



**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON
TRUE POTATO SEED**
held on 19th May 2015, Brussels.

Chairperson: T. Weber

DG SANTE: I. Clement-Nissou, F. Hopkins

Experts from BE, CZ, DE, FI, ES, FR, HU, IE, LV, NL, SE were present. An expert from CPVO also participated.

Two NL-based breeding companies have developed technologies whereby true potato seed can be used for commercial production of potato propagation material. Registration trials are ongoing and could be concluded at the earliest by the end of 2015. This implies that within a relatively short time, the first seed propagated potato varieties could become available. In Council Directive 2002/56/EC there are no specific rules on the marketing of true potato seed. Nevertheless, due to the importance of potato production in the EU, it is necessary to establish rules for this new type of propagating material and therefore a temporary experiment needs to be developed and adopted on the marketing of such varieties.

1. Aspects of Plant Health Legislation

The Commission informed the experts on the plant health provisions applicable to True Potato Seed (TPS) and the necessary procedures to allow their movement within the EU. While Annex 4, Section 2, point 18.3 lists the viruses and viroids that need to be tested in the case of TPS, any additional risks are unknown. Therefore, the Netherlands was requested to provide a Pest Risk Assessment (PRA) as soon as possible. Such a PRA will be discussed in the Standing Committee for Plant Health and, if the Member States decide so, an EFSA-opinion might be requested. If subsequently any amendments to the Annexes of the plant health legislation are necessary, the entire process might only be concluded by the end of 2016.

2. Marketing pathways

The expert group discussed the most likely marketing pathways for potato varieties produced from TPS. Given the climatic conditions in Europe it is considered to be most likely that

tubers, and not TPS, will be marketed to final users. The most realistic pathway is thus: TPS → plants for planting → 1st generation hybrid tubers → 2nd generation hybrid tubers. As the potato is an agricultural crop, the propagating material needs to be certified and certification requirements need to be developed. If TPS are to be imported from 3rd countries, an equivalence decision will be required.

The issue of an appropriate terminology for the two tuber generations was discussed. It was agreed that the first generation corresponds to basic and the second generation to certified seed potatoes. The names of the two generations should reflect this, but also signal the specific mode of propagation through TPS. A decision concerning the naming of the TPS derived tuber generations was not taken.

3. Requirements

3.1. Uniformity requirements for variety acceptance

TPS varieties are less uniform than vegetatively propagated varieties. The current uniformity requirements in the relevant CPVO protocol might thus be too strict for TPS varieties and a temporary experiment should also derogate from the existing uniformity standards. It was agreed to compile information on the uniformity that can be achieved by TPS varieties in order to develop an appropriate standard for this type of propagation.

3.2. Requirements for seeds

The experts agreed that appropriate requirements need to be developed for the parental lines:

- uniformity
- purity
- trueness to type
- percentage of off-types
- inspection at suitable growth stage
- certain plant health requirements;

for the crop (for production in field or greenhouse):

- isolation (maybe not applicable if produced in greenhouses)
- varietal purity
- species purity
- plant health requirements

- inspections;

and for lots:

- germination
- varietal purity,
- analytical purity
- moisture content
- lot size (maximum lot size)
- sample size
- plant health requirements.

FR informed that ISTA protocols exist for the testing of TPS.

3.3 Requirements on propagating material

Small plants might be an intermediary production stage and therefore official checks on seedlings are necessary, especially with regard to traceability and sanitary risks.

3.4 Requirements for 1st and 2nd generation hybrid tubers

The experts agreed that in general the requirements as for basic and certified seed potato tubers in Annex I of the basic directive 2002/56/EC should apply. The possibility that certain requirements, such as external defects, are not needed should be taken into account.

3.5 Other requirements

Further requirements that need to be determined concern

- requirements on producers of TPS tubers;
- labelling and packaging;
- quantitative restrictions;
- reporting requirements for the temporary experiment.

4. Conclusions

It was agreed that smaller groups of experts will work on concrete proposals for the requirements identified and summarised in points 3.1. – 3.5. The Commission will prepare a draft decision and both the proposed requirements and the draft will be discussed in a second expert group meeting later in 2015.