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COMMITTEE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of
Seed Potatoes
Thirty-fifth session, 2-4 May 2005, Geneva

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

REPORT OF THE EXTENDED BUREAU MEETING IN EAST GRAND FORKS (MN) USA 4 TO 6 OF OCTOBER 2004*

Note by the secretariat

At the kind invitation of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture the Extended Bureau met from 4th to 6th of October in East Grand Forks.

Participants:
Willem Schrage, Steve Marquardt (United States)
Francois Mercure (Canada)
Gunther Erbe (Germany)
Hank Van de Haar (Netherlands)
Stuart Carnegie (United Kingdom)
Gerard Crouau (France)
Pierre Miauton (Switzerland)
Pier Giacomo Bianchi (Italy)

The following document sums up the results of the meeting and the changes proposed to the UNECE Standard for Seed Potatoes.

* This document was submitted after the deadline due to missing secretariat resources.

1. Destination tolerances

The following proposal to amend the Standard has been prepared:

A new paragraph 4.4 of the introduction to read as follows (the following paragraph to be renumbered):

"The responsibility of the NDA is to ensure the application of the provisions and conditions as specified in the standard. The responsibility for the quality of the lot remains with the owner."

A new sentence to be added after paragraph II of Chapter III a to read as follows:

"The condition of the seed potatoes at point of export should be such as to enable them:
- to withstand transport and handling
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination."

2. Interpretation of the size band

The following interpretation of size band (see p.57 of TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2004/16 (report of the specialized section) TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2004/8) has been suggested to be endorsed by the Specialised Section:

"The size band on the label shall represent the natural distribution after grading of the seed potatoes of the lot within the sizes of the label."

3. Sizing requirements

The extended bureau doesn't see the necessity to apply the maximum deviation of 5 mm to rounded shaped varieties.

4. Provision concerning presentation

Further discussion took place on the amendments proposed in Dublin on the provision concerning presentation. The following text has been drafted (in red the amendments to the Dublin text):

"VI. PROVISIONS CONCERNING ~~PRESENTATION~~ CONTAINERS

(i) ***Condition of ~~units of presentation~~ containers***

Bags ~~Packages of up to 50 kg or one "hundredweight" (112 lbs avoirdupois) as the case may be,~~ must be new, boxes may be reused provided that they are ~~Larger units of presentation~~ thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

(ii) ***Closing of ~~units of presentation~~ containers***

~~Units of presentation~~ Containers shall be closed officially or under official control in such a manner that they cannot be opened without damaging the official sealing device or without leaving evidence of tampering on the official label provided for in section VI (i).

The official system of closing shall comprise either the incorporation into the system of the label mentioned above if it is without a string-hole or in all other cases, by the application of an official seal.

Re-closing shall be carried only by the NDA or under its control. ~~Only official control service may, in case of need, reclose a package or container.~~

(iii) ***Weight***

~~With the exception of bags for Pre-Basic TC, the packaging units for bags shall normally be 25, 50, 500, or 1000 kg net., but the "hundredweight" may be used in trade with countries using that measure, However other~~ The weight of seed potatoes in a container shall be agreed with ~~to may be used upon application to and with the agreement of~~ the NDA. ~~buyer and seller agree to deviate from these requirements.~~

(iv) ***Nature of contents of ~~units of presentation~~ containers***

Each ~~unit of presentation~~ container shall contain tubers of the same variety, category, class, size band and origin."

The term "container" with supply "unit of presentation" trough the Standard.

5. Homogeneity of the lot

It was proposed to move Item (v) of paragraph VI to read as new point D of paragraph III.

"D. Lot

A lot should be sufficiently homogeneous."

The following paragraphs are to be renumbered.

In USA a lot having double of the tolerance for certain requirement in different sub-sample is considered as not uniform. The item will be kept on the agenda.

6. Traceability

France submitted a paper concerning the concept of traceability.

The following amendments to the Standard were drafted:

III. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY, B. Classification to read as follows:

"Seed potatoes shall be classified according to variety and the standards given below. Their classification shall be subject to official control in the producing country. The NDA is responsible for the maintenance of all classification data to provide traceability. Seed potatoes shall be placed in two classes within each of three categories as defined below."

Add the following definition to Annex VIII (Glossary):

"Traceability: A system of documentation that enables the source and performance of a lot to be tracked during the classification process."

