



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

Eleventh Session

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**Alignment of the Food Additive provisions of Regional Standards and relevant provisions of the
GSFA**

Prepared by the Electronic Working Group led by Saudi Arabia

1. Background

- 1.1 The 10th session of the Codex Committee for the Near East (CCNE10) agreed to establish an electronic Working Group (EWG), chaired by Saudi Arabia, working in English and Arabic, to consider the alignment of food additive provisions in the regional standards developed by CCNE with the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA, CXS 192-1995).
- 1.2 The Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) which is leading this process has developed guidance on the alignment of food additive provisions for committees that have developed commodity standards.¹ This Guidance document establishes a minimum expectation for active Commodity Committees who have only limited competence to undertake this work.
- 1.3 The process followed here is in line with the requirements in paragraphs 10-13 of the guidance document, i.e., updating food additive provisions – minimum requirements for alignment.

2. Process description

- 2.1 The EWG chaired by Saudi Arabia invited all interested Members and Observers of the Codex Alimentarius to participate in the EWG. The proposed timeline for the work was as follows:

No.	Date	Subject
1.	1 May 2021	Due date for answer to the invitation and establish EWG members.
2.	15 June 2021	open the 1st round of comments on the proposed draft standard for alignment of the food additive provisions of regional standards and relevant provisions of the GSFA.
3.	15 September 2021	Deadline for submission of first round comments
4.	1 November 2021	Revised draft standard circulated for 2nd round of comments on the proposed alignment.
5.	1 January 2022	Deadline for submission of comments
6.	1 March 2022	EWG Report and final proposal for alignment of the food additive provisions in the regional standards with the GSFA based on comments submitted to the Codex Secretariat.

¹ CCFA information document - GUIDANCE TO COMMODITY COMMITTEES ON THE ALIGNMENT OF FOOD ADDITIVE PROVISIONS. Available at

https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/codexalimentarius/committee/docs/INF_CCFA_e_01.pdf

2.2 The following Members participated in the EWG: Iran, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Jordan. The list of participants is present in **Annex II**.

2.3 The EWG conducted two rounds of consultation. Comments submitted by Syrian Arab Republic in round one were reviewed and clarified by the chairperson of the EWG. The second draft was circulated without receipt of further comments.

2.4 The final proposal was prepared by the EWG Chairperson. Annex I contains the food additive provisions in CCNE standards along with some explanations.

3 Recommendation

3.1 Considering the work progress by the EWG, CCNE11 is invited to consider the information presented in Annex I and the following recommendations for each of the regional standards for the consideration of CCFA.

3.2 Regional Standard for Canned Humus with Tehena (CXS 257R-2007) – Confirm the food additive provisions included in the standard are still appropriate and request CCFA to add notes to the GSFA to indicate that only these three additives (citric acid (INS 330); sodium carbonate (INS 500(i)); and potassium carbonate (INS501(i))) can be used in this commodity at GMP and with the specific technological functions.

3.3 Regional Standard for Canned Foul Medames (CXS 258 R- 2007) – Propose to change the name of EDTAs to ETHYLENE DIAMINE TETRA ACETATES; confirm the food additive provisions included in the standard are still appropriate and request CCFA to add notes to the GSFA to indicate that only these two additives (citric acid (INS 330) at GMP and EDTAs (INS 386 and 385) at a maximum level of 365 mg/kg) can be used in this commodity and with the specific technological functions.

3.4 Regional Standard for Tehena (CXS 259R-2007) – Agree that no food additives are permitted in this commodity, propose to insert the food additive provision i.e. “No food additives are permitted in Tehena” in the commodity standard, and request CCFA to make changes to GSFA to reflect this.

3.5 Regional Standard for Harissa (Red Hot Pepper Paste) (CXS – 308R-2011): Confirm that no food additives may be used in harissa, revise the food additive provision to indicate that No food additives are permitted in foods conforming to this standard and request CCFA to make changes to GSFA to reflect this.

