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Rome, Italy

27 June – 01 July 2016

REPORT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS

Goa, India

14 – 18 September 2015

NOTE: *This report includes Circular Letter CL 2015/27-SCH*



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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To: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

From: Secretariat
Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

Subject: **Distribution of the Report of the Second Session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (REP16/SCH)**

The report of the Second Session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs will be considered by the 39th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Rome, Italy, 27 June - 01 July 2016).

PART A - MATTERS FOR ADOPTION BY THE 39TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

Proposed Draft Standards at Step 5 of the Procedure

1. Proposed Draft Standard for Cumin (Para 25 and Appendix III)
2. Proposed Draft Standard for Thyme (Para 37 and Appendix IV)

Governments and international organizations wishing to comment on the above documents should do so in writing to the Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy (e-mail: codex@fao.org) **before 31 May 2016.**

PART B - REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

Proposals for new work on Spices and Culinary Herbs (REP14/SCH para. 34).

Governments and international organizations wishing to submit proposals for new work for the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) should do so in writing to (i) National Codex Contact Point of India (NCCP), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi -110002, INDIA, Tel: +91-11-23237439, Email: codex-india@nic.in; and (ii) Dr Dinesh Singh Bisht, Liaison Officer, Secretariat, Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs, Email: ccsch@indianspices.com with a copy to the Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy (E-mail: Codex@fao.org) **before 30 September 2016.**

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Second Session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs reached the following conclusions:

Matters for Adoption by CAC39

The Committee agreed to forward the following draft Standards for adoption at Step 5:

- Proposed Draft Standard for Cumin (para. 25 and Appendix III);
- Proposed Draft Standard for Thyme (para. 37 and Appendix IV).

Matters for consideration by CAC39

- The Committee provided replies regarding the status of implementation of selected activities of the Codex Strategic Plan (2014-2019) relevant to its work (para. 12 and Appendix II).

Matters Referred to other Committees

The Committee:

Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)

- Replied to the request of CCFA47 regarding the use of food additives in culinary herbs (para.15).

Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF)

- Requested CCCF to clarify the applicability of maximum levels of contaminants for leafy vegetables to spices and culinary herbs (para. 36).

Relevant committees (endorsement)

- Forwarded the provisions for food additives, labelling and methods of analysis to CCFA, CCFL and CCMAS respectively for endorsement (para. 24).

Other Matters for information

The Committee:

- Returned the proposed draft standard for Black, White and Green Pepper and the proposed draft standard for Oregano to Step 2/3 for redrafting by eWGs (paras 21 and 31);
- Agreed to use the prioritised list for sending proposals for new work to the Commission at its next session (para 54);
- Agreed to consider at its next session: (i) sampling plans for inclusion in the standards for thyme and cumin; and (ii) discussion paper on development of a glossary of terms and on what further processing meant and how it applied to the scope of CCSCH (paras 36 and 56).

INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) held its Second Session in Goa, India, from 14 to 18 September 2015, at the kind invitation of the Government of India. Dr M. R. Sudharshan, former Director Research, Spices Board India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, chaired the Session. The Session was attended by 38 Member countries and one Member organization and three Observers. The list of participants, including the Secretariats, is given in Appendix I.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Dr A. Jayathilak IAS, Chairman of the Spices Board India, welcomed the delegates. He noted that the recent positive developments in the production, process and trade of spices, were due to the stringent quality control system in India. He mentioned that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), also the Codex Contact Point, is the premier body on food standards and safety in the country. Dr Jayathilak concluded his speech by wishing the delegates fruitful deliberations and a pleasant stay in Goa.
3. Mr Ashish Bahuguna IAS, Chairperson of FSSAI opened the session by lighting the traditional lamp. In his opening speech, the FSSAI Chairperson emphasised the importance of the work of the Committee on the development of standards for spices and culinary herbs.
4. Dr M. R. Sudharshan, Chairperson of the Committee and Dr P. S. Sreekantan Thampi, Organizing Secretary of the Committee, also welcomed the delegates.

Division of Competence¹

5. The Committee noted the division of competence between the European Union and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II of the Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)²

6. The Committee:
 - a) Adopted the Provisional Agenda as its Agenda for the Session.
 - b) Agreed to establish an in-session Working Group (WG), chaired by the United States, to:
 - Consider proposals for new work submitted in reply to [CL 2014/04-SCH](#) (Agenda Item 9); and
 - Assess the proposals according to the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priority, set out in the Procedural Manual.
 - c) Agreed to consider the agenda items in the following order: 2, 3, 7, 5, 6, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2)³

7. The Committee noted that matters referred from CAC37, CAC38 and other committees were mainly for information while others would be discussed under relevant agenda items.

Monitoring of Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019

8. The Committee prepared a reply on the basis of the proposals of India ([CRD3](#)) and European Union ([CRD4](#)).
9. The Committee further clarified the responses related to the following activities:

Activity 1.2.1

10. The Committee agreed to indicate that if CCSCH were to develop an approach for dealing with emerging issues this should be according to the provision in the Procedural Manual (Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities - Criteria applicable to commodities).

Activity 4.1.4

11. The Committee agreed that members also have a role in ensuring the timely distribution of working documents.

¹ [CRD1](#) (Annotated Agenda – Division of competence between the European Union and its Member States).

² [CX/SCH 15/2/1](#).

³ [CX/SCH 15/2/2](#); [CRD3](#) (Comments of India); [CRD4](#) (Comments of European Union); [CRD12](#) (Comments of Chile).

Conclusion

12. The Committee agreed to forward the responses to CCEXEC71 and CAC39 for consideration (Appendix II).

Management of the work of the Committee

13. The Committee agreed to request the in-session WG on priorities (see Agenda Item 1) to prepare a scheme for ranking the proposals for new work.

Food Additives

14. The Committee discussed the request of the Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) and noted the different views including: referring to the GSFA; that no additives should be allowed as there was no technological justification; that it was premature for the Committee to consider the use of food additives in spices and culinary herbs at this stage.

