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**Economic Commission for Europe****Committee on Trade****Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards****Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat****Twentieth session**

Geneva, 15-17 June 2011

**Report of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat  
on its twentieth session****I. Introduction**

1. Mr. Ian King (Australia), the Chair of the Specialized Section, opened the meeting. The Director of the Trade and Sustainable Land Management Division, Ms. Virginia Cram-Martos, welcomed delegates and thanked them for their valuable contribution to the agricultural standards work.
2. In reply to a question on the support given by UNECE to the implementation of standards and capacity-building, Ms. Cram-Martos outlined several possible sources of funding including regular budget (covering work in Geneva); regional advisory services (which don't exist for agricultural standards); United Nations Development Account funding (which is a non-consistent, temporary, highly competitive source of funding); extra-budgetary funding via trust funds (which so far doesn't exist for capacity-building in agricultural standards); and government-funded trainings with United Nations support for organization, staffing and experts.
3. The delegate from China mentioned that his country might be interested in organizing a capacity-building workshop. He also enquired about the use of UNECE meat standards by industry and international trade and requested more information on this issue. The secretariat explained that for the November 2011 Working Party session such a survey would be prepared on the basis of a questionnaire. It was suggested to reflect on the development of a tool to collect more accurate and consistent information on a regular basis. On the issue of copyright of UNECE standards, it was explained that the standards could be distributed free of charge provided that United Nations copyright was indicated on the document.

## **II. Attendance**

4. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: Australia, China, France, Poland, Russian Federation, and United States of America. Argentina apologized for not being able to attend owing to unexpected, severe meteorological disturbances.

## **III. Matters of interest since the last session**

Documentation: Report of the Working Party (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2010/16)

5. The secretariat briefly outlined the review process of the 1985 version of the Geneva Protocol which was initiated by the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards at its November 2010 meeting. The Specialized Section took note of the tabled document entitled “Geneva Agreement on Agricultural Quality Standards” which contained comments already made by other Specialized Sections as well as those received from the United States delegation. The latter reflected the consolidated views of all United States representatives to the UNECE produce standardization sections. It was decided to circulate the current draft (which includes comments by the United States) to all members of the Specialized Section, publish it on the Internet (if possible also in Russian) and invite delegations to make further country-consolidated comments in time for the November 2011 Working Party meeting.

## **IV. Adoption of the agenda**

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.11/2011/1

6. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda with proposed changes and the amendment of a discussion proposed by the delegation of the Russian Federation on the development of a UNECE standard for reindeer meat (venison) under item 7 of the agenda.

## **V. Information on the meetings of the section in 2010 and 2011**

7. The delegate from France reported on the Meeting of Rapporteurs held in France from 25 to 26 October 2010 which aimed at presenting French and European retail meat cut specifications for bovine meat. The draft standard for retail meat cuts could not yet be updated, as important information was still missing and the selection of cuts which should be included was on-going. Several delegations stressed that the currently listed cuts were all based on the same primal cuts already established in the UNECE standard for bovine meat. However, it was also noted that certain simplification and harmonization with regard to muscle names and Latin terms had yet to be achieved. The delegation of France noted that France attached a lot of importance to the retail meat cut standard, especially in view of the on-going simplification of legal texts on the European level. The future UNECE Standard for retail meat cuts could inspire French regulations. The Chair thanked the French delegation for organizing this successful meeting last October.

8. The delegation of the United States reported on a recent capacity-building workshop held in Serbia in May 2011. The purpose of the training was to help Serbia – with a view towards its possible accession to the European Union (EU) – to revise their porcine and bovine meat standards on the basis of UNECE Standards; as well as to assist them in updating their cutting styles. In this respect, a future standard for retail meat cuts would be very important for the country. The delegation of the United States inquired about the possibility by UNECE and the secretariat of helping countries implement standards.

## VI. Proposals for new UNECE standards

- Documentation: Draft new UNECE standard for horse meat – carcasses and cuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.11/2011/3)
- Draft new UNECE standard for goose meat – carcasses and parts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.11/2011/4)
- Draft new UNECE standard for veal meat – carcasses and cuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.11/2011/5)
- Draft new UNECE standard for retail meat cuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.11/2010/6)
- Retail cut descriptions (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.11/2010/7)

### A. Horse meat – carcasses and cuts

9. The delegation of the Russian Federation (Rapporteur) noted that the current version of the Standard took into account all proposals made during previous sections, including amendments made by the French delegation following the last session in October 2010. The delegation of Poland drew the group's attention to sections 5.7.1 and 5.7.2 where fat colour was described in too great detail for a standard. The group noted that whenever colour classifications were used, it should be done on the basis of an agreement between buyers and seller. Such a provision was included in the UNECE Standard for Bovine Meat. Sections 5.7.1 and 5.7.2 were therefore deleted and the text of section 3.8 (UNECE Standard for Bovine meat) was inserted in their place.

