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

Geneva, 8-10 July 2013

**Report of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat
on its Twenty-second session****I. Introduction**

1. Mr. Ian King (Australia), the Chair of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, chaired the meeting.
2. The Chief of Trade Policy and Governmental Cooperation Section, Mr. Mika Vepsäläinen, welcomed delegates and thanked them for attending even from far away countries. He expressed his gratitude to Poland for hosting the rapporteurs meeting on porcine meat which preceded the meeting of the Specialized Section. The rapporteurs meeting had been very well organized and provided attendees with the opportunity to validate the standard and newly proposed cuts in a practical setting.
3. He also welcomed the participation of private-sector delegates whose voice was very important in setting reality-based standards that reflected the latest developments in international trade. Over the past years, he noted, the Specialized Section had achieved outstanding results and also this year, the agenda showed that the workload had not diminished. He also mentioned that at the current review of the Aid for Trade process at the World Trade Organization (WTO), UNECE had organized an event on food supply chains and food security. A further event would be organized for the countries of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), during which the work of WP.7 and the implementation of standards would also be mentioned.
4. Recently, he announced, the Polish beef industry had indicated that it would translate the UNECE standard for Bovine meat into Polish to allow the use of the standard. He welcomed this as an excellent example of implementation of UNECE standards in a growing number of countries. In concluding, he wished delegates success in their work and assured them of the continued support of UNECE.
5. The Chair concurred with the secretariat on the importance of the group's work. The standards, he explained, were respected and used worldwide. It was therefore important that

this work be seen as complementary to the developments in the WTO and to the facilitation of global trade and smooth supply chains.

II. Attendance

6. Representatives of the following UN member countries attended the meeting: Australia, China, Poland, Russian Federation, and United States of America.
7. The European Union (EU) was also represented.
8. A representative from the Association of Poultry Processors and Trade in the EU (A.V.E.C.) and a representative from GS-1 Global Office also attended.

III. Adoption of the agenda

9. The Specialized Section adopted the provisional agenda.

IV. Matters of interest since the last session

A. UNECE and subsidiary bodies

10. The secretariat reported on the results of the Review of the 2005 UNECE Reform (document E/ECE/1468), noting that member States had unanimously indicated their continued satisfaction with the work on standards setting and agricultural quality standards. The meeting was also informed about the cuts to the 2014-2015 UNECE budget and their possible impact on the work of the Specialized Section. The delegates from the USA and the European Union asked for copies of the ECE report referenced above, both to justify participation in UNECE activities and encouraging other countries to attend. The secretariat explained that UNECE was the only regional commission with a mandate in standardization. Other UN bodies such as for example the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) also set standards. It was suggested that the work done by WP.7 could be presented to the other regional commission.

11. The secretariat also informed the participants about discussions on revising the Geneva Protocol and the decision taken by the Working Party at its November 2012 session to include the following provision in its working procedures: "The standards should not be revised earlier than three years after the latest revision unless there is an urgent and well-substantiated need to do so. Between the revisions, proposals that were submitted to the secretariat by countries would be considered by the specialized sections as work in progress."

12. The Chair explained that revision cycles in the meat standardization area were necessary and well established. UNECE standards, he stressed, were voluntary and implementation was within the domain of individual countries.

V. Information on Rapporteurs and Expert meetings held in 2013

13. The Chair thanked the Polish delegation for organizing a successful rapporteurs meeting and study tour to a meat processing facility prior to the session in Geneva. The Polish delegation expressed their gratitude to attendees for their active participation. The

comments and changes agreed in Warsaw had already been incorporated into the revised Standard for Porcine meat and were outlined during the review of the Standard.

