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COUNCIL

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Council

**DECISION REVISING THE OECD "SCHEME" FOR THE APPLICATION OF  
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

**(adopted by the Council on 8 April 1999 [C/M(99)8] under the written procedure)**

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THE COUNCIL,

Having regard to Article 5 a) and c) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

Having regard to the Decision of the Council, of 18 December 1992, revising the OECD "Scheme" for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables, hereinafter called the "Decision" [C(92)184/FINAL];

Having regard to the standards for fruit and vegetables adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe;

Noting the benefits resulting from the implementation of the OECD "Scheme" for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables and, in particular, the explanatory brochures published on the authority of the Secretary-General with a view to facilitating the common interpretation of standards in force, by both the quality control services and professional bodies responsible for the application of standards or interested in the international trade in these products, which are a unique and original contribution to the expansion of international trade of fruit and vegetables;

On the proposal of the Committee for Agriculture;

I. DECIDES:

1. The OECD "Scheme" for the Application of International Standards for Fruit and Vegetables (hereinafter called the "Scheme") is revised pursuant to the provisions of this Decision.

2. The "Scheme" has as its primary objectives:

- to promote the establishment of one single international grade standard setting body and,
- in the interim, to facilitate the implementation and harmonisation of international grade standards activities. Hence, the "Scheme" shall:
  - a) facilitate the international harmonisation and adaptation of grade standards, standardisation of packaging and development of palletisation to present production, trade and marketing conditions;
  - b) review the operation and progress of its activities at Plenary Meetings of the national representatives appointed by their Governments to be responsible for its implementation (hereafter called the "Plenary Meeting");
  - c) promote uniform quality control procedures and the use of the model control certificate;
  - d) set up meetings of officers in charge of national quality control services;
  - e) propose new standards and revisions to those which are the subject of Annex I to this Decision;
  - f) develop the "Scheme's" operational guidelines;

- g) study conditions and quality assurance operations, taking into account new methods of marketing, to ensure consumer interest in product quality is addressed.

3. The "Scheme" may establish Produce Working Groups, which are subsidiary bodies of the Plenary Meeting for the development and preparation of explanatory guidelines for the various standards.

4. The standards adopted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, once approved by the Plenary Meeting, shall be applied under the "Scheme" to the products specified in Annex I to this Decision, at the export stage, when these products enter into international trade between countries participating in the "Scheme".

5. Each time a new standard is approved, each country participating in the "Scheme" willing to conform thereto shall inform the Secretary-General within a period of six months. Once a standard has been approved, participating countries willing to conform thereto may inform the Secretary-General at any time.

6. The Secretary-General shall bring to the attention of participating countries of the "Scheme" all notifications and information conveyed within the framework of the "Scheme".

7. Participating countries are obliged to establish within three years of joining the Scheme, an export quality control of the produce in accordance with the guidelines set out in Annex II of this Decision, by virtue of which they participate in the Scheme.

8. Participation in the "Scheme" shall be open to any member of the United Nations or one of its specialised agencies or the World Trade Organisation which desire to participate therein as regards all or some of the produce concerned and is willing, as an exporting country, to conform with the standards referred to in paragraph 4 and, as an importing country, to recognise them as standards which are to be applied to exported fruit and vegetables produced in the country of origin. Any country desiring to participate in the "Scheme" shall notify the Secretary-General indicating the institution responsible for quality control and a contact person.

9. Any participating country can withdraw from the "Scheme" by giving no less than twelve months' notice in writing to the Secretary-General.

10. The Secretariats of the:

- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe,
- Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme of the United Nations,
- Confederation of Importers and Marketing Organisations in Europe of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (CIMO),
- Liaison Committee for Mediterranean Citrus Fruit Culture (CLAM),
- Liaison Committee for the Promotion of Tropical Fruits and Out-of-Season Vegetables derived from ACP Countries (COLEACP),
- European Union of the Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale, Import and Export Trade (EUCOFEL),

shall be invited to be represented as observers at the Plenary Meeting and its Produce Working Groups.

