ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

Meeting of the Extended Bureau
Edinburgh, Scotland, 31 May – 1 June 2012

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EXTENDED BUREAU

1. The meeting of the Extended Bureau was attended by the representatives of the following countries: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America.

2. The European Union was also represented. A representatives of the IPPC secretariat attended at the invitation of the secretariat.

3. Below is a summary of the discussions and decisions taken at the meeting. The revised texts of the documents discussed and agreed upon by the delegations, as well as the presentations made at the meeting and the text of the Standard containing the agreed changes, can be found on the UNECE website at: http://www.unece.org/trade/wp-7/meetings.html

1. List of diseases, pests and disorders

4. The delegations agreed upon the following text of the draft definition of "External defects" to be submitted for approval by the Specialized Section in 2013:

“External defects: any tuber defect which can be detected externally. Countable tubers are those which may have a negative impact on yielding capacity or storability. Included in countable external defects are: mechanical damage, severe cracks, pressure bruises, misshapen tubers (including secondary growth).”

5. The Extended Bureau also recommended that the following list of external defects be added to item 3 of Annex III:

“Countable levels: Countable damage is damage which is likely to lead to secondary infection. Tubers which are fully healed are not countable. Tubers are countable, if for:

- Mechanical damaged tubers: more than 20 % of the tuber is affected
- Severe cracks: more than 5 cracks exceeding 20 mm in length and 5 mm in depth
- Pressure bruises: spots of more than 20 mm in diameter with discolouration of the flesh with more than 5 mm in depth

- Misshapen tubers: if likely to be damaged during sorting/planting."

6. The Extended Bureau agreed to remove glassiness from the list of external defects. In the future, the Specialized Section may wish to discuss how to reflect glassiness in the Standard. The delegations of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom would provide photographs for the discussion.

7. The delegations agreed in principle to add pictures of shrivelled tubers, severe cracks and pressure bruises to the list of diseases, pests and disorders. However, better pictures, as compared to those presented in Prague, would be needed for inclusion in the list. The delegation of France would provide photographs of severe cracks. The participants were asked to send photographs of misshapen and shrivelled tubers to the Netherlands and the United States.

2. Cutting tubers for internal defects during inspection

8. The Extended Bureau reviewed the proposal by the delegation of Canada (document GE.6/BUR/2012/2) and decided to submit to the Specialized Section for approval the following text as a new section C of Annex III:

"C. Tuber inspection procedures

A randomly collected sample representative of the seed potato tubers from the lot to be inspected should be gathered and set aside for tuber size, grade and quality inspection. The tubers need to be sufficiently clean to allow for a visual inspection, no caked dirt. During the inspection process some tubers of the sample may be cut to establish the presence or absence of internal defects.

In order to assess tuber samples for meeting the tolerance for internal defects and diseases, tubers should be cut along the longitudinal axis, drawn through the widest part of the tuber (i.e. from the stem end to the bud end), and examined. In some cases the deeper a defect or disease penetrates into the flesh, it may be considered to be of a more serious nature and should be rated accordingly.

During the inspection process a tuber should only be counted once for a defect or damage. Calculate total counts and percentages for each disease, defect, or condition and compare with the tuber standard tolerance to determine if the lot meets the tuber standard. If the sample exceeds the tolerance for any of the categories, an inspector may proceed to either increase the sample size and/or re-grade the lot as required to make sure it complies with the specified standard."

3. Wet and dry rot

9. The Extended Bureau recommended that the Specialized Section adopt the definitions of wet and dry rot (annex VII), as well as the different tolerances for wet and dry rot for Basic and Certified seed (annex III) agreed upon at the October 2011 session. The Specialized Section may wish to consider how the relationship between defects and disorders under section A and pests under section B in Annex III could be better presented.

4. Varietal identity and purity

10. The Extended Bureau submitted to the Specialized Section for approval the changes to the first sentence in section "II. Provisions concerning the variety" to read: “Varieties shall be accepted for certification under the Standard only if an official description and a reference sample are available to the DA.”

11. It was also recommended that the Specialized Section approve the following additional sentence on crop inspection in “Annex II B. Field inspection procedures” under “2. Level and timing of inspection”: “During each crop inspection the inspector should verify the purity and identity of the variety. The first generation derived from Pre-basic TC class seed potatoes is recommended to be inspected at a more intensive rate to identify off-types”.

5. Demonstration trials and guidelines on training inspectors

12. The delegations agreed that the proposed text of the guidelines should be re-drafted for the next meeting of the Specialized Section to identify the minimum and optimum requirements. The delegation of the United Kingdom agreed to collect comments and do more work on the guidelines with the assistance of Australia, Finland and New Zealand.

6. Promotional leaflet

13. The delegation of the United States volunteered to collect photographs for the promotional leaflet and to send them to the secretariat. The Specialized Section would review the photographs and the text of the leaflet at its March 2013 session.

7. Extension of the Standard to other species

14. To make the definition of seed potatoes in the Standard (annex VII) consistent with that in ISPM 33, the Extended Bureau recommended the following wording to the Specialized Section for adoption:

“**Seed Potatoes:**

Tubers (including minitubers) and potato micropropagative material of cultivated tuber-forming *Solanum* spp. for planting.

Certified Seed Potatoes: tubers which are certified by the DA as meeting specified requirements and as being suitable for reproduction.”

15. It also recommended that the first sentence in section “I. Definition of produce” be amended to read: “Seed potatoes are tubers or any other propagation material, other than true seed, of *Solanum tuberosum* L. and related tuber-forming species acceptable for certification by the DA …” and be adopted by the Specialized Section.

