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Risk-based inspection

Risk-based inspection

Submitted by the delegation of the Netherlands

1. The aim of this is to introduce the subject of risk-based inspections, as a start for further reflection by the Specialized Section. Most seed programmes are operated under official inspection and certification schemes. Official inspections are usually prescribed.
2. In the European Union, an official system of company licensing has been introduced many years ago for grass seeds and cereals. This system does not apply to seed potatoes. All seed potato crops and lots must be officially inspected. For the internal market the inspection intensity is a national responsibility, provided that the EU plant health and marketing requirements are met. For exports to non-EU countries, inspection and testing must follow IPPC principles (plant health) and additional import requirements.
3. Quality-related demands from customers, both national and international, increase. That could require a more intensive inspection and/or testing, thereby increasing inspection costs. Higher costs that challenge producers' acceptance. Risk-based inspections could be more cost-efficient and effective.
4. The world is changing. The EU is working to modernize and harmonize the plant health, animal health, marketing and control legislation. Principles of risk-based inspection and control will be part of it.
5. Several elements can be considered as a basis for a risk-based approach to inspection within the framework of the national inspection and certification systems.

- **Field and tuber inspection**

- efficient organization of inspection procedures and instructions, aiming at a higher inspection output;

- past results (inspection history) at producers and/or crop level determine the intensity and/or frequency of inspections;
- information concerning quality complaints (vigour, defects, virus level, etc.);
- quality of ungraded lots determines follow-up inspection intensity;
- elements of accreditation.
- **Laboratory control**
 - results of the past testing at producers/crop/variety levels determine the intensity and/or frequency of additional laboratory tests, which are particularly useful for viruses;
 - balance between laboratory testing and visual inspection.
- **Actual (2014) experience in the Netherlands**
 - focus on seed stocks (pre-basic) with latent *Erwinia* infections (lab tests); results in considerably more field interceptions; correlation is significant only at higher infection levels;
 - no risk categories at producers level yet; needs a very subtle approach;
 - risk-based approach for lot inspection:
 - to be implemented at individual lot level
 - implementation must meet internationally (or bilaterally) agreed inspection protocols.

General: at the EU level we must prepare for the future EU Regulations for Plant Health and Plant Reproductive Material ('Better regulations').
