

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

Agenda Item 3

CX/PR 03/2
February 2003

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES

Thirty-fifth Session

Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 31 March - 5 April 2003

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

1.1 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 50TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(C) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS AT STEP 5¹

1. The Executive Committee considered the Proposed Draft Standards and Related Texts that had been submitted for preliminary adoption at Step 5. In this regard, the Executive Committee noted that when it was considering the adoption of Codex texts, the following decision of the 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius should be taken into account, namely:

“When there is evidence that a risk to human health exists but scientific data are insufficient or incomplete, the Commission should not proceed to elaborate a standard but should consider elaborating a related text, such as a code of practice, provided that such a text would be supported by the available scientific evidence.”

2. The Executive Committee noted however that there was no guidance on how to interpret or apply this principle, especially in the establishment of maximum residue limits for veterinary drug residues and pesticides and also for microbiological contamination. It agreed that such guidance would be useful when considering either proposals for new work or when considering texts for adoption.

Proposed Draft Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides

3. The Regional Coordinator for Asia expressed their reservation on the proposed draft MRLs for DDT in poultry meat at 0.1-0.3 mg/kg. It was noted that according to the 2000 JMPR evaluation based on the total data sets and the lowest violation rate, the EMRL for DDT should be established at the level of 0.3 mg/kg for poultry meat as the risk assessment done by JMPR showed that this level was safe for consumers. The delegation supported the establishment of the EMRL for DDT at an appropriate level to ensure consumer protection but not at a lower level which might result in barriers to trade.

¹ CX/EXEC 02/50/8, CX/EXEC 02/50/8 – Corregendum and comments submitted at Step 5 from Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, EC and ISDI (CX/EXEC 02/50/8 – Add. 1).

4. The Executive Committee adopted the MRLs at Step 5 as proposed and forwarded the above discussion to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues for consideration.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX COMMITTEES

2.1 CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES (CCGP) (ALINORM 03/33, PARAS 25-66)

Application of Risk Analysis in the Elaboration of Codex Standards

The Codex Committee on General Principles is considering the Proposed Draft Working Principles for Risk Analysis (for details see ALINORM 03/33, paras 25-66). The Committee agreed to advance the text of the Proposed Draft Working Principles for Risk Analysis in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius to Step 5 of the Procedure for consideration by the 50th Session of the Executive Committee. It noted that, when finalized, this text would be included in the Procedural Manual as general guidance to the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

Concerning the status of the Working Principles when finally adopted by the Commission, the Delegation of Denmark raised some questions about the practical implementation of the principles in Codex work. To illustrate the issue the Delegation indicated that the following questions needed to be addressed: who had the formal competence to establish risk assessment policies; which procedures should be followed; and how the policies so established would be addressed to the independent risk assessment bodies. The Delegation encouraged the Committee to consider such issues in the elaboration process leading to the final adoption of the text by the Commission.

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NEAR EAST ALINORM 03/40, PARAS 18-19

RESIDUE LIMITS OF PESTICIDE IN SPICES AND AROMATIC PLANTS

18. The Coordinating Committee noted the ongoing work of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues on the establishment of MRLs for spices and that the proposed use of monitoring data to establish Codex MRLs for pesticides should be limited to spices falling under the current Codex Commodity Group 028. The committee also noted the proposal that the approach of using monitoring data could be expanded to other internationally traded commodities which comply with certain parameters such as: limited per capita consumption (less than 5% of the total diet); origin from developing countries; size of cultivation; number of farmers involved in production; the significance of its trade for developing countries; the presence of international trade problems; the presence of a monitoring programme; and an acceptable dietary risk.

19. As the cultivation of aromatic plants used as beverages (herbal teas, etc) complies with the above parameters, the Coordinating Committee supported the proposal of the Egyptian Government to recommend to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues to consider Pesticide MRLs for aromatic plants used as beverages, in addition to spices. The Representative of WHO, who informed the Coordinating Committee of the recently completed draft Code of Practice for the Cultivation of Traditional Medicinal Plants, supported the proposal that Codex could undertake work on aromatic plants used as beverages, but noted that the legal status of such products varied among member States.

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA (ALINORM 03/15, PARAS 151-155)

THE NEED FOR MRLS FOR CHLORAMPHENICOL IN SHRIMP

5. The Delegation of Indonesia introduced Conference Room Document 18 that outlined problems facing exporters of shrimp due to the detection of residues or traces of chloramphenicol. The Delegation noted that over the years the regulation of chloramphenicol residues had become stricter, with the implementation of a zero-tolerance approach by importing countries and a progressive reduction in the limit of analytical detection. The Delegation questioned the scientific basis for imposing a zero tolerance (including the reported association with aplastic anaemia) and stated that neither JECFA nor the CCFAC had established maximum residue limits for chloramphenicol especially in shrimp. The Delegation stated that there was an urgent need to establish a MRL for chloramphenicol in shrimp to avoid such technical barriers to trade.

6. The Delegation of Vietnam stated that a major question to be addressed was the progressive reduction of the limit of analytical detection that resulted from the use of new techniques and equipment in the importing countries without adequate advice, forewarning or technical assistance to exporting countries. Such abrupt changes in the analytical methodology meant that very expensive investments in training and in laboratory equipment in the exporting countries were suddenly made valueless. The Delegation of India stated that since this was a problem not exclusively associated with chloramphenicol in shrimp but concerned other antibiotics and contaminants and in respect of other products also and it needed to be addressed more widely and urgently. The Delegation of Indonesia also stated that samples of fish and shellfish caught in the open sea had shown the presence of chloramphenicol at low levels.

7. The Delegation of Thailand stated that the use of chloramphenicol in shrimp production had recently been prohibited in the country, with the introduction of appropriate control measures.

8. The Secretariat pointed out that JECFA had evaluated chloramphenicol on a number of occasions² and in each case had come to the conclusion that there were no acceptable residues of chloramphenicol in foods and that as a result no maximum residue limits could be established. Nevertheless, if a Member country believed that there were new scientific data that would demonstrate the safety of residues due to the use of chloramphenicol in processing, or as an incidental contaminant, a request for a re-evaluation to JECFA could be made through the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods. The Coordinating Committee recommended that the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods take up this matter.

9. In relation to the matter of analytical methodology for determination of residues of substances not permitted or severely restricted in foods (as raised by Vietnam and India above), the Committee requested that relevant Codex Committee (CCMAS, CCRVDF, CCFAC, **CCPR**) to give urgent attention to the resolution of the problem of abrupt changes in analytical techniques, and changes in detection limits (levels determination).

² JECFA evaluated chloramphenicol in 1968, 1987 and 1994.