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Information on Rapporteurs and Expert meeting held in 2013

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Submitted by the Secretariat

The following report was prepared by the secretariat and contains a summary of the discussions held at the Meeting of the Rapporteurs on Porcine Meat, organized jointly with the Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection Poland (IJHARS) in Warsaw, Poland, from 4 to 5 July 2013.

I. Report - UNECE- Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection Poland - Meeting of Rapporteurs on Porcine Meat, Warsaw, Poland, 4 to 5 July 2013.

1. The meeting was opened by Ms. Dorota Krzyzanowska, Deputy Chief Inspector of the Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection Poland, who welcomed delegates to the Rapporteurs Meeting and pointed to the importance of keeping the Standard for Porcine Meat up to date. She also mentioned that quality has become a key aspect in international trade and it was therefore very important to have standards that reflect current trade practices. She also noted Poland's long involvement in and commitment to the work of the organizations involved in this area, i.e. WP.7 and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

2. Mr. Marian Borek, Deputy Director of Agricultural Markets Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Poland) also welcomed delegates. He, as well, stressed the importance of quality in international trade and mentioned that international meetings also served to get to know the partners who develop these standards. Implementing a standard, he underlined required substantial investment from industry – technical, training, awareness raising etc. But industry needed a common language internationally and regionally and, for traders, standards were important references. Regional markets he said, had consumers' and traders' with their own traditions, preferences, and habits, aspect, which should not be forgotten. He also previewed the technical visit to a meat processing plant scheduled to take place on the second day of the meeting..

3. Mr. Ian King, Chair of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, expressed his and the group's sincere gratitude to the organizers. He gave a presentation on the work of the group and the economic value of standards in international trade. He also reviewed the history of the Standard for Porcine Meat and stressed the responsibility of the Rapporteurs in the development and revision process of standards. Standards are only as good as the contributions received from users and regulators, he noted, and an important element in gaining consumer confidence. He also mentioned that continuity of participation was very important in standard setting and he highlighted Poland long-standing involvement in the development of this particular standard. It was not important to draft standards – they had to be reviewed and implemented, and and respond to new market realities in order to keep their relevance for trade. In the global meat trading environment, any issue in one part of the world had wide reaching implications. He also briefly reviewed recent rapporteurs meetings and noted that UNECE had developed many new meat standards over the past years.

4. The Vice-Chair of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, Mr. Craig Morris thanked the hosts and briefly reviewed recent development in trade of meat between the US and Canada. He mentioned that a new agreement between the two countries made it now possible to use harmonized names for meat cuts and ended the re-labelling of cuts which were sold from the US to Canada. Mexico had indicated its willingness to join this agreement. He noted that only international standardization and partnerships with industry made it possible to develop the most relevant and reality-based standards. He also announced that the UNECE standard for horse meat had been used as the basis for new US horse meat standards required for the newly developing horse meat industry in the US. In the United States domestic grade standards played an important role. Hence, the country's continued interest in having similar systems in place for international trade

5. Ms. Anna Janasik, introduced the Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection which was created in 2003 and celebrates 10th anniversary this year. The Inspection Agency deals

with all aspects of commercial quality control of exported goods and imported goods as well as cooperation with international organizations. She stressed that the latter was key to their work and collaboration with UNECE was a very important part of this.

6. UNECE's role in developing standards of worldwide relevance was outlined by the Secretary of the Group, Ms. L. Annovazzi-Jakab. She stressed the need to involve the private sector and welcomed the participation of public and private sector groups in this meeting. The challenges in international trade were manifold and only a consensus between the public and private sector as well as importing and exporting countries could achieve tangible results. She also expressed her sincere gratitude to the Polish organizers.

A. Review of the UNECE Standard for Porcine meat

7. Delegates reviewed in detail the provisions of the standard as well as the proposals and comments from Italy, Australia, China and Poland. The secretariat had already introduced several editorial changes and up-dated information which mirrored those agreed during the 2012 revision of four other UNECE standards.

8. In the section on production history the meeting discussed whether it would be necessary to introduce a separate category for immunocastrated animals. For clarification purposes, it was decided to add in category I "Can include immunocastrated males". In addition, as the international trade of small immature porcine had increased in recent years, the meeting added a new category 8 "male pig - immature intact porcine".

