



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

Fifth Session

Virtual, 20-29 April 2021

DRAFT STANDARD FOR DRIED OREGANO (UPDATED¹)

(Prepared by the Electronic Working Group chaired by Turkey)

INTRODUCTION

1. The 1st session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)², (2014) agreed: to start new work on the development of a standard for oregano; to establish, subject to the approval of the Commission, an electronic Working Group (eWG), led by Argentina and co-chaired by Greece and working in English and Spanish, and to prepare the proposed draft standard for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next Session.
2. CCSCH³ (2015), considered the proposed draft standard for Oregano and noted that several provisions still required considerable review and that the standard was not ready for advancement in the Step process. The Committee agreed to establish eWG, led by Argentina and co-chaired by Turkey, to redraft the proposed draft Standard taking into account the discussions, written comments and related decisions, made at the session. CCSCH² agreed to return the proposed draft standard to Step 2/3 for redrafting.
3. The proposed draft Standard for Oregano, with the amendments proposed at CCSCH², was circulated to the eWG for two rounds of comments. In total, eleven member countries and two observers⁴ submitted comments that were considered and incorporated in every case. Although CCSCH only agreed on development of a draft Standard on *Oregano* L. by excluding Marjoram or Thyme or Lippia., some members (Mexico and US) requested about including of *Lippia* spp. in the proposed draft standard.
4. At CCSCH³ (2017)⁵, Turkey summarised the outcomes of the eWG and noted that Oregano and Lippia were classified in different taxonomy and they have different physical/chemical properties. Therefore, separate standard should be prepared. And this comment was supported by some delegates.
5. The Committee agreed to establish an eWG, led by Turkey and co-chaired by Mexico, working in English and taking into account discussion and comments made at the session to prepare revised proposed draft Standard for all products traded as oregano.; and to consider how a proposed draft standard could be subsequently incorporated in the grouping system for spices and culinary herbs.
6. At CCSCH⁴ (2019)⁶, the Committee agreed to: forward the proposed draft Standard for dried Oregano to CAC42 for adoption at Step 5 and extension of the timeline for completion until CCSCH⁵; and forward the provisions on food additives, labelling and methods of analysis and sampling to the appropriate committees for endorsement.
7. The Committee agreed to re-establish an eWG, chaired by Turkey and working in English only, to review Sections: 2.1, Product definition, and 8, Labelling, and those outstanding issues as indicated within square brackets.

¹ This Updated document takes into account the Comments at Step 6, in reply to [CL 2019/98/OCS-SCH](#)

² REP14/SCH paras 67-69

³ REP16/SCH paras 29-31

⁴ Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Greece, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, the United States of America, IOSTA and Food Drink

⁵ REP17/SCH, paras 44-54

⁶ REP19/SCH, paras 30

PARTICIPATION AND METHODOLOGY

8. The eWG started its work on August 15, 2019. The draft document was circulated for two rounds of consultation to the eWG members (Appendix II) (i.e. November 5, 2019, and June 15, 2020); and a revised document was prepared to take into account the comments received. However due to Covid-19 global pandemic, a few comments were received during the second round of the eWG discussions.

9. Due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, the CCSC5 meeting scheduled in 2020 could not be convened; however, Codex Secretariat, CCSC Secretariat and CCSC Chair organized an online virtual meeting in June 2020 with all the eWG chairs to come up with a continuity plans for the Committee. At meeting, it was agreed that:

- The timelines for the eWGs be extended to enable to consider comments submitted at Step 6 as submitted through the relevant Circular Letters (CLs);
- eWGs should take into account matters referred by Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) and by Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) when preparing their working documents
- the eWG on oregano should hold a virtual meeting to try and address sticking issues and that crucial issues to be considered should be clearly identified.

10. eWG on oregano held its informal virtual meeting on December 10, 2020, considered and clarified the following issues in addition:

- Agree to insert the "Flowering tops of the plants mentioned in Table 1" phrase in the Section 2.1
- On the proposal by a member to include a parameter for the determination of the amount of carvacrol and thymol from the essential oil components for the correct identification of oregano, it was clarified that CCSC3 agreed that the standard would cover *Lippia*, and that *Lippia* would not meet the criteria to be determined for 50% carvacrol and thymol.
- Agree to add the reference to the related code of practice about Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids in the contaminants section. "Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed (CXC 74-2014) and other relevant Codex texts."
- On section of "Labelling" about the part of "Inspection mark optional" it was proposed that the phrase "Inspection mark optional" could be deleted, but it would be useful to have the USA delegate comment on the issue before deleting this part according to the comment of USA member. After the discussion by the eWG members, this part was deleted.
- It was proposed that the typing of the methods of analysis should take into account the comments made by CCMAS as elaborated in REP16/MAS.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

11. In view that all the submitted comments were addressed and the views expressed during the virtual meeting, it is considered that the draft standard is ready to be submitted to the CCSC for consideration at Step 7, with the view to recommending for adoption at Step 8 by the Commission.