Conclusion

15. The Committee agreed to inform CCFA that CCSCH was in the process of elaborating two standards on culinary herbs (i.e. thyme and oregano). Both proposed draft standards did not include provisions for antioxidants, while the proposed draft Standard for Thyme included a proposal for the use of microcrystalline cellulose (INS 460(i)), powdered cellulose (INS 460(ii)) and silicon dioxide, amorphous (INS 551) as anticaking agent in ground/powdered thyme.

ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCSCH (Agenda Item 3)⁴

16. The Committee noted with appreciation the activities of FAO and WHO, IOSTA, IPC and ISO relevant to its work.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR BLACK, WHITE AND GREEN PEPPER (Agenda Item 4)⁵

17. The Delegation of India as Chair of the eWG on the Standard for Black, White and Green Pepper introduced the item and summarised the outcomes of the eWG work. The Delegation also explained that the eWG had addressed the request of CAC37 to consider broadening the scope of standard to include other types of pepper berries (peppercorn), such as red pepper⁶ but found that it was not feasible.

Discussion

18. Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to collect additional comments on each section of the proposed draft standard so that these comments along with written comments submitted at the present session could be considered when redrafting the document.

19. Delegations commented as follows:

a. *Title*

- include the word “dried” to differentiate it from the fresh form and be consistent with other draft standards currently under elaboration;

b. *Section 1: Scope*

- delete “catering purposes”;
- delete “three commercial forms” to be consistent with the scope;
- include dried and dehydrated pepper.

c. *Section 2.1: Product definition*

- use clear definitions that would assist to differentiate between the black, white and green peppers;
- if used, maturity criteria should be clearly defined or quantitative definitions should be used;
- the following definitions were proposed: “Black pepper – dried berries having unbroken pericarp” “White pepper – dried berries with outer pericarp removed”, “Green pepper – prepared from green berries by removal of moisture under controlled conditions”.

⁴ [CX/SCH 15/2/3](#); [CX/SCH 15/2/3 Add.1](#).

⁵ [CX/SCH 15/2/4](#); [CX/SCH 15/2/4 Add.1](#) (Comments of Argentina, Chile, Cote d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Senegal and Sri Lanka); [CX/SCH 15/2/4 Add.2](#) (Comments of Cameroon, Costa Rica, Japan, Nigeria, Sudan and Thailand); [CRD7](#) (Comments of Ghana); [CRD8](#) (Comments of European Union); [CRD9](#) (Comments of Philippines); [CRD10](#) (Comments of Malaysia).

⁶ [REP14/CAC](#) para. 98.

- d. *Section 2.2: Styles*
- harmonise styles with those used in other standards currently under elaboration;
 - delete sieve sizes.
- e. *Section 2.4: Trade Classes /Grades*
- distinguish between pepper for direct human consumption and for further processing and develop separate provisions (in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4).
- f. *Section 2.5.1 Extraneous matter*
- align the definition with that of other standards currently under elaboration;
 - transfer the definition to a footnote under Table 2 for ease of reference.
- g. *Section 2.5.2 Light berries*
- exclude “dehydrated green pepper berries” from the definition since these are harvested when they are immature.
- h. *Section 3.2 Quality factors*
- insert a new section under 3.2 to cater for, “odour, flavour, colour and general/size and shape” to ensure consistency with the provisions of other draft standards;
 - in Table 1 “Basic Parameters of BWG Pepper” delete section numbers as they are not appropriate; and also delete words “spherical shape” in the general size/shape parameter for white pepper;
 - in Table 3 “Chemical Characteristics of BWG whole Pepper” transfer sulphur dioxide to Section 4 “Food additives” and delete salt content as it would appear to refer to a pickled product.
- i. *Section 4: Food Additives*
- Insert sulphur dioxide, transferred from Table 3, and amend the section accordingly.
- j. *Section 6 Food Hygiene*
- examine the appropriateness of Section 6.3 and its relation with the *General Standard for Labelling of Pre-Packaged Foods* ([CODEX STAN 1-1985](#)).
- k. *Section 9: Packaging and storage*
- delete this section as packaging and storage is covered under the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* ([CAC/RCP 1-1969](#)) and the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Herbs* ([CAC/RCP 42-1995](#)) referred under Section 6.

Conclusion

20. The Committee agreed to establish an eWG led by India and co-chaired by Indonesia and Cameroon, open to all Members and Observers, working in English only, to revise the proposed draft standard taking into account the above discussions and written comments submitted at the present session and relevant decisions regarding the format of the other standards currently under elaboration.

Status of the proposed draft Standard for Black, White and Green Pepper

21. The Committee agreed to return the proposed draft Standard to Step 2/3 for redrafting by the aforementioned eWG, circulation for comments and consideration by the next Session of CCSC.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR CUMIN (Agenda Item 5)⁷

22. The Delegation of European Union, as Chair of the eWG, introduced the item and explained that the principles and approaches used in defining the layout, quality provisions and other requirements for cumin were similar to those of thyme. The Delegation highlighted some issues that the eWG could not resolve including grading and some physico-chemical requirements.

⁷ [CX/SCH 15/2/5](#); [CX/SCH 15/2/5 Add.1](#) (Comments of Argentina, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, India, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and the United States); [CX/SCH 15/2/5 Add.2](#) (Comments of Cameroon, Costa Rica, Japan, Nigeria, Sudan and Thailand); [CRD7](#) (Comments of Ghana); [CRD8](#) (Comments of European Union).

