



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEx COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS**

Second Session

Goa, India, 14 – 18 September 2015

**Proposed Draft Standard for Thyme
Comments at Step 3**

Prepared by the European Union and Switzerland with the assistance of: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States, Council for Responsible Nutrition, FoodDrinkEurope, IADSA, IOSTA.

Governments and international organizations in Observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission wishing to submit comments at Step 3 on the Draft Standard (**Annex I**) are invited to do so no later than **31 July 2015** as follows: Secretariat, Spices Board (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India), Email: ccsch@indianspices.com, with a copy to the Codex Contact Point of India, (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) Email: codex-india@nic.in and the Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, e-mail: codex@fao.org.

Format for submitting comments: In order to facilitate the compilation of comments and prepare a more useful comments document, Members and Observers, which are not yet doing so, are requested to provide their comments in the format outlined in the Annex 2 to this document.

Background

1. The 1st session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) which met in Kochi, India, 11-14 February 2014, agreed to establish an electronic working group, led by the European Union and co-chaired by Switzerland and working in English only to prepare a proposed draft standard for thyme.
2. A first proposal for the proposed draft standard for thyme was circulated to the eWG on 21 May 2014. On the basis of comments received from the eWG members, the chairs prepared a second proposal which was circulated to the eWG on 6 October 2014.
3. Based on further eWG comments, the chairs prepared a final proposal for the proposed draft standard for thyme which attached to this report.

Recommendations

4. The Committee is invited to consider the proposed draft Standard for Thyme attached in Annex I.
5. The attention of the Committee is drawn to the following provisions which remain in square brackets indicating that the eWG could not conclude them:
 - a) The inclusion of colour in quality factors in section 3.2.1.
 - b) Certain chemical and physical requirements in Table 1 in section 3.2.3.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR THYME
(N07-2014)
(At Step 3 of the Procedure)

1 SCOPE

This Standard applies to dried leaves and flowers of any wild or commercially cultivated variety (cultivar) of thyme (*Thymus spp.*) of the *Lamiaceae* family offered for industrial food production and for direct consumption, including for catering purposes 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:

- (a) prepared from leaves and flowers of *Thymus spp.* having reached appropriate development for processing; and
- (b) processed in an appropriate manner, undergoing operations such as cleaning, drying, rubbing, milling and sifting.

2.2 STYLES

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

- a) Whole: intact leaves and flowers.
- b) Crushed/rubbed: crushed/rubbed leaves and flowers.
- c) Ground/powdered: powdered leaves and flowers.

3 ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS**3.1 COMPOSITION**

Product as defined in Section 2.

3.2 QUALITY FACTORS**3.2.1 Odour and flavor [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 gray depending on the source.]**

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 Chemical and Physical Characteristics

Dried thyme shall comply with the chemical and physical requirements specified in Table 1.

Parameter	Requirement % mass fraction (dry basis)
a) Moisture	≤ 12,0
b) Total ash	≤ [12,0] [14,0]
c) Acid-insoluble ash	≤ 3,5
d) Volatile oils	≥ 1,0
e) Extraneous vegetable material ¹	≤ [0,5] [2,0] [5,0] %
f) Foreign matter ²	≤ [0,5] [1,0] % [practically absent]

¹ All vegetable matter from the specific plant other than the required part. The proportion of stalks which have dimensions exceeding 10 mm in length and 2 mm in diameter shall not be more than 5 % (m/m) (w/w) of total extraneous matter content.

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

g) [Mold]	[≤ 1,0]
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Table 1. Chemical and physical requirements for dried thyme.

3.3 CLASSIFICATION OF “DEFECTIVES”

A container 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 (c) of the appropriate sampling plan, as described in Section 10. 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	Celluloses	GMP

4.2 No 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 Codex 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 and/or veterinary drugs established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

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 Recommended International Code of Practice – 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 Codex 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.