11. Other International Organisations or Non Governmental Organisations which have responsibilities in the sector covered by the "Scheme" may be invited to designate an ad-hoc observer or an expert to sessions of the Plenary Meetings of the "Scheme" or its Produce Working Groups.

12. Sessions of the Plenary Meeting and its Produce Working Groups may take place in any participating country of the "Scheme". If the meetings take place outside the OECD headquarters, no additional cost shall be incurred by the OECD Secretariat.

13. a) Expenditures required for the functioning of the "Scheme" shall be defrayed from the appropriations authorized for it under Part II of the Budget of the Organisation.

b) The annual contributions, beginning 1 January 2000, of participating countries in the "Scheme" shall be calculated according to the following scale :

- a basic fee of FF 20 000 ;
- an additional part calculated according to the criteria used for the contributions of OECD member countries set out in the Resolution of the Council [C(63)155(Final) as amended] as they may be modified from time to time.

II. DECIDES that the countries listed in Annex III shall participate in the "Scheme" established by this Decision subject to notification of the contrary to the Secretary-General within three months following the adoption of the present Decision.

III. DECIDES that within a period of six months after the adoption of this Decision, the participating countries shall inform the Secretary-General of the standards currently in force with which they are willing to conform.

IV. INSTRUCES the Committee for Agriculture to report to the Council, when appropriate, on the operation of the "Scheme", to submit to the Council, where necessary, proposals for its modification.

V. DECIDES that the Decision of the Council of 18 December 1992 referred to above is repealed and replaced by this Decision.

## ANNEX I

### STANDARDS APPLICABLE UNDER THE OECD “SCHEME”<sup>1</sup>

Annonas  
[Apples (dried)]  
Apples and pears (x)  
Apricots (x)  
Apricots (dried)  
Artichokes (x)  
Asparagus (x)  
Aubergines (x)  
Avocados (x)  
Beans (x)  
Bilberries and blueberries  
Broccoli  
Brussels sprouts  
Cabbages (headed) (x)  
Carrots (x)  
Cauliflowers (x)  
Celery (ribbed)  
Cherries (x)  
Chinese cabbages  
Citrus fruit (oranges, clementines,  
mandarins, lemons, grapefruits) (x)  
Courgettes  
Cucumbers(x)  
Dates (whole)  
Edible sweet chestnuts  
Fennel  
Figs (fresh)  
Figs (dried)  
Garlic (x)  
Grapes (dried)  
Hazel nut kernels  
Hazel nuts (inshell) (x)  
Horse-radish

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1. These standards are gathered in two separate documents available at the Publications Service of the OECD under the titles:

- UN/ECE Standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
- UN/ECE Standards for Dry and Dried Produce (Fruit)

The products with explanatory brochures are indicated by the sign (x).

Kiwifruit (x)  
Leeks  
Lettuces, curled-leaved endives,  
broad-leaved (Batavian) endives (x)  
Mangoes (x)  
Melons  
Mushrooms (cultivated)  
Onions (x)  
Peaches and nectarines (x)  
Pears (dried)  
Peas (x)  
Pine nuts (decorticated peeled)  
Pistachio nuts (unshelled)  
Pistachio nuts (decorticated and  
Decorticated peeled )  
Plums (x)  
Plums (dried)  
Potatoes (early) (x)  
Potatoes (ware)(x)  
Radishes  
Raspberries  
Rhubarb  
Scorzonera  
Spinach  
Strawberries (x)  
Sweet almonds (decorticated)  
Sweet almonds (unshelled) (x)  
Sweet peppers (x)  
Table grapes (x)  
Tomatoes (x)  
Walnut kernels  
Walnuts (inshell)  
Watermelons  
Witloof chicory (x)

## ANNEX II

### OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONTROL OF THE QUALITY OF PRODUCE EXPORTED UNDER THE "SCHEME"

#### I. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK CONCERNING QUALITY CONTROL

1. The purpose of the control is to ascertain that the quality and classification of the produce exported are in conformity with the standards applied under the "Scheme".

2. Control operations are to be carried out according to the guidelines set out in Section II below by the quality control service authorised by each country participating in the "Scheme" to issue the control certificate comparable to the model set out in Appendix I to this Annex. Its use is described in the explanatory note appearing in Appendix II to this Annex.

