

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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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

20th Session

Kampala, Uganda, 2 – 6 October, 2017

COMMENTS ON PROPOSED LAYOUT FOR CODEX STANDARDS FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (OUTSTANDING ISSUES)

(Comments submitted by Albania, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Ghana, Iran, Jamaica, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, USA)

BACKGROUND

This document compiles the comments on the proposed layout for Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables (Outstanding issues), submitted through the Codex Online Commenting Systems (OCS). The comments are as shown in the Appendix.

The Online Commenting System (OCS) is an online tool that enables contact points to submit comments on draft texts in a standardised way thus providing more transparency and better management of comments on different Codex texts as requested through Circular Letters. Since its launching at CAC39 (2016), the OCS has been used for different Codex Committees.

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE APPENDIX

Structure of Comments

The Comments submitted have been presented in a table format, with each Table divided into the following two Columns as follows:

First Column – Provides the proposed changes made by contact points on the text, and is divided into general comments and comments specific to a paragraph.

Second Column – Provides its author and the rationale (explanation) of the comment. For general comments, only the author of the comment is included.

General Comments	Members or observers
ok.	Albania
<p>Argentina sugiere modificar el ámbito de aplicación, dejando como texto solo las dos primeras oraciones hasta la palabra "envasado".</p> <p>El resto del párrafo sugerimos eliminarlo del ámbito de aplicación debido a que no se considera necesaria en esta sección de la norma sino que debería incluirse en la sección de tolerancias</p>	Argentina
<p>Ecuador agradece a Estados Unidos de América por la oportunidad de comentar el documento, por lo cual desea informar que ha revisado el documento y no se han establecido comentarios ni observaciones, sin embargo ha decidido abstenerse de aprobar el documento.</p>	Ecuador
<p>5.2 Size Tolerance We propose the removal of this section as it conflicts with provisions made in section 4 on sizing</p>	Ghana
<p>the option to request the name of the variety as a mandatory requirement should exist; this depends on the produce, e.g</p> <p>Iran supports the inclusion of a section on Methods of Analysis and Sampling to standardize texts across Codex commodity standards. The methods for each standard needs to be specified in accordance with international standards approved by the Codex Committee of Methods Analysis and Sampling as set out in the Relations between Commodity Committees and General Subject Committees section of the Procedural Manual. The following wording is suggested as a preamble:</p> <p>“The methods of analysis and sampling described hereunder are to be endorsed [have been endorsed] by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling.”</p> <p>8. FOOD ADDITIVES</p> <p>Untreated fresh fruit and vegetables</p> <p>This Standard applies to fresh fruits and vegetables as identified in Food Categories 04.1.1.1 Untreated fresh fruits and 04.2.1.1 Untreated fresh vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes (including soybeans), and aloe vera), seaweeds, and nuts and seeds and therefore, no food additives are allowed in accordance with the provisions of the General Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192-1995) for these categories.</p> <p>Treated fresh fruits and vegetables</p> <p>Food additives listed in Tables 1 and 2 of the General Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192-1995) in Food Categories 04.1.1.2 (Surface-treated fresh fruit) and 04.2.1.2 (Surface- treated fresh vegetables, (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, and aloe vera), seaweeds, and nuts and seeds) may be used in foods subject to this Standard</p> <p>Iran support option1 as indicated in CX/FFV 17/20/10: Retain underlined text in this section.</p>	Iran

<p>In cases when minimum size are established the size requirements might not apply to miniature produce: In case of introduction of the exemption for miniature produce, it should be checked whether other provisions on maturity and/or ripeness sufficiently developed are already in the standard or should be introduced, to guarantee the adequate development of miniature produce.}</p> <p>The size requirements shall not apply to miniature produce. [Miniature produce means produce obtained from a variety or cultivar of vegetable, obtained by plant breeding and/or special cultivation techniques. These produce though smaller in size than the minimum size requirement in the standard when applicable), however, they must meet all other requirements of the standard.]</p>	
<p>This proposed Layout for Codex Standards will set the foundation for all new and revised work. We will continue to support its further development for adoption.</p>	Jamaica
<p>Trinidad and Tobago is in agreement with the proposed layout for standards for Fruits and Vegetables as proposed by CODEX. In general, we are in agreement with provisions concerning marking or labeling.</p>	Trinidad and Tobago