VI. 2013 Revision of UNECE Standards

A. Porcine meat - carcasses and cuts

14. The secretariat led the meeting through the proposed changes introduced during the rapporteurs meeting in Poland. Lengthy discussion took place in the section on refrigeration. The delegation of Poland proposed to harmonize this section with provisions on other recently revised standards. However, it was recalled that not all provisions could automatically be carried over from the standards for small animals to those for larger species. Chilling regimes varied between the species. In addition, it was also clarified that conditions during transport were not the same as those post-slaughter, and that the current standards covered the latter and not transport conditions. In addition, a lowering of the temperature of chilled product from -1.5 degrees C to 2 degrees C could bring it into a range where case-hardening (frost) occurred. It was therefore decided to leave the current temperatures (of not less than -1.5 degrees C or more than +7 degrees C).

15. After discussions and explanations, the meeting accepted the following proposed amendments to 3.5.2 Porcine category: addition of “can include immunocastrated males” in category 1; and a new category 8 “male pigs – immature intact porcine”. The meeting also adopted the inclusion of provisions on lean meat content, already in place in the European Union and the Russian Federation. The hot carcass weight range covered was expanded to between 50 and 150 kg to reflect what was traded on international markets. A footnote was added to explain that EU legislation covered the range between 60 and 120 KG.

16. The meeting also accepted the inclusion of three new cuts (pork slices with bone; pork rib roasts/pork rack frenched; and boneless pork collar-belly roast). The cut description of the pork slices with bone was altered and the description of the pork rib roast was shortened. At a request by China, the specification “skin removed” was added to the carcass side 4001.

17. The meeting decided to submit the revised Standard for approval by the Working Party and for subsequent publication on the Internet.

B. Codification system and reference addresses

18. The secretariat reviewed the list of reference addresses (open for amendments) for the meat and poultry meat sectors, and explained that these, together with the codification system, were now a separate reference document, and no longer included in the annexes of the individual standards. China was added to the meat reference list.

19. The representative from GS1 reviewed in detail the new reference document on codification systems which GS1 had up-dated and amended to include new and more accurate information on technologies currently in use such as GDSN, EPCIS, or the GS1 DataBar for fresh meat. He explained the rationale behind each inclusion, their added value and the way they worked in practice. He also outlined the new up-dated graphics and examples. In reply to a question from the US delegate, the representative from GS1 noted that in the current horse meat scandal, bar codes had not played a prominent role. Misinformation on components of e.g. burgers was cases of mislabelling and the wrong information could not be found in the GDSN. However, in the future, with e.g. GS1's DataBar it would be possible to initiate speedier recalls. He also explained the data used in

example 1 and their relationship with UNECE's codes. Further information would be provided to the secretariat.

20. The Chair thanked GS1 for this contribution and stressed that this document was now a generic reference document for addresses and codification systems.

VII. Proposal for new UNECE standards

A. Rabbit meat

21. The Rapporteur (China) reviewed the proposed new draft standard which contained comments from Spain as well as the USA. It was decided to amend the first phrase of the "mandatory requirements" to add the reference to official approval and control. In the section on "refrigeration", the meeting added the category and description of "deeply chilled", (as in the revised poultry standards) with the footnote "also known as super chilled". In section 3 "production systems", the meeting accepted the proposal by Spain for category 3, namely "Conventional- Rabbits are raised in cages indoors". In section 3.5.5., delegates added "kosher, and in section 3.5.6, the chilling system code 3 for "air spray". In section 3.7.1, the meeting included the "date of slaughtering" and the "date of minimum durability according to the legislation of the importing country".

22. It was also decided to add a new full carcass cut (code 0101) with the relevant cut description and specifications; and to amend the specifications for the former 0101 carcass (now 0102); and for the former 0102 (now 0103) side.

23. The meeting decided to submit the current draft to the Working Party for adoption as a new UNECE Standard for Rabbit Meat and for subsequent publication on the Internet.

B. Processed Poultry meat

24. The Rapporteur (USA) reviewed the proposed new draft. At the request of the delegate from Russia the meeting decided to expand the title to read "Draft standard for processed poultry meat including ready-to-cook preparations and ready-to-eat products". The meeting also added a section on definitions (Section 1.3) of batter, breading, binder, casing, herbs, mechanically separated meat, patty, spices, and vegetables.

