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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

Thirty-seventh session  
Geneva, 19 - 21 March 2007  
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU**

Note by the Chairman of the Specialized Section

This document summarizes the discussions at the Extended Bureau meeting held in Arras, France from 16 to 18 October 2006. It contains proposals for amendments to the UNECE Standard and other information that will be referred to under the different agenda items. This document is presented for discussion.

**REPORT OF THE EXTENDED BUREAU MEETING IN ARRAS, FRANCE,  
16-18 OCTOBER 2005**

1. At the invitation of the French Authorities, the Extended Bureau held its meeting from 16 to 18 October 2006 in Arras at the premises of the Association of the Seed Potato Producer Groups of the North of France (Comité Nord). The following persons participated: Bartel de Muynck (Belgium), Natalie Bruneau (Canada), Gérard Crouau (France), Thierry Gokelaere (France), Kurt Günter Erbe (Germany), Pier Giacomo Bianchi (Italy), Dan Murphy (Ireland), Jos Flammang (Luxembourg), Hendrik Van de Haar (Netherlands), Henry Gilliland (Switzerland), Stuart Carnegie (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Willem Schrage (United States of America), Marcantonio Valvassori (European Commission) and Serguei Malanitchev (UNECE).

2. Jean-Charles Quillet, president of the Association of the Seed Potato Producer Groups of the North of France, opened the meeting. He and other French colleagues presented and explained how their system for seed potatoes certification works. The participants were shown the facilities at the station for laboratory testing of Comité Nord. A technical visit to Touquet Savour, a grower and packer of potatoes *haut de gamme* was also organized.

3. The Bureau gave a press conference to journalists of the local newspapers. On the last day of the meeting, the proceedings of the Bureau were filmed, and several Bureau members were interviewed by a television crew from France 3.

4. Below is a summary of the discussions of, and decisions taken by, the Bureau.

**I. Review of the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes**

**(a) Improvement of the assessment key for Rhizoctonia**

5. The Bureau studied the pictures made available by Canada, Germany and Switzerland, and agreed to maintain the present computer-generated Rhizoctonia scale (see annex I) because of the precision in the size of the area defined by the computer.

**(b) Further development of annex VIII: The assessment key for common scab, netted scab and powdery scab**

6. The Bureau agreed on an assessment key for common scab, netted scab, and powdery scab. Annex II contains pictures of these three types of scab, selected by the Bureau for presentation at the March meeting of the Specialized Section.

**(c) Further development of annex VI: Discussion on the aim of comparative trials**

7. The Bureau agreed on the following changes to the text of annex VI (I. Purpose of the comparative trials), to be considered at the March meeting of the Specialized Section. These changes would be in addition to those agreed upon at the thirty-sixth session of the Specialized

Section (ECE/TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2006/13, para. 27). The following changes were agreed upon by the Bureau:

#### **“I. Purpose of the comparative trials**

The examination of seed potatoes in plots enables the quality vigour, (varietal identity and purity, healthiness, with particular reference to viruses, as referred to in Annex IV), productivity) of seed lots put on the market to be checked at random.”

8. The proposal to include a post-harvest test in the standard was not supported.

#### **(d) Amendment to section III with reference to tuber inspection procedures**

9. The Bureau agreed to present the following amended text of section III. D for consideration at the March meeting of the Specialized Section:

#### **“D. Sampling**

Sampling of seed potatoes for certification purposes shall be carried out officially or under official supervision. To assure compliance with Annex III, tuber samples, taken at random from at least two containers or during grading, shall consist of a minimum of 25 kg, up to 0.5 per cent of the weight of the lot.

For a lot to be considered homogenous, no individual sample may have more than double a tolerance specified in annex III.”

### **III. Arbitration rules/dispute settlement**

10. France presented a list of dispute situations, among them: differing standards on sizes; confusing references to official and commercial standards; official inspectors rejecting lots on commercial, not governmental, standards; unreasonably strict plant health tolerances; the mandatory use of refrigerated containers; delays in dispute settlements; the difficulty of finding an expert to arbitrate in a dispute; and the absence of any measures to control a lot under dispute.

11. France proposed the inclusion of guidelines for dispute settlement within the UNECE Standard. The guidelines would focus on resolving disputes between two parties who have referred in their marketing agreement to the UNECE Standard. The following list of issues/recommendations with regard to pre-sale requirements will be submitted for discussion at the March meeting of the Specialized Section:

- (a) The designation of official services to settle a dispute.
- (b) The date of the dispute.
- (c) The reason for the dispute.
- (d) In the case of developing pests, there should be a deadline of 48 hours from import inspection. After the deadline, the quality of the original load can no longer be determined, unless there is adequate storage available. One question is whether this

dispute can be resolved under the RUCIP procedures (Rules and Practices of the Inter-European Trade in Potatoes).

