

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



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**Agenda Item 2(b)**

**CX/FFV 15/19/3**  
**September 2015**

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

**19<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Ixtapa Zihuatanejo, Guerrero, Mexico, 5 – 9 October 2015**

**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 70th session, held from 4 to 5 November 2014, the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards adopted:

- the new UNECE standard for quince;
- the revised UNECE standards for plums, chicory, figs, chanterelles, apricots and Chinese cabbage;
- the revised UNECE standard for sweet chestnuts and the draft text for lambs lettuce as UNECE recommendations for a one-year trial period;
- the prolongation of the trial period for the UNECE recommendation for persimmons;
- the revised UNECE standard for apples and the amendments to this standard's list of varieties (e.g. inclusion of miniature varieties)

2. As the 71st session of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards will take place from 2 to 4 November 2015, the following will provide relevant information about the 62nd session of UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (28 April to 1 May 2014). It also lists the texts which the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables recommended that the Working Party adopt at its November 2015 session, i.e.:

- the new UNECE standards for lambs lettuce and persimmons;
- the revised UNECE standards for sweet chestnuts, truffles, garlic, tomatoes and watermelons;
- the UNECE Standard Layout for Explanatory Brochures on Fresh Fruit and Vegetables which is harmonized with the Guidelines on the Development of OECD Explanatory Brochures as far as the notes explaining the application of the standards are concerned.

In addition, the Specialized Section:

- also reviewed the UNECE Standards for citrus fruit (labelling the variety) and apples (list of varieties).
- postponed proposed amendments to the current text of the UNECE standard for early and ware potatoes and await the final text of the new Codex standard for ware potatoes in order to harmonize the two standards as much as possible.
- advanced the work on the Glossary of Terms used in UNECE Standards.

Discussions also took place on the following topics:

- quality tolerances in marketing standards;
- food waste concerns related to the use of standards; as well as
- traceability of agricultural produce.

As the topic of traceability was considered to be important for all UNECE Specialized Sections (meat, seed potatoes, dry and dried produce, fresh fruit and vegetables), it was decided to organize a one-day conference on this topic at the 2015 Working Party session on 3 November 2015.

3. For further information on the above and the texts of the UNECE standards, please refer to [www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm](http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.htm) or contact:

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**Explanatory brochures**

4. The UNECE explanatory brochure for persimmons will be presented in print-ready version at the November 2015 session of the Working Party. In June 2015, the UNECE Specialized Section on Dry and Dried Produce published the UNECE Explanatory Brochure for Inshell Walnuts.

5. Copies of the following UNECE explanatory brochures are now available free of charge in English, French and Russian from the UNECE secretariat: sweet peppers, pineapples, fresh chilli peppers, dried chilli peppers and inshell walnuts as well as a colour gauge for walnut kernels. The explanatory brochure for persimmons will be available in late 2015.

#### **Other decisions**

6. The Working Party at its 2014 session adopted the text of the “Geneva Understanding” which replaces and supersedes the Geneva Protocol of 1985. It is presented in document [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/SCTCS\\_2015/2015\\_04E\\_GenevaUnderstanding.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/SCTCS_2015/2015_04E_GenevaUnderstanding.pdf). This document has been submitted to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards for endorsement at its first session in September 2015.

#### **Capacity-building and promotion**

7. In 2013 and 2014 UNECE’s Agricultural Standards Unit was in charge of the implementation of the agri-food component of the trade facilitation roadmap for Greece. This project included several workshops for the public and private sector as well as practical training and capacity-building for Greek food inspectors in Greece, France and Spain. As a result of these activities, several reform processes were initiated; and certain inspection processes and procedures were improved and automated in order to facilitate inspection and export processes.

8. Since June 2014, UNECE has also been leading a 4 year project on “Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains”. The project covers target regions in Europe, Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific (<http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2014/1415AE.html>). Under this project, UNECE has

- organized a training on meat supply chains (Geneva, September 2014)
- organized a training on cross-border trade in nuts and dried fruit (Izmir, Turkey, July 2015)
- prepared a case study (Business Process Analysis) on the export of dried apricots (Tajikistan), and
- started preliminary work on an agricultural reference and training web site.

Upcoming activities include:

- training on the development of electronic SPS certificates to facilitate cross-border trade scheduled to take place in Asia in October 2015 (organised by UNESCAP, UNECE’s project implementing partner);
- 2016 workshops on the cross-border trade of fresh fruit and vegetables in Europe, Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific regions.

#### **Meeting dates 2015/2016:**

- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: 2 to 4 November 2015
- International Conference on Traceability of Agricultural Produce/Food: 3 November 2015
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: 18 to 21 April 2016
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce: 27 to 29 June 2016
- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards: 9 to 11 November 2016

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

### **ACTIVITIES OF THE OECD FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SCHEME**

1. At the 18th Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV18) (Phuket, Thailand, 24-28 February 2014) a Codex/OECD Side Event on Pomegranate was held, showing collaboration between Codex member countries and OECD member countries in the development of the OECD explanatory brochure on Pomegranate, the first based on a Codex standard. Delegates welcomed this initiative and continuation of work between Codex and the OECD Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables in complementary areas of work. The OECD Scheme on Fruit and Vegetables has also included bananas in its priority list to prepare an explanatory brochure based on the Bananas Codex Standard.
2. The Scheme had made progress on the revision of the OECD Operating Rules for the Conformity Checks of Produce Exported under the Scheme (OECD Inspection Methods) and will be presented for adoption in 2015. The Scheme also develops an OECD Guidelines on Quality Inspection which will be discussed at the 74th Plenary Meeting.
3. The Scheme decided to setup two Sub-Working Groups to discuss traceability and tolerances. Preliminary discussions will take place in the coming months and at the 74th Plenary Meeting.
4. The Scheme regularly undertakes peer reviews on national fruit and vegetables quality inspection system 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. The Peer Reviews of the Netherlands, Finland and Spain are available at the website ([www.oecd.org/tad/fv](http://www.oecd.org/tad/fv)). The Scheme will undertake a peer review on the French fruit and vegetables quality inspection system in 2015.
5. The Scheme is involved in capacity building activities. These training courses and workshops focus on the implementation of the OECD quality inspection system, interpretation of international standards and on latest developments and challenges in the fruit and vegetables sector. The latest events were organized in Eastern Africa. The Codex Secretariat is always invited to participate and provide information on the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission related to fruit and vegetables inspection.
6. The Scheme regularly provides economic and market analysis of selected fruit and vegetables products for its Members, in order to give an overview on trends, trade volume/value on international trade and forecast for the next season. The analysis is done by experts for the invitation of the OECD Secretariat. In 2014, the representative of the International Nut and Dried Fruit Council made a comprehensive presentation on the walnut and tree nuts market review especially on the statistics of consumption, growing area, production. The world trade of nuts was also presented.
7. The OECD explanatory brochures, guidelines and peer review reports are available from the official website of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme ([www.oecd.org/tad/fv](http://www.oecd.org/tad/fv)) free of charges.