



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
24 August 2016

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

**Specialized Section on Standardization
of Seed Potatoes**

Forty-third session

Geneva, 31 August (pm) – 2 September 2016

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Update on risk-based inspection methods

Update on risk-based inspection methods *

The following document contains an update provided by the delegations of the Netherlands on risk-based inspection methods. It is presented to the Specialized Section for review and discussion.

* Submitted on the date indicated to include the most recent information.

I. Risk-based tuber inspections

A. Introduction

The UNECE seed potato standard indicates a minimum sampling intensity: *“Tuber samples, representative for the lot, shall be taken at a minimum rate of 20 kg for each 10,000 kg and may be collected either during grading or from at least two containers.”*

Seed producing countries expectedly, in one way or the other, will comply with this minimum sampling intensity. However, we have to respond to the rapidly changing world with respect to production, professionalization, legislation (e.g. future Plant Health and Control regulation), such as:

- Pressure to control cost, or even to reduce inspection costs.
- ‘Progressive’ producers demand more responsibility (and less control).
- A growing grading capacity (> 100 tons a day).
- Professional administrative (information) systems on farms.
- Seed companies collect data sets (yield, quality, etc.), which could effectively be used by inspection bodies.

B. Challenges

Modernisation of inspection systems and procedures is an on-going process (standards, disease and pest control, new lab technologies, data processing, etc.).

Up to now, company licencing for seed potato inspection is a bridge too far. Customers, particularly importing countries, rely on official (field and lot) inspections. IPPC provisions (official inspections) apply to international trade. Future EU legislation however, will facilitate (some form of) licencing. This will by definition be limited to intra EU trade. Having official inspections as the fundamental rule, forms of (information and) risk-based inspections enable more effective and cost efficient inspection procedures.

C. Goals of risk-based (tuber) inspections

- Increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- Control and, if possible, reduce inspection costs.
- Increase awareness among producers for their responsibility for seed quality.

D. Risk-based - system options

Below are three principal options, all with an official inspection at minimum intensity as a basis, suggested for discussion:

1. Accreditation of producers, according to officially accepted accreditation schemes (as for EU fodder crop producers). This option requires substantial regulatory input, administrative procedures, checks, etc.
2. Categorization of producers, based on (long term) inspection results, customer complaints and seed company information. This option requires big data (historical inspection results) and contains arbitrary elements (category definitions).

3. Producer participation. Growers who want to qualify for a 'minimum inspection' scheme are responsible for the initial quality assessment. They shall enter their seed quality observations in the official inspection database (IT systems must be ready for this). Seed lots which are scored substantially below tolerance, are eligible for a minimum (official) inspection intensity. Seed lots close to tolerance will be officially inspected at the regular intensity. Based on a one or two season experience, the seed lot approach may be changed into a producer approach (all seed lots yes/no at minimum intensity). This option requires active participation of producers, resulting in quality responsibility awareness. Also information from seed companies is considered useful input.
