CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

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Agenda Items 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15

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ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

17th Session
15-19 April 2024

Comments submitted by Thailand

Agenda Item 5: Maximum levels for lead in certain food categories (at Step 4)

Thailand would like to express its appreciation to the EWG chaired by Brazil on the establishment of MLs for lead in culinary herbs and spices as well as take this appropriate opportunity to assert comments on this issue.

General comments

In general, Thailand is of the view that culinary herbs and spices are the categories that have relatively low consumption quantities compared to the others. According to CCCF criteria, an acceptable ML with a maximum cut-off at 5% is usually selected. Generally, the range is from 2-5%. However, the sample rejection does not need to be close to 5%. ML with a sample rejection lower than 5%, which have more negligible effect on intake reduction, is acceptable.

Specific comments

CULINARY HERBS:

Dried culinary herbs: We have no objection to the proposed ML of 2.5 mg/kg with the sample rejection of 3.1%.

Fresh culinary herbs: We have no objection to the proposed ML of 0.2 mg/kg with the sample rejection of 2.1%.

SPICES:

Thailand is of the view that the acceptable MLs for spices should be established at slightly higher level than the proposed MLs. Principally, selecting an acceptable ML should consider a low sample rejection (typically set to be less than 5%). However, the sample rejection does not need to be very close to 5%. The lower sample rejection, which have a more negligible effect on intake reduction and trade impact, is acceptable. Therefore, Thailand proposes to the establishment of MLs for lead in spices as follows:

Spices, dried aril: We have no objection to the proposed ML of 0.9 mg/kg with the sample rejection of 3.1%.

Spices, dried barks: We propose an ML of **3.0** mg/kg with the sample rejection of 2.7%.

Spices, dried floral parts: We propose an ML of **3.0** mg/kg with the sample rejection of 2.8%.

Spices, dried flowers: We propose an ML of **0.5** mg/kg with the sample rejection of 2.7%.

Spices, dried fruits and berries: We propose to establish an ML slightly higher than 0.6 mg/kg such as **0.7** mg/kg with an exclusion of dried Sichuan pepper.

Spices, rhizomes, bulbs and roots: Considering the proposed MLs in the category of rhizome, bulb and root spices with the exclusion of galangal, we are of the view that galangal is one of the commodities that belongs to the group of root or rhizome spices and is traded internationally. Therefore, it is not appropriate to exclude the setting of ML in galangal. In addition, occurrence data of lead in galangal shows higher level than the other spices in this category.

However, there is limited data on galangal to set the specific ML. If CCCF agrees with the ML establishment of lead in rhizome, bulb and root spices with the exclusion of galangal, we suggest to issue a call for data on galangal for further consideration to establish a specific ML for galangal. Thailand would like to submit occurrence data of galangal to GEMS/Food database for ML consideration next year.

Additionally, to set an ML for lead in this category with the exclusion of galangal, we propose an ML of **2.5** mg/kg with the sample rejection of 2.7%.

Spices, dried seeds: We propose an ML of **1.0** mg/kg with the sample rejection of 2.7%.

Thailand agrees that the MLs in each spice group should be set for the whole category without adding the list of spices in the footnote in order to reduce trade impact.

Agenda Item 6: Sampling plans for methylmercury in fish (at Step 4)

Thailand appreciates the efforts of New Zealand as Chair and Canada as co-Chair of the EWG in preparing the sampling plans for methylmercury in fish.

We would like to seek a clarification on the examples appeared in Appendix II of the CX/CF 24/17/6. After the CCCF agrees to advance the sampling plan for adoption, the information of examples on how to apply the sampling plan would be maintained in the final draft or not.

Also, the recommended minimum number of incremental samples taken from the lot that depends on the weight of the lot as specified in Table 3 of Appendix I is not appropriate for a valuable fish. In addition, the approach taking the incremental samples for lots/sub lots where fish are not of comparable length and/or weight as specified in para. 8 of Appendix I is complex and not practical. We propose to revise the sampling plan in basic sampling provisions and emphasize on data gaps and outstanding issues as raised in paras. 32, 44 and 45 of Appendix III. This will help develop a sampling plan to be practical and reduce the burden of sampling.

Agenda Item 7: Definition for ready-to-eat peanuts for the establishment of a maximum level for total aflatoxins in this product

Thailand would like to express the appreciation to India for preparing the definition for ready-to-eat (RTE) peanuts for the establishment of a ML for total aflatoxins. We would like to provide the following comments for consideration.