12. The main task of the eWG were the preparation of the draft Standard on Oregano. The eWG has completed the task. The Chairperson would like to thank the Working Group for the very constructive attitude and good contributions that enabled the achievement of a good document based on consensus. The Chairperson would also like to thank the CCSC Chairperson and Codex Secretariats for their guidance during the eWG informal virtual meeting.

13. Significant amount of information has been gathered during two rounds of discussions and virtual meeting. The revised draft standard is appended to the present report as Appendix I.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR DRIED OREGANO**(Step 7)****1 SCOPE**

This Standard applies to dried leaves/flowers of oregano, as defined in Section 2.1, offered for direct consumption, as an ingredient in food processing or for repackaging if required. It excludes dried oregano intended for industrial processing.

2 DESCRIPTION**2.1 Product definition**

Dried oregano is the product obtained from the leaves and the flowering tops of the plants mentioned in Table 1 and processed in an appropriate manner, undergoing operations such as cleaning, drying, rubbing and sifting.

Table 1. Dried culinary herbs covered by this Standard

General name	Trade name	Scientific name
Oregano	Oregano	<i>Origanum</i> spp. L., except (<i>Origanum majorana</i> L.)
Sword oregano	Turkish sword oregano	<i>Satureja</i> spp. L.
Mexican oregano	Mexican oregano	<i>Lippia</i> spp. <i>Poliomintha longiflora</i>

2.2 Styles

2.2.1 Dried oregano may be offered in one of the following styles:

- a) Whole;
- b) Crushed/Rubbed: processed to varying degrees, ranging from a coarse to fine crush; and
- c) Ground/Powdered: processed into a powder.

2.2.2 The particle size of ground/powdered styles is determined by contractual agreement between buyer and seller.

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

Product as defined in Section 2.

3.2 Quality factors**3.2.1 Moisture content**

Dried oregano (whole, crushed or ground) shall not contain more than 12% moisture.

3.2.2 Odour, flavour and colour

Dried oregano shall have a characteristic odour and flavour, varying according to the composition/chemical variety of the main components of the volatile oil (carvacrol and/or thymol), which may vary depending on geo-climatic factors/conditions. Dried oregano shall be free from any foreign odour or flavour and especially from mustiness. Dried oregano shall have a characteristic colour varying from pale greyish yellow green to dark green.

3.2.3 Classification

Whole and crushed/rubbed oregano may be classified in three classes/grades according physical and chemical requirements as specified in Table 2 and 3, respectively.

- Extra
- Class/Grade I

- Class/Grade II

When dried oregano is treated as unclassified/ungraded, the chemical and physical characteristics of Class/Grade II apply as the minimum requirements.

3.2.4 Physical characteristics

Whole, crushed/rubbed and ground/powdered oregano shall comply with the physical requirements specified in Table 2.

Table 2. Physical requirements for whole/crushed/rubbed and ground/powdered oregano (allowed tolerance for defects)

Parameter	Whole or Crushed/Rubbed Oregano			Ground/Powdered Oregano
	Extra	Class/Grade I	Class/Grade II	
Extraneous vegetable matter ⁽¹⁾ (maximum % mass fraction)	0.5	2	2	N/A
Foreign matter content ⁽²⁾ (maximum % mass fraction)	0.1	0.1	0.1	N/A
Tolerance for oregano powder among non-powder styles (% smaller than the particle size indicated) ⁽³⁾	5	10	20	N/A
Dead insects (maximum number/100 g)	3	3	3	N/A
Insects fragments (maximum number/10 g)	300	300	300	1250
Visible mold/insect damage (maximum % m/m)	1	3	5	N/A
Live insects	0	0	0	0
Mammalian excreta maximum (mg/Kg)	1.0	2.2	2.2	N/A
Other excreta (maximum mg/Kg) ⁽⁴⁾	10	10	22	N/A

⁽¹⁾: Vegetative matter associated with the plant from which the product originates but not accepted as part of the final product, such as stems/sticks, etc.