Discussion

23. The Committee considered the proposed draft standard section by section, noted comments and made the following decisions:
- a) *Section 1: Scope* – put the last sentence “It does not apply to the product when indicated as being intended for further processing” into square brackets for further discussion on its need or interpretation (see Agenda Item 10).
 - b) *Section 2.2: Styles* – added the definitions to “cracked” and “ground” styles (see Agenda Item 7).
 - c) *Section 2.3: Varietal Types* – deleted the text, as cumin was an annual crop and no wild or hybrid was used.
 - d) *Section 3.2.1: Odour, flavour and colour* – deleted “cumin aldehyde” as the aroma composition of cumin was attributed to a number of substances; broadened the range of colours, i.e. from light grey to dark brown; and made other editorial amendments.
 - e) *Section 3.2.3: Classification* – added a text to indicate that requirements of Class III/Grade III applied as minimum requirements to ungraded products since some countries do not use classification.
 - f) *Section 3.2.4: Physical Characteristics* – deleted the column related to the requirements for “fruits with stalks” in Table 1; amended the definition of insect-damaged matter in footnote 4, for consistency with other standards. The Committee reached agreement on the other physical requirements. The Delegation of the United States expressed concern to the physical requirements in Table 1 as in their view these did not reflect the current practice in international trade.
 - g) *Section 3.2.5: Chemical Characteristics* – deleted the parameters on “non-volatile ether extract” and “cumin aldehyde content” as they might not be useful for routine quality control. The Committee reached agreement on the other chemical requirements.
 - h) *Section 5.2: Contaminants* - deleted the reference to veterinary drugs as these do not apply to the plant materials covered by the draft standard;
 - i) *Section 8.2 Name of the Product* - deleted the “crop year” (8.2.3) as it would not be possible to verify the provision during normal routine inspection.
 - j) *Section 9: Methods of analysis and sampling* – aligned the table on methods of analysis with that of other standards currently under elaboration; deleted the sampling plan as its appropriateness for spices and culinary herbs needed to be further evaluated and an appropriate sampling plan developed (see Agenda Item 7).

Conclusion

24. The Committee noted that:
- a) Substantial progress had been made on the standard but that some issues needed to be further discussed, i.e. definition of further processing and sampling plan and, therefore, the document was ready to progress in the Step Procedure;
 - b) Provisions for food additives, labelling and methods of analysis would be submitted to CCFA, CCFL and CCMAS, respectively, for endorsement.

Status of the Proposed Draft Standard for Cumin (N05-2014)

25. The Committee agreed to forward the proposed draft Standard to the Commission for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix III).

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR OREGANO (Agenda Item 6)⁸

26. The Delegation of the European Union introduced the item and summarised the outcomes of the work of the eWG, which was led by Argentina and co-chaired by Greece. The Delegation noted that the format of the proposed draft standard had been aligned with those of the other three proposed draft standards and pointed out a number of issues that remained to be solved, including scope, styles, flavour and colour, several physical and chemical requirements, the method for the determination of volatile oils and sampling plan.

⁸ [CX/SCH 15/2/6](#); [CX/SCH 15/2/6 Add.1](#): (Comments of Argentina, Chile, Egypt, Kenya, and Turkey); [15/2/6 Add.2](#) (Comments of Cameroon, Costa Rica, Japan, Sudan and Thailand); [CRD7](#) (Comments of Ghana); [CRD8](#) (Comments of European Union); [CRD9](#) (Comments of Philippines).

Discussion

27. The Committee considered the proposed draft standard section by section, noted comments and made the following decisions:
- a) *Format* - align the format of the standard with that of other standards currently under elaboration.
 - b) *Title*: insert the word “dried” to differentiate it from the fresh form and be consistent with other draft standards under elaboration.
 - c) *Section 1: Scope*
 - exclude *Oregano majoranum* from the scope of the standard and align the section with that of other standards currently under elaboration;
 - noted different views on the last sentence of the “scope” which exclude products for further processing: the exclusion significantly narrowed the scope of the standard than that proposed in the project document approved by CAC36⁹; a large portion of oregano and other spices in international trade was for further processing; commercial requirements regulated products from further processing;.
 - agreed to continue discussion on “products for further processing (see Agenda Item 10).
 - d) *Section 2.1: Product definition* – delete reference to the appropriate level of development as there is difficulty to define it in this product.
 - e) *Section 2.2: Styles* – replace the numerical values of the sieve size in “crushed/rubbed” and “ground/powdered” styles with the definitions used in other standards currently under elaboration noting that this would simplify the standard and facilitate its implementation.
 - f) *Section 2.3: Varietal types* – add a text on the exclusion of *Oregano majoranum*.
 - g) *Section 3.2.2: Odour, flavour and colour* – align the section with that of other standards currently under elaboration; broaden the range of colours, i.e. from yellowish green to olive green to take into account the colour of the species, e.g. Turkish oregano (*Oreganum onites* L.) covered by the standard.
 - h) *Section 3.2.3: Classification* – add a text to indicate that requirements of Class II/Grade II applied as minimum requirements to ungraded products.
 - i) *Section 3.2.4: Physical characteristics*
 - delete all requirements for ground/ powdered style;
 - align the footnote to the parameter “extraneous vegetable materials” with that of standard for thyme;
 - combine the two parameters related to foreign parts into one, i.e. “foreign matters” which included both plant and non plant materials, as a footnote because the determination of the two individual parameters was not possible;
 - revise the parameter “oregano powder” to read “fines content”; and include different requirements for “whole leaf / flowering top” and “crushed / rubbed” styles; the mesh size was revised to “smaller than 40/420 µm”;
 - note that a glossary of terms would allow defining the terms used in the standards for spices and culinary herbs (see Agenda Item 10).
 - j) *Section 3.2.5: Chemical characteristics*
 - grades were removed for “ground/ powdered” style and only one set of requirements retained; the need to further discuss whether grading would also apply to this “ground/ powdered” style was noted;
 - could not reach agreement on whether to retain the parameter on volatile oil and the related requirements.
28. In view of time constraints and the number of unresolved issues, the Committee did not discuss the remaining sections of the document in details.

⁹ [REP14/SCH-Appendix IV](#).

Conclusion

29. The Committee noted that several provisions still required considerable review and that the standard was not ready for advancement in the Step process.
30. The Committee agreed to establish an eWG, led by Argentina and co-chaired by Turkey, open to all Members and Observers, working in English and Spanish, to redraft the proposed draft Standard taking into account the above discussion, written comments and relevant decisions regarding the format of the other standards currently under elaboration.