3. The purpose of the control certificate is to attest that the appropriate control service has verified, according to the methods set out hereafter in Section II of this Annex, that the consignment in question conforms with the standard applied under the "Scheme" at the time of inspection. That service is responsible to the corresponding services of importing countries participating in the "Scheme" for the statements attesting quality in the control certificate.

#### II. QUALITY CONTROL OPERATIONS FOR PRODUCE EXPORTED UNDER THE "SCHEME"

##### 1. Definitions

##### 1.1 Quality control:

Inspection carried out by national quality control services to check the conformity of fresh fruit and vegetables with the quality standards.

##### 1.2 Quality inspector:

Person authorised by the national official quality control service who has appropriate and regular training enabling them to undertake quality inspection.

##### 1.3 Consignment:

Quantity of produce from one dispatcher found at the time of inspection and defined by a document. The consignment may consist of one or several types of produce: it may contain one or several lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.

##### 1.4 Lot:

Quantity of produce which, at the time of inspection at one place, has similar characteristics with regard to:

- packer and/or dispatcher
- country of origin
- nature of produce
- class of produce

- size (if the produce is graded according to size)
- variety or commercial type (according to the relevant provisions of the standard)
- type of packaging and presentation.

However, if during the inspection of consignments (see 1.3), it is difficult to distinguish between the different lots and/or the presentation of individual lots is not possible, all lots of a specific consignment may be treated as one lot if they are similar in regard to type of produce, dispatcher, country of origin, quality class and variety or commercial type, if this is provided for in the standard.

#### 1.5 Sampling:

Refers to a collective sample taken temporarily from a lot during quality inspection.

#### 1.6 Primary sample:

Package taken from the lot or, in the case of bulk produce, a quantity taken from a point in the lot.

#### 1.7 Bulk sample:

Several representative individual samples taken from the lot whose quantity is sufficient to allow the assessment of the lot with regard to all criteria.

#### 1.8 Reduced sample:

Representative quantity of produce taken from the bulk sample whose size is sufficient to allow the assessment of certain individual criteria. Several reduced samples may be taken from a bulk sample.

### 2. Implementation of quality control

#### 2.1 General remarks:

Quality control takes place by assessing bulk samples taken at random from the lots to be inspected. It is based on the principle of presumption that the quality of the bulk sample is representative of the quality of the lot.

#### 2.2 Place of control:

Quality control may be carried out during the packing operation or at the point of dispatch or during transport.

#### 2.3 Presentation of produce:

The exporter or their representative is to inform the quality control service whenever a consignment is to be exported.

The quality inspector decides which lots are to be inspected. The presentation is made by the person authorised to do so or their representative. The procedure includes a presentation of the bulk sample (see 2.5.3) as well as the supply of all information necessary for the identification of the consignment or lots.

If reduced samples are required, the quality inspector selects these from the bulk sample.



## 2.4 Identification of lots and/or getting a general impression of the consignment:

The identification of lots is carried out on the basis of their marking or other criteria. In the case of consignments which are made up of several lots it is necessary for the quality inspector to get a general impression of the consignment with the aid of accompanying documents or declarations concerning the consignments. The quality inspector then determines how far the lots presented comply with the information in these documents.

If the produce is to be, or has been, loaded onto a means of transport, the registration number of the latter may be used for identification of the consignment.

## 2.5 Verification of the lot

### 2.5.1 Assessment of packaging and presentation on the basis of primary samples:

The packaging, including the material used within the package is to be tested for suitability and cleanness according to the provisions of the quality standards. If only certain types of packaging are permitted, the quality inspector checks whether these are being used. If the individual standard includes provisions concerning presentation, their conformity is also checked.

### 2.5.2 Verification of marking on the basis of primary samples:

First, it is ascertained whether the produce is marked according to the quality standards. During inspection a check is made on the accuracy of marking and/or the extent of amendment required.

### 2.5.3 Sampling<sup>2</sup>

The quality inspector determines the size of the bulk sample in such a way as to be able to assess the lots. The quality inspector selects at random the packages to be inspected or in the case of bulk produce the points of the lot from which individual samples shall be taken.