8.2.3 The crop year may be indicated.

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

Provision	Method	Principle	Type
Moisture	ISO 760:1978 AOAC 2001.12	Gravimetry	I
Total ash	ISO 928:1997 AOAC 950.49	Gravimetry	I
Acid-insoluble ash	ISO 930:1997	Gravimetry	I
Volatile oils	ISO 6571:2008 AOAC 962.17	Gravimetry	I
Extraneous vegetable material	ISO 927:2009	Visual examination	IV
Foreign matter	ISO 927:2009	Visual examination	IV

Sampling Plans

The appropriate inspection level is selected as follows:

Inspection level I - Normal Sampling

Inspection level II - Disputes, (Codex referee purposes sample size), enforcement or need for better lot estimate

SAMPLING PLAN 1 (Inspection Level I, AQL = 6.5)

NET WEIGHT IS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 1 KG (2.2 LB)		
Lot Size (N)	Sample Size (n)	Acceptance Number (c)
4,800 or less	6	1
4,801 - 24,000	13	2
24,001 - 48,000	21	3
48,001 - 84,000	29	4
84,001 - 144,000	38	5
144,001 - 240,000	48	6
more than 240,000	60	7
NET WEIGHT IS GREATER THAN 1 KG (2.2 LB) BUT NOT MORE THAN 4.5 KG (10 LB)		
Lot Size (N)	Sample Size (n)	Acceptance Number (c)
2,400 or less	6	1
2,401 - 15,000	13	2
15,001 - 24,000	21	3
24,001 - 42,000	29	4
42,001 - 72,000	38	5
72,001 - 120,000	48	6
more than 120,000	60	7
NET WEIGHT GREATER THAN 4.5 KG (10 LB)		
Lot Size (N)	Sample Size (n)	Acceptance Number (c)
600 or less	6	1
601 - 2,000	13	2
2,001 - 7,200	21	3
7,201 - 15,000	29	4
15,001 - 24,000	38	5
24,001 - 42,000	48	6
more than 42,000	60	7

SAMPLING PLAN (Inspection Level II, AQL = 6.5)

NET WEIGHT IS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 1 KG (2.2 LB)		
Lot Size (N)	Sample Size (n)	Acceptance Number (c)
4,800 or less	13	2
4,801 - 24,000	21	3
24,001 - 48,000	29	4
48,001 - 84,000	38	5
84,001 - 144,000	48	6
144,001 - 240,000	60	7
more than 240,000	72	8
NET WEIGHT IS GREATER THAN 1 KG (2.2 LB) BUT NOT MORE THAN 4.5 KG (10 LB)		
Lot Size (N)	Sample Size (n)	Acceptance Number (c)
2,400 or less	13	2
2,401 - 15,000	21	3
15,001 - 24,000	29	4
24,001 - 42,000	38	5
42,001 - 72,000	48	6
72,001 - 120,000	60	7
more than 120,000	72	8
NET WEIGHT GREATER THAN 4.5 KG (10 LB)		
Lot Size (N)	Sample Size (n)	Acceptance Number (c)
600 or less	13	2
601 - 2,000	21	3
2,001 - 7,200	29	4
7,201 - 15,000	38	5
15,001 - 24,000	48	6
24,001 - 42,000	60	7
more than 42,000	72	8

Annex 2**GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR THE PROVISION OF COMMENTS**

In order to facilitate the compilation and prepare a more useful comments' document, Members and Observers, which are not yet doing so, are requested to provide their comments under the following headings:

- (i) General Comments
- (ii) Specific Comments

Specific comments should include a reference to the relevant section and/or paragraph of the document that the comments refer to.

When changes are proposed to specific paragraphs, Members and Observers are requested to provide their proposal for amendments accompanied by the related rationale. New texts should be presented in underlined/bold font and deletion in ~~strikethrough font~~.

In order to facilitate the work of the Secretariats to compile comments, Members and Observers are requested to refrain from using colour font/shading as documents are printed in black and white and from using track change mode, which might be lost when comments are copied / pasted into a consolidated document.

In order to reduce the translation work and save paper, Members and Observers are requested not to reproduce the complete document but only those parts of the texts for which any change and/or amendments is proposed.