3.6 Regional Standard for Halwa Tehenia (CXS 309R-2011); Confirm the food additive provisions included in the standard are still appropriate and note the alignment of the food additive provision in this standard with the GSFA has been completed. Request an editorial correction to the description of Food Category 05.2.2 “Soft candy” in the GSFA (To change “halwa teheniaa” to “Halwa Tehenia”, page 28 of the GSFA in English version) to accurately reflect the name of the commodity Halwa Tehenia.

3.7 Regional Standard for Date Paste (CXS 314R-2013): Confirm that no food additives are permitted in date paste, and revise the food additive provision to indicate that No food additives are permitted in foods conforming to this standard and request CCFA to make changes to GSFA to reflect this.

3.8 Regional Standard for Doogh (CXS 332R- 2018): Note that food additive provisions have yet to be developed for this commodity, that the work on the alignment of the food additive provisions in the Standard for Fermented Milks (CXS 243-2003) is still ongoing in CCFA, and that work on the food additive provisions of this commodity be put on hold until that alignment work has been completed.

3.9 Regional standard for mixed zaatar (CXS 341R-2020); Confirm the food additive provisions included in the standard are still appropriate, propose that the food category in the GSFA be revised from 0.4.2.2.2 (Dried vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes and aloe vera), seaweeds, and nuts and seeds) to 12.2.1 (Herbs and spices), and request CCFA to add notes to the GSFA to indicate that citric acid (INS 330) as an acidity regulator is only permitted in grade 3 mixed zaatar at GMP.

ALIGNMENT OF THE FOOD ADDITIVE PROVISIONS OF REGIONAL STANDARDS AND RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE GSFA

No.	REGIONAL STANDARDS	Food category listed in the cross-reference table of the GSFA	INS No.	FOOD ADDITIVES	MAXIMUM LEVELS	COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS
1.	CXS 257R-2007 (Regional Standard for Canned Humus with Tehena)	04.2.2.4 Canned or bottled (pasteurized) or retort pouch vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, and aloe vera), and seaweeds	330	Citric acid	GMP	Confirm that Canned Humus with Tehena has been assigned to the appropriate Food category in the GSFA (04.2.2.4). Confirm that there are no changes to the food additive provisions as included in the regional standard and request CCFA to add appropriate notes to the GSFA to reflect these.
			500(i)	Sodium carbonate	GMP	
			501(i)	Potassium carbonate	GMP	
2.	CXS 258R-2007 (Regional Standard for Canned Foul Medames)	04.2.2.4 Canned or bottled (pasteurized) or retort pouch vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, and aloe vera), and seaweeds	330	Citric acid	GMP	Confirm that Canned Foul Medames has been assigned to the appropriate Food category in the GSFA (04.2.2.4). EDTAs should be changed to ETHYLENE DIAMINE TETRA ACETATES to be consistent with the name in the GSFA. Confirm that there are no changes to the food additive provisions as included in the regional standard, that citric acid is used as an acidity regulator in this commodity and EDTAs are used as antioxidants and preservatives and request CCFA to add an appropriate note to the GSFA to reflect these.
			386 385	EDTAs	365mg/kg (singly or in combination) (as anhydrous calcium disodium EDTA)	
3.	CXS 259R-2007 (Regional Standard for Tehena)	04.2.2.6 Vegetable (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, and aloe vera), seaweed, and nut and seed pulps and preparations (e.g. vegetable desserts and sauces, candied vegetables) other than food category 04.2.2.5		Although not explicitly mentioned in the standard the product shall be free from artificial flavour, filling agent, colouring and bleaching agents (i.e.: titanium dioxide)i.e. no food additives . are permitted		Confirm that Tehena has been assigned to the appropriate Food category of the GSFA (04.2.2.6). Reflect in the standards tha No food additives are permitted in foods conforming to this standard and ask CCFA to align accordingly