The bulk sample is to comprise the following minimum quantities whenever a consignment is to be declared unsatisfactory:<sup>3</sup>

#### Packed produce

| Number of packages<br>in the lot | Number of packages to be taken<br>(primary samples) |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Up to 100.....                   | 5   |
| 101 to 300.....                  | 7   |
| 301 to 500.....                  | 9   |
| 501 to 1000.....                 | 10  |
| over 1000.....                   | 15 (min.)   |

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2. Damaged packages will not be used as part of the bulk sample. They shall be set aside and may, if necessary, be subject to a separate examination and report.
  3. A participating country may experiment with a sampling method other than that provided for in paragraph 2.5.3 if it has previously notified its intention to the Secretary-General.

## Produce in bulk

| Quantity of lot, in kg<br>or number of bundles in the lot | Quantity of primary samples to be taken in kg or<br>number of bundles <sup>4</sup> |
|---|--|
| Up to 200.....  | 10   |
| 201 to 500.....   | 20   |
| 501 to 1000.....  | 30   |
| 1001 to 5000.....   | 60   |
| over 5000.....  | 100 (min.)   |

If the quality inspector determines after an inspection that a decision cannot be reached, another inspection is to be undertaken and the overall results reported as an average of the two checks.

Certain criteria such as the presence or absence of internal defects may be checked on the basis of reduced samples; this applies in particular to control which destroys the trade value of the produce. The size of the reduced samples are to be restricted to the minimum quantity absolutely necessary for the assessment of the lot; if, however, defects are ascertained or suspected the size of the reduced sample is not to exceed 10 per cent of the size of the bulk sample initially taken for the inspection.

## 2.6 Control of produce

The produce has to be removed entirely from its packaging for the control; the quality inspector may only dispense with this, if the type of packaging and form of presentation allow an inspection of the contents without unpacking the produce. The inspection of uniformity, minimum requirements, quality classes and size is to be carried out on the basis of the bulk sample. In the case where defects are detected, the quality inspector is to ascertain the respective percentage of the produce not in conformity with the standard by number or weight.

## 2.7 Report of control results:

According to the respective legal provisions of the individual countries and depending on the results of control, a report on the findings may be made in the form of a statement, a control certificate, a complaint, etc. For the report on the results of control, in cases of non-conformity, several lots may be taken together if these are uniform in regard to type of produce, sender, country of origin, quality class and variety or commercial type, if this is provided for in the standard.

If defects are found, the authorised person or their representative must be informed about the reasons of complaint. This information must be made according to the legal provisions of the individual countries. If the compliance of produce with the standard is possible by a change in marking, the person authorised to sell it or their representative must be informed.

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4. In the case of bulky fresh fruit and vegetables (over 2 kg. per unit), the primary samples shall be made up of at least five units.

If defects are found in produce, the percentage found not to be in conformity with the standard may be indicated. This is not necessary if it is possible to achieve compliance with the standard by a change in the marking of the produce.

The quality control services shall develop and maintain a system of recording their inspection results.

2.8 Non-conforming produce:

The authorised person, or their representative, shall ensure that there is no shipment of the non-conforming produce.

2.9 Decline in value by quality control:

After the quality inspection, the bulk sample is put at the disposal of the authorised person or their representative.

Unless legal provisions so specify, the quality control service is not bound to hand back the elements of the bulk sample destroyed during the quality inspection.

When quality control has been limited to the minimum required, no compensation (unless legal provisions so specify) can be claimed from the quality control service concerned if the commercial value of the produce has suffered a loss.