7. Definition of leaf roll

The definition drafted as an addition to the glossary of the Standard in Dublin has been amended, also on the ground of a paper prepared by Germany, as follows:

Potato Leaf Roll: is a severe virus disease, causing plants to be usually smaller, sometimes stunted, than healthy plants. The top of the plant is paler and the leaves are more erect than usual. ~~in the case of primary infection, a slight rolling of upper leaves, sometimes with purple discoloration. In the case of secondary infection, *there is a* rolling of *the*~~ Older lower leaves roll upward and become brittle, such that they can be easily broken (metallic rustling), when squeezed gently. ~~, *which become* dry and crisped, *and a* stunting of the plant.~~" Primary infection may cause a slight rolling of the upper leaves, sometimes accompanied by discoloration

8. Netted scab

The following proposal to amend the standard was drafted:

In Annex III 4 become 4a and the following is added:

"4b. Netted scab: Tubers affected over a specified per cent of their surface (see Annex VIII)

Pre-basic TC (0% surface cover)	0 per cent by weight
all other categories (>33.3% surface cover)	5 per cent by weight"

9. Common scab images

On the ground of proposals from France and Germany the new images for Common scab has been drafted as in annex 1 to this report.
Germany will prepare a proposal for assessment key for netted scab.

10. Potato tuber necrotic ringspot disease (PTNRD)

France will prepare a paper to address the constraints identified in paper TRADE/WP.7/GE.6/2004/12.

11. Potato rot nematode (formerly Potato Tuber Eelworm) (Ditylenchus destructor)

The Extended Bureau meeting agreed to propose to amend III (lot) and X (summary table) to introduce a zero tolerance:

Annex III to read:

"B. The seed potatoes shall be free from Globodera rostochiensis (Woll) and Globodera pallida (Stone), Synchytrium endobioticum (Schilb.) Perc., Clavibacter michiganensis Spp. sepedonicus (Spieck. and Kotth.) Skapt. and Burkh., Ralstonia solanacearum (E.F. Smith) E.F. Smith , Potato spindle tuber viroid, Tomato Stolbur, Meloidogyne chitwoodi and fallax and Ditylenchus destructor"

12. Tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV)

A paper on the distribution of the pest will be available from UK.

13. Inventory of pest and diseases (paper 2004/12) not regulated in the UN-ECE Standard

Some amendments to the column of comment in the list of pest and diseases were drafted

Disease	French name	Agent	Status in the UNECE Standard	Recommended diagnostic method	General Disease Description	Comment
FUNGUS						
Skin spot	Oosporiose	*Polyscytalum pustulans*	Not regulated	Visual observation of tubers	Tuber = skin blemish and death of eyes Plant = uneven and non emergence	Regulated with tolerances in some regions. No need for regulation in UNECE standard, ~~no barrier to trade.~~
White mould	Sclerotiniose	*Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*	Not regulated	Visual observation of stem	Tuber = rot, rare Plant = wilting and death of individual stems	Not to be regulated. Infection is from soil inoculum and not from the tuber

Verticilliu m wilt	Verticillios e	*Verticillium dalhiae and V. alboatrum*	Not regulated	Visual observation of leaves and plant	Tuber = vascular discolouration Plant = wilting and death	No need for regulation in UNECE standard because path of infection is primarily through infested soil and not the seed tuber
Mop top (Spraing in tubers)	Mop top	*Potato mop top virus*	Not regulated[1]	Visual observation of plant and tubers, ELISA test and PCR	Plant = marked mottling of leaves and stunting of all or some stems Tuber = necrotic rings or arcs on surface and in flesh	Regulated ~~with a zero tolerance~~ in some regions
Tobacco rattle virus (Spraing in tubers)	Rattle	*Tobacco rattle virus*	Not regulated1	Observation of tubers and PCR	Plant = mottling and distortion of leaves and stunting of some or all stems Tuber = internal discoloured arcs and rings, rarely visible on the surface	Regulated in some regions with tolerances
Tomato spotted wilt virus	TSWV	*Tomato spotted wilt virus*	Not regulated		Plant = leaf spotting and necrosis Tuber = skin blemish and internal necrotic spotting	~~In some regions regulated, zero tolerance.~~ Regulated in some regions
BACTERIA						
Netted scab	Galle Plate	*S. reticuliscabies*	~~Status not clear~~ Tolerance proposed in UNECE standard	Observation of tuber	Tuber and underground parts superficial netted scabs	
PESTS						

[1] According to the experience in certain areas, the disease can eradicate itself due to low transmission rates.

