

## **SPECIALIZED SECTION ON STANDARDIZATION OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

### **Comments from Canada**

**on**

### **Proposal to create and internationally recognized list of trade descriptions and classification codes for fruits and vegetables**

**TRADE/WP.7/GE.1/2002/17**

Canada is pleased to offer the following comments on the Proposal to create an internationally recognized list of trade descriptions and classification codes for fruits and vegetables

Produce coding in Canada is managed by the Canadian Produce Marketing Association. The Canadian Government supports the Canadian industry initiative. Although the main objective of the industry is to enhance electronic commerce, another important objective of produce coding is to establish a standard means for traceability of produce for food safety as well as for quality reasons.

Canada is a net importer of fresh fruits and vegetables. As a country, Canadian importers buy produce from more than 150 countries, therefore globally standardized produce coding is important for the Canadian government and industry. The Canadian industry cannot afford to manage two or more produce coding systems. Also, Canada believes that major exporting countries of fresh produce would also find it extremely burdensome to manage different coding systems when shipping to different areas of the world. Therefore, Canada is of the opinion that produce coding should be globally uniform and will endorse a world-wide established standard which will facilitate trade.

There has been significant work done by the produce industry in North America to address the needs for uniform and harmonized codification of fresh fruits and vegetables and to facilitate e-commerce among trading partners. The efficient and feasible solution for Canada to achieve the objective of a global standard to facilitate trade is to work towards the current North American initiative to establish an industry database that would act as a central repository for codes.

The enclosed document outlines in more detail the North American database initiative.