- (e) When a non-quarantine pest or disease organism is present in the country, there should not be a no-tolerance requirement in the agreement.
- (f) Photographs showing the appropriate surface area coverage should be available to assist with the inspection of the tubers, according to the sampling methods described in the UNECE Standard.
- (g) Both parties may call in an international expert, from a list to be made available at the UNECE office.
- (h) A country's import requirements should enable marketing to take place according to the natural size distribution of tubers in the crop.
- (i) The two parties must produce a report of the dispute.

Items d, e, f and h were questioned by the experts.

12. The question was raised whether, where appropriate, the RUCIP dispute settlement procedures should be used. Participants noted that some unreasonable import requirements can only be solved on a political level, and that sovereign countries have the right and possibility to establish their own import requirements.

#### **IV. Exchange of practices for taking samples for tuber inspection**

13. The Chair proposed to collect examples of tuber inspection from participating countries. Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom (rapporteur) and the United States would draft and provide to the secretariat a set of questions to send to countries in order to find out how the principles of sampling were applied.

#### **V. Superficial necrosis caused by virus (PTNRD - Potato Tuber Necrotic Ringspot Disease)**

14. The working paper on PVY<sup>NTN</sup> (Potato Virus Y) drafted by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom should be reviewed and updated. New evidence on classification of PVY strains from a range of countries has shown that the situation is not as simple as there being only one type PVY<sup>NTN</sup>. A simple approach for the discussion in Geneva needs to be developed acknowledging the diversity in recombinants of PVY (o and n) now occurring on potatoes. A control strategy needs to be developed to control the complex as a whole rather than PVY<sup>NTN</sup> specifically. It was agreed that France would send comments to the Netherlands, which would send the updated working paper to the secretariat to complete it with the research results of Emmanuel Jacquot of INRA and to submit it to the March meeting of the Specialized Section.

15. Mr. Jacquot presented results of research on PVY. Two amino acids must be present in a PVY virus to be able to cause leaf necrosis. Mr Jacquot stated that the ability of a strain to cause leaf necrosis was linked to the ability to cause tuber necrosis. The test for PVY strains should become available by the end of 2007/beginning of 2008, associated with the patent.

16. The strains of PVY were not limited to the four known ones; there were more recombinant isolates. The previous molecular test targeted the classification, not whether it

would cause necrosis. Conclusions of research in Germany and North America had shown that the ELISA test (the Enzyme-Linked ImmunoSorbent Assay) could not determine whether a PVY strain was necrotic on tobacco.

#### **VI. Further development of the List of Diseases and Pests: images to complement the list**

17. The Bureau decided to select pictures for the list. National and private pictures should be sent to France ([gerard.crouau@gnis.fr](mailto:gerard.crouau@gnis.fr)), which would do the first selection to be submitted at the March meeting of the Specialized Section. Some national pictures, such as those from the French and Canadian books, were not copyright-protected, so only source references were requested.

18. The Bureau also decided that the List of Diseases and Pests should be updated on a regular basis for annual meetings of the Specialized Section.

#### **VII. Homogeneity/size of the lot**

19. It was desided not to discuss the size of the lot for the time being.

#### **VIII. Information collected by the secretariat on National Catalogues of Varieties and Designated Authorities**

20. The Bureau noted that the variety list and list of contacts should be kept up-to-date on the UNECE website. The suggestion was made to send national links to the registered varieties to UNECE.

#### **IX. Update of the agenda for the 2007 meeting of the Specialized Section**

21. The Bureau approved the following provisional agenda for the thirty-seventh session of the Specialized Section, scheduled for 19-21 March 2007.

1	Adoption of the agenda	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/1
2.	Matters of interest since the last session	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/2
3.	Information on the results of the Bureau meetings	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/3 (Arras Report)
4.	Review of the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes	
	(a) Further development of annex VIII: Assessment key for common scab, netted scab and powdery scab	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/4 (Canada, France, Germany and Switzerland)
	(b) Further development of annex VI: Discussion on the aim of comparative trials	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/5

	(c)	Amendment of the provision concerning quality with reference to sampling and homogeneity of the lot	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/6
5.		Arbitration rules/dispute settlement.	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/7 (France)
6.		Exchange of practices for taking samples for tuber inspection	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/8 (Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States)
7.		Superficial necrosis caused by virus (PTNRD)	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/9 (France, Netherlands, Switzerland and United Kingdom)
8.		Further development of the List of Diseases and Pests: images to complement the list.	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/10 (France)
9.		Information collected by the secretariat on National Catalogues of Varieties and Designated Authorities	ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.6/2007/11
10.		Preparation of the next session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards	
11.		Promotion of the Standard	TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2005/11, Annex 1 (Prototype training course)
12.		Next meetings and future work	
13.		Other business	
14.		Election of officers	
15.		Adoption of the report	

## X. Other business

22. The Bureau included the following items in the list for future work: the size of the lot; the post-harvest test; the control under supervision, the accreditation system; and promotion for the acceptance of the standard.