Colorado beetle	Doryphore	*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*	~~Un-~~ Not regulated	Visual observation of eggs, larvae and adults	Plant : leaf damage	~~In some regions regulated, zero tolerance~~ Regulated in some regions
Wireworms/ slugs	Taupin	*Agriotes sp.: A obscurus, A. sputator, A. lineatus/ Tandonia budapestensis, Arion hortensis*	~~Un-~~ Not regulated	Visual observation of tubers	Tuber : tunnels and holes	
Tuber moth	Teigne	*Phthorimea operculella*	~~Un-~~ Not regulated	Visual observation of leaves and tubers	Tuber : leaf Plant : tunnels in flesh damage.	~~In some regions regulated, zero tolerance~~ Regulated in some regions

14. Visual inspection versus testing

The following amendment to the Standard will be proposed to the Specialised Section:

Annex IV paragraph 5 to be read as follows:

"The incidence of virus in the direct progeny may be determined by either inspection and/or testing of a sample of tubers from the crop for virus. Annex X describes the principles of developing a sampling regime for this purpose."

In Annex VII the following definitions were amended:

Inspection:

Visual examination of plants, tubers, ~~units of presentation~~, container equipment or facilities by an authorized person, to determine compliance with regulations.

Testing:

The use of one or more procedures, other than inspection for determining the presence ~~or absence~~ of a pathogenic agent or varietal identification.

15. Prototype training course

The outline developed in the bureau meeting in Dublin was amended and is contained in Annex 3 to this report. The next step should be to promote the training course and to find adequate funding for it.

The meeting also considered that it would be useful to prepare a leaflet on the work of UNECE in the area of seed potatoes and to present the activity at the World Potato Congress, EAPR (European Association of Potato Research, PAA (Potato Association of America) triennial Conference, or ALAP (Latin American Potato Association).

The bureau felt that support was needed from the UNECE secretariat for these activities but recognized that this might be difficult due to the limited secretariat resources available for the wok of WP.7 and its Specialized Sections.

16. Living modified organisms (LMO)

The Chairman reported recent developments within the OECD scheme for seed certification, where the possibility to use seed certification labels and documents to implement the obligations derived from the Cartagena Protocol for LMO is being evaluated.

In order to implement such an option for seed potatoes under UNECE Standard a revised version of information paper 4 submitted to the Specialised Section at the 2004 meeting has been tabled by the Chairman (see annex 2).

It was nevertheless stressed that for the time being no LMO varieties are marketed under the UNECE Standard, but the possibility to use, on a voluntary basis, UECE labels and to establish an accompanying documents for additional information requested by the Cartagena Protocol will be evaluated. Contact with the Cartagena Protocol Secretariat should be established to exchange information.

17. Best handling practices

Canada, that previously suggested the item, is no longer interested in discussing it. The item will be deleted from the agenda.

18. Weight

The issue to discuss the possible introduction of a maximum weight of the lot was raised by the Chairman to address problems of homogeneity of the lot and representative of the samples. The experts would not be in favour to introduce a maximum weight, but the relative implication will be further discussed.

19. Improvement of the annex on sampling

The Chairman suggested to clarify practical use of annex IX on sampling and to add 0,5 % and 2 % in the table of tolerances, considering that these tolerance are now part of the standard for virus. NL will prepare a draft paper. An exchange of practices of taking samples for tuber inspection will take place at next extended Bureau meeting.

20. Follow-up activities to the meeting

Proposal: to the Specialised Section to amend the standard:

- Sentence in the introduction to clarify the responsibility of the NDA in respect of seed quality
- Provision concerning destination tolerances
- New provisions concerning presentation
- New provisions concerning traceability
- New definition of leaf roll
- New provisions concerning netted scab
- New images for common scab
- Introduction of provision concerning Dytilencus destructor
- Expanding of testing in annex V

The following items will be submitted for approval to the Specialized Section

- Prototype of the two-day Seminar will be submitted
- The interpretation of the size band

Future items for discussion:

- Concept of direct progeny
- Discussion on annex VI (comparative trials)
- Size of the lot
- Homogeneity of the lot
- Exchange of practices of taking samples for tuber inspection

To do list:

- France: paper on PTNRD
- Germany: assessment key for netted scab
- United Kingdom: paper on distribution TSWV
- Netherlands: to amend the table of tolerances of annex IX

21. Next Extended Bureau Meeting

At the kind invitation of Germany next meeting of the extended Bureau will take place in Rostock from 24 to 27 October 2005.

