CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

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TO	Codex Contact Points Contact Points of international organizations having observer status with Codex
FROM	Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program
SUBJECT	**Request for data and information on mitigation measures on mycotoxin contamination in cassava and cassava-based products**
DEADLINE	**10 November 2019**

COMMENTS	**To:**	**Copy to:**
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BACKGROUND

1. At 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (May 2019), Nigeria explained that mycotoxins, particularly aflatoxin and ochratoxin, are of public health concern in both fermented and unfermented cassava products. Since fungal contamination of cassava products occurs mainly after processing due to poor handling and storage practices and also to some extent at pre-harvest stage due to proliferation of *Fusarium* species in the field amongst others such as *Aspergillus*, due to poor good agricultural practices (GAPs) / good manufacturing practices (GMPs), Nigeria recommended CCCF considering the development of a code of practice (COP) for reduction and prevention of mycotoxin contamination in cassava and cassava fermented products.

2. CCCF13 generally agreed that a discussion paper should be prepared that would assess whether there are sufficient prevention and/or mitigation measures to support the development of a COP. Information to support the development of the paper would be collected through a circular letter. [1]

REQUEST FOR DATA AND INFORMATION ON PREVENTION OR REDUCTION MEASURES TO PREVENT OR REDUCE MYCOTOXIN CONTAMINATION IN CASSAVA AND CASSAVA-BASED PRODUCTS

3. Codex members and observers are kindly invited to provide data and information on prevention or reduction measures to prevent or reduce mycotoxin contamination (particularly aflatoxins and ochratoxin A) in cassava and cassava-based products (processing may / may not include fermentation) along the food production/supply chain which are:

- effective and readily available)
- proven to be cost-effective;
- applicable widely across regions; and
- applicable at all scales of production (specially at medium, small and micro businesses)

4. Indication should also be provided at which stage in the production/supply chain such prevention or reduction measures (e.g. GAPs/GMPs) apply to assist the EWG to scope the COP (i.e. whether the COP will apply along the entire food production/supply chain, i.e. production, storage, processing, distribution and preparation, or only at certain stages).

[1] REP19/CF, paras. 128 - 145

5. In providing the requested data/information, the following should be considered and if available, provide information on:

- Which stage is the most critical in terms of prevention or reduction of mycotoxins in cassava and cassava-based products.
- What prevention or reduction measures should be applied during cultivation and harvest.
- What critical parameters (e.g. temperature, humidity, fungal contamination, etc.) should be measured and at which stage (i.e. harvest, storage, processing).
- The optimal storage conditions to prevent or reduce mycotoxins contamination.
- The optimal processing conditions to prevent or reduce mycotoxin contamination.
- What are the critical control points and critical levels (criterion) to be verified at these control points. Provide evidence for the critical levels. What prevention or reduction measures can be applied to comply with these critical levels.
- Prevention or reduction measures to be taken during transport and distribution.
- Any other relevant information as appropriate / necessary that could further complement data and information on prevention or reduction measures requested under paragrahs 3 and 4.

6. If possible:

- Indicate if the prevention or reduction measures and critical parameters are applicable for all production regions (Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean, South-west Pacific) or, if not, for which regions they would be applicable.
- In the case of fermented production, indicate if the prevention or reduction measures are applicable for all fermentation processes or only for certain specific fermentation processes. If the latter is the case, for which fermentation processes the prevention or reduction measures are applicable.

7. If available, it would be helpful to submit occurrence data of mycotoxins (particularly aflatoxins and ochratoxin A) to the GEMS/Food database with as detailed as possible description of the cassava root (e.g. varieties) and cassava products (e.g. type of processing - fermented, unfermented products) in which the mycotoxin (identified which mycotoxin(s)) was measured.

8. If possible, please provide the information in word file to facilitate their compilation and analysis by the EWG.