

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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World Health
Organization

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PROJECT DOCUMENT

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON CODEX STANDARD FOR BASIL

(Revised proposal submitted by Egypt)

Introduction

Basil, Thai basil, or sweet basil, is a common name for the culinary herb Basil which belongs to the family Lamiaceae, in the genus: *Ocimum*. Its scientific name is "*Ocimum basilicum*". Basil herb is one of the oldest and popular herbal plants brimming with notable benefiting phytonutrients. This highly prized plant is revered as "holy herb" in many traditions all around the world. ". Basil is considered the "king of herbs" by many cookery authors. Basil is native to India, China, Southeast Asia and Iran. It was originally domesticated in India, having been cultivated there for more than 5,000 years, now it is found in most tropical parts of the world.

The most common varieties of basil are treated as annuals, some are perennial in warm, tropical climates, The various basils have such different scents because the herb has a number of different essential oils that come together in different proportions for various breeds (eugenol, citral, limonene, camphor, anethole...)

1. The Purpose and Scope of the Standard

The scope of the work is to establish a worldwide standard for dried and/or dehydrated whole, crushed or ground basil leaves (*Ocimum spp.*) of the family Lamiaceae to be offered industrial food production and direct consumption, including for catering purposes or for repacking, as required. The standard will cover all species and varieties of basil of commercial interest.

The objective is to develop a Codex standard based on measurable characteristics, specifically quality criteria and any other factors for developing an international document to protect consumer's health and facilitate the international trade.

2. Relevance and Timeliness

Basil is widespread in Asia, Africa as well as central and Southern America. It appears to have its center of diversity in Africa. Basil is cultivated in many Asian and Mediterranean countries; France, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Morocco and the United States of America. Developing a worldwide standard will help to protect consumer's health and to facilitate fair trade.

Increases of international tourism all over the world, the migrations flow, and globalization as well as increasing the food trade worldwide have increased the demand on the spices and herbs resulting in developing and growth in their international trade continuously.

3. Main aspects to be covered

The standard will cover characteristics related to identification and quality in all aspects as well as safety requirements.

- Product definition: Defining the product as dried and / or dehydrated basil's leaves including all species and varieties of basil (*Ocimum spp.*) of commercial.
- Style: Listing the different forms of the dried basil leaves (whole, crushed, and powdered).
- Composition: Including provisions for basic ingredient and other permitted ingredients. Establishing moisture, ash and volatile oil content as well as other values of the dried basil leaves.
- Quality criteria : Including provisions for colour , odour , flavour ...etc
- Provisions for the labeling and marking of the product in accordance with the CODEX standard for the labeling of pre-packaged foods.
- Provisions for hygiene, contaminants, and pesticides residues with reference to pre-existing Codex documents.
- References to Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

4. Assessment against the criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

General Criterion

Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in food trade and taking into account the indentified needs of developing countries.

The proposed new standard will meet this criterion by:

- Promotion of consumer protection and the prevention of fraudulent practices.
- Providing greater assurance of the product to meet consumer needs and the minimum requirements for food safety
- Arriving at levels of standardization based on the properties of different to meet industrial and consumer needs with exactness and credibility.

In addition, the elaboration of the standard would be to the benefit of many countries in general and more particular in the case of developing countries, for the developing countries are the major producers, exporters, and consumers of basil.

Criteria applicable to commodities

(a) Volume of production and consumption of (Basil, Hyssop, Roselle, Sage and Savory) in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries

The global trade of Basil as total export and import in 2013 is to be (820,162MT -8201, 77MT) respectively as the major exporters were China, India, Madagascar, Egypt, and Mexico. While major importers was China, including Hong Kong SA, USA, Germany, Madagascar.

Table (1) Volume of Global trade in Basil with other herbs

Country	Trade 2013	
	Import (MT)	Export (MT)
China	98,537	199,424
China (Hong Kong SA)	95,279	3,234
United States of America	72,147	13,454
Germany	56,688	21,270
Madagascar	49,311	71,141
Viet Nam	33,285	7,858

India	30,015	87,731
Japan	28,440	44
Korea, Republic of	27,213	314
Spain	18,710	13,982
France	17,122	6,562
Netherlands	15,853	3,343
Malaysia	15,446	2,340
Mexico	14,693	27,242
Canada	14,186	1,295
Singapore	13,453	1,884
Italy	11,388	2,641
United Kingdom	11,155	1,315
Thailand	10,497	8,831
Russian Federation	10,052	1,087
Pakistan	9,970	18,377
Poland	8,809	14,732
Egypt	6,862	41,664

Sources: ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE statistics.

