

June 2009

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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English Only

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Thirty-second Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, 29 June – 4 July 2009

Codex Advocacy Material – User’s Guide

As the food world becomes more global and more complex, so does the role of Codex Alimentarius in maintaining the safety of the world’s food supply and ensuring that food trade moves fairly and smoothly. In order to ensure that all Codex partners – including those within countries and national administrations – remain abreast of the work of Codex Contact Points and the Commission in general, the Codex secretariat has produced a series of advocacy products for sharing information, raising visibility and solidifying the global Codex partnerships.

In addition, Codex is being challenged in the public domain in a court of public opinion that did not exist when it was founded in 1963. Science and prevention are hard sells. In today’s multimedia world, with YouTube and online blogs, Codex has new challenges from self-serving interest groups that have tapped the online public to their advantage, taking the challenge of Codex well beyond the scientific debate. In answer to this, Codex has produced a series of public awareness and communication products in order to make sure that the real picture of the crucial role of Codex – what it is and what it does – reaches the public. Codex videos are now online and the new Codex Web site will further increase the transparency of the Codex process.

For example, the booklet “Understanding the Codex Alimentarius” gives an overview of the work of Codex, explains how it works, the role of science in Codex procedures, as well as how Codex impacts consumers and food trade. It also explains the importance that Codex places on its core values of transparency and inclusiveness and how that is manifest in its global partnerships with member nations and its inclusion of non-governmental organizations in debates. This booklet has been widely distributed through Codex