

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2b)

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
Twenty-second Session

MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

This document is divided into two parts:

- Part I refers to Activities of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards since the last session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables; and
- Part II refers to Activities of the Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables since the last Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetable.

PART I: UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)

Activities of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards since the last session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

1. During the past two and a half years, the work under the Working Party has focused on:
 - I. Revising existing standards and helping countries keep quality along the entire food supply chain
 - II. Food loss and waste prevention and reduction through: the adoption of Minimum Quality Specifications for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables as well as the development of the following tools: (i) a UNECE Code of Good Practice: reducing food loss and ensuring optimum handling of fresh fruit and vegetables along the value chain; (ii) a UNECE food loss and waste measuring methodology for fresh produce supply chains; and (iii) a smart food loss/waste management system for identifying, quantifying, and tracing food lost in supply chains (FeedUP@UN).
 - III. Intensified collaboration on food loss and waste prevention and related topics with FAO and other international and national stakeholders.

Adoption of standards

2. The Working Party's standardization work resulted in:

75th Working Party session (19-21 November 2019, [ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2019/2](https://www.unece.org/trade/agr/wp7/FFV-2019-2)):

- Adoption of the revised UNECE standards for Annonas; Avocado; Berry fruit; Broccoli; Cauliflower; Cherries; Onions; Root and Tubercle Vegetables; Table Grapes; and Watermelon, .
- Adoption of the UNECE Code of Good Practice for reducing food loss in handling fruit and vegetables.

Informal virtual consultations of the Working Party (16-17 November 2020), and following intersessional approval procedure:

- Adoption of the revised UNECE standards for Headed Cabbages; Persimmons; Sweet Peppers; and Table Grapes.
- Adoption of the update of lists of varieties (standards for Apples, Pears, Plums).
- Adoption of the Minimum Quality Specifications for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.

76th Working Party session (15-17 November 2021, [ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2021/2](https://www.unece.org/trade/agr/wp7/FFV-2021-2)):

- Adoption of new UNECE standard for Pomegranates, and revised UNECE standards for Apricots; Carrots; Cauliflower; Chinese Cabbage; Cucumbers; Fresh Figs; Strawberries; and Watermelons.
- Adoption of the revised Standard Layout for UNECE Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.
- Noting of the revised (second edition) of the UNECE Code of Good Practice - Reducing Food Loss and Ensuring Optimum Handling of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Along the Value Chain, developed by an ad-hoc drafting group chaired by Sweden.

3. For further information on the above and the texts of the UNECE standards, please refer to the following web pages: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/welcome.html> and <https://unece.org/trade/wp7/FFV-Standards>

Explanatory brochures and posters

4. In 2021, the Working Party adopted the explanatory brochure for dried apricots, as well as explanatory posters for walnut kernels, dried figs, dried grapes, and prunes.

Studies

5. A joint UNECE/OECD study analysing the impact of agricultural quality standards on the trade of fruit and vegetables is currently underway. The preliminary results were presented at the 76th session of the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards in November 2021, and the final results will be reviewed at the 70th session of the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables in May 2022.

Capacity-building and promotion

6. Apart from its five regular annual meetings with an annual attendance of 250 experts from United Nations Member States (UNECE and beyond), due to the COVID-19 pandemic only a limited number of capacity-building and promotional events were able to be held over the past two and a half years.

Part I - UNECE

- UNECE – FAO Conference on Food (Waste) for Thought - Food loss/waste and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 20 November 2019
- UNECE workshop/expert panel on Food waste reloaded for inclusive agri-trade supply chains, 16-17 January 2020
- Webinar on eQuality Certificates – the next steps, 2 and 10 June 2020
- UNECE and the Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Sustainable Food Systems – The sustainable food systems approach to address food security, nutrition and health risks: Sharing tools and practical solutions, 9 September 2020
- Roundtable on Food for partnerships: sustainable, resilient and climate-proof food supply chains, 16 November 2020
- UNECE and Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Sustainable Food Systems (FAO, WFP, WHO, UNICEF, UNECE, WMO) 2nd webinar - Food Systems Summit 2021 and technical session, 16 December 2020
- Regional Training Workshop on Sustainable Walnut Quality, 7-8 September 2021
- Participation in UNCTAD workshop on Trading Food for Sustainable Development, 24-25 November 2021, to present UNECE work.

7. Moreover, with funding from COVID-19 response project to support the resilience of small-, and medium enterprises, the secretariat is also working to develop an online training on agricultural quality and food loss and waste, expected to be launched in the first half of 2022.

Upcoming regular Meetings in 2022 (Geneva, Switzerland, and online)

- Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes, 49th session: 17-18 March 2022
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, 70th session: 16-18 May 2022
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce, 69th session: 15-17 June 2022
- Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat, 30th session: 28-30 September 2022
- Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, 77th session: 15-17 November 2022

8. For further information on UNECE's work on agricultural quality standards, please contact Marit Nilnes and Kamola Khusnutdinova at the Agricultural Standards Unit, UNECE, Geneva, Switzerland (nilsesm@un.org, kamola.khusnutdinova@un.org)

PART II: ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

Activities of the Scheme for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables since the last Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