Status of the Proposed Draft Standard for Oregano (N06-2014)

31. The Committee agreed to return the proposed draft standard to Steps 2/3 for redrafting by the aforementioned eWG, circulation for comments and consideration at the next Session.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR THYME (Agenda Item 7)¹⁰

32. The Delegation of the European Union, as Chair of the eWG on the standard for thyme, introduced the item and summarised the outcomes of the eWG work. The Delegation noted that the structure of the proposed draft standard was based on the “*Format of Commodity Standards*” in the Procedural Manual and the Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables and the quality provisions were based on the corresponding ISO standard. The Delegation pointed out that food additives were not permitted except for certain anti-caking agents for use only in ground and powdered products; and that a number of provisions where the eWG could not reach consensus were left in square brackets for further discussion.

Discussion

33. The Chairperson of CCSC noted that the written comments submitted suggested that there was general support for the work to progress.
34. The Committee considered the draft standard section by section, noted comments and made the following decisions:
 - a) *Title*: inserted the word “dried” to differentiate it from the fresh form and be consistent with other standards currently under elaboration.
 - b) *Section 1: Scope* – transferred the wording related to varietal types to a new Section 2.3 “Varietal types” for consistency with the format of other proposed standards for spices and culinary herbs; deleted the words “for catering purpose” for clarity; and put the last sentence “It does not apply to related to the products when indicated as being intended for further processing” into square brackets for further discussion on its need or interpretation (see Agenda Item 10).
 - c) *Section 2.1: Product definition* – deleted reference to the appropriate level of development as it was difficult to define it in this product.
 - d) *Section 2.2: Styles* – added definitions “crushed/rubbed” and “ground/powdered” styles to distinguish between these two styles.
 - e) *Section 3.2.3: Chemical and Physical Characteristics* – separated the section into two as follows: 3.2.3 “Physical Characteristics” and 3.2.4 “Chemical characteristics” for consistency with the format of other proposed standards for spices and culinary herbs. Agreement was reached on the requirements left in square brackets. The specific parameters were amended as follows:
 - requirements were expressed as absolute values (i.e. maximum or minimum);
 - the length of stalks (as defined in the footnote 1) was reduced to 7 mm as evidence indicated that injuries to humans increased when stalks were longer than 7 mm;
 - the term “mold” was amended to read “visible mold” to clarify that the parameter referred to product affected by molds;
 - a new requirement for “insect damaged leaves/flowers” was added in 3.2.3.The Delegation of Brazil was of the view that consideration of physical and chemical requirements should be postponed until the issue of further processing is resolved.
 - f) *Section 3.3: Classification of “Defectives”* – changed the word “container” to “lot sample” as it was more appropriate.

¹⁰ [CX/SCH 15/2/7](#); [CX/SCH 15/2/7 Add.1](#) (Comments of Argentina, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Niger and Senegal); [CX/SCH 15/2/7 Add.2](#) (Comments of Cameroon, Costa Rica, Japan, Nigeria, Sudan and Thailand); [CRD7](#) (Comments of Ghana); [CRD8](#) (Comments of European Union).

- g) *Section 4: Food additives* – changed the provision for celluloses (INS 460) to individual food additives i.e. microcrystalline cellulose (INS 460 (i)) and powdered cellulose (INS 460 (ii)), and added silicon dioxide, amorphous (INS 551).
- h) *Section 5: Contaminants* - deleted the reference to veterinary drugs as it was not relevant to plant materials. The Committee questioned whether the current maximum levels of contaminants for leafy vegetables were also applicable to spices and culinary herbs due to their different level of consumption.
- i) *Section 8: Labelling* - deleted the “crop year” (8.2.3) as it would not be possible to verify the parameter during normal routine inspection.
- j) *Section 9: Methods of analysis and sampling* - included methods for the evaluation of insect damage and mold damage and various ASTA methods as alternative methods; and deleted the sampling plan as their appropriateness for spices and culinary herbs needed to be further evaluated; and agreed that an appropriate sampling plan be developed.

Conclusion

35. The Committee noted that:
- a) Substantial progress had been made on the standard but some issues needed to be further discussed: i.e. definition of further processing and sampling plan and, therefore, the document was ready to progress in the Step Procedure;
 - b) Provisions for food additives, labelling and methods of analysis would be submitted to CCFA, CCFL and CCMAS, respectively for endorsement.
36. The Committee agreed to:
- a) Establish an eWG, led by Brazil, open to all members and observers and working in English only, to prepare sampling plans for the inclusion in the standards for thyme and cumin, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS)¹¹, for consideration at its next session;
 - b) Request the Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) to consider whether existing maximum levels of contaminants for leafy vegetables could apply to spices and culinary herbs or whether specific maximum levels should be drafted.

Status of the Proposed Draft Standard for Thyme (N07-2014)

37. The Committee agreed to forward the proposed draft Standard to the Commission for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix IV).

DISCUSSION PAPER ON GROUPING OF SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS (Agenda Item 8)¹²

38. The Delegation of India, as Chair of the eWG on the grouping of spices and culinary herbs, introduced the item and summarised the outcomes of the eWG work. The Delegation explained that the eWG had prepared a proposal for grouping spices in seven (7) groups and culinary herbs in one (1) group.

General Discussion

39. The Chairperson recalled that the purpose of the eWG work on grouping was to explore the possibility to develop group standards. He noted that the document prepared by the eWG was a good attempt to group and list all herbs and spices used around the world and that the list, which included 113 spices and culinary herbs, was a good starting point for the Committee's work.
40. The Chairperson noted that the group “dried bark” seemed to be a good candidate for a group standard and that further work on the list might lead to the identification of other groups /sub-groups of products for which this type of standards could be developed. The Chairperson further noted that all written comments were in support of the proposed grouping and invited the Committee to discuss how the proposal could assist in moving forward the Committee's work.

¹¹ [REP14/MAS](#) para 83, Point 2.

¹² [CX/SCH 15/2/8](#); [CRD5](#) (Comments of Argentina, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and Thailand); [CRD12](#) (Comments of Chile).

41. Delegations made the following comments:
- The background should clearly define the purpose and rationale of the grouping and only refer to the use of spices and culinary herbs within the mandate of CCSCCH (e.g. the use of spices and culinary herbs as medicine should not be considered);
 - The group “Other” should be better defined;
 - Grouping should take into account the botanical similarities of plants; instead of “HS codes” (which are for trade and country names) and should not be used;
 - One or two widely used databases for agriculture products, e.g. GREN database, Mansfeld's World Database of Agriculture and Horticultural Crops, could be used as authoritative sources for the nomenclature of the botanical names.
 - The list should be used only as a reference and allow for the inclusion of other products.
42. Several delegations suggested the addition, deletion and moving to other groups of a number of spices and culinary herbs.

