

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
“SEEDS AND PROPAGATING MATERIAL FOR AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE AND
FORESTRY” HELD ON 10 JULY 2006**

Chairman: Mr. Valvassori.

All Member States were present except Lithuania and Luxembourg.

Bulgaria, Romania Norway and CPVO participated as observers.

1. SPECIFIC CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH SEED AND PROPAGATING MATERIAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND VEGETABLE SPECIES MAY BE MARKETED IN RELATION TO THE CONSERVATION IN-SITU AND THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

The Committee continued to discuss a working paper prepared by the Commission services (SANCO) at the beginning of April 2006, already discussed in the previous meetings held on 19-20 April 2006, 16 May and 6 June.

The Committee considered that the following points, in particular, are still considered critical:

- Certain definitions,
- The status of Plant Genetic Resources Bodies,
- The scope of derogations in respect of the criteria for carrying out the examination of the varieties,
- The relationship between the possible admission of a conservation/amateur variety and the previous rejection of such a variety from a national catalogue,
- The time between the deletion of a variety from the Common Catalogue and its admission as a conservation/amateur variety,
- The requirements of the official certification of seed potatoes,
- The colour of the supplier's label,
- The quantitative restrictions,
- The inclusion in this Draft Commission Directive of conditions as regards the preservation of seed mixtures.

2. DRAFT COMMISSION DIRECTIVE AMENDING COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/33/EEC ON THE MARKETING OF VEGETABLE PROPAGATING AND PLANTING MATERIAL OTHER THAN SEED AND COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2002/55/EC ON THE MARKETING OF VEGETABLE SEED

Council Directives 2002/55/EC (former 70/458/EEC) and 92/33/EEC respectively establish rules on the marketing of vegetable seed and vegetable propagating and planting material other than seed.

Their scope covers a large number of vegetable plants, but there is a need:

- To cover the plants irrespective of their reproduction methods,
- To cover plants which became economically important following the enlargement of the EU.

In the light of developments in scientific knowledge, a number of the botanical names of vegetable plants used in Council Directives 2002/55/EC or 92/33/EEC have been shown to be incorrect or of doubtful authenticity.

The proposal amends both Directives with the aim of:

- Ensuring that both Directives cover the same genera and species,
- Aligning the botanical names with those accepted internationally (ISTA – List of Stabilised Plant names and Grin Taxonomy),
- Covering sweet corn and pop corn, largely grown in territories of new Member States.

It should be noted that this alignment also covers both onions and shallots. Their botanical names should become, at the level of species “*Allium cepa* L” for both and at the level of group of varieties:

- *Allium cepa* L. (Cepa group) for Onion and
- *Allium cepa* L. (Aggregatum group) for Shallots.

The Committee supported the initiatives of the Commission. However it advised:

- To check further the accuracy of all the denominations,
- To ensure the removal of any possible incompatibility between the inclusion of sweet corn and pop corn and the Common Agricultural Policy currently in force,
- To assess the consequences of the amendments on shallots in the light of the revision of the Commission Directive 2003/91/EC.

3. DRAFT COMMISSION DIRECTIVE AMENDING DIRECTIVE 2003/91/EC SETTING OUT IMPLEMENTING MEASURES FOR THE PURPOSES OF ARTICLE 7 AS COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2002/55/EC AS REGARDS THE CHARACTRISTICS TO BE COVERED AS A MINIMUM BY THE EXAMINATION AND THE MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR EXAMINING CERTAIN VARIETIES OF VEGETABLE SPECIES

Commission Directive 2003/91/EC lays down implementing measures based on Council Directive 20002/55/EC on the marketing of vegetable seed. The Directive determines the characteristics and minimum conditions for examining vegetable varieties

New test guidelines related to the above have been issued in respect of certain species by the Community Poland Variety Office (CPVO) in the framework of Community plant variety rights. Other test guidelines have been up-dated. Furthermore UPOV has recently issued new guidelines, or up-dated existing ones.

The difference between onion and shallots is based exclusively on the tendency to split the bulblet and the growing points per bulb or bulblet (as laid down in the CPVO protocol adopted on 14 June 2005).

4. TEMPORARY EXPERIMENT WITH REGARD TO INCREASING THE MAXIMUM WEIGHT OF A LOT OF CERTAIN FODDER PLANT SEEDS UNDER COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 66/401/EEC

Council Directive 66/401/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of fodder plant seed provides for the maximum weight of a lot in the context of seed testing. In this specific case of seed of grasses, such a maximum weight is of 10 tonnes.

The same Directive provides for the organisation of temporary experiments under specified conditions with the aim of seeking improved alternatives to certain provisions set out in this Directive. The provisions include also the maximum weight of a lot.

Current international practice, namely the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) experiment to derogate on the maximum size of gramineae seed lots, as adopted by the Council of the OECD on 24 May 2006, and the ISTA (International Seed Testing Association)/ISF (International Seed Federation) experiment on herbage seed lot size, approved by the ISTA Executive Committee on 10 February 2006, permit procedures whereby the maximum weight of a lot may be increased for grasses.

The Commission intends to adopt a Decision permitting a temporary experiment with regard to a possible increase in the maximum weight of a lot of grasses (from 10 to 25 tonnes), providing that certain conditions specified in the same Decision are met.

The Committee supported the approach.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

The Committee noted:

- a) Information on a TAIEX meeting (Technical Assistance Information Instrument of the European Community) held on 31 May 2006 with Bulgaria and Romania where a discussion on agricultural and vegetable varieties in Bulgaria and Romania regarding the eligibility for the Common Catalogues of varieties took place.
- b) A request from the Commission (SANCO E1) to report on the results of the controls on GM adventitious presence in seeds, as addressed to the Member States on 23 June 2006.

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