8. Definitions of parent material, clonal selection and clonal multiplication

16. The Extended Bureau submitted the following definitions of parent material to the Specialized Section for approval:

"Parent material: Initial stock or selected plants or tubers in the clonal selection used to increase a clone of seed potatoes.

Clonal selection: A system of potato propagation that starts from selected plants that fulfil the requirements of the pre-basic seed.

Clonal stock: Propagation stock of a particular variety descended from a clonally selected mother plant (EPPO, 1999). Clonal stocks are subject to visual inspection (diseases and trueness-to-type) and additional testing for diseases."

9. Definition of micropropagative multiplication

17. The Extended Bureau submitted the following definition of micropropagative multiplication to the Specialized Section for approval:

Micropropagative multiplication:

"The process of propagating microplants of Initial Stock by taking nodal cuttings under aseptic conditions to produce large numbers of microplants. The resulting microplants are retained for further multiplication cycles or grown to maturity to provide harvestable tubers usually of the class PBTC.".

10. Certification of cut seed tubers

18. The delegations could not agree on what to recommend to the Specialized Section as its position on cutting tubers within the certification scheme. The working group composed of Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States would continue working on this issue drawing on document GE.6/BUR/2012/5 and the discussions that took place at the Extended Bureau's meeting.

11. Class denomination

19. The representative of the European Commission updated the Extended Bureau on the work on the revision of the annexes to Directive 2002/56/EC on the marketing of seed potatoes. This work included the establishment of a new, harmonised classification system for seed potatoes in the European Union. He pointed out that the UNECE Standard continued to be the reference for the EU Working Group. He also mentioned that the mandatory indication of the field generation on the label had not been supported by the EU member countries.

12. Combination of mild and severe virus symptoms into one field tolerance

20. The Extended Bureau discussed symptomatic demonstration plants with various combinations of virus isolates/varieties and also held a joint session with the PVY wide research network. The principle issue was the shift towards virus strains, particularly PVY, which produce less severe symptoms but have the capacity to produce tuber necrosis. The Extended Bureau was in favour of merging mild and severe viruses under one heading "viruses". For the March 2013 session of the Specialized Section, the Working Group composed of Australia, United Kingdom and United States would propose how the definitions of different types of viruses could be combined under one heading in annex VII. It would also advise whether the corresponding tolerances would need to be changed.

13. Requirements on sprouted tubers

21. The Extended Bureau agreed to continue the discussion on whether requirements on sprouted tubers should be reflected in the Standard. The delegations of Australia and the United Kingdom would prepare a background paper for discussion.

14. Indication of the field generation on the label

22. The Extended Bureau decided that the indication of the field generation on the label should be maintained as optional within the Standard. No further discussion on this issue was needed.

15. Update on zebra chip disease

23. The delegations of New Zealand and the United States gave presentations to update the Extended Bureau on zebra chip disease. It was decided to keep it as an on-going topic for future work.

16. Promotion of the Standard

24. The secretariat explained that there was no longer any funding available from the UN for promotional activities outside the CIS region. The Russian Voluntary Fund would be available through 2014 for projects in the CIS countries.

17. Cooperation between IPPC and UNECE

25. The representative of the IPPC secretariat gave a presentation on the role and purpose of the IPPC and went on to focus on regulated non-quarantine pests (RNQPs). She also expressed concerns about several provisions in the UNECE Standard, in particular the status of the Standard in legal terms. With regard to the ability of the IPPC and the UNECE to cooperate formally, she indicated that this was desirable but not currently possible due to legal difficulties over ratification of certain UN charters at a high level. She went on to point out that the work of the group was very helpful to authorities interested in building capacity to manage seed potato certification programmes at their national levels, so was broadly supportive of the UNECE activity in its region. The IPPC was pleased to note that the UNECE were willing to address some of the issues of wording in the Standard, and some informal interaction to facilitate this would be welcome. To start this interaction, the Extended Bureau asked the delegations of Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom to prepare a paper suggesting how to improve, where desired and possible, consistency of the concepts and definitions used in the UNECE Standard with those used by IPPC. The Extended Bureau invited the IPPC secretariat to take part in that work.

18. Future work and programme of meetings

26. The delegations decided on the following items for future work:

- Procedures of field inspection (Finland, United Kingdom)
- Risk-based inspections (Netherlands)
- Potato flea beetles (*Epitrix* species) (Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom)

- Potato tuber moth (Belgium, South Africa)
- Update from PVY working group (Netherlands, United Kingdom)
- List of diseases, pests and disorders
- Demonstration trials and guidelines on training inspectors (Australia, Finland New Zealand and United Kingdom)
- Promotional leaflet (United States)
- Certification of cut seed tubers (Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States)
- Combining mild and severe viruses into one field tolerance (Australia, United Kingdom, United States)
- Requirements on sprouted tubers (Australia, United Kingdom)
- Update on zebra chip disease
- Enhancing consistency with IPPC (Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom)

27. The next annual session of the Specialized Section was planned for 11 to 13 March 2013 in Geneva. The Autumn 2012 Extended Bureau meeting, previously planned to be held in Canada, had been cancelled. The delegates agreed on the following provisional programme of the Extended Bureau/Specialized Section meetings:

- Extended Bureau meeting (United States, first week in October 2013)
- Annual session of the Specialized Section (Geneva, second week in March 2014)
- Extended Bureau meeting (India, May 2014, to be confirmed)
- Extended Bureau meeting (Australia, October 2015, to be confirmed)