Table (2) Pattern in international trade

Year	World Import (MT)	World Export (MT)
2009	546,145	558,101
2010	568,738	588,304
2011	658,888	594,303
2012	613,772	611,575
2013	820,162	820,177

Sources: ITC calculations based on UN COMTRADE statistics

Table (3) Egyptian production of Basil 2014

Governorates	Total		
	Production (Ton)	Yield (Ton/Fed.)	Area (Fed.)
Total	153811	20.987	7329

Source: *Agriculture Directorates - Union of Producers and Exporters of Horticultural Crops (UPEHC), 2016 - Egypt

Table (4) Egyptian Exports of Basil 2015

Country	Total
Germany	540.65
USA	444.98
Russia	289.95
Poland	285.18
Brazil	231.53
Netherlands	145.57
Spain	133.08
India	130.83
Canada	111.99
France	111.29
England	95.47
Italy	94.98
Austria	93.99

Source: Central Administration of Plant Quarantine - Union of Producers and Exporters of Horticultural Crops (UPEHC), 2016 - Egypt

(b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade:

Imports and exports of basil take place for many applications. However, it would be preferred that the trade in basil is carried under an international criteria based on Codex Standard. Therefore, the new work would provide internationally recognized specific standards in order to enhance international trade and to accommodate the importer's requirements.

International organizations like the, European Spice Association and ISO have dealt with the standards for basil. To overcome the resultant or potential impediments to international trade, it is essential to incorporate all existing different standards in a single improved comprehensive standard acceptable across board internationally. This warrants the establishment of a Codex standard as per the Procedural Manual.

(c) International or regional market potential

Dried basil foliage is the most important utilization form of basil after basil oil due to its popularity; basil is grown all over the world in the warm and temperate zones.

Egypt is one of the most suppliers for the western European Countries (England, Germany, France, Netherlands, Austria...etc)

Although basil has a wide popularity, no up to date figures can be found on the national and international trade statistics especially there is lacking of information of cultivated areas.

In contrast of basil oil, there are no available statistics concerning the world production of dried basil herb.

A considerable proportion of the world production particularly in the Mediterranean areas, India and California does not enter the international trade, but is rather consumed locally.

Table (1) and (2) indicate the pattern of trade (Import and Export in MT) between countries and worldwide between (2009-2013) for the basil herb among other herbs.

The world market for imported Basil in 2013 was valued at 3,086,654 (USD thousands) and the exported ones was 2,829,966(USD thousands), China contributes about 25% of the export market in 2013.

Basil shows an international growth in quantity exported between 2012 and 2013 (613,772- 820,162) MT respectively by percentage of 25%.

(d) Amenability of commodity to standardization

The standard will include the characteristics of dry and/or dehydrated basil's leaves including all species and varieties of basil cultivar varieties, composition, quality and packaging criteria.

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

There is no general commodity standard covering basil. The new work will enhance consumer protection and facilitate trade by establishing an international agreed and recognized quality standard.

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

The proposed standard will cover the dried and / or dehydrated basil's leaves. The different forms of basil like whole, crushed, and powdered.

(g) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field

- i. ASTA's Cleanliness Specification for spices, seeds and herbs -USA (2007)
- ii. Quality Minima Document of ESA (Rev.4) - December 2011
- iii. ISO Standard for Dried sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum* L.) - Specification (ISO 11163:1995)

5. Relevance To CODEX strategic objectives

The proposal is consistent with the Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission 2014-2019, in particular, Strategic Goal 1 and objectives 1.1, 1.3, 2.3 and 3.1 and aims at setting up international accepted minimum quality requirements of basil for human consumption.

6. Information on the relation between the Proposal and other existing CODEX document

This proposal is a new Codex standard and is not related to or based on any pre-existing Codex document. This standard will include references to relevant pre - existing Codex texts developed by general subject committees, as follows:

- Principles and guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC / GL21-1997) "
- " General Principles of Food Hygiene" (CAC / RCP1-1969)
- Data bases related to the maximum limits for pesticides residues issued by Codex Committee on Pesticides Residues in Food (CCPR).
- General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995)
- Code of hygienic practice for spices and dried aromatic herbs (CAC/RCP 42-1995)

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

No need for expert scientific advice is foreseen at this stage. Published research documents by international bodies will be referred in the process of preparing the standard.

8. Identification of any requirement for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

Technical input from the International Standards Organization (ISO), American Spice Trade Association (ASTA), and European Spice Association (ESA) while through developing this standard may be sought when developing this standard.

9. Proposed Time Schedule

The following is the proposed timetable for the completion of the standard.

DATE	ADVANCE AND PROCEDURES
CCSCH3	Consideration of new work
June/July 2016	Critical review of proposal by CCEXEC; Approval of new work proposals by CAC40
CCSCH4	Consideration at Step 3
June/July 2019	Consideration by CAC 42 Step 5
CCSCH5	Consideration by at Step 6
June/July 2020	Adoption by CAC43