⁽²⁾: Any visible/detectable objectionable foreign matter or material not usually associated with the natural components of the spice plant, such as stones, burlap bagging, metal, foreign leaves etc.

⁽³⁾: Particle size is evaluated upon request accompanied by supporting documents.

⁽⁴⁾: Excreta from other animals such as reptiles and birds.

3.2.5 Chemical characteristics

Whole, crushed/rubbed and ground/powdered-oregano shall comply with the chemical requirements specified in Table 3.

Table 3. Chemical requirements for whole/crushed/rubbed and ground oregano

Parameter	Whole/Crushed/Rubbed Oregano			Ground/Powdered Oregano
	Extra	Class/Grade I	Class/Grade II	
Total ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	9	10	10	12
Acid-insoluble ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	1.2	2	2	2.5
Volatile oils, ml/100 g (dry basis), minimum	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.5

4 FOOD ADDITIVES

Anticaking agents may be used in the powdered form of the product in accordance with Table 3 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995).

5 CONTAMINANTS

5.1 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995) and *Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed* (CXC 74-2014) and other relevant Codex texts.

5.2 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6 HYGIENE

6.1 It is recommended that the products covered by this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods* (CXC 75-2015), Annex III (Spices and Dried Aromatic Herbs), and other Codes of Practice.

6.2 The products shall comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods* (CXG 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 this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985). In particular, the following specific provisions apply:

8.2 Name of the product

8.2.1 The name of the product shall be "dried oregano" or "oregano" when the omission of the word dry would not mislead or confuse the consumer.

8.2.2 The general name, scientific name and style of the product shall be noted and trade name may be indicated as described in Table 1 and Section 2.2.

8.3 Country of origin

8.3.1 If there are more than one country of harvest, they may be indicated using the legend and /or.

8.3.2 Year of harvest (optional)

8.4 Commercial identification

- Class/Grade, if applicable

- Size (optional)

8.5 Labelling of non-retail containers

Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the package 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

9.1 Methods of analysis

Table 4. Methods of analysis¹

Provision	Method	Principle	Type
Moisture	ISO 939	Distillation	I
Total ash on dry basis	ISO 939 and ISO 928	Calculation Distillation and Gravimetry	I
Acid-insoluble ash on dry basis	ISO 939 and ISO 930	Calculation Distillation and Gravimetry	I

Volatile oils on a dry basis	ISO 939 and ISO 6571	Calculation Distillation and Distillation	I
Extraneous vegetable matter	ISO 927	Visual examination followed by Gravimetry	I
Foreign matter	ISO 927	Visual examination followed by Gravimetry	I
Mammalian excreta Other excreta	Macroanalytical Procedure Manual, USFDA, Technical Bulletin V.39 B (For whole)	Visual examination	IV
Whole dead insect	ISO 927	Visual examination	IV
	MPM V-8 Spices, Condiments, Flavours and Crude Drugs A. General methods for spices herbs and botanicals (V 32)		
Insect fragments	AOAC 969.44	Flotation method	IV
Mould visible	Method V-8 Spices, Condiments, Flavors and Crude Drugs (Macroanalytical Procedure Manual, FDA Technical Bulletin Number 5) http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodScienceResearch/Laboratory Methods/ucm084394.htm#v-32	Visual examination	IV
Insect Damage	ISO 927	Visual Examination	I

(1) Latest edition or version of the approved method should be used

9.2 Sampling plan

To be developed.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**CHAIRPERSON****Ahmet GÜNGÖR**

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
General Directorate of Food and Control
Department of Food Establishments and Codex
Eskisehir Yolu 9.Km Lodumlu Ankara
TURKEY

Ph: +90 312 258 7756

Fax: +90 312 258 7760

E mail: 1- ahmet.gungor@tarimorman.gov.tr

2- agungortarim@gmail.com

ARGENTINA**Mrs. Florencia Demarco**

Ingeniera Agrónoma

Email: fdemarco@senasa.gob.ar; codex@magyp.gob.ar

BOTSWANA**CHAKUBINGA MOATSWI**

Principal Agriculture Scientific Officer

Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food Security, Department of Crop Production and Plant Protection

Email: ccmoatswi@gov.bw

BRAZIL**Andre Bispo Oliveira**

Plant Products Inspector

Ministry of Agriculture

E-mail: andre.oliveira@agricultura.gov.br

CHILE**Karen Baracatt**

CCSCH coordinator

Email: karen.baracatt@achipia.gob.cl

CHINA**Jiaqi Wang**

The China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA)

Email: wangjiaqi@cfsa.net.cn

Ding Shaohui

Email: cnfia@163.com

Cell: +86 13910419933

Jenny Qu

China National Food Industry Association

Email: jennyqu@newlywedsfoods.com

Cell: +86 13910097742

COLOMBIA**Giovanny Cifuentes Rodriguez**

Profesional Especializado,

Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social de Colombia

Address: Carrera 13 No. 32 – 76 Bogotá D.C.

