

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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TO: - Puntos de contacto del Codex
- Organizaciones internacionales interesadas

FROM: Secretariat,
Codex Alimentarius Commission
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AT STEP 6 ON THE DRAFT CODEX STANDARD FOR GOLDEN PASSION FRUIT¹

DEADLINE: 15 October 2013

COMMENTS: To:
Secretariat,
Codex Alimentarius Commission,
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme,
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BACKGROUND

1. The 17th Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (September 2012) considered a proposed draft Codex Standard for Golden Passion Fruit² and had an extensive discussion on the scope of the standard.

2. A delegation noted that there were several other edible species of passion fruit marketed at international level. The delegation felt that the standard should include different species of passion fruits thus become a single standard for passion fruits. The different species and common names could be included in the standard to facilitate its application hence international trade rather than focusing on one particular specie.

3. Other delegations supported this proposal as many other species and hybrids of passion fruit were traded therefore the scope of the standard should be enlarged to cover other species. The single standard could present a clear separation between those provisions common to all species and those provisions specific to the relevant specie. The specific names, i.e. scientific and/or common names of the different species or commercial varieties, could be addressed through labelling.

4. The delegation of Colombia, who had initially proposed the standard, noted that there were many species in the Passifloraceae family which varied widely as regards their morphological, biological and physico-chemical characteristics e.g. shape, size, skin, total soluble solids, sugar/acid ratio, etc. Golden passion fruit was meant for fresh consumption as opposed to other passion fruits. The stalk was an integral part of the fruit thus, if it was removed, the flesh would be exposed whereas other species could be marketed without the stalk. Skin defects in golden passion fruit related more to cracking / rough skin rather than surface depression / wrinkled skin as in other species of passion fruits. Cultivation areas and growing methods, post harvest handling / treatments, and phytosanitary issues for golden passion fruit were different from other passion fruits. In view of the specific characteristics of passion fruit species, in particular the golden passion fruit specie, it would be very difficult to combine all species in one standard hence, it would be better to keep separate standards like in the case of the single standards for various citrus fruits. The delegation further noted that no data had been provided to the Committee in order to consider the inclusion of other species of passion fruits.

5. Some delegations supported this opinion and noted that the standard should not be expanded at this point as this would delay its completion. A separate standard could then be developed for other passion fruit species that shared more similar characteristics. Alternatively, separate standards for different species of passion fruits could also be developed.

¹ Reports of Codex meetings are available on the Codex website: <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/> by subsequently clicking on Meetings and Reports, 2013.

² REP13/FFV, Appendix IV.

6. Those delegations favouring the development of a general standard noted that this approach would optimize the use of the Committee's resources in the development of worldwide standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, that no more standards than absolutely necessary should be developed within Codex, and that this was in the overall interest of the Commission.

7. The Codex Secretariat recalled that this issue had been raised at the last session of the Committee, that the conclusion had been to request new work on a standard for golden passion fruit which had been approved by the Commission, and that there had been no comments on the scope at that stage. If there was consensus, the Committee could enlarge the scope of the standard and inform the Executive Committee and the Commission accordingly. Another possibility would be to request new work on a standard for other passion fruit species in which case a project document and lead country would need to be identified.

8. The Committee could not reach consensus as to whether to enlarge the scope of the standard, to have a single standard covering all species of passion fruits or to request new work on a standard for different species of passion fruits (excluding golden passion fruit). In view of this, the Committee agreed to review the standard section by section while noting which parts were specific to golden passion fruit and to decide on a way forward after completing the review.

9. Many delegations were of the opinion that the review had shown that other species could be included in the standard therefore a single standard for passion fruits should not be so difficult to develop. Other delegations were of the opinion that it would be more appropriate to continue work on a specific standard for golden passion fruit at this time and to eventually start work on standards for different species of passion fruits or on a standard for other species of passion fruits.