9. In the section on production systems, a new category 4 was introduced which included pigs born and raised outdoor, reading: "Production methods that are based on outdoor housing for all of their lives.

10. In section 3.6.1 "Fat thickness", the meeting agreed to include a new category "above 12mm" which now included a fat thickness more common in Asian countries.

11. In 3.7 Porcine quality systems, the meeting accepted the proposal by Poland to introduce provisions on lean meat content currently already in use in the European Union. The example given in section 4.2 was adapted accordingly. The standard was amended to include the following:

3.7.1 Porcine quality system code (data field 11 - 1 to 2)

<i>Porcine quality system code (data field 11)</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>0</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	
<i>1</i>	<i>Official standards</i>	<i>Quality classifications based on an official quality system of the exporting country</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Industry standards</i>	<i>Quality classifications based on an industry-wide quality system</i>
<i>3-8</i>	<i>Lean meat content (see 3.7.2)</i>	
<i>9</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Other quality classifications agreed between buyer and seller</i>

NOTE: Any system should meet or exceed the official quality requirements of the consuming country.

3.7.2 *Lean-meat content code (data field 11 – 3 to 8)*

The lean-meat content of the carcass shall be the percentage ratio of the total weight of the red striated muscles separated by a knife in relation to the total weight of a carcass.

The carcass/half-carcass lean-meat content - codes should be compatible with porcine category (point 3.5.2).

The methods of lean-meat content assessment shall be established by competent authority of the country of slaughter.

<i>Lean-meat content code in carcass/half-carcass</i>	<i>Lean-meat category as percentage of carcass weight</i>
3	60% or more
4	55% or more but less than 60%
5	50% or more but less than 55%
6	45% or more but less than 50%
7	40% or more but less than 45%
8	less than 40%

The lean-meat content classification relates to carcasses with hot weight of 60-120 kg.

12. The inquiry from Italy about an inclusion of a country of origin under 3.11.2 “Additional information” was noted. Given that this was currently under discussion in the EU and recommendations could come into force in 2014, it was decided to postpone a decision on this issue until the next revision of the standard. From a technical point of view and specifically a lack of space in the code, it would be difficult to include this additionally requested information on country of origin at this stage.

13. Section 5 “Carcases and Cut Descriptions”: The meeting expressed its gratitude to the delegate from China who had prepared the translation into Chinese of the multilingual index of products. The translations would be included in the revised standard. In addition, the meeting decided to include the following new cuts in the revised Standard for Porcine Meat: “Pork Rib Roasts-Pork Rack Frenched”; “Boneless pork collar-Belly roast” (proposals by Australia) as well as “Ham slices with bone” (proposal by Poland). All three cuts were presented during the study tour to the processing plant. The Rapporteurs were given the possibility to determine whether they fit better into the Standard for Porcine Meat or the new retail cut standard.

14. All agreed changes are reflected in the revised standard which will be presented to the July 2013 meeting of the UNECE Specialized Section on Meat and, once approved, submitted to the Working Party in November 2013.

B. Presentation and discussions on the new retail draft standard for retail meat cuts (beef and pork)

15. The delegate from the US provided the meeting with detailed information on the background and development history of this draft. He noted that trade in retail cuts had increased in recent years and following a request from the Specialized Section, the present document had been prepared as a separate standard. Several items were, however already included in the main standards.

16. He reviewed all cuts currently included in the draft stressing that these were the most traded items (internationally). The naming of the cuts was not always harmonized across countries, however, it was agreed that the pictures were a good reference. Electronic means will allow adding several (regional or national) denominations and translations to the cuts. In addition, it had yet to be decided whether specifications (e.g. fat trim levels) had to be included as well. The cuts which wrongly carried the name “steak” would be called either “cuts” or “portions”.

17. The description of the cuts was shorter than in other (national) reference books as the source of each cut was a UNECE Standard primal cut (described already in great detail in the main standards).

18. The meeting agreed that the present document was a good start and could always be expanded later on.

C. Study tour

19. IJHARS organized a very instructive and valuable study tour to a slaughter and processing facility in Sokolow. This plant also prepared also retail cuts and processed items for international trade. During this visit delegates were given a tour of the facility and the possibility to validate the newly proposed cuts in practice. Delegates viewed and discussed the cuts and their accurate description. Participants expressed their gratitude to the organizers and owners of the facility for their hospitality and for arranging this very much appreciated visit.