10. The Specialized Section agreed to request the secretariat to present the revised version of the draft Standard for adoption by the Working Party. The French and the Russian versions of the draft standard will be reviewed by the French and the Russian delegations respectively.

### B. Goose meat – carcasses and cuts

11. The Rapporteur (China) briefly reviewed the revised version of the draft Standard. In response to concerns raised by several delegations as to the specification of days in Section 3.5.3 (third line) which can vary between countries. It was agreed to delete the current number and insert the following wording "for a specific number of days". It was also agreed to change the provisions under "processed blood description". All changes are reflected in the revised draft standard.

12. Lengthy discussions ensued on the Section 3.6 "Quality level". The delegation of Poland drew the group's attention to the fact that the reference to the EU regulation contained in the Standard for Chicken Meat (footnote 11) was no longer in force. Poland also mentioned that industry was somewhat confused about the current wording on quality levels and had asked for the insertion of a general EU reference. The French and Russian delegations noted that footnote 11 reflected a compromise which cited examples and accurately reflected international trade. The Chair explained that in many countries more than 2 quality levels existed (as currently specified in the Standard). However, it was always the buyer and the seller who determined the quality level traded. It was therefore agreed not to insert an up-dated version of footnote 11 (Chicken Standard) and to leave the more generic wording in the Standard. The word "quality" before level was deleted.

13. The Specialized Section briefly discussed the proposals made by the Rapporteur (China) under Section 3.5.2. Category Code 6. It was decided to keep the first proposal (see revised draft standard).

14. In addition, at the proposal of the Russian Federation, it was agreed to insert a new section “1.4 Adoption and Publication History (see Chicken Standard)”, to add in 3.7.2 a new indent on “water content in percentage according to 3.5.6” and to correct “0701 Backquarter” to read “Backquarter with tail”. In the Russian version of the draft Standard the word “healthy” before “animals” in “2. Minimum Requirements” was deleted.

15. The Specialized Section decided to change the English text under “1301 Head” to read “Head with tongue” and took note of three corrections to the Russian text, namely in 0203 change the current Russian translation to accurately reflect the English text “two whole wings” and “two whole legs”; in 0608 change the current Russian word for “de-boning” to “cutting”; and in 1105 last sentence insert into the Russian text “ulna and radius” which is the correct terminology in English.

16. The Specialized Section agreed to request the secretariat to present the revised version of the draft Standard for adoption by the Working Party. If required, the Russian language version of draft standard will be reviewed by the Russian delegation.

### **C. Veal meat – carcasses and cuts**

17. The Specialized Section reviewed the revised draft standard and decided to insert a new chapter “1.4 Adoption and Publication History”. The missing footnote in section 3.5.2 on the EU’s new category regulation will be inserted in the revised text. Several reminders were deleted throughout the draft and it was agreed to move reminders on codes which are in square brackets such as e.g. p.26 [allow several codes...] to a separate check list at the end of the document.

18. The Specialized Section reviewed in great detail the 2011 version of the draft standard for veal meat which contained comments from previous Rapporteurs’ meetings, revisions agreed at the 2010 meeting as well as comments from the delegations of France and the United States. All agreed changes are reflected in the revised draft standard (post-session document).

19. The Specialized Section recommended that subject to a review by its members prior to publication the secretariat present the revised version of the draft Standard for adoption by the Working Party at its next session in November 2011.

### **D. Retail meat cuts**

20. The Specialized Section discussed a modified approach for the development of the UNECE Standard for Retail Meat Cuts. This revised approach would consist of the following: identifying the most commonly traded retail meat cuts in each country so that the adoption of the standard would not be delayed; working downwards from the relevant UNECE primal cut standard to sub-primal cuts and to retail cuts which would allow having easily identifiable codes with an immediate reference to the UNECE standard; having a simple, technical description of the retail meat cuts; and including many, good pictures and diagrams. More detailed descriptions should only be added if absolutely necessary as the retail cuts would be referenced back to the initial cut codes. It was also suggested to consider reviewing the purchaser specified requirements section of the document.

21. The initial minimum set of cuts (which could be expanded as required in the future) would include all alternative denominations for the various cuts and their various names in different countries. The use of the muscle names would be the commonality between the various denominations used in the different countries. This would make it possible to trace the retail cut back to the primal cut.

