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Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization
of Seed Potatoes

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True Potato Seed

Draft statement on True Potato Seed and its breeding technology*

The following draft statement on True Potato Seed and its breeding technology was submitted by the delegation from the United Kingdom as a basis for discussion by the members of the Working Group (Australia, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States) and the Specialized Section.

* Submitted on the above date due to delayed inputs.

The position of the Specialized Section on True Potato Seed

- Currently commercial trading of propagative material of potatoes for the purpose of commercial planting is through the marketing of seed potato tubers. Small volumes of potatoes are also traded as microplants and mini/microtubers, particularly early-generation material intended for further multiplication or for the purposes of moving high-health status potato propagative material between territories. Thus the material being marketed is clonally propagated potatoes where the progeny is genetically identical to the preceding generation. The UNECE standard covers this trade.
- Trade in True Potato Seed (TPS), also known as botanical seed, has been limited due to non-uniformity of the progeny crops derived from TPS. However, in recent years several plant breeding companies are advancing knowledge and techniques in the production of TPS which provides for much more uniform progeny. This has culminated in the first ever F1 hybrid potato variety “Oliver” being granted plant breeder’s rights in the Netherlands in 2017.
- The UNECE Specialized Section recognizes the potential merits of marketing TPS to growers outside the established potato supply chains whose production is based on horticultural methods, particularly, in developing countries.
- The UNECE standard does not currently cover TPS within its scope and the Specialized Section will consider whether and how to bring the trade of TPS within the scope of the standard in its future work programme.