We support most of the proposed definition for RTE peanuts. However, we are of the view that if processed peanuts, such as the products in (iii) – (x), can be understood or treated as ready-to-eat peanuts, there is no need to label or declare as “RTE peanut”. But raw peanuts still need to be clearly labelled or declared as “RTE peanut” for enforcing specific measure by the competent authority. Therefore, we propose minor change to the definition as follows:

“Ready-to-Eat Peanuts is a product intended for direct human consumption, not intended to undergo an additional processing/treatment that has proven to reduce levels of aflatoxins, before being used as ingredients in foodstuffs, otherwise processed, packed in all types of packaging such as consumer or bulk~~.~~ For raw shelled and in-shell peanuts, the product should be labeled or clearly identified ~~labeled~~ as ‘RTE Peanuts’. Includes, but not restricted to: (i) raw shelled peanuts, (ii) raw in-shell peanuts, (iii) roasted in-shell peanuts, (iv) roasted/blanched shelled peanuts, (v) fried shelled peanuts with or without skin, (vi) coated peanuts, (vii) seasoned peanuts, (viii) smoked peanuts, (ix) salted and cooked peanuts, (x) peanut butter.”

If the Committee agrees with the revised definition of “RTE peanut” above, the EWG could further consider occurrence data of RTE peanuts. If it is processed peanut, it indicates that it is RTE peanuts. But if it is raw peanuts, the information must be clearly specified as “RTE peanut” when data is submitted to GEMS/Foods.

Agenda Item 8: Sampling plans for total aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in certain spices (at Step 4)

Thailand would like to thank India, chair of the EWG, for establishment of the sampling plan for total aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in certain spices. We also appreciate the opportunity to comment on this issue as follows:

The sampling plan should only be established for specific spices with established Codex MLs, such as nutmeg, dried chili, and paprika taking into account styles or characterizations of each spice, such as whole, powder, crushed, and ground.

It is not necessary to establish sampling plan for ginger, black and white pepper, and turmeric, As the CAC discontinued work on the MLs.

The sampling plan provides details for spices with different particle sizes i.e., large and small particle size. Therefore, it is necessary to have a clear description or identification of which spices or styles/form of spices are considered large particle size or small particle size.

We agree with reduction of the aggregate sample weight in Table 1 and 2 of the sampling plan as outlined in Appendix I of CX/CF 24/17/8, as it seems appropriate and practical. However, we would like to request clarification regarding the decision not to reduce the aggregate sample weight in lots weighing >2.0 tons to ≤ 15.0 tons in Table 2. Consequently, we propose a similar adjustment for consistency.

Additionally, we would appreciate clarification on whether or not the aggregate sample weight in Table 1 is reduced to 10 kg. Also, it is necessary or not to divide the aggregate sample weight into two laboratory samples, each weighing 5 kg. In case it is necessary, modification should be made accordingly to the footnote underneath Table 1.

Agenda Item 10: Discussion paper on pyrrolizidine alkaloids in food and feed

Thailand wishes to express its appreciation to the EWG chaired by European Union on the establishment of a discussion paper on pyrrolizidine alkaloids. We would like to provide the following comments for consideration.

We have no objection to update the *Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed* (CXC 74-2014). Although this CoP has been established for 10 years and results in recommendation to review, there is not sufficient information on the CoP implementation and it is unclear which specific measure should be reviewed. We suggest to collect additional information before taking a decision.

Taking into account the need to establish the CoP for preventing and reducing contamination of pyrrolizidine alkaloids in honey, Thailand does not have information on this matter yet. The possibility whether to establish a CoP or not will depend on information of mitigation measure in honey. The information may be included as an annex of CXC 74-2014 or separated as a new CoP if the control measures are clearly different from the other foods.

We have no objection to elaborate a document providing guidance for sampling and defining the minimum analytical requirements to which occurrence data have to comply for submission to the GEMS/Food database. However, Thailand has limited capacity of laboratory to analyse pyrrolizidine alkaloids. Also, there is no validated method and the reference standard for analysis at the moment. We are of the view that more information should be collected and it might be appropriate to consult with CCMAS on minimum requirements of analytical methods before making decision on risk management option.

Agenda Item 14: Review of the *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004)

Thailand wishes to express its appreciation to the EWG chaired by Brazil on the establishment of a discussion paper on the review of the *Code practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004). Thailand supports the establishment of the revision of the *Code practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004) as a new work as well as the project document for the CAC approval.

Agenda Item 15: Review of the *Code of Practice for the Reduction of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feedingstuffs for Milk-Producing Animals* (CXC 45-1997)

Thailand would like to sincerely thank the EWG chaired by Canada and co-chaired by Japan and the United States of America for their work in preparing discussion paper on the review of the *Code of practice for the Reduction of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feedingstuffs for Milk-Producing Animals* (CXC 45-1997). Thailand supports the revision of the *Code of practice for the Reduction of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feedingstuffs for Milk-Producing Animals* and agrees to forward the project document for CAC approval as a new work.