Conclusion

43. The Committee agreed to the proposal of the Chairperson to continue work on grouping and to establish an eWG, led by India and co-chaired by Nigeria and Turkey, open to all members and observers and working in English only, to:
- Update the list;
 - Revise the list on the basis of the comments submitted;
 - Attempt some sub-grouping with a view to recommend group standards; and
 - Explore the possibility to develop a format for group standards for spices, taking into consideration the physical and chemical characteristics of the proposed draft standards for cumin and thyme (Appendices III and IV) and the format of other Codex group standards, e.g. the *Standard for Fruits Juices and Nectars* ([CODEX STAN 247-2005](#)).

PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK ([Replies to CL 2014/04-SCH](#)) (Agenda Item 9)¹³

44. The Delegation of the United States, as Chair, introduced the report (CRD 2) of the in-session WG on prioritization of proposals for new work and informed the Committee that the WG had considered ten proposals: (i) paprika (Argentina); (ii) basil (Egypt); (iii) coriander (Egypt); (iv) dehydrated chillies (India); (v) dried and dehydrated garlic (India); (vi) dried and dehydrated ginger (India); (vii) nutmeg (Indonesia); (viii) saffron (Iran); (ix) cloves (Nigeria); and (x) dried whole and ground ginger (Nigeria).
45. He noted that the work was guided by the Terms of Reference given by the Committee (Agenda Item 1), and took into account the existing workload of CCSCCH.

Discussion

46. The Committee noted the outcomes of the in-session WG under each terms of reference as follows:
- Review the proposals for new work
47. The Committee noted that the proposals submitted in reply to the CL 2014/4-SCH had been reviewed; four (4) proposals which were either similar or had a close relationship, were merged into two new proposals i.e. dry and dehydrated ginger merged with dry whole and ground ginger ([CRD11](#)); and dehydrated chillies merged with paprika ([CRD13](#)).
- Assessment of the proposals
48. The Committee noted that the in-session WG had attempted to follow the CCFH approach for ranking the proposals for new work. Since the CCFH approach did not work, the in-session WG had ranked the proposals according to the prioritisation criteria as set in the Procedural Manual.
49. The Committee was informed, that based on the outcome of the review, the proposals had been assessed and grouped into three categories i.e.
- Recommended for approval – projects that met the requirements laid down in the Procedural Manual;

¹³ [CL 2014/04-SCH](#); [CX/SCH 15/2/9](#); [CX/SCH 15/2/9 Add.1](#); [CRD6](#) (Replies of Cameroon, Costa Rica, Grenada, India, Sudan and Thailand); [CRD11](#) (Revised project document – Nigeria); [CRD13](#) (Revised project document – India and Argentina); [CRD14](#) (Revised project document – Iran).

- ii. Conditional approval – projects which require minimal changes before approval; and
 - iii. Returned for redevelopment – projects which need substantial changes.
50. Within the first two categories above, proposals were ranked according to the highest priority (see below).
- a) Recommended for approval (in order of priority)
 - i. Dried or Dehydrated Ginger (Nigeria) ([CRD11](#))
 - ii. Dried Chilli Peppers and Paprika (India and Argentina) ([CRD13](#))
 - iii. Dried Garlic (India) ([CX/SCH 15/2/9](#) Appendix IV)
 - b) Conditional approval (in order of priority)
 - i. Basil (Egypt)
 - ii. Saffron (Islamic Republic of Iran)
 - iii. Nutmeg (Indonesia)
 - c) Returned for redevelopment
 - i. Coriander (Egypt)
 - ii. Cloves (Nigeria)
51. The Committee noted that project documents recommended for approval could be revised to provide updated information and resubmitted with an explanatory note to the effect.

Others

52. The Committee agreed that work on prioritization would continue under the current arrangements (in-session WG) due to: the resource implication of establishing a physical WG, and to allow broader participation.

Conclusion

53. The Committee noted that at the current session, no work had been finalised and, therefore, it was not possible to initiate work on new items.
54. It was understood that the prioritised list (see above) would be used for sending proposals for new work to the Commission unless a need to address an emergency or a consumer safety issue arose in global trade.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 10)

Glossary of terms and products for further processing

55. The Committee recalled the discussion regarding a glossary of terms and products for further processing under Agenda Items 4, 5, 6 and 7 and noted that the development of a glossary of terms and more clarity on what further processing meant and how it applied to the scope of CCSCHE would facilitate the development of standards for spices and culinary herbs.
56. Therefore, the Committee welcomed the offer of the United States to prepare a discussion paper on these matters for consideration at its next session.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 11)

57. The Committee was informed that its Third Session was tentatively scheduled to be held in February 2017 in India. The exact date and venue would be decided between the Indian and Codex and Secretariats.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

SUBJECT	STEP	FOR ACTION BY	DOCUMENT REFERENCE (REP16/SCH)
Proposed draft Standard for Cumin (N05-2014)	5	Members, CAC39 CCSCH3	Para. 25 and App. III
Proposed draft Standard for Thyme (N07-2014)	5	Members, CAC39 CCSCH3	Para. 37 and App. IV
Proposed draft Standard for Black, White and Green Pepper (N04-2014)	2/3	eWG (India, Indonesia and Cameroon) CCSCH3	Para. 21
Proposed draft Standard for Oregano (N06-2014)	2/3	eWG (Argentina and Turkey) CCSCH3	Para. 31
Elaboration of sampling plans in the standards for cumin and thyme	-	eWG (Brazil) CCSCH3	Para. 36
Discussion paper on grouping of spices and culinary herbs	-	eWG (India, Nigeria and Turkey) CCSCH3	Para. 43
Discussion paper on glossary of terms and meaning of further processing (in the context of spices and culinary herbs)	-	United States of America CCSCH3	Para. 55-56

Appendix I

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Appendix II

REPLIES OF CCSCH2 TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Responses of CCSCH2 are shown in **Underlined** font.