Tel.: 57 1 3305000

E-mail: gcifuentes@minsalud.gov.co

E-mail: giomega2000@yahoo.com

Sandra Milena Solis Luna

Profesional encargada de la cadena de aromáticas y especias
Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural
Email: sandra.solis@minagricultura.gov.co

COSTA RICA**Melina Flores R.**

Codex Alimentarius Costa Rica
E-mail: mflores@meic.go.cr

EGYPT**Ahmed Mohammed Elhelw**

Egyptian Organization for Standardization & Quality (EOS)
Ministry of Trade and Industry
E-mail: helws_a@hotmail.com
Tel: +201224083536

EUROPEAN UNION**Mr Marco CASTELINA**

Tel.: +32 229-87443
E-mail: marco.castellina@ec.europa.eu
E-mail: sante-codex@ec.europa.eu

FRANCE**Mr. Gilles Morini**

Ministry of economy
E-mail: gilles.morini@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr

Mr. Nicolas Cocolo

Official laboratory
E-mail: Nicolas.COCOLO@scl.finances.gouv.fr

GREECE**Georgios Marakis**

Expert Scientific Officer
Greece Hellenic Food Authority
E-mail: gmarakis@efet.gr

INDIA**Mr. Rijo Johny**

Scientist B, Spices Board
E-mail: rijo.johny@nic.in

Dr S C Khurana

Consultant
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India;
E-mail: khurana.fssai@gmail.com
E-mail: codex-india@nic.in

Ramesh B Natarajan

E-mail: rameshbabu.n@nic.in

INDONESIA**Sekar Insani Sumunaringtyas (Mrs.)**

Directorate of Processing and Marketing of Horticultural Products
Ministry of Agriculture
E-mail: sekartyassumunar@gmail.com

Nisa Wulandari (Mrs.)

Directorate of Processing and Marketing of Horticultural Products
Ministry of Agriculture
E-mail: subditsm@gmail.com

IRAN**Dr. MH (F) Shojaee AliAbadi**

CCNEA Regional Coordinator & Senior Scientific Adviser of Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of IRAN

Central Office: No.1294 Valiaser Ave. Vanak corner, Tehran, Iran

P. O. Box: 14155-6139, Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 31585-163

Mobile: +98 912 159 17 66,

Email: farooqlab@gmail.com

Fakhrisadat Hosseini

Codex Secretariat

Alzahra university-ISIRI

E-mail: sadat77@gmail.com

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

Farid Sapi Mohammad Hassan

Potation: General Manager of Consumer Protection

Organization: Ministry of Industry &Commerce

Directorate: Competition Promotion and Consumer Protection Directorate

Telephone: 0776336046

Email: Faridsapiafghan@gmail.com

JAPAN**Mitsuhide Kamikochi, Mr. (the official representative)**

Position: Deputy Director, Food Manufacture Affairs Division, Food Industry Affairs Bureau

Organization: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan

Email: mitsuhide_kamikoc690@maff.go.jp

Mayumi Tenga, Ms.

Position: Section Chief, Food Manufacture Affairs Division, Food Industry Affairs Bureau

Organization: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan

Email: mayumi_tenga130@maff.go.jp ; codex_maff@maff.go.jp

MEXICO**Tania Daniela Fosado Soriano**

Position: Punto de Contacto CODEX México

Organization: Secretaría de Economía

Telephone: 52 (55) 5229-6100 Ext.43264

Email: codexmex@economia.gob.mx

MOROCCO**Mrs Khadija Haddad**

Cadre au Service du contrôle des produits végétaux et d'origine végétale

Office national de sécurité sanitaire des produits alimentaires

Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche Maritime avenue Hadj ahmed Cherkaoui, Agdal

