

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Items 9

FH/47 CRD/22

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

Forty-seventh Session

Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America, 9 – 13 November 2015

PROJECT DOCUMENT

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON *CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (CAC/RCP 53-2003)*

1. Purpose and Scope of the new work

The purpose of the proposed new work is to revise *CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (CAC/RCP 53-2003)*.

2. Relevance and timeliness

The Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables was adopted by CAC in 2003. Since then, many Codes of Hygienic Practice for specific fruit and vegetables were adopted and added as Annexes to the Code. However, slightly different wording was used, text was sometimes duplicated and some of the provisions do not fit the scope of the main code. Continued outbreaks of foodborne illness attributed to fresh produce have led to the identification of new sources of contamination and additional control measures to minimize the potential for illness.

3. Main aspects to be covered

A number of changes will be considered. The code will be restructured with the inclusion of new definitions, specific provisions regarding hygiene in the environment and cleaning programs. The objective and the scope need to be expanded to include provision throughout the food chain from "primary production to consumer" as well as to accommodate the inclusion of specific provisions from the Annexes.

4. Assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

The proposed work falls under the general criterion for establishment of work priorities, because the use of the Code will strengthen protection of consumers by ensuring food safety. This work also seeks to promote fair practices in food trade taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.

The proposed work is directed primarily at control of microbial hazards in fresh fruit and vegetables. Fresh fruits and vegetables are part of the basic diet worldwide, and therefore widely traded. Through updating the information and structure of the document, the revision of this Code aims to facilitate understanding of the guidance in matters of hygiene for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Other criteria applicable to general subjects for the establishment of work priorities of the Procedural Manual:

(a) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade - it is covered by the preceding paragraph.

(b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work- see above section on purpose and scope.

(c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies) - no other similar work undertaken by other international organizations.

(d) Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization – it is amenable to standardization – the Code is already adopted, and the revisions will be simply to streamline the Code – there should be no problem with standardization.

(e) Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue - it is covered by the preceding paragraph.

5. Relevance to Codex Strategic Goals¹

The proposed work falls under 3 Codex Strategic Goals:

Strategic goal 1. Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues.

Strategic goal 2. Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards: this work will help in establishing of risk management options and strategies to prevent outbreaks from the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Strategic goal 4. Implement effective and efficient work management system and practices: reviewing and implementing the recommended practices from primary production to consumption can help the control of microbiological contamination in fresh fruits and vegetables.

6. Information on the relationship between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

The revised Code will build on the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), the *Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Viruses in Food* (CAC/GL 79-2012), the *Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 44-1995), the *Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods* (CAC/RCP 8-1976) and on *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 53-2003).

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Additional scientific advice is not necessary at this moment.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies

There is no need for additional technical input from external bodies.

9. The proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the starting date, proposed date for adoption at step 5 and the proposed date for the adoption by the Commission, the timeframe for developing a standard should not normally exceed 5 years.

Work to start in 2016 with adoption at Step 5 and final adoption in 2018.

¹ ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/Publications/StrategicFrame/Strategic_plan_2014_2019_EN.pdf