10. The Committee noted splitting views in relation to this matter. The Chair of the Committee therefore recommended to forward the standard to the Commission for adoption at Step 5 and to keep the provisions on sizing in square brackets waiting for data on sizing methods in particular by weight and count. The Chairperson noted that delegations could submit comments and information at Step 5 for consideration by the Commission on the economic importance of other species of passion fruits for their countries, which could possibly allow the enlargement of the scope by having specific annexes attached to common provisions in the main body of the standard.

11. The Committee agreed to the proposal from the Chairperson and also agreed to re-establish the electronic working group led by Colombia to discuss any open questions in the standard especially the section on sizing by weight and count^{3,4}

12. At the 68th Session of the Executive Committee (June 2013) several members expressed the view that the scope of the standard was very limited and that it should be extended to cover other types of passion fruit, and proposed either to recommend adoption at Step 5 and extension of the scope afterwards, or returning the standard for redrafting as it would be more difficult to extend the scope when the standard was closer to finalization. A member pointed out that, as new work had been approved and the standard was at Step 5, work should proceed according to the current scope and the development of annexes to cover other products could be considered in the future.

13. The Committee recalled that, following extensive discussion on the scope, the CCFFV had noted that delegations could submit comments and information at Step 5 for consideration by the Commission on the economic importance of other species of passion fruits for their countries which could possibly allow the enlargement of the scope by having specific annexes attached to common provisions in the main body of the standard. However no such comments had been received for consideration at the Commission. The Committee therefore supported adoption of the standard at Step 5 and noted that further comments should be considered by the Commission.⁵

14. At the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2013), the Chairperson of the Commission noted that no comments on the enlargement of the scope had been received for consideration by the Commission. Some delegations, while supporting adoption at Step 5, said they would like to see other varieties included as they had economic value in trade. The Delegation of Colombia said that as no proposals for enlarging the scope had been received the standard should be adopted at Step 5 and progress according to its current scope and that any delegation could make comments or proposals for an annex to the standard in the CCFFV.

15. The Commission adopted the Standard at Step 5 with the current scope noting that any delegation could make comments or proposals regarding other species in CCFFV.⁶

³ REP13/FFV, paras. 72-74.

⁴ REP13/FFV, paras. 54-85.

⁵ REP13/EXEC, paras. 24-26.

⁶ REP13/CAC, paras. 87-90.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

16. Codex Members and Observers are invited to submit their comments on the draft Codex Standard for Golden Passion Fruit in light of the discussion and decisions taken at the 17th Session of the Committee. In making comments, special attention should be attached to those sections in square brackets especially the section on sizing by weight and count and any open questions in the standard in order to assist the Committee in the resolution of these matters.

17. Comments provided on sizing and other technical comments will be forwarded to the electronic Working Group on Golden Passion Fruit established by the Committee with a view to make proposals for consideration by the 18th Session of the CCFFV.

18. Comments on the scope of the standard will be considered by the 18th Session of the CCFFV.

19. As regards the scope of the standard, Codex members and observers are invited to consider the following possible options: (a) having a single standard for golden passion fruit; (b) developing other single standards for different passion fruits; (c) developing a general standard covering all edible species of passion fruits being traded or having the potential to be traded on the international market by describing general provisions in the body of the standard and specific provisions in complementary annexes – this approach has already been taken in the development of Codex commodity standards e.g. *Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables*; (d) having a general standard covering all species of passion fruits – this approach has already been taken in the development of the *Standard for Chilli Peppers* and the proposed draft Standard for Durian (it is a variation of option (c) if no specific annexes will be required); (e) any other option in addition to (a) – (d).

20. Those countries favouring any of the proposals or alternative proposals should provide the rationale in support of the proposal. Options (c) and (d) may require re-schedule of the timeframe for completion of the standard should the Committee would agree to develop a horizontal standard. Codex members are encouraged to consider standards which are inclusive to all products traded within commodity groups rather than highly specific standards, in order to avoid problems of achieving consensus at the time of adopting these standards hence, when it appears that enough common provisions exist between individual standards, commodity committees should give preference to the development of “inclusive standards” for related commodities when feasible⁷.

⁷ ALINORM 99/3, paras. 26-27; ALINORM 99/4, para. 39.