

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 9

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CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-sixth Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

27 November - 2 December 2023

NEW FOOD SOURCES AND PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

(Comments of Argentina, Benin, India, Kenya, Mali, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname)

Argentina

Argentina considera que la diversidad de opciones actuales y futuras para trabajar en nuevos alimentos será muy variada y no se puede predecir en este campo las necesidades futuras.

En nuestra opinión en la actualidad el Codex cuenta con procedimientos y ámbitos que le permitirían abordar nuevos temas sin necesidad de crear nuevas estructuras. Reconocemos, no obstante, que sólo cuando haya propuestas concretas y se comience a andar el camino de nuevos alimentos podremos determinar si es preciso establecer nuevos Grupos de trabajos, comités, solicitar a la FAO/OMS nuevos grupos de expertos o simplemente otros mecanismos de trabajo.

Por el momento, Argentina espera ansiosa el momento en que comencemos a trabajar en algunas de las propuestas más desafiantes.

Benin

Contexte:

Le rapport/document du secrétariat du Codex sur l'état d'avancement de cette question n'était pas disponible au moment de la réunion. Toutefois, sur la base de la participation, les informations suivantes ont été fournies à la réunion.

a) Le Codex et ses membres s'efforcent de recueillir et d'organiser des informations sur les nouvelles sources alimentaires et les nouveaux systèmes de production (NSANSP).

b) L'utilisation du terme "nouveau" suscite des inquiétudes, car certains produits sont connus depuis des années.

c) Certains membres ont l'expérience d'un grand nombre de NFPS en ce qui concerne les questions potentielles de sécurité alimentaire, de réglementation, d'étiquetage, de nutrition, de qualité, etc. Les membres ont également fait part de la complexité de ce domaine.

Les thèmes proposés sont les suivants

- i. Viande, fruits de mer et produits laitiers cultivés
- ii. Ingrédients dérivés de la fermentation

- iii. Protéines alternatives à base de plantes
- iv. Algues
- v. Insectes comestibles
- vi. Aliments imprimés en 3D
- vii. Microalgae Microalgues

Il était prévu qu'après le CAC45, les États Membres soumettraient des données relatives à :

- i. Aspects nutritionnels
- ii. Effets des processus de production sur les nouveaux aliments
- iii. Histoire alimentaire de la source d'origine du nouvel aliment
- iv. Utilisation prévue du nouvel aliment et la quantité de consommation attendue
- v. Informations sur la consommation humaine antérieure du nouvel aliment
- vi. Informations microbiologiques pertinentes sur le nouvel aliment
- vii. Toxicité de l'aliment ou de ses composants
- viii. Aspects allergiques du nouveau produit ou de certains de ses composants

Il s'agissait d'aider à identifier les éventuels problèmes liés aux SNFP que la structure et les procédures actuelles ne permettaient pas de résoudre, ainsi que les options pour y remédier au cours de la CAC46.

India

India, while agreeing with the recommendations, suggests that CAC can establish a task force to develop a general guidelines (scope, definitions etc.) and general principles of risk analysis which may be used by the National food regulatory bodies for establishing regulatory mechanism to address these NFPS.

Kenya

Kenya's responses to the agenda include:

Comments:

Q1: The global demand for proteins is changing, creating opportunities for alternative sources of proteins such as cell-based and other possible protein sources e.g. insects, seaweed etc. As the global demand for proteins grows, many in the food sector are looking into opportunities to expand the scope of diverse sources of proteins that can be both environmentally sustainable and nutritionally sound. The commercial landscape for cell-based food is fast expanding. As such foods are becoming a reality, national food safety authorities need to be prepared to regulate them and authorize them for use by food business operators.

So, in this context the topic below which is not covered within the scope of current Codex committees will be an important basis for standardisation of what to be considered as NFPS.

Kenya proposes the development of **Guidance on the Approval of new ingredients and new technologies**: This includes technologies like Cellular Agriculture (tissue engineering and precision fermentation) and include new ingredients that are produced using such technologies.

Rationale : To develop guidance which may be used by member countries while evaluating new technology or new ingredient developed by such technology, need cross functional experts. Unfortunately, this is not within the terms of reference of current Codex subsidiary committees.

Q2: Currently, cell-based foods and ingredients produced thereof are considered a new technology and new ingredient across the globe and must be submitted to national authorities before being introduced in the market. The novelty of these products and its process is giving rise to various safety questions some unique to the technology and end products. Due to the complex and novel production process, all the different stages generate different risks. Some key safety concerns: Food hygiene, tissue biopsy, cell banking, possible harmful by-products, storage, allergenicity, product stability and scaling of production.