Specific comments	Members or observers/Rational
3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY	
3.1 Minimum Requirements	
estar prácticamente exentos de plagas ² ;	Chile Chile apoya la Opción 1, ya que circunscribe la disposición al ámbito de calidad, que es lo que compete a este Comité, y a su vez hace la referencia a la CIPF para remitirse a los aspectos fitosanitarios. Esto último es importante de destacar, ya que suele ser un punto de confusión para los usuarios de las recomendaciones, cuando no se conoce a fondo los ámbitos de los distintos foros.
practically free from pests ² ;	Jamaica Keep “practically free from pest” and expand with: free of damage caused by pests affecting the flesh {For fresh fruits and vegetables with edible and inedible skins or skins that are peeled off prior to consumption. Keep footnote.
practically free from pests ² ;	Thailand We prefer option 1. By adding the underlined footnote refers to the provision on pests in the first bullet to provide more clarity. However, we feel that footnotes on damage caused by pests in the second and third bullets are not necessary and would appreciate a more discussion on this issue.
<practically free of damage caused by pests {For fresh fruits and vegetables with edible skin ² }>{or};	Jamaica or rephrase to read: practically free of damage caused by pests affecting the flesh {For fresh fruits and vegetables with edible and inedible skins or skins that are peeled off prior to consumption. Keep footnote In the interest of food safety all pest or fruits and vegetables damaged by pest must be avoid at all cost
<practically free of damage caused by pests {For fresh fruits and vegetables with edible skin ² }>{or};	Thailand
<free of damage caused by pests affecting the flesh {For fresh fruits and vegetables with inedible skins or skins that are peeled off prior to consumption ² .}>;	Thailand
4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING	
{En el caso que se establezca un calibre (tamaño) mínimo, los requisitos de calibre podrían no aplicarse a los productos miniatura: En caso de introducción de la exención para los productos miniatura, debe comprobarse si otras disposiciones sobre madurez y / o madurez suficientemente desarrolladas ya se encuentran en la norma o deben ser introducidas para garantizar el desarrollo adecuado de los productos en miniatura.}	Chile Mantener el texto subrayado ya que entrega orientación respecto a lo que se debe considerar al momento de presentar una petición para incluir productos miniaturas en una norma del CCFFV
{In case when minimum sizes are established the size requirements might not apply to miniature produce: In case of introduction of the exemption for miniature produce, it should be checked whether other provisions on maturity and/or ripeness sufficiently developed are already in the standard or should be introduced, to guarantee the adequate development of miniature produce.}	Thailand We support not to exclude miniature produce from the standard and would prefer to retain underlined text in option 1.

<p><The size requirements shall not apply to miniature produce. Miniature produce means produce obtained from a variety or cultivar of vegetable, obtained by plant breeding and/or special cultivation techniques. These produce though smaller in size than the minimum size requirement in the standard when applicable), however, they must meet all other requirements of the standard.].></p>	<p>Jamaica the current text is acceptable i.e. Miniature produce maybe exempt from sizing provision but must adhere to all the other requirements in the standard.</p>
<p>5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES</p>	
<p>5.1 QUALITY TOLERANCES</p>	
<p>{The tolerances for decay may be established depending on the characteristics/ nature of produce.}</p>	<p>Jamaica Coming out of the plenary discussion at the 19th session it was recommended that tolerances for decay in all classes should be 1:1:2 as shown. I recommend keeping this provision in the interest of fair trade. There is also agreement with recommendation made, that, under the heading of 5.1. Quality Tolerances the following text be added “{The tolerances for decay may be established depending on the characteristics/ nature of produce.}”</p>
<p>5.1.1 “EXTRA” CLASS</p>	
<p>Categoría”Extra”</p>	<p>Chile Opción 1, considerando la naturaleza perecedera, los tiempos de almacenamiento y transporte de los productos hasta sus puntos de destino. Además se apoya lo sugerido por el grupo de trabajo respecto a la inclusión de la propuesta OPCIÓN 3, del siguiente texto: “{Podrán establecerse tolerancias de pudrición en función de las características o la naturaleza del producto.}”</p>
<p>Catégorie «Extra»</p>	<p>Switzerland La Suisse approuve la norme-cadre telle que proposée. Concernant la question en suspens relative à une tolérance pour dégradation, pourriture molle et altérations internes pour la catégorie Extra, la Suisse réitère son opposition communiquée lors des échanges antérieurs. Les raisons suivantes appuient notre refus :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La catégorie « Extra » est, comme le nom le dit, une catégorie de qualité exceptionnelle avec des caractéristiques bien supérieures à celles des autres catégories. • Seule une distinction claire entre un produit de catégorie « Extra » et un produit de « catégorie I » permet de générer une plus-value importante pour les producteurs et la filière. • L’acheteur est prêt à payer chère la qualité « Extra » ; il peut donc attendre un état impeccable du produit. • L’inclusion d’une tolérance pour dégradation, pourriture molle et altérations internes entraînerait certainement la prescription, par les importateurs et les commerces acheteurs, de spécifications plus strictes que celles de la norme Codex ; la norme Codex ne serait ainsi pas utilisée en l’état puisqu’elle ne refléterait plus les usages en vigueur. <p>La Suisse exprimera ses réserves si le Comité décide d’inclure de tolérances pour dégradation, pourriture molle et altérations internes dans la catégorie « Extra ».</p>