4.	CXS 308R-2011 (Regional Standard for Harissa (Red Hot Pepper Paste))	04.2.2.6 Vegetable (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, and aloe vera), seaweed, and nut and seed pulps and preparations (e.g. vegetable desserts and sauces, candied vegetables) other than food category 04.2.2.5	Confirm that no food additives may be used in harissa.	Confirm that harissa has been assigned to the appropriate Food category of the GSFA (04.2.2.6) Reflect in the standard that “No food additives are permitted in foods conforming to this standard” and ask CCFA to align accordingly
5.	CXS 309R-2011 (Regional Standard for Halwa Tehenia)	05.2.2 Soft candy: Products include soft, chewy products such as caramels (containing sugar syrup, fats, colour and flavour) and their dietetic counterparts; products that may or may not contain cocoa and milk (e.g. toffees and chocolate-flavoured caramels); jelly-based candies (e.g. jelly beans, jellied fruit paste covered in sugar, made from gelatin, pectin, colour and flavour); and licorice. ⁴⁹ Also included are halwa teheniaa and oriental specialties, such as sweet bean jelly (yokan) and agar jelly for mitsumame. These types of products may be used as fillings for chocolate products within the scope of food categories 05.1.4 and 05.1.5.	Only acidity and emulsifiers in Table 3 of General Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192-1995) are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard.	Confirm that Halwa Tehenia has been assigned to the appropriate Food category of the GSFA (05.2.2) but request and editorial correction on page 28 under the heading 05.2.2 Soft candy to change “halwa teheniaa” to Halwa Tehenia Confirm that there are no changes to the food additive provisions as included in the regional standard, and request CCFA to reflect these provisions as appropriate in the GSFA.
6.	CXS 314R-2013 (Regional Standard for Date Paste (Near East))	04.1.2.8 Fruit preparations including pulp, purees, fruit toppings and coconut milk	No additives are allowed in the products covered by this Standard	Confirm that date paste has been assigned to the appropriate Food category of the GSFA (04.1.2.8) the standard that Reflect in “No food additives are permitted in foods conforming to this standard” and ask CCFA to align accordingly
7.	CXS 332R-2018 (Regional Standard for Doogh)	01.2.1.1 Fermented milks (plain), not heat-treated after fermentation	(For further consideration by the Regional Coordinating Committee for the Near East and subsequent endorsement by the Codex Committee on Food Additives).	Confirm that doogh has been assigned to the appropriate Food categories of the GSFA (01.2.1.1; 01.2.1.2 and 01.1.4) Note that work on the alignment of these categories is still ongoing and CCNE agreed to wait until the alignment work had been completed to work on the food additive provisions.

				<p>Draft food additive provisions for future consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All food additives permitted for use in the category 01.2.1 and the Sub- category 01.2.1.1 is applicable within Doogh (plain), not heat-treated after fermentation.
		<p>01.2.1.2 Fermented milks (plain), heat-treated after fermentation</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All food additives permitted for use in the category 01.2.1 and the Sub- category 01.2.1.2 is applicable within Doogh (plain), heat-treated after fermentation.
		<p>01.1.4 Flavoured fluid milk drinks</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All food additives permitted for use in the category 01.1.4 is applicable within Doogh (flavored).
<p>8.</p>	<p>CXS 341R-2020 REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MIXED ZAATAR</p>	<p>04.2.2.2 Dried vegetables (Dried vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes and aloe vera), seaweeds, and nuts and seeds)</p>	<p>No food additives are permitted in Grade 1 and Grade 2 mixed zaatar. Only the following food additive is permitted in Grade 3 mixed zaatar (Table 3).</p> <p>It shall consist of at least 15% raw broadleaf zaatar or raw zaatar mixed with sesame seeds and sumac husk which should be added to a level of at least 5%, with the possibility of adding salt to a maximum level of 4% and citric acid according to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Optional ingredients as listed in Section 3.1.2 may be added provided they all meet GMP.</p>	<p>Recommend that given the nature of the product mixed Zaatar be assigned to the food category 12.2.1 Herbs and spices: as more appropriate considering the composition of the commodity.</p> <p>Confirm that there are no changes to the food additive provisions as included in the regional standard, and request CCFA to reflect these provisions as appropriate in the GSFA</p>

ANNEX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
ELECTRONIC WORKING GROUP - CCNE- ALIGNMENT OF THE FOOD ADDITIVE PROVISIONS
OF REGIONAL STANDARDS AND RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE GSFA

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