22. Amended Standard

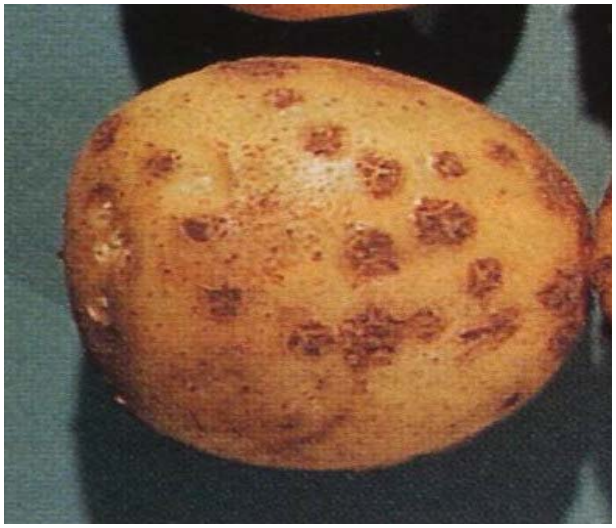
As a consequence of the proposals the Standard would be amended as shown in INF.1

Annex 1

ANNEX VIII:
Assessment Key for percentage tuber surface area coverage

Common Scab

10 % surface area coverage



33 % surface area coverage

Annex 2

At the last specialized section the reinforcement of the concept of the variety was agreed. A paragraph "Requirement concerning the variety" was added to the Standard, establishing that varieties shall be accepted into the Standard only if an official description and a reference sample are available from the NDA. The variety should also be distinct, uniform and stable according to the guidelines of UPOV and have a denomination allowing its identification.

On the other side an agreement on the introduction of a reference to novel traits for varieties was not reached. A previous attempt to refer to Genetical modified varieties also failed.

The Chairman proposed to study the terminology used in the Cartagena protocol on biodiversity (LMO – living modified organisms) to find a new definition that would allow the European Union and United States to use the same language, as it is already included in an international protocol.

PROPOSAL

Chapter II

Add the following text:

"For varieties, which are LMO in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol[1] the official description should provide information on its identity and relevant traits and/or characteristics."

Add the following footnote:

"[1] Living modified organism (LMO) means any living organism that possesses a novel combination of genetic material obtained through the use of modern biotechnology

Modern biotechnology means the application of:

(a) In vitro nucleic acid techniques, including recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and direct injection of nucleic acid into cells or organelles, or
(b) Fusion of cells beyond the taxonomic family that overcome natural physiological reproductive or recombination barriers and that are not techniques used in traditional breeding and selection."

Annex V

Statement: "Seed potatoes issued from a LMO, satisfying the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety" (where appropriate)

Point 6 a: ~~"Variety and where appropriate, designation as an LMO"~~ Genetic modification.... (use the OECD unique identification number)

Additional information prescribed by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety should be reported on an accompanyind document to be established and containing the following information:
Requirement for the safe handling, storage, transport and use, the contact point for further information and, as appropriate, the name and address of the importer and exporter.

PROTOTYPE FOR A TWO DAYS TRAINING COURSE FOR SEED POTATO CERTIFICATION

Introduction: The development of a prototype training course is considered important by the Specialised Section to support the implementation of the Standard.

Aim: To promote the Standard for international trade in seed potatoes and to encourage its implementation.

Target Groups: Officials, professional people, National Certification Authorities, regional organisations, Importers and Exporters, potentially interested in using the Standard.

Outline of the programme

1. Introduction:

- The role of UN-ECE in standardization of trade
- Elements of international trade (WTO, IPPC, Cartagena Protocol)

2. Seed Production and Marketing

- Background to the genetics of potatoes, variety registration, plant breeders rights
- Elements of seed production (maintenance, multiplication, grading and packing)
- Epidemiology of potato diseases as related to seed potato production and certification
- The role of seed certification

3. Standards for certifications

- The UN-ECE Standard on seed potatoes
- Overview of other phytosanitary organizations and schemes
- Examples of National schemes.

Trainer requirements:
- Should have expertise of different countries.
- For optimum training 4 trainers are required to cover different aspects of seed potato certification.

Names of possible specialists were mentioned as follows:

Siert Wiersema NL, former CIP, present IAC, experience in training and seed potato production in many countries;
Heinz Schmid CH, former ISTA executive secretary, consultant, experience in training and seed production in many countries;
Michel Mallet F, consultant for seed potatoes in France;
Bernard Jouan F, former director INRA, disease specialist on seeds. Regional Manager Agro Sans Frontieres;
Rudi Schwaerzel CH: Seed Potato Production and Certification Specialist.