25. Lengthy discussions took place on the scope of the minimum requirements, i.e. if they adequately covered both the raw meat and the processed products and preparations. To clarify this issue, it was decided to add that "processed poultry meat items must originate from poultry meat that meets the following conditions: (listed)".

26. The meeting took note that maximum residue limits (MRLs) were regulated by the importing country. He, therefore, added a generic reference to chemical residue level regulations of the importing country as well as a reference to foreign material under 2. Minimum requirements. To clarify that the requested specifications and items contained in tables 3.5.2 to 3.5.7 had to be determined between buyer and seller prior to the purchase of the products and preparations, it was agreed to add the following introduction: "Subject to purchaser requirements, the set of items found in tables 3.5.2 to 3.5.7 should be negotiated before the acquisition of the processed poultry meat, including ready-to-cook preparations and ready-to-eat products."

27. In 3.7.1 "Labelling requirements (mandatory information)", discussions took place on the "percentage of additional water". In the EU, it was explained, labelling was mandatory when the water content reached levels above 5 per cent. It was therefore agreed

to keep this provision and amend it to read: “percentage of additional water conforming to the requirements of the importing country”. It was also decided to add cooking recommendations to the mandatory information.

28. The term “country of origin” mentioned in 3.7.2, it was explained, referred to the country of origin of the processed product. It was only considered necessary to indicate the source countries of the processed products if they included several countries. The product claims which referred exclusively to raw meat were therefore removed.

29. The meeting reviewed the commonly traded items. It was suggested to keep the same format for all products and preparation descriptions and add each time the source meat. The delegate from Russia noted that the proposed draft included mostly ready-to-eat products and not many ready-to-cook products. In addition, he felt that although the raw materials were well covered, the draft lacked information on processing methods, coding and classifications. He considered it necessary to add definitions for e.g. “glazed, smoked, thermo processed, etc.” This would introduce more clarity into the standard and help international trade.

30. It was stressed that the document was an excellent basis but some further work was needed on defining certain parameters. The Rapporteur agreed to working with the Russian and other delegations to include the definitions of the processing methods and the codes. The Russian and the Chinese delegation would provide possible definitions to the Rapporteur with a copy to the secretariat.

31. The Specialised Section adopted the document and agreed to submit it to the Working Party for adoption as a new standard provided that a revised document (which would address the open coding and description of processes issues) would be sent to the secretariat by the deadline of 22 August 2013. Once adopted as a new Standard, the document would be published on the Internet.

C. Deer meat

32. The Rapporteur (Russia) outlined the changes introduced in the proposed draft since the 2012 session. Deer meat was attributed species code 20. Delegates agreed with the changes but decided that it was necessary to list the species covered by the standard in the scope of the document. This would clearly acknowledge the variety of deer species covered by the standard. The scope was amended to read “This Standard recommends an international language for raw (unprocessed) deer carcasses and cuts of all deer species (for example reindeer, roe deer, moose and other) marketed as fit for human consumption.”

33. Owing to the specificity of the deer carcass, the Rapporteur noted, some cuts were different from other species’. In the English language version, the wrong cut name - “haunch” (9111) was changed to “leg long cut” (a cut also included in the standard for porcine meat) throughout the draft standard.

34. It was decided that the document with the adopted changes would be submitted to the Working Party for adoption as a new UNECE Standard for deer meat. The Rapporteur would send to the secretariat pictures for inclusion in the final Internet publication by the end of 2013.