22. The delegation of France stressed that although the Standard was intended for internationally traded retail meat cuts (the volume of which was still limited) France might

consider making reference to this new Standard in its national legislation. The delegation of the Russian Federation noted that it already had a list of traded retail meat cuts with descriptions and photos which could be added to the document.

23. In order to make it possible to adopt an approach inclusive of all cuts, procedures and denominations, the designated Rapporteur (United States) kindly offered to set up a web page so that the members of the Specialized Section could log into and work on a master document which would be sent to UNECE for the next session in 2012. The web-site-based working procedure and a simple methodology would allow inserting instantly information and pictures in the three UNECE languages, as well as in Spanish and Chinese. It would make it possible to access the list of cuts and their various names by clicking on a list of primal or sub-primal cuts (referenced and coded according to the relevant UNECE Standards).

## **VII. Finalization of the UNECE Standard for edible meat co-products**

24. The Specialized Section briefly reviewed the UNECE Standard for edible meat co-products and requested all delegations to send the missing pictures to the secretariat by September 2011. It was agreed that there was no need to include pictures for the various blood products. The French and the Russian language versions had to be harmonized with the English version.

## **VIII. Other business**

25. The secretary of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) previewed the October 2011 WP.6 Workshop on Traceability and invited delegates to participate in this event. Delegations emphasized the importance of traceability systems and expressed their support for the workshop. The delegation of the Russian Federation stressed its interest in work on traceability as well as in participating in and receiving more information on the event and its outcome.

26. The delegation of the Russian Federation showed a short film on “Reindeer breeding in the North of Russia” and made a presentation on reindeer production stressing the unique properties of deer meat, its ecological importance and its healthy dietary features. Venison in the Russian Federation, it was stressed, was not farmed; reindeers were grazing freely. Deer meat was exported mainly to Central Asia and Europe and particularly to Scandinavia. Given the growing importance of this meat, the delegation of the Russian Federation proposed to develop a standard for deer meat.

27. The Chair explained that in Australia and New Zealand there was deer/venison breeding for export and Australia had a standard for venison. The delegation of France supported the proposal, noting that Europe had become an important market for game meat and venison. It was therefore agreed to include the development of a Standard for Venison in the Specialized Section’s future work programme with the Russian Federation acting as Rapporteur. China suggested contacting the Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences and asking for their collaboration. Australia offered to provide the Rapporteur (Russian Federation) with their national standard.

28. The Specialized Section stressed the importance of capacity-building activities to help countries implement and apply the standards. Several delegations briefly reviewed their internal training and their ways of using, implementing or referencing UNECE standards in their work. It was noted that many UNECE meat standards or certain provisions thereof had been adopted; harmonized; worked into national legislation; certain

provisions could be referenced back to UNECE standards; or had become recommended guidelines.

29. To increase the use and implementation of the standards, training was an important component. Funding for such activities, however, remained a problem in many countries and regions. The Specialized Section enquired about the allocation of existing available funds. It expressed hope that UNECE could assign funding to capacity-building in implementation of meat standards to countries requesting such assistance.

## **IX. Revision of existing UNECE standards**

30. The Specialized Section decided to initiate the revision of the following standards over the next 12 months: chicken and turkey standard (Rapporteur – United States) with meetings in the United States, and one in the Russian Federation on chicken and turkey meat (training with the involvement of speakers) to include also Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan; Bovine and Ovine (Rapporteur Australia) with, if possible, one meeting in Argentina to include South American producers. The process will be coordinated by the secretariat; a provisional timetable will be circulated.

31. For caprine meat a possible date for revision was set for 2014. For edible co-products, duck and porcine meat revisions were not considered necessary at this point. The secretariat will contact Bolivia to enquire about the need to revise the llama/alpaca standard.

## **X. Future work**

32. The Specialized Section adopted the proposal by the delegation of the Russian Federation to develop a new draft UNECE Standard for Venison.

33. The delegation of Poland proposed to examine the possibility of developing a new standard for rabbit meat. The Specialized Section noted that trade in rabbit meat had been growing over the past years. The delegation of the United States informed the group that his country had a national standard and a grading system which would be made available to the group. The Specialized Section recognized the value of having such a standard and asked the secretariat to request delegations for the nomination of a Rapporteur or a group of Rapporteurs.

34. Delegations were reminded to send images for the Standards for edible co-products, horse, and veal meat by December 2011.

## **XI. Election of officers**

35. The Specialized Section re-elected Mr. Ian King (Australia) as Chair and Mr. Craig Morris (United States) as Vice-Chair.

## **XII. Adoption of the report**

36. The Specialized Section adopted its report.

37. The next session of the Specialized Section will take place in Geneva from 10-12 September 2012.