

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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Agenda Item 13

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES

Thirty-fifth Session

Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 31 March - 5 April 2003

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE REVISION OF THE CODEX CLASSIFICATION ON FOODS AND ANIMAL FEEDS

Prepared by the Netherlands

BACKGROUND

1. In the 34th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticides Residues (CCPR) in 2002 a discussion paper prepared by the Netherlands (CX/PR 02/13) was discussed. While there was a general support for the revision of the Classification, there were different views expressed regarding the extent of the revision. The Committee noted that before proceeding with the revision there should be a clear understanding on the terms of reference. The Committee requested the Delegation of the Netherlands in co-operation with the Codex Secretariat to prepare a document for consideration by the next session of the Committee that would include the following matters:

- How the revision could be undertaken practically,
- Commodities be added and what should be criteria for the addition of commodities,
- To which extend classification should be up-dated for reasons of extrapolation and harmonisation,
- What the impact of the revision would be on the existing CXLs, and
- What are resource implications?
- Inclusion of processed commodities.

Governments were requested in Circular Letter CL 2002/16-PR: Part C-3 and C-5 to respond on these matters.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

2. In response to the above Circular Letter comment were received from the USA and Australia and the Codex Secretariat.

3. The government of the USA favours an extensive update of the Classification and that the update should include the following topics:

- Eliminate general items
- Update scientific names
- Add new commodities (new tropical fruit commodities are listed)
- Add more synonyms
- Develop an electronic database for the classification
- Revise the Codex crop groupings (various proposals are made)
- Consider processed products
- Consider the descriptions and definitions for animal commodities to harmonise with CCRVDF

4. The more detailed response of the USA is available in CRD 2.

5. The government of Australia supports the revision of the Codex Classification. Their comment included:

- New commodities need to be added (tropical fruits, animal forages, herbs and Asian leafy vegetables). A list of commodities is included in their comments.
- Criteria to include new commodities should include movement of the commodity in trade and significance in regional/national diets.
- Priority should be given to commodities for which MRLs have been established or for which MRLs are realistically likely to be established.
- Resource implications should be investigated prior to revision of the classification.
- Revision of crop grouping or sub groupings proposed within the Cereal grains and feed commodities groups.

6. The more detailed response of the Australia is available in CRD 2.

DISCUSSION

7. There is still support to update the classification although the response to the circular letter is limited. As only two replies have been received, the Committee will need to discuss whether there is enough support to undertake the revision, and take a decision on a limited or extensive revision.

Commodities to be added and criteria for the addition and deletion of commodities

8. Australia proposes to give priority to commodities for which MRLs have been established or for which MRLs are realistically likely to be established. The government of the USA favours an extensive update of the classification.

9. According to response to Circular Letters criteria for the addition of these commodities could be identified:

- Significance in regional/national diets
- Important in trade
- Commodities for which MRLs are established (national) or likely to be established.

10. Also more synonyms for commodities should be added to the system to facilitate the look up of commodities and the use of the preferred terms.

Extent to which the Classification should be up-dated for reasons of extrapolation and harmonisation and what impact it could have on resources

11. Some governments wish to revise the crop groupings:

- Berries and small fruits. Proposal to establish subgroups: cane fruits, bush fruits and others
- Brassica vegetables. To include the sub-group Brassica leafy vegetables in the group of Brassica vegetables
- Fruiting vegetables – Cucurbits. To make a distinction between the edible peel (cucumber, squash) and inedible peel (melons)
- Bulb vegetables. Establish subgroups for tops (spring onions, chives) and root (onion, garlic) bulb vegetables
- Cereal grains. To make a sub-group for small grains

12. In other groups in order to ensure the grouping and sub grouping of commodities could also be considered for reason of harmonisation and extrapolation. Extrapolation in small sub-groups with related crops is much easier than in big groups. This could give an opportunity to set MRLs for relatively minor crops with the data available for major crops.

Impact of the revision on the existing CXLs

13. The revision of the sub grouping could have an impact on the existing CXLs. In the list of MRLs for pesticides in food and animal feed some group tolerances have been established. For instance on AO2 0002 Fruits, AO1 0002 Vegetables, FC 0001 Citrus fruit, VL 0053 Leafy vegetables, AO 1900 Nuts, TN 0085 Tree nuts, GC 0080 Cereal grains, HS 0093 Spices, DH 0170 Dried herbs, VR 0075 Root and tuber vegetables, VC 0045 Fruiting vegetables – Cucurbits. For the commodities within these groups MRLs have to be reviewed if the classification is amended.

Inclusion of processed commodities

14. The government of the USA favours to include processed products. Only products should be included if the commodity is significant in international trade and is a primary processed commodity (derived from standard mechanical and/or chemical processing). Multi-component processed commodities should not be considered for inclusion in the Classification. Also MRLs should not be proposed for processed commodities where the pesticides residue decreases from raw agricultural commodity to the processed commodity.

Practical aspects of an electronic version

15. It is foreseen that the revised classification would be in a form of a data base that would provide search capabilities for commodities, groups and sub-groups, scientific names and code numbers.

Resource implications

16. There was a view expressed by the government of Australia that resource implications should be investigated prior to revision of the classification

17. Currently in Codex there are four separate classifications: a) data-base designed for the establishment of pesticide residues, b) data-base designed for the establishment of veterinary drug residues and the ones for the establishment provisions on additives and contaminants.

18. The classification should be capable of integrating CXL's for veterinary drugs in foods and will therefore need to be revised in consultation with CCRVDF.

Recommendations

19. The first step should be to ask a data-base designer to evaluate the current Codex classification systems in case the Committee agrees to undertake a revision. After (and only after) the system requirements become clear, we should enter into details on the content. In any case, the system must be capable of extension to new areas (such as fish) and capable of handling sub-sets of data at a detailed level as shown in the US examples.