

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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CODEX DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION

BACKGROUND

1. In 2006 the Codex Secretariat reduced paper distribution of Codex documentation to make savings to minimise negative impacts of expected budget cuts on the core operations of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. The distribution of documents through electronic lists and the Codex website had already been accepted as the preferred means of communication by an increasing number of member governments. These measures are in line with the FAO-wide policy that encourages the use of modern methods of communication, including electronic document distribution, by commissions and committees established under Article VI of the Constitution.

2. The experience made with the reduction of paper distribution was positive and the Codex Secretariat received only few requests for paper documents. This document sums up the present situation and outlines future measures.

PRESENT SITUATION

3. The following measures announced in CL 2005/49-GEN, CL 2006/4-GEN and CAC/29 INF/12 have been implemented:

- Paper distribution of Codex documents (e.g. working papers, reports, Circular Letters) to observers was discontinued from 31 January 2006.
- Paper distribution of documents to all other recipients in member countries that are neither Codex Contact Points nor observer organizations was discontinued at the end of the year 2005.
- Paper distribution of working papers was discontinued for all Codex Contact Points from March 2006.
- Paper distribution of Circular Letters and reports of sessions of Codex subsidiary bodies was discontinued for all Codex Contact Points.

4. Paper distribution continues for:

- Reports of the Commission (Codex Contact Points)
- Official Invitations (missions, ministries, Codex Contact Points and observers)
- Publications (Codex Contact Points).

FUTURE MEASURES

5. Pending further consultation within FAO, the sending of official paper invitations may be replaced by sending scanned invitations by electronic mail.

6. Progressively, fewer paper publications will be printed and distributed. The number of copies sent free-of-charge to a Codex Contact Point may be reduced. Remote and on-demand printing will be encouraged.

7. The Codex Secretariat will continue to work on improving the services offered by the Codex website and through the electronic mailing lists and the ftp server. Codex texts and publications and databases (e.g. GSFA) will continue to be published on CD-ROM on a regular basis. Codex information material (videos, presentations) will be published on an ad-hoc basis.

ANNEX: ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC CODEX DOCUMENTATION

A. CODEX ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION LISTS

There are two Codex Electronic Distribution Lists: Codex-L and Codex-direct-L.

Codex-direct-L: distributes documents as attached files (in pdf format);

Codex-L: distributes links to the documents posted on the ftp server accessible through the Internet. The Codex-L list has the advantage that the e-mails distributed are small and the problem of mailbox sizes and full mailboxes is avoided. Subsequent file transfer (downloading) is required by the subscriber.

Both lists distribute Codex Circular Letters, Invitations, Agendas of Codex meetings, and other working documents and papers related to Codex meetings as well as any other documentation and/or communication regarding Codex-related work (JMPR¹, JECFA², JEMRA³, Expert Consultations, etc.).

The distribution lists are open to Codex Members through their Codex Contact Points and to international organizations with “Observer Status” in Codex and Chairpersons of Codex Committees and Task Forces.

Once Codex documents have been distributed through the Codex Electronic Distribution Lists, they are also posted on the Codex website for downloading.

How to subscribe

1. To subscribe to Codex-L or to Codex-direct-L send an e-mail: codex@fao.org.
2. The subject header should read: “Codex Electronic Distribution”.
3. The body of the e-mail should contain:

“subscribe Codex-direct-L” (to receive documents as attachments), or
“subscribe Codex-L” (to receive a link to the document posted on the web)

followed by

“[E-mail address]”

and

the name and full address, including e-mail address(es) of the Codex Contact Point or Observer

¹ Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues

² Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives

³ Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment

NOTES:

- The subscription to the Lists is free of charge.
- As much as possible, the e-mail address of the subscriber should be the one being used institutionally and in a sustainable manner so that it is not affected by eventual transfer of the officer in charge. The use of personal accounts is strongly discouraged.
- It is possible for each Member or Observer to register up to two e-mail addresses if required.

Cancel a subscription/ Change an e-mail address

1. To cancel a subscription or to change the e-mail address an e-mail should be sent to codex@fao.org .

2. The subject header should read: “Codex Electronic Distribution”.

3. The body of the e-mail should contain:

“Unsubscribe codex-direct-L.” or “Unsubscribe codex-L. “

followed by:

“[Old e-mail address], [New e-mail address]”

(Leave “[New e-mail address]” empty to cancel a subscription.)

and

name and full address, including e-mail address(es) of the Codex Contact Point or Observer.

B. CODEX WEBSITE (www.codexalimentarius.net)

The information currently available on the website includes:

- The schedule for forthcoming Codex committee meetings which in turn contains links to the agendas and their relevant working papers;
- Reports of the Commission (since 1963) and its subsidiary bodies (since 1997);
- Audiorecordings of recent meetings of the Commission and the Executive Committee
- Circular Letters;
- Codex standards and related texts;
- Codex special publications (e.g. combined texts on food hygiene, food labelling, food import and export inspection and certification systems);
- Procedural Manual;
- Other relevant Codex publications (e.g. Understanding the Codex Alimentarius);
- Contact data on Codex Members (Codex Contact Points) and Observers.

Access to the Codex website does not require registration or password.

C. CODEX CD-ROM/DVD

The Codex CD-ROM 2006 and a Codex DVD with multimedia content will be presented during the Commission session.