

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  
 Fargo, United States, 28 September - 2 October 2013  
 Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda  
 Tuber moth and flea beetle

**Proposal for an amendment of  
Annex III: Minimum quality conditions for lots of seed potatoes  
in relation to tuber moth**

**1. Actual situation**

Annex III

A. Tolerances for defects and disorders allowed for seed potato.

Item 9: Tuber moth: tubers affected by galleries covering more than 20% of the cut surface:

- Pre-basic TC: 0 per cent by weight
- Other categories: 4 per cent by weight.

B. Zero tolerances.

The seed potatoes shall be free from.... *Phthorimaea operculella* (Zeller).

**2. Discussion**

**South Africa** (Dr. Sanette Thiar): “it is highly unlikely that the inspectors will see the 1<sup>st</sup> instar larvae in the galleries at the time of inspection as they are smaller than 1 mm. It is therefore almost impossible to guarantee that tuber moths will not have developed by the time the tubers arrive in another country. Section B Zero tolerances just refers to *Phthorimaea operculella* and not zero tolerance for living tuber moth larvae. Therefore I’m still of the opinion that it cannot be listed under Section B”.

“I agree with Willem one hundred percent on the fact that live insects should not be allowed at all. (Quarantine issue). My argument is that if you have 4% (by weight) of a consignment which has more than 20% of tuber surface covered with galleries (Tuber tolerance for tuber moth), it is highly likely that eggs or first instar larvae might be missed during tuber inspection, resulting in post-harvest hatching of moths. Thus at the time of certification or shipping no live insects were detected based on a visual examination, but they develop during transportation. At the port of entry live insects will have or might have developed.

It would therefore be better to have a zero tolerance for galleries as well or stipulate under Section B, that **live stages** of *Phthorimaea operculella* has a zero tolerance. One cannot guarantee zero moths or larvae after shipment.

If you feel comfortable that Section B refers only to live insects, I am happy to keep it there. I do however think that consideration should be given to a more comprehensive description of what the zero tolerance applies to”.

**Willem:** “If I remember the discussions well: the first approach to the tuber moth issue .... was a zero tolerance. The absence of any galleries in the tubers would be an unnecessary strict requirement (according to Bartel), because it was the moth that did the damage. Therefore it was accepted that there would be a certain tolerance for the galleries, but the zero tolerance for insects remained. In shipping point inspection (or tuber inspection) terminology, we might call that "condition", which means that a condition can get worse after inspection and during shipping, e.g. wet rot or silver scurf.

From the point of risk assessment one would consider it much safer to set a zero tolerance for galleries, but my understanding was that that would be overkill”.

### **3. Proposal to discuss at the Extended Bureau meeting in Fargo**

- a) Section B: ... the seed potatoes shall be free from.... *Phthorimea operculella* (Zeller) **at all living stages.**
- b) Section A stays as it is now but we add a new item at the end (after item 10):

**“additional measures to support seed lot inspection:**

**Inspectors may be supported by appropriate tests when a confirmation of the cause of a particular symptom is required.”**

*[this item is similar to item 3 in Section B of Annex II ]*

These additional measures (for example, keep a sample of tubers with galleries for a few days at room temperature) will allow to see if tuber moth at any of its living stage is still present in the seed lot.