Five percent 5.0%, by number or weight, of {name of produce} not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class I. Included therein, is one percent tolerance for decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown

USA

Section 5 – Provisions concerning tolerances:

- 5.1.1 “Extra” class: - Inclusion of tolerances one percent (1.0%) for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown.

The United States supports the inclusion of tolerances for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown in all classes of fresh fruits and vegetables traded and strongly recommends a 1.0 percent tolerance for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown in Extra Class for the following reasons.

1. The absence of tolerances for decay, internal breakdown and/or soft rot in Extra Class is a major limiting factor in the uniform international application of these standards, and can result in trade barriers if, in the absence of tolerance, countries apply an absolute zero tolerance, which is clearly inappropriate for fresh, perishable products in trade.

Attention is drawn to the following basic facts:

2. Fresh fruits and vegetables, including those in “Extra Class,” are perishable by nature. Their deterioration process (senescence) commences and/or quickens immediately after harvest. Irrespective of the post-harvest technology applied at point of packing, transportation and distribution, senescence is only temporarily slowed down; it cannot be halted.

3. No trader or current technology can ascertain that every unit or piece of fruit packed and traded in “Extra Class” is perfect, i.e., free of all internal and external defects that contribute to premature decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown.

4. Current trends in consumer demand, including the need to maximize desired organoleptic characteristics as well as address food safety concerns, have resulted in demands (i) for more physiologically developed/mature fresh fruits and vegetables, compared to traditional market maturity; (ii) for chemical free production and/or reduced application of agro-chemicals at all stages of production, post-harvest and marketing; and (iii) for less packaging. These modern consumer demands singly or collectively reduce the disease/pest resistance and shelf life of fresh fruits and vegetables, thereby rendering them more prone to decay, internal breakdown and/or soft rot.

5. Not including a tolerance for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown in Extra Class is either interpreted as absolutely none (“zero”) is allowed, or member countries are free to set the tolerances as they wish. “Zero” tolerance for decay, soft rot or internal breakdown in any “Extra Class” is impractical and limits the use of this class to domestic and regional markets where fresh fruits and vegetables can be harvested and sold within two days. Destination markets for many Codex member countries are often not accessible within two or three days and but rather are two to six weeks away by sea.

6. Codex fresh fruits and vegetable standards are written for application “after preparation and packaging,” however they are not always applied as intended. Fresh fruits and vegetables are not always shipped immediately after packaging; they may be stored for months before being shipped. Some member countries apply the standard at any point within the distribution channel, from packing to retail. Hence, based on the duration of storage and/or duration of time within the distribution channel, some of fresh fruits and vegetables will be affected by soft rot decay and internal breakdown

7. Farmers, packers and exporters invest significant resources to grow, pack, protect and ship fresh fruits and vegetables that meet the requirements of Extra Class.

Therefore, not having a tolerance for decay, soft rot or internal breakdown in this class

	<p>directly results in fresh fruits and vegetables being downgraded or rejected. As always such actions result in negative financial consequences for the packers, exporters and most of all the farmers and dependent farming communities.</p> <p>8. Codex standards must reflect global trade practices. Participating countries are not seeking the Committee's permission for a new practice; but rather participate with the goal of harmonizing current trade practices.</p>
7. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING OR LABELLING	
7.2 NOM-RETAIL CONTAINERS	
<p>Cada envase debe llevar las siguientes indicaciones en letras agrupadas en el mismo lado, marcadas de forma legible, e indeleble y visibles desde el exterior.</p>	<p>Chile</p> <p>Se sugiere suprimir el texto entre corchetes e introducir el segundo párrafo entre corchetes siempre que se permita la presentación de un producto —una vez clasificado— no envasado sino a granel en un vehículo de transporte. Este segundo párrafo se ha redactado para los contenedores transportados por mar, aire y ferrocarril que contienen productos a granel.</p> <p>Se apoya la Opción 3: se considera que el texto vigente cubre las prácticas actuales para estos envases.</p>