



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST

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DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL STANDARD ON MAAMOUL

(Prepared by Saudi Arabia)

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The FAO/WHO Coordinating for Near East at its 9th session (CCNE9) in May 2017 noted the proposal of Saudi Arabia to develop a regional standard for Maamoul and requested Saudi Arabia to prepare a discussion paper for consideration at CCNE10¹.

CCNE9 specified that the discussion paper should clearly identify the product, the key issues to be addressed and the trade volume of Maamoul in the region. The paper should further be accompanied by a project document, as laid down in the Procedural Manual, and, if possible an outline of the proposed regional standard.

This paper has been prepared in response to the request of CCNE9 and contains a project document in Appendix I as well as an outline of the proposed regional standard in Appendix II.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRODUCT

Maamoul is a filled pastry or cookie type of food product prepared mainly from wheat flour, semolina, wheat germ, food salt, butter and water and is filled with a sweet chewy paste based on dates or other fruits.

3. NEED FOR A REGIONAL STANDARD

The number of countries that consume this type of product is estimated at approximately 30 different countries around the world. Maamoul is particularly widely consumed in countries of the Near East region.

This type of product is a highly nutrient-dense food due to its content of dates or other fruit-based fillings, butter and dough. The need of regulating Maamoul and having a standard for it is fundamental for health reasons as well as the facilitation of trade.

4. RECOMMENDATION

Saudi Arabia suggests that CCNE10 consider the project document for Maamoul (Appendix I) and agree to submit the new work on a regional standard for Maamoul for approval by the 43rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

¹ REP17/NE, para. 100

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Proposal for the Development of a Regional Standard for Maamoul

1. The purpose and scope of the standard

The purpose of this proposed standard is to facilitate trade and to provide guidance to Member States and the Maamoul production industry on the preparation of Maamoul. This type of product is consumed widely covering many continents. Maamoul is a highly nutrient-dense food, for its content of dates or other fruit or nut paste fillings, butter and dough, and a much consumed product. Therefore, the need of regulating Maamoul and having a standard for it is fundamental for health reasons as well as the facilitation of trade.

The scope of the work is to provide guidance on the preparation, packaging and labeling of Maamoul. This standard applies to the Maamoul marketed regionally.

This standard is concerned with Maamoul for human consumption that is defined as “A food product prepared essentially from wheat flour or Semolina or wheat germ, edible fat substance, edible common salt and water, which stuffed in one of the suitable substances.”

2. Relevance and timeliness

This commodity is produced in Near East countries and exported internationally. Countries producing this product include: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain. Besides, there are many countries to which this commodity is imported such as: France, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Netherland, Turkey, United State of America, Australia, Gabon, Senegal, Kenya, Ethiopia, Pakistan, China (SFDA exporting certificate data). Therefore, the standard will assist countries to comply with Maamoul requirements and its labeling in order to facilitate international trade.

3. Main aspects to be covered:

The work will address the main aspects of production of Mammoul such as:

COMPOSITION:

Maamoul is made of several ingredients such as cereal products, milk and milk products, leavening agents, sweeteners, edible starches, spices, fruit, vegetable and their products, dough enhancers, proteolytic enzyme and amylases etc.

QUALITY FACTORS

- The product shall be free from pathogenic organisms and insect infestation
- The moisture content for the product shall not be less than 11% and shall not exceeded 14%.
- The product shall be clean, sound and free from impurities and foreign materials and burned parts.
- It shall have a distinctive taste and odour and be free of rancidity.

Labelling of the product

- The food label is an important communication tool that provides consumers with information about a product's composition, nutritional profile, and quantity of contents.

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

General criterion

Mammoul is not only internationally traded within the Near East region, but also to countries outside the region such as South Africa, China, and the United Kingdom. Countries in Europe such as Italy are also starting to produce this product.

a. Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries

No data available.

b. Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.