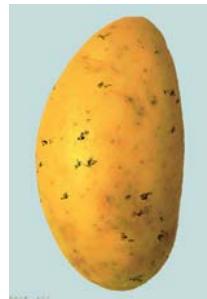
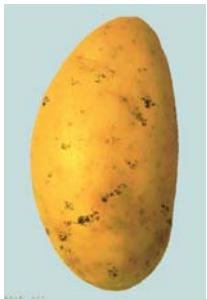
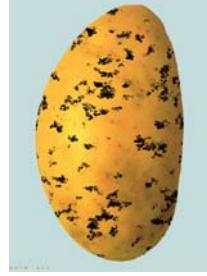
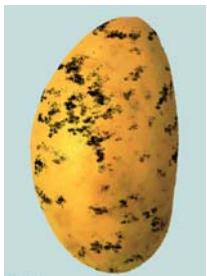
23. Switzerland presented AgriStrip, a rapid one-step assay for Sss (*Spongospora subterranea f. sp. subterrana*) detection.

24. The Chair will report on the work of the Specialized Section at the November meeting of Working Party 7.

25. The next meeting of the Bureau was tentatively scheduled for 11 of January, to be held in Nyon, Switzerland.

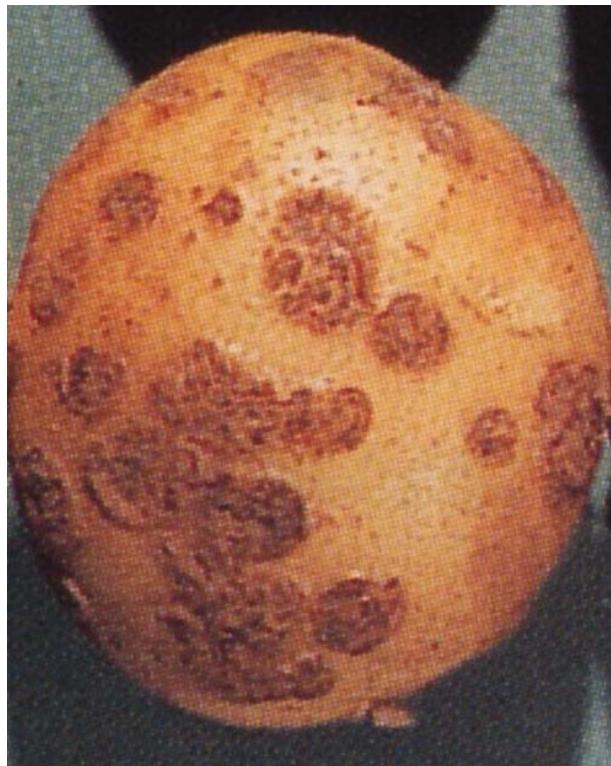
26. The participants thanked the French colleagues for their hospitality and a very useful meeting.

**Annex I.** Assessment key for Rhizoctonia

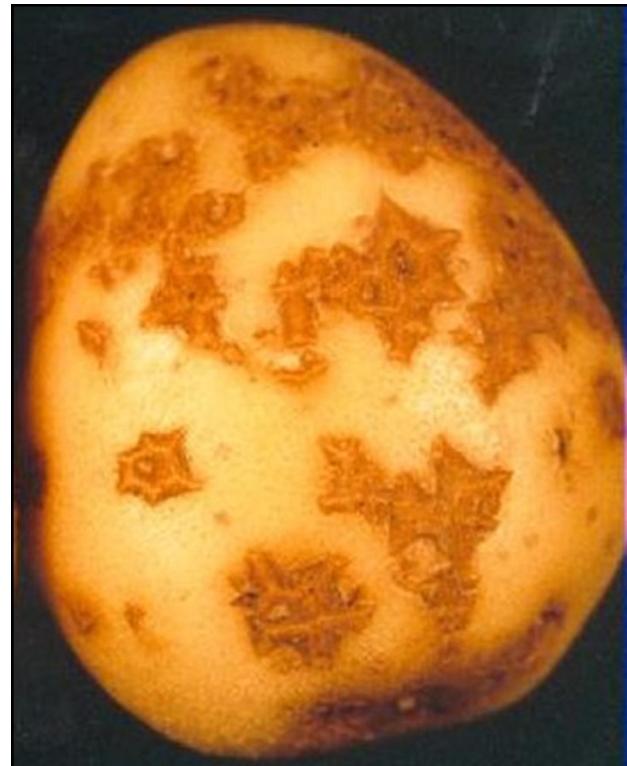
<b>1% surface area coverage</b>	
	Homogeneous
	Concentrated
<b>10% surface area coverage</b>	
	Homogeneous
	Concentrated

**Annex II.** Assessment key for common and netted scab and powdery scab

**Common Scab (33.3%)**



**Netted Scab (33.3%)**



**Powdery scab (10%)**