D. Retail meat cuts

35. The proposed new draft was reviewed by the Rapporteur (USA). He explained the approach used in the present document, which constituted a simplified version of the draft presented some years ago. It included the most popular, internationally traded cuts. At the

rapporteurs meeting in Warsaw, the document had already been reviewed and questions about the use of simplified descriptions had been raised. The Rapporteur explained that the source cut (included in the UNECE main standards) already gave much detail. In addition, it was not possible to cover all regionally popular items or denominations. Simplified names together with pictures were considered sufficient at this stage. More photos could be inserted, if required, and, eventually, in the electronic version more names and translations could be added. The present document was a starting point and could be expanded in due course. The meeting agreed that the included items were the currently most traded cuts.

36. Russia noted that that this standard covered expensive cuts which should comply with certain requirements. The Rapporteur explained that the referenced UNECE source code or the cut duplicates (included in both standards) already conformed to specific parameters included in the main standards. To highlight this in the new Standard, a new scope section (introductory part) was added, which referred the user back to the main standards, and makes the retail cut standard a logical continuation of the main standards without having to elaborate on the subject in more detail. The Specialized Section also included sections on “application” and “adoption and publication history” in the introductory part.

37. Several amendments and changes were also made in the list of cuts. In addition, it was decided to place the UNECE source code of the cuts more prominently in the heading of each cut. Those cuts that were in both, the retail cut standard and the main standards would be given the heading “replicates the UNECE source code...” The term “steak”, whenever not applicable, was replaced by “portion cut”.

38. The Specialized Section decided that the draft with the accepted changes would be submitted to the Working Party for adoption as a new UNECE Standard for Retail Meat cuts and for subsequent publication on the Internet.

VIII. Periodic revision of existing UNECE Standards

39. The Specialized Section agreed that in the coming year the Standard for Edible Meat Co-products (adopted in 2008) would be up-dated (Rapporteur USA). Australia supported this initiative and offered their help. It was not considered necessary to revise the standards for Lama-Alpaca meat and for Caprine meat.

40. The delegate of China (Rapporteur duck meat) proposed to organize a meeting in China on the revision of the standard for duck meat (adopted in 2008) as well as goose meat and a demonstration of the standard for rabbit meat.

IX. Future work

41. The Specialized Section welcomed the invitation by China to host a rapporteurs meeting on duck, goose, and rabbit meat in 2014. The venue, date and programme of the meeting would be communicated at a later stage.

42. In addition to the revision of the Standard for Edible Co-products, the Specialized Section also agreed to start working on adding veal and lamb cuts to the new retail meat cuts standard.

43. Delegates agreed that it was necessary to educate and inform more about the work of the group and decided to reflect on ways to increase participation and broaden the scope of the group’s work. Capacity-building, awareness-raising, promotion of the standards and increasing the Group’s visibility, were suggested as possibilities for areas of work. The Russian delegate informed the Specialized Section about a scheduled project on traceability

as part of the implementation of the UNECE standards for poultry meat in the Russian poultry sector.

44. The US delegate suggested inviting ISO, Codex and more private-sector representatives to the next meeting in 2014. The Specialized Section agreed that this meeting could be a demonstration and promotion meeting. A draft programme would be developed shortly.

X. Other business

45. Responding to a question on project funding, the Chief of the Trade Policy and Governmental Cooperation Section explained that the Committee on Trade at its February 2014 session would examine a matrix of on-going or proposed new projects (with or without secured funding). He suggested that the Specialized Section submit via WP.7 a list of projects. The Chair welcomed this move towards more transparency in the allocation of funds.

46. The delegate from Poland remarked that the terms and descriptions included in the standards should be harmonized and used in a more consistent way whenever possible and reasonable. The secretariat was asked to review the standards keeping this in mind (including new, revised and older standards).

47. The Specialized Section asked UNECE to consider addressing a request to the new Director General of the European Commission's DG Agriculture, for presenting the work of UNECE at the relevant EU meetings.

XI. Election of officers

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

XII. Adoption of the report

49. The Specialized Section adopted the report on its twenty-second session (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.11/2013/2). The next meeting of the Specialized Section will take place from 19 to 21 May 2014.