Rabat Morocco

Tel: 0661144014

Email: haddad_khadija@yahoo.fr

PERU**Ing. Luis Reymundo Meneses**

Coordinador titular de la comisión técnica de Especies Y hierbas culinarias(vocero)

SENASA (Servicio Nacional de sanidad Agraria)/PERÚ

E-mail: sdioses@senasa.gob.pe

Susán Dioses Córdova

Coordinadora alterna de la Comisión Técnica Especies y Hierbas Culinarias

SENASA (Servicio Nacional de sanidad Agraria)/PERÚ

E-mail: sdioses@senasa.gob.pe

Juan Carlos Huiza Trujillo

Secretario Técnico del Comité Nacional del Codex

DIGESA (Dirección General de Salud Ambiental) Minsa/Perú

E-mail: codex@minsa.gob.pe

POLAND

Ms Anna Gierasimiuk

Head of Microbiology Division
Specialised laboratory in Gdynia
Main Inspectorate of Agricultural and Food Quality
E-mail: pam@ijhars.gov.pl, kodeks@ijhars.gov.pl

Ms Danuta Orleanska

Representative for Persons Certification and Food Safety Systems
Polish Centre for Testing and Certification
E-mail: dorleanska@pcbc.gov.pl

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Korean Contact Point

Ministry of Food and Drug Safety
E-mail: codexkorea@korea.kr

Ms Eun-kyung Hong

Codex Researcher,
Ministry of Food and Drug Safety
E-mail: hongek3@korea.kr

SWITZERLAND

Ms. Franziska Franchini

Scientific Officer
Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO
E-mail: franziska.franchini@blv.admin.ch

SWEDEN

Mrs. Kristina Lagestrand Sjölin

Principal Regulatory Officer
National Food Agency
Sweden
E-mail: Kristina.sjolin@slv.se , Codex.Sweden@slv.se

TURKEY

Mr. Ahmet Gungor

Food Engineer
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock
Eskisehir Yolu 9.km Lodumlu
Ankara, 06800
Phone: +905058780899 Fax: +903122587760
Email: 1- ahmet.gungor@tarimorman.gov.tr
2- agungortarim@gmail.com

Mr. Recep Ariturk

Food Engineer -Kutas Group Cooperation
Kutas Group 1140 Sk. No:57 Guney Mah. Yenisehir / Izmir
Phone: +905412853318
Email: recep_ariturk@kutas.com.tr

UNITED KINGDOM

Dr. Michelle McQuillan

Team Lead Food Compositional Standards
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, UK
E-mail: michelle.mcquillan@defra.gov.uk; codex@defra.gov.uk

Christopher Conder

Senior Policy Advisor
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, UK
E-mail: Christopher.conder@defra.gov.uk

Sophie Gallagher

Policy Advisor
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, UK
E-mail: Sophie.gallagher@defra.gov.uk

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**Dorian A. LaFond**

International Standards Coordinator
AMS Specialty Crops Program
Specialty Crops Inspection Division
Stop 0247, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20250-0247
Email: dorian.lafond@ams.usda.gov
Tel. 202-690-4944

Aparna Tatavarthy, Ph.D.

Microbiologist, Spices and Seasoning Mixes Team
Division of Plant Products and Beverages
Office of Food Safety (HFS-317)
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5001 Campus Drive
College Park, MD 20740
Phone: +1 (240) 402-1013
Fax: +1 (301) 436-2632
E-mail: Aparna.Tatavarthy@fda.hhs.gov

Marie Maratos

International Issues Analyst
U.S. Codex Office
Room 4865 South Building
Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Washington, DC, USA
Email: Marie.Maratos@fsis.usda.gov
Tel: 202 690 4795

ASTA (American Spice Trade Association), IOSTA

Laura Shumow
Executive Director, American Spice Trade Association
IOSTA
E-mail: lshumow@astaspice.org

THE EUROPEAN SPICE ASSOCIATION, ESA**Elena Fakou**

Seasoning and Spice Association Executive
Tel: +44(0) 20 7420 7106
E-mail: elena.fakou@fdf.org.uk

Steve Clemenson

Nedspice Sourcing BV
Group Quality and Regulatory Manager
F +31 10 41 47 550
M +31 61 17 03 623
E-mail: sclemenson@nedspice.com

CODEX SECRETARIAT**Mr. Patrick Sekitoleko**

Food Standards Officer
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 Roma, Italy
Tel: +39 06570 56626

Email: patrick.sekitoleko@fao.org