Strategic Goal	Objective	Activity	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues.	1.1: Establish new and review existing Codex standards, based on priorities of the CAC	1.1.1: Consistently apply decision-making and priority-setting criteria across Committees to ensure that the standards and work areas of highest priority are progressed in a timely manner.	New or updated standards are developed in a timely manner.	- Priority setting criteria are reviewed, revised as required and applied. - # of standards revised and # of new standards developed based on these criteria.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? <u>YES</u> Does the Committee use any specific criteria for standards development? <u>CCSCH uses the “Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities” and “Format for Codex Commodity Standards” as per the Codex Procedural Manual.</u> <u>In its work on development of Standards for spices and Culinary herbs, the Committee prioritizes the new work proposals based on the criteria mentioned in the Procedural Manual.</u> Does the Committee intend to develop such criteria? <u>No as of now. In the first session of the CCSCH, it was decided that there is no need for any specific criteria for CCSCH other than the one provided for in the Codex Procedural Manual.</u></p>				
	1.2: Proactively identify emerging issues and Member needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards.	1.2.1: Develop a systematic approach to promote identification of emerging issues related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in the food trade.	Timely Codex response to emerging issues and to the needs of Members.	- Committees implement systematic approaches for identification of emerging issues.- Regular reports on systematic approach and emerging issues made to the CCEXEC through the Codex Secretariat.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? <u>YES</u> How does the Committee identify emerging issues and members needs? <u>The Members submit the new work proposals including the emerging issues related to spices and herbs. In addition, other committees or FAO/WHO could refer any emerging issues to the Committee.</u> Is there a systematic approach? Is it necessary to develop such an approach? <u>Currently, there is no systematic approach, however, there may be a need to develop one should the current process be found insufficient.</u></p>				
		1.2.2: Develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade.	Improved ability of Codex to develop standards relevant to the needs of its Members.	- Input from committees identifying and prioritizing needs of Members. - Report to CCEXEC from committees on how standards developed address the needs of the Members as part of critical review process.
<p>Included in question to 1.2.</p>				

<p>2: Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards.</p>	<p>2.1: Ensure consistent use of risk analysis principles and scientific advice.</p>	<p>2.1.1: Use the scientific advice of the joint FAO/WHO expert bodies to the fullest extent possible in food safety and nutrition standards development based on the "Working Principles of Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius".</p>	<p>Scientific advice consistently taken into account by all relevant committees during the standard setting process.</p>	<p>- # of times the need for scientific advice is: - identified, - requested and, -utilized in a timely manner.</p>
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Question to the Committee:

Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? **No. Scientific advice and risk analysis principles are not relevant for CCSCCH as it is a commodity committee.**

Does the committee request scientific advice in course of its work, how often does it request such advice? **N/A.**

Does the committee always use the scientific advice, if not, why not? **N/A.**

		<p>2.1.2: Encourage engagement of scientific and technical expertise of Members and their representatives in the development of Codex standards.</p>	<p>Increase in scientific and technical experts at the national level contributing to the development of Codex standards.</p>	<p>- # of scientists and technical experts as part of Member delegations. - # of scientists and technical experts providing appropriate input to country positions.</p>
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Question to the Committee:

Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? **YES**

How do members make sure that the necessary scientific input is given into country positions and that the composition of the national delegation allows to adequately present and discuss this position? What guidance could be given by the Committee or FAO and WHO? **The Members are encouraged to involve their technical and scientific experts when submitting new work proposals, reviewing the agenda and while submitting their comments in the working Groups.**

		<p>2.1.3: Ensure that all relevant factors are fully considered in exploring risk management options in the context of Codex standard development.</p>	<p>Enhanced identification, and documentation of all relevant factors considered by committees during the development of Codex standards.</p>	<p>- # of committee documents identifying all relevant factors guiding risk management recommendations. - # of committee documents clearly reflecting how those relevant factors were considered in the context of standards development.</p>
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Question to the Committee:

Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? **No. Risk analysis principles, including risk management, are not relevant for CCSCCH as it is a commodity committee.**

How does the Committee ensure that all relevant factors have been taken into account when developing a standard and how are these documented? **N/A.**

		<p>2.1.4: Communicate the risk management recommendations to all interested parties.</p>	<p>Risk management recommendations are effectively communicated and disseminated to all interested parties.</p>	<p>- # of web publication/ Communications relaying Codex standards. - # of media releases disseminating Codex standards.</p>
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Question to the Committee:

Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? **No. Risk analysis principles, including risk communication, are not relevant for CCSCCH as it is a commodity committee.**

When taking a risk management decision, does the committee give guidance to members how to communicate this decision? Would more consideration of this be helpful to members? **N/A.**

Strategic Goal	Objective	Activity	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members.	3.1: Increase the effective participation of developing countries in Codex.	3.1.5: To the extent possible, promote the use of the official languages of the Commission in committees and working groups.	Active participation of Members in committees and working groups.	- Report on number of committees and working groups using the languages of the Commission
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES Is the use of official languages in working groups of the committee sufficient? The Committee would recommend using as many official languages as possible in WGs in order to enhance participation of members. What are the factors determining the choice of languages? This mainly depends on the Member chairing the WG. How could the situation be improved? A suggestion could be to promote co-hosting arrangements by countries with different languages.</p>				
	3.2: Promote capacity development programs that assist countries in creating sustainable national Codex structures.	3.2.3: Where practical, the use of Codex meetings as a forum to effectively conduct educational and technical capacity building activities.	Enhancement of the opportunities to conduct concurrent activities to maximize use of the resources of Codex and Members.	- # of activities hosted on the margins of Codex meetings.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES Does the Committee organize technical capacity activities or other activities in the margins of Committee sessions? If yes – how many and with which topics have been organized in the past? If no – could this be useful and what topics could be addressed? Workshops are conducted for the first -time delegates on the sidelines of committee meetings. The Committee can definitely look for options to conduct capacity development programs in the future.</p>				
4: Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices.	4.1: Strive for an effective, efficient, transparent, and consensus based standard setting process.	4.1.4: Ensure timely distribution of all Codex working documents in the working languages of the Committee/Commission.	Codex documents distributed in a more timely manner consistent with timelines in the Procedural Manual.	- Baseline Ratio (%) established for documents distributed at least 2 months prior to versus less than 2 months prior to a scheduled meeting. - Factors that potentially delay the circulation of documents identified and addressed. - An increase in the ratio (%) of documents circulated 2 months or more prior to meetings.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES Does the Committee have a mechanism in place to ensure timely distribution of documents? What could be done to further improve the situation? The Committee Secretariat and the National Codex Contact Point in close coordination with the Codex Secretariat follow up work on the work of the electronic working groups and timely distribution of documents. All members are responsible for ensuring its implementation.</p>				