**APPENDIX I  
MODEL CONTROL CERTIFICATE**

|  |  |   |                                     |                                  |  |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 Exporter   |  | DECO SCHEME   |                                     | CONTROL CERTIFICATE<br>N°: ..... |  |
| 2 Packer (as indicated on packing (if other than exporter))  |  | This certificate is for the exclusive use of control services |                                     |                                  |  |
|  |  | 3 Control service   |                                     | 4 Country of origin*             |  |
| 5 Country of destination   |  | 7 Space reserved for national regulations **                  |                                     |                                  |  |
| 6 Identification of means of transport   |  |   |                                     |                                  |  |
| 8 Number (and kind **) of packages   | 9 Nature of produce (variety when specified by the standard) | 10 Quality class  | 11 Total weight in kg gross/net *** |                                  |  |
| 12 The above-mentioned control office certifies that, on the basis of an examination by sampling, the consignment referred to above conforms, at the time of inspection, with the standards in force.                                    |  |   |                                     |                                  |  |
| .....<br>Customs office of departure **  |  | .....<br>Place and date of issue                              |                                     |                                  |  |
| .....<br>Duration of validity **** ..... days  |  | .....   |                                     |                                  |  |
| .....<br>Inspector (name in block capitals)  |  | .....   |                                     |                                  |  |
| .....<br>Signature   |  | .....<br>Seal of Control Service                              |                                     |                                  |  |
| 13 Observations  |  |   |                                     |                                  |  |
| .....<br>* When the produce is re-exported, indicate its origin after the nature of the produce<br>** Optional<br>*** Delete where inapplicable<br>**** Valid up to point of exit of the exporting country (including day of inspection) |  |   |                                     |                                  |  |

10 mm

20 mm

297 mm

210 mm

## APPENDIX II

### EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE USE OF THE MODEL CONTROL CERTIFICATE

The following notes are intended to help quality inspectors in the use of the model control certificate.

Box No. 1

Name and address of the exporter or exporting firm. An identification code issued or approved by the official service may also be useful.

Box No. 2

Name and address or identification code indicated on the packages if they differ from those given in Box No. 1. It is not necessary to complete this box when the exporter and packer are one and the same person. The entry "various" may be used if there are several packers.

Box No. 3

Title or acronym of the official national quality control service.

Box No. 4

Name of the producing country when the produce is inspected in that country. When the produce is re-exported or is of various origins (national and foreign), the country of origin must be indicated in Box No. 9 immediately after specification of the nature of the produce. Box No. 4 must then remain empty or be deleted.

Box No. 5

Name of country to which the produce is being sent. However, if the country of final destination is not yet known at the time of inspection -- particularly in the case of transport by sea or air -- this entry may be replaced by the indication "unknown".

Box No. 6

Number of waggon, registration number of lorry, number of container, name of vessel (possibly indicating "by sea" or "by air").

Box No. 7

Specify any national regulations relating to the export of the produce in question.

Box No. 8

Number and type of packages of each produce (e.g. boxes, trays, cartons, etc.). Specification of the type of package is optional.

Box No. 9

Type of produce (apples, peaches, etc.) followed by the name of the country of origin where produce is re-exported or is of various origins (national and foreign). Name of the variety (Golden Delicious, Dixired, etc.) when specified by the standard.

Box No. 10

Specify the quality class: EXTRA, I or II.

Box No. 11

Specify the net or gross weight of each produce indicated on the consignment note; specifying the total weight of the consignment is optional.

Box No. 12

- Customs office of departure: specify the place where the consignment must be cleared. This entry is optional.
- Duration of validity: specify the number of days for which the certificate is valid, i.e., up to the point of departure from the exporting country (including the day of inspection). The number of days is fixed by the authorized person from the competent national quality control service on the basis of criteria specific to each country (nature of produce, season, place of production, etc).
- Inspector: name of the authorised quality inspector who inspected the consignment.
- Signature: signature of the person authorised by the national quality control service to sign control certificate(s).
- Place and date of issue: place where the goods are inspected and date on which the certificate is issued.

Box No. 13

Reserved for any additional observations. The quality inspector shall delete this box when no observations are entered.

ANNEX III

**COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE OECD “SCHEME” FOR THE APPLICATION OF  
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

Austria  
Belgium  
Czech Republic  
Denmark<sup>\*</sup>  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Luxembourg  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Slovakia  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Turkey  
United Kingdom<sup>\*\*</sup>

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\* Participation from Denmark will end on 9 September 1999.

\*\* Participation from the United Kingdom will end on 24 September 1999.