are listed in order of priority in the following table. These countries represent two thirds of world production of potatoes.

**Main countries producing potatoes,
2005 (tons)**

Country	Tons
China	73,036,500
Russia Federation	36,400,000
India	25,000,000
Ukraine	19,480,000
United States	19,111,030
Germany	11,157,500
Poland	11,009,390
Belarus	8,185,000
Netherlands	6,835,985
France	6,347,000
Total	216,562,405

Source: Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) / ESS, 2005.

Potatoes are critical to the food security of hundreds of millions of people of the world under development, where the annual consumption has increased from less than 10 kilograms per capita in the early 1960s to about 21 kilograms. While Europe has decreased the potato production, in the countries under development the growing is stronger especially in China and India, so the global production has almost been duplicated in the last 20 years due to the promotion of FAO and, it is expected that by 2020 the demand for potato be twice that of 1993.

Potato is a crop that grows quickly, is customizable and produces a lot without the necessity of having many inputs. Potatoes are ideal for places where there are few lands but a lot of labour. Also, it is a crop of great nutritional importance. It contains many carbohydrates, 2.1% of the fresh product weight is protein. It has a high content of vitamin C.

Production and yield of potato in Central America

Country	Production			Yield		
	Average 90-92 (miles ton)	Average 01-03 (miles ton)	Annual growth (%)	Average 90-92 (kg / ha)	Average 01-03 (kg / ha)	Annual growth (%)
Costa Rica	56	85	3.2	23,540	26,246	0.8
El Salvador	7	17	6.7	14,289	23,085	3.8
Guatemala	171	241	2.7	20,740	23,567	1.0
Honduras	19	21	0.8	12,930	16,726	2.0
Nicaragua	24	28	1.2	14,127	13,098	-0.6
Panama	16	26	3.8	15,422	21,600	2.6

Source: Food Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Costa Rica believes that the above mentioned details the characteristics of the potato, from cultivation to harvest, the tuber characteristics, varieties, composition, quality and packaging, allowing the establishment of the proper parameters for the purpose of the product standardization.

(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards

There is no general commodity standard covering ware potato. The new work will help to protect the consumer and facilitate the trade of ware potato establishing a worldwide recognized standard.

(g) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)

In Costa Rica, we not know about existing works regarding this field.

EGYPT

Referring to your Proposed Draft Request for commission on new work on ware potatoes.

We would like to inform you that Egypt agrees on the proposal for fresh ware potatoes putting in consideration that this standard as mentioned in the proposal must cover all varieties of ware potatoes to facilitate trade between countries. The standard must cover the main aspects to include ware potato grows in many areas of the world.

KENYA

We support the proposal for new work on a CODEX Standard for fresh Ware Potato for there is no international codex standard for this product to give guidance to consumers and suppliers.