Therefore, to enable innovation and to address this emerging technology, to enable decision making at the national level and to foster harmonization, the Codex Alimentarius Commission must develop guidance on how to evaluate this new technology and the ingredients produced thereof from this technology.

The new food sources do not fall under the currently established Codex Subsidiary bodies as outlined in their ToRs.

Secondly, some of the new food sources may not fit within the current Codex Food categories e.g. meat alternatives, and plant-based protein alternatives.

Rationale: Taking into consideration the dual Codex mandate objective and Codex's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, especially Goals 1 which states that – "Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner", there is urgent need for Codex Alimentarius Commission to develop a guidance on the proposed topic.

Kenya proposes that the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) can take either of the below two approaches:

- **Establishing Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force to work on this agenda:** As in the past, CAC has established a task force on Antimicrobial Resistance - (TFAMR) or Food Derived from Biotechnology (TFFBT) etc, CAC may establish an *ad hoc* intergovernmental task force to do the work on this agenda. Depending upon the output of this task force and if there will be a need for any further work, the review can be made for either establishing new Codex committee or reviewing the terms of reference of existing Codex Committee.
- **Establish Working Group (WG) under Codex Alimentarius Commission:** CAC may establish WG under its leadership to work on this agenda. This will enable that this WG will not be restricted within the terms of reference of individual Codex Committee and also experts from multiple disciplines can join such working group to enable the development of this proposed Codex guidelines.

Mali

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Singapore

1. Singapore thanks the Codex Secretariat for collecting and analysing comments on New Food Sources and Production Systems (NFPS) and recognises that there is a range of views on how Codex might work on NFPS. Since CAC45, Singapore has had the opportunity to discuss and speak with various Codex members, and several of these discussions echo the findings that Codex Secretariat has summarised in CX/CAC23/46/22.
2. Singapore would like to recall the basis of the start of the current discussion on NFPS, which stemmed from a call by the FAO and WHO for Codex to recognise food system innovations that seek to address challenges related to feeding a growing global population, and at the same time produce food more sustainably. Singapore agrees with the FAO and WHO that it is important for Codex to be proactive and “future-proof” our work in anticipation of an evolving future agri-food landscape. The importance of Codex working in a flexible and timely manner to consider NFPS was also recognised during the CAC45.
3. Although Singapore would prefer a more holistic approach by Codex for work related to NFPS, we recognise that it is timely for Codex to move forward on the issue. Singapore stands ready to contribute to the development of Codex texts on NFPS that could be useful to the Codex membership.
4. Specifically, Singapore hope to further develop new work in the following areas, and we invite interested parties to work together with us on new work proposals:
 - An interpretation document on how existing Codex texts could be applied for safety evaluation of food ingredients derived from precision fermentation technology.
 - Codex guidelines for safety assessment principles of chemical substances used in the production of cell-based food.
 - A Code of Hygienic Practice for the manufacture of cell-based food.
 - A Codex guideline on terminology related to NFPS.
5. While Singapore stands ready to contribute to furthering the above topics, we note that the Codex Procedural Manual currently make references to volume of production, consumption, and trade, for Codex to establish work priorities. As some forms of NFPS continue to evolve, strict interpretation of these rules will mean that Codex will not be able to work on NFPS matters until these new products become more common, and thus removing an opportunity for Codex to proactively pursue work that members could benefit from.
6. Singapore is of the view that Codex will need to consider the unique circumstances related to NFPS when making decisions on work priorities for new work, to prevent potential work on NFPS from being impeded.

South Africa

South Africa is of the opinion that there is a need for discussion on the guidance on the New Food Sources and Production Systems (NFPS) which will address the different components on issues related to the regulatory measures to be followed with regards to food safety, labelling and nutritional and essential compositions, etc. Whereas we acknowledge that the scope of NFPS is wide as such there would be a need for a comprehensive discussion on how these different aspect would be dealt with considering the scope and TORs of the different Codex Committees.

South Africa support the need to establish mechanisms on how to deal with NFPS which can be dealt with through the establishment of an Ad Hoc Task Team with Specific terms of reference and time frames.

Suriname

Suriname thanks the Executive Committee and its Sub-committee for the work and analysis developed to identify avenues for Codex to address requirements of the development of standards for New Food Sources and Production Systems.

Suriname considers that it may be appropriate to address these needs on a case by case basis, and for Codex to develop experience on how New Food Sources and Production Systems should be addressed.

Where required a Working Group reporting to the Commission could address specific situations where a committee was not identified as the “natural home” for the development of these standards.