1. The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme provides a complete and internationally harmonised export quality inspection system for member countries. The mutual recognition of inspections is strengthened through implementation of peer reviews on national quality inspection systems, organisation of meetings for the heads of national inspection services and workshops for the inspectors. Frequent meetings also allow for a comprehensive dialogue amongst stakeholders in reviewing and elaborating the OECD standards' interpretation, as well as defining inspection procedures.
2. The Scheme is well known for its explanatory brochures on standards. Currently there are 34 explanatory brochures and new material is added each year.
3. The Scheme has approved two new Explanatory Brochures based on CODEX standards (to be published in 2022) and is currently working on two new brochures:
 - Explanatory Brochure on Passion Fruit, Rapporteur-> Kenya [CODEX Standard] - **approved**
 - Explanatory Brochure on Green Bananas, Rapporteur -> Spain [CODEX Standard] - **approved**
 - Explanatory Brochure on Papaya, Rapporteur -> Brazil [CODEX Standard] - ongoing
 - Explanatory Brochure on Cauliflower, Rapporteur-> Hungary [UNECE Standard] – ongoing
4. The Scheme has approved the following electronic updates of brochures:
 - Explanatory Brochure on Table Grapes [UNECE Standard]
 - Explanatory Brochure on Apricots [UNECE Standard]
 - Explanatory Brochure on Cucumbers [UNECE Standard]
 - Explanatory Brochure on Potatoes [UNECE Standard]

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

5. The OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme is open to any OECD or non-OECD country that is a member of the United Nations, or of the World Trade Organisation. There is also close co-operation with the UN family especially the FAO, WHO, UNECE, and UNESCAP as well as non-governmental and farmer organisations.
6. **Croatia and Slovenia** joined the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme on February 2021 and 2022 respectively, which set the number of participating countries to 28: **Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.**
7. The OECD Secretariat invited Kazakhstan and Costa Rica as observers.

OECD FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SCHEME MEETINGS

8. Since the 79th Plenary Meeting in December 2020, the following REMOTE meetings (with Zoom connection) of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme took place:

Produce Working Group:

- 1-2 June 2021
- 1 December 2021 (hybrid format)

Ad-hoc working group on eLearning (excluding smaller implementation meetings involving fewer participants)

- 27 January 2021
- 12 February 2021

Sub-Working Group on the development of guidelines for the implementation of quality controls in case of pandemics and other disruptive events

- 29 March 2021
- 28 April 2021
- 19 May 2021
- 23 June 2021
- 8 September 2021
- 20 October 2021

And 80th Plenary Meeting (December 2021)

MISSIONS AND OTHER MEETINGS

9. Since the 79th Plenary Meeting, the OECD participated in the following REMOTE events:
- 33rd International Meeting on Quality Control of Fruit and Vegetables, Bonn, Germany, 16-18 March 2021
 - Sixty-ninth session of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, hosted from Geneva, Switzerland, an on-line and hybrid format, on 7-9 June 2021
 - Joint webinar COLEACP-OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme on Fruit and Vegetables industry: market trends and prospects of a dynamic sector. It was the first of a series of webinars that COLEACP and the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme are organising to celebrate the 2021 UN Fruit and Vegetables Year.
 - 21st ITC Harmonization Meeting of the Fruit and Vegetables Quality Assessment, Mojmírovce, Slovak Republic, 16-17 September 2021. The OECD sent one staff in-person and had one other one participating remotely.
 - Seventy-sixth session of the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7), hosted from Geneva, Switzerland, 15-17 November 2021. The OECD sent one staff in-person and had one other one attending remotely.

PEER REVIEWS

10. The Scheme regularly undertakes Peer Reviews on national fruit and vegetables quality inspection systems on a voluntary basis, to examine and assess its performance by experts from other countries under the umbrella of the OECD. The ultimate goal is to help improve policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established international standards and principles. The OECD Scheme undertook a Peer Review on the Kenyan fruit and vegetables quality inspection system. A final report is now available on our webpage: <http://www.oecd.org/agriculture/fruit-vegetables/>

11. A new Peer Review on the German inspection system was delayed due to the pandemic, but is now expected to be conducted in 2022.

GUIDELINES

12. The scheme also develops and updates guidelines for fruit and vegetables inspectors. This helps harmonise interpretation and enhance trade amongst member countries. The following guideline and recommendations are available from the official website of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme free of charges:

- Quality Inspection (2018)
- Recommendation of the OECD FVS Scheme on the verification of the country of origin (2018)
- Objective tests to determine quality of Fruit and Vegetables (updated 2018)
- Notification of Non-conformity
- Risk Analysis
- Inspector's trainings
- Guidelines for the implementation of quality controls in the event of pandemics and other disruptive events

MEETINGS OF HEADS OF NATIONAL INSPECTION SERVICES

13. The Scheme also holds Meetings of Heads of National Inspection Services (HNIS) of its Members Countries every two years. The objective of these meetings is triple: to facilitate discussions between inspection services on major problems, developments and challenges in the fruit and vegetables sector and quality inspection system; to share and harmonise the application of the OECD Scheme; and to present developments in the fruit and vegetables sector and quality inspection system in the Host Country. The proceedings are available upon request. The latest HNIS meeting was hosted by Spain in May 2018 and the Codex Secretariat attended as Observer. The next Meeting will be hosted by Brazil, tentatively in 2022.

Contact

14. For further information on OECD's work, please contact Jose Brambila, Programme Manager, Trade and Agriculture Directorate, Codes and Schemes, 2 rue André Pascal - 75016 Paris, France (Jose.Brambila@oecd.org)