

Chairman's summary

Informal discussions - Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

1 August 2019 – Potsdam, Germany (Meat Quality for a Sustainable Future)

Items placed on the 2019 agenda 2019

Item 1 UNECE Standards and their implementation and utilization worldwide.

The Chair of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, Mr. Ian King (Australia) introduced the work of the Specialized Section highlighting the role and importance of the meat standards and the eating quality work. He noted that UNECE standards for meat provided trust, facilitated fair international trade, prevented technical barriers to trade, defined common trading language for seller and buyers, promoted high quality sustainable production and created market transparency for buyers and consumer. International best practice, standards, guides and training can help countries to ensure consistent quality and establish trusted and sustainable trade relations. The fast-evolving work on eating quality initiated in 2014 has led to the first training sessions for Chiller Assessors this year in Europe (Wales and France). He also explained that the UNECE held regular training sessions, technical meetings and symposia on emerging issues.

He also provided an update on the use of the standards by countries in the UNECE region and beyond and stressed the role of the standards and the included cut descriptions in the international trade and control of meat traded worldwide. **In order to broaden the overview of countries using UNECE standards for meat, countries were invited to report to the secretariat on their use of the UNECE cut descriptions.**

Item 2 Proposal to develop a UNECE marketing/quality standard for fish meat

The discussion on the possible development of marketing standards for fish meat was introduced by the UNECE secretariat represented by Ms. Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab which highlighted the following:

- Existence of a Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP -adjourned sine die but operating electronically) with many standards for various fish species (see Annex)
- Existence of regional standards – e.g. EU (see Annex)
- Existence of national standards

Prior to this meeting, the UNECE secretariat had initiated consultations with members states and experts. During these consultations some countries had expressed their strong interested in developing such standards, others had opposed it (pointing to the existence of standards listed above), and a third group had been undecided.

She also stressed that any new work required the establishment of a new group of fish experts, with countries and designated Rapporteurs driving this work. In addition, the scope of the work, i.e. which species, wild or aquaculture fish needed to be defined.

In ensuing discussions, participants noted that there were also widely used industry standards in addition to the ones listed by the secretariat. It was also pointed out that more information needed to be collected on the challenges inspectors and industry were facing, including the naming and

description issues. Furthermore, it was also suggested that the ramifications of developing UNECE fish meat standards should be examined.

As a way forward, it was suggested that the UNECE secretariat contact the Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to obtain more information on the exiting Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products and to explore possible collaboration.

It was also suggested that the secretariat send out a note and a short questionnaire to the Working Party members, already identified fish experts and relevant authorities, to inquire about their need to develop a marketing standard for the international trade of fish meat with the emphasis on quality as opposed to food safety, and obtain information on:

- sourcing- scope (wild or/and aquaculture)
- species
- volume exported or imported (if relevant)
- decision to develop a quality/marketing standard for the international trade of fish meat (yes/no)
- if pro development, how could the authority contribute to the development of a UNECE quality/marketing standard for the international trade of fish meat.

Item 3 Aligning the UNECE cut codes with HS codes

Several participants reported on the problems and challenges they faced when including detailed descriptions of meat cuts into the much less detailed HS coding system used by customs. It was pointed out that in practice, most of the not included cuts were added to HS code “Others”.

While some participants stressed that it was very difficult to align the very well-functioning and widely used international trade codes defined by UNECE into less defined HS codes. Alignments might even impose additional burden and adjustment costs on operators and inspectors.

Other participants noted that this could be done through the linking of the two codes instead of an alignment. Such an exercise, it was stressed, required the collaboration of all parties including customs authorities.

It was therefore decided that more information was needed before any decision could be taken. It was recommended that a subgroup would be established to lead this work including a representative from a customs agency to assist with scoping a potential project. The Specialized Section would be informed in due course.

Item 4 UNECE standard for ovine meat – update by Australia

The Chair of the UNECE Specialized Section provided an update on recent amendments to the Australian Standard for ovine meat. He showed an explanatory video on the adoption by Australia of a new definition of “lamb” which so far had been following the wording of the UNECE standard. The new definition deviates slightly in determining dentition from the UNECE standard (see <https://youtu.be/3UkKyfsWNWg>)

Annex

1. Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) – existing standards

CXC 52-2003	Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products
CXG 31-1999	Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories
CXG 48-2004	Model Certificate for Fish and Fishery Products
CXS 3-1981	Standard for Canned Salmon
CXS 36-1981	Standard for Quick Frozen Finfish, Uneviscerated and Eviscerated
CXS 37-1991	Standard for Canned Shrimps or Prawns
CXS 70-1981	Standard for Canned Tuna and Bonito
CXS 90-1981	Standard for Canned Crab Meat
CXS 92-1981	Standard for Quick Frozen Shrimps or Prawns
CXS 94-1981	Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products
CXS 95-1981	Standard for Quick Frozen Lobsters
CXS 119-1981	Standard for Canned Finfish
CXS 165-1989	Standard for Quick Frozen Blocks of Fish Fillets, Minced Fish Flesh and Mixtures of Fillets and Minced Fish Flesh
CXS 166-1989	Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Sticks (Fish Fingers), Fish Portions and Fish Fillets - Breaded or in Batter
CXS 167-1989	Standard for Salted Fish and Dried Salted Fish of the Gadidae Family of Fishes
CXS 189-1993	Standard for Dried Shark Fins
CXS 190-1995	Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Fillets
CXS 191-1995	Standard for Quick Frozen Raw Squid
CXS 222-2001	Standard for Crackers from Marine and Freshwater Fish, Crustaceans and Molluscan Shellfish
CXS 236-2003	Standard for Boiled Dried Salted Anchovies
CXS 244-2004	Standard for Salted Atlantic Herring and Salted Sprat
CXS 291-2010	Standard for Sturgeon Caviar
CXS 292-2008	Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs
CXS 302-2011	Standard for Fish Sauce
CXS 311-2013	Standard for Smoked Fish, Smoke-Flavoured Fish and Smoke-Dried Fish
CXS 312-2013	Standard for Live Abalone and for Raw Fresh Chilled or Frozen Abalone for Direct Consumption or for further Processing
CXS 315-2014	Standard for Fresh and Quick Frozen Raw Scallop Products

2. EU Legislation

- Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the common organization of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products. Annex I – List of products

(1) Council Regulation (EEC) No 2136/89 common marketing standards for preserved sardines and trade descriptions for preserved sardines and sardine-type products (OJ L 212, 22.7.1989, p. 79).

(2) Council Regulation (EEC) No 1536/92 common marketing standards for preserved tuna and bonito (OJ L 163, 17.6.1992, p. 1).

(3) Council Regulation (EC) 2406/96 common marketing standards for certain fishery products (OJ L 334, 23.12.1996, p. 1).

(4) Commission Regulation (EEC) No 3703/85 detailed rules for applying the common marketing standards for certain fresh or chilled fish (OJ L 351, 28.12.1985, p. 63).