No data available.

c. International or regional market potential

No data available.

d. Amenability of the commodity to standardization

No data available.

e. Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards

No data available.

f. Number of commodities which would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi-processed or processed

No data available.

g. Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)

None.

5. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

The development of this work will contribute to the Strategic Objective 1 of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, namely "Address proactively and in a timely manner current, emerging and critical issues identified by Codex members in food safety and quality " and in particular to its objective 1 which is " Identify needs and emerging issues".

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

The proposed standard will take into account existing applicable Codex texts such as:

- Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985).
- Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.
- Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CODEX STAN 234-1999).
- Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).

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

None

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for the proposed timeline for completion of the new work

None.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of work

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval at its 43rd session in 2020, it is expected that the work can be completed in three sessions.

Consideration by CCNE10	November 2019
Critical review by the Executive Committee and approval by CAC43 as new work	July 2020
Preparation of draft standard and circulation for comments	2020-2021
Consideration of the proposed draft standard by CCNE11 (Step 4)	2021/22
Adoption by CAC45 as Draft Standard (Step 5)	2022
Consideration of the draft Regional Standard by CCNE12 (Step 5)	2023/24
Adoption as regional standard by CAC	2024

OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MAAMOUL

1. SCOPE

This standard is concerned with maamoul for human consumption that is defined in section 2.

2. DEFINITIONS

Maamoul: A food product prepared essentially from wheat flour or Semolina or wheat germ, edible fat substance, edible common salt and water, which stuffed in one of the suitable substances mentioned in section 3.

3. COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1. COMPOSITION:

3.1.1. Cereal products: Semolina, wheat germ, maize germ, edible wheat bran, malt flour, barley powder, edible oat flour, rice flour, and rye flour.

3.1.2. Milk and milk products: Liquid milk, powdered milk, butter, butter milk and its solids, edible casein, condensed milk, cheese, liquid or dried whey.

3.1.3. Leavening agents: Baking powder, active baker's yeast, sodium bicarbonate, ammonium bicarbonate or any other approved leavening agents.

3.1.4. Sweeteners: Any permitted sweeteners, honey and dates.

3.1.5. Edible starches: Maize starch, rice starch, potato starch, tapioca starch, wheat starch, etc.

3.1.6. Spices: Ginger, saffron, chili powder, black pepper, cardamon, cumin, anise or other permitted spices.

3.1.7. Fruit, vegetable and their products: Dried fruits, desiccated coconut, fruit and vegetable jams, edible vegetables, pectin, fruit paste and date paste.

3.1.8. Miscellaneous: Cocoa powder, coffee powder, chocolate, egg products and edible nuts.

3.1.9. Dough enhances: Sodium sulphite, potassium sulphite, sodium metabisulphite, potassium metabisulphite, proteolytic enzyme and amylases etc.

3.2. QUALITY FACTORS

3.2.1. The product shall be free from pathogenic organisms and insect infestation

3.2.2. The moisture content for the product shall not be less than 11% and shall not exceeded 14%.

3.2.3. The product shall be clean, sound and free from impurities and foreign materials and burned parts

3.2.4. It shall have a distinctive taste and odors and free of rancidity.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the Codex General Standard for Food Additives (CXS 192-1995)

5. CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CXS 193-1995).

6. HYGIENE

6.1. It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

6.2. The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods (CXG 21-1997).

7. LABELLING

The products covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985). In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

- 7.1. Name of the product (Maamoul, type of filling).
- 7.2. The name and percentage of fruits or fillings should be declared.

8. PACKAGING, TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE

- 8.1. It shall protect the quality characteristics and sensory properties of the product.
- 8.2. It shall protect the product from contamination.
- 8.3. It shall protect the product from absorption of moisture, seepage and breakage.
- 8.4. It shall not contaminate the product with any smell or taste or colour or any other strange properties during storage, handling and distribution until the final sale.

9. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

For checking the compliance with this Standard, the Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CXS 234-1999), shall be used.