Strategic Goal	Objective	Activity	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
		4.1.5: Increase the scheduling of Work Group meetings in conjunction with Committee meetings.	Improved efficiency in use of resources by Codex committees and Members	- # of physical working group meetings in conjunction with committee meetings, where appropriate.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? NO Does the Committee hold physical working groups independent of Committee sessions? If yes – why is this necessary? NO. The Committee does not have plan to hold work group meetings independent of Committee session.</p>				
	4.2: Enhance capacity to arrive at consensus in standards setting process.	4.2.1: Improve the understanding of Codex Members and delegates of the importance of and approach to consensus building of Codex work.	Members and delegates awareness of the importance of consensus in the Codex standard setting process improved.	- Training material on guidance to achieve consensus developed and made available in the languages of the Commission to delegates. - Regular dissemination of existing material to Members through Codex Contact Points. - Delegate training programs held in association with Codex meetings. - Impediments to consensus being achieved in Codex identified and analyzed and additional guidance developed to address such impediments, if necessary.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES Are there problems with finding consensus in the Committee? If yes – what are the impediments to consensus? What has been attempted and what more could be done? Problems may arise in this Committee like in any other Committee. It is the role of members and the chair to explore all possible means to reach consensus.</p>				

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR CUMIN
N05-2014
(at Step 5 of the Procedure)

1 SCOPE

This Standard applies to dried fruits of any cultivated varieties (cultivars) of *Cuminum cyminum* L. of the *Apiaceae* family offered for industrial food production and for direct consumption, or for repackaging if required. [It does not apply to the product when indicated as being intended for further processing.]

2 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Product Definition

Cumin is the product prepared from fruits of *Cuminum cyminum* L. having reached appropriate degree of development for processing; and processed in an appropriate manner, undergoing operations such as cleaning, drying, grinding and sifting.

2.2 Styles

Cumin may be offered in one of the following styles:

- a) Whole / intact
- b) Cracked: broken into two or more pieces.
- c) Ground: processed into powders

2.3 Varietal Types

Not applicable

3 ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Composition

Product as defined in Section 2.

3.2 Quality Factors

3.2.1 Odour, flavour and colour

Cumin shall have a characteristic aroma and flavour which can vary depending on geo-climatic factors/conditions. Cumin shall be free from any foreign odour or flavour and especially from mustiness. Cumin shall have a characteristic colour varying from light grey to dark brown.

3.2.2 Infestation

Cumin shall be free from live insects and practically free from dead insects, insect fragments and rodent contamination visible to the naked eye (corrected, if necessary, for abnormal vision).

3.2.3. Classification

Whole cumin may be classified in three classes / grades according to physical and chemical requirements as specified in Tables 1 and 2.

When ungraded, the provisions for Class / Grade III requirements apply as the minimum requirements.

3.2.4 Physical Characteristics

Whole cumin shall comply with the physical requirements specified in Table 1.

Table 1. Physical requirements for whole cumin

Parameter	Class/Grade		
	I	II	III
Extraneous matter ¹ content, maximum.% mass fraction	1	2	3
Foreign matter ² content, maximum.% mass fraction	practically absent	0.5	0.5
Proportion of damaged/defective fruits ³ , maximum.% mass fraction	5	5	5
Insect-damaged matter ⁴ , maximum. % mass fraction	1	1	1

3.2.5 Chemical Characteristics

Whole, cracked and ground cumin shall comply with the chemical requirements specified in Table 2.

Table 2. Chemical requirements for whole, cracked and ground cumin

Parameter	Requirement for grade, whole and cracked cumin			Requirement for ground cumin
	I	II	III	
Moisture, % mass fraction, maximum	10	10	10	10
Total ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	8.5	10	12	9.5
Acid-insoluble ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	1.5	3	4	1.5
Volatile oils, ml/100 g (dry basis), minimum	2	1.5	1.5	1.3

3.3 Classification of “Defectives”

A lot sample that fails to meet one or more of the applicable quality requirements, as set out in Section 3.2 (except those based on sample averages), should be considered as a “defective”.

3.4 Lot Acceptance

A lot should be considered as meeting the applicable quality requirements referred to in Section 3.2 when the number of “defectives”, as defined in Section 3.3, does not exceed the acceptance number of the appropriate sampling plan. For factors evaluated on a sample average, a lot will be considered acceptable if the average meets the specified tolerance, and no individual sample is excessively out of tolerance.

4 FOOD ADDITIVES

No food additives and flavourings are permitted in the products covered by this standard.

5 CONTAMINANTS

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

5.2 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

¹ All vegetable matter from the specific plant other than the required part.

² Any visible and/or apparent matter or material not usually associated with the product.

³ Damaged, discolored, shriveled and immature seeds.

⁴ Cumin seeds that are damaged, discoloured or showing signs of bores as a result of infestation of insects so as to affect the quality of the materials.

6 FOOD 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 *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Herbs* (CAC/RCP 42-1995) 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 for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997).

7 WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Containers shall be as full as practicable without impairment of quality and shall be consistent with a proper declaration of contents for the product.

