Between 1910 and 1912, Theodor Becker, great German Dipterist, published a world revision of the dipterous family Chloropidae in a series of monographs of the various faunal regions. The first (March 15, 1910) covered the Palaearctic Region, and in this he proposed the generic name Oscinella for a large group of small and predominantly black grass flies hitherto known as Oscinis Latreille (1804). Oscinis technically could not be used because its earliest valid type designation made it a synonym of Chlorops Meigen (1803), which contains larger, usually yellow and black striped species in a different subfamily than Oscinella. The genus Oscinella, obviously polyphyletic, has been divided in recent years, but the name Oscinella has always been retained for O. frit (Linnaeus), the European frit fly, and its congeners. The literature on that one species alone, O. frit, is extensive because of its considerable damage to cereals, especially in the Palaearctic Region.

2. Aldrich (1929: 91) designated O. frit as type-species in line with common usage. Unfortunately, he overlooked the fact that only a few months before Becker's important monograph on the Palaearctic Chloropidae, the name Oscinella appeared in a short paper on the results of an expedition to Ethiopia and East Africa (Becker, 1909). It appeared in the heading of a brief description as “Oscinella deficiens nov. sp. [Oscinis olim]”. The genus was not diagnosed or described, and not even marked as new, as if the author assumed—as he no doubt did—that his monograph would appear first. Under the Rules of that day, however, Oscinella was at that point an available name by indication, and O. deficiens was fixed as its type-species. Aldrich recognized this soon after his designation of frit, and published a correction in 1930, but the change caused no difficulty for him and many others because they still used Oscinella in a broad sense that encompassed both frit and deficiens.

3. Duda, beginning in 1929 a series of papers on Chloropidae, proceeded to divide Oscinella, and his groups (Conioscinella, Tropidoscinis, etc.) have been accepted throughout the world, but he continued to base Oscinella s. str. on frit. The extensive economic literature naturally continued to use Oscinella for the frit fly and its relatives.

4. The writer early recognized (1941) that the type-species of Oscinella was O. deficiens Becker, but the point did not cause difficulty because at that period he continued to use Oscinella in a broad sense, following Aldrich and Malloch, and because O. deficiens was an African species and not yet within his purview.

5. The identity of Oscinella deficiens is unknown. On several occasions, both by letter and in person, the writer has searched for the holotype without success in the collection of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris.
Some years ago, about 1948, Professor Seguy stated that the type had then been lost for some time. There is thus no way to be sure to what genus it belongs, but one can be certain from items in the brief description ("grisea, opaca", and "triangulo deficienve") that it does not belong in Oscinella as interpreted by Oscinella frit, i.e., frontal triangle distinct and polished black. Possibly it belongs in Duda's genus Conioscinella.

6. If the type-species of Oscinella were to be maintained as O. deficiens, then the generic name Oscinella would be based on a species dubia, and, if one were to make the assumption mentioned in the preceding paragraph, it would be transferred to the genus now widely known as Conioscinella Duda (1929). The latter has had some usage in all faunal regions, but chiefly in taxonomic and faunistic works. By itself, it has no great claim to conservation, but a change of meaning of Oscinella would carry with it seeds of confusion.

7. As far as I know, there is only one name available to replace Oscinella for the frit group and associated species: Paroscinella Becker (1913), originally published as a subgenus of Oscinella for a small group of species that may not be congeneric or even consubgeneric with frit. With one exception in 1914, that name has never been used except in nomenclators and in my list of type-species of genus-group names in Chloropidae (1941). It is not presently accepted as a subgenus of Oscinella.

8. Becker based a new subfamily name Oscinellinae on Oscinella, and that has continued in use to the present time. Presumably this would not be affected by any change because Oscinella in either meaning would be a member of the same subfamily group.

9. In summary, maintenance of Musca frit as type-species of Oscinella would maintain continuity in the use of Oscinella in the extensive literature of applied entomology, avoid the confusion of change of meaning of Oscinella from the frit group to a generically different group of species, and avoid the weak and potentially dangerous situation of basing Oscinella on what is, presently at least, a species dubia. For these reasons, the Commission is requested:

(1) to exercise its plenary powers to suppress all previous type fixations for Oscinella Becker, 1909, and to designate Musca frit Linnaeus, 1758, as type-species;

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the generic name Oscinella Becker, 1909 (gender: feminine), type-species Musca frit Linnaeus, 1758, by designation under the plenary powers in (1) above; and

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology frit Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the binomen Musca frit (type-species of Oscinella Becker, 1909).

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