8 LABELLING

8.1 The products covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985). In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

8.2 Name of the Product

8.2.1 The name of the product shall be "cumin".

8.2.2 The name of the product may include an indication of the style as described in Section 2.2.

8.3 Labelling of Non-Retail Containers

Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

9 METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

9.1 Methods of Analysis

Provision	Method	Principle
Moisture	ISO 938:1980 Alternative: AOAC 2001.12 ASTA 2.0	Distillation
Total ash	ISO 928:1997 Alternative: AOAC 950.49 ASTA 3.0	Gravimetry
Acid-insoluble ash	ISO 930:1997 Alternative: ASTA 4.0	Gravimetry
Volatile oils	ISO 6571:2008 Alternative: AOAC 962.17 ASTA 5.0	Distillation

Provision	Method	Principle
Extraneous vegetable material	ISO 927:2009 Alternative: ASTA 14.1	Visual examination
Foreign matter	ISO 927:2009	Visual examination
Insect damage	Method V-8 Spices, Condiments, Flavors and Crude Drugs (Macroanalytical Procedure Manual, FDA Technical Buletin Number 5)	Visual examination

9.2 Sampling Plan

[To be developed]

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR DRIED THYME
(N07-2014)
(at Step 5 of the Procedure)

1 SCOPE

This Standard applies to dried leaves/ flowers of thyme (*Thymus spp.*) of the *Lamiaceae* family offered for industrial food production as a condiment and for direct human consumption or for repackaging if required. [It does not apply to the product when indicated as being intended for further processing.]

2 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Product Definition

Dried thyme is the product prepared from leaves/ flowers of *Thymus spp.* processed in an appropriate manner, undergoing operations such as cleaning, drying, rubbing, milling and sifting.

2.2 Styles

Dried thyme leaves/ flowers may be offered in one of the following styles:

- a) Whole / intact.
- b) Crushed/rubbed: processed into varying degrees ranging from a coarse to fine crush.
- c) Ground/powdered: processed into powders.

2.3 Varietal Types

All wild species and varieties or cultivars and hybrids belonging to the genus *Thymus*, which are suitable for processing.

3 ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Composition

Product as defined in Section 2.

3.2 Quality Factors

3.2.1 Odour, flavour and colour

Dried thyme shall have a characteristic odour and flavour according to the chemical components of the volatile oil (such as thymol, carvacrol, and linalool), which can vary depending on geo-climatic factors/conditions. Dried thyme shall be free from any foreign odour or flavour and especially from mustiness. Dried thyme shall have a characteristic colour varying from green ash to brownish grey.

3.2.2 Infestation

Dried thyme shall be free from live insects and practically free from dead insects, insect fragments and rodent contamination visible to the naked eye (corrected, if necessary, for abnormal vision).

3.2.3 Physical Characteristics

Dried thyme shall comply with the physical requirements specified in Table 1, excluding ground/powdered style.

Table 1. Physical requirements for dried thyme

Parameter	Requirement
Extraneous vegetable material ⁵ , maximum % mass fraction	0.5
Foreign matter ⁶ content, maximum % mass fraction	0.5
Mold visible, maximum %	1.0
Insect damaged leaves/ flowers, maximum % mass fraction	1.0

3.2.4 Chemical Characteristics

Dried thyme shall comply with the chemical requirements specified in Table 2.

Table 2. Chemical requirements for dried thyme

Parameter	Requirement
Moisture, % mass fraction, maximum	12.0
Total ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	12.0
Acid-insoluble ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	3.5
Volatile oils, ml/100 g (dry basis), minimum	1.0

3.3 Classification of “Defectives”

A lot sample that fails to meet one or more of the applicable quality requirements, as set out in Section 3.2 (except those based on sample averages), should be considered as a “defective”.

3.4 Lot Acceptance

A lot should be considered as meeting the applicable quality requirements referred to in Section 3.2 when the number of “defectives”, as defined in Section 3.3, does not exceed the acceptance number of the appropriate sampling plan. For factors evaluated on a sample average, a lot will be considered acceptable if the average meets the specified tolerance, and no individual sample is excessively out of tolerance.

4 FOOD ADDITIVES

4.1 Only the anticaking agents listed below are permitted for use in ground/powdered thyme.

INS No.	Name of the Food Additive	Maximum Level
460 (i)	Microcrystalline cellulose	GMP
460 (ii)	Powdered cellulose	GMP
551	Silicon dioxide, amorphous	GMP

5 CONTAMINANTS

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

5.2 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

⁵ All vegetable matter from the specific plant other than the required part. The proportion of stalks which have dimensions exceeding 7 mm in length and 2 mm in diameter shall not be more than 5 % (m/m) (w/w) of total extraneous matter content.

⁶ Any visible and/or apparent matter or material not usually associated with the product.

6 FOOD 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 *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Herbs* (CAC/RCP 42-1995) 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 for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997).

7 WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Containers shall be as full as practicable without impairment of quality and shall be consistent with a proper declaration of contents for the product.

8 LABELLING

8.1 The products covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985). In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

8.2 Name of the Product

8.2.1 The name of the product shall be "dried thyme".

8.2.2 The name of the product may include an indication of the species, varietal types and the style as described in Section 2.2. In case of products consisting of blends of different *Thymus* species, the name of the product may be followed by the *Thymus* species in order of descending quantity.

8.3 Labelling of Non-Retail Containers

Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

9. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

9.1 Methods of Analysis

Provision	Method	Principle
Moisture	ISO 938:1980 Alternative: AOAC 2001.12 ASTA 2.0	Distillation
Total ash	ISO 928:1997 Alternative: AOAC 950.49 ASTA 3.0	Gravimetry
Acid-insoluble ash	ISO 930:1997 Alternative: ASTA 4.0	Gravimetry
Volatile oils	ISO 6571:2008 Alternative: AOAC 962.17 ASTA 5.0	Distillation

Provision	Method	Principle
Extraneous vegetable material	ISO 927:2009 Alternative: ASTA 14.1	Visual examination
Foreign matter	ISO 927:2009	Visual examination
Insect damage	Method V-8 Spices, Condiments, Flavors and Crude Drugs (Macroanalytical Procedure Manual, FDA Technical Buletin Number 5)	Visual examination
Mold damage	Method V-8 Spices, Condiments, Flavors and Crude Drugs (Macroanalytical Procedure Manual, FDA Technical Bulletin Number 5)	Visual examination

9.2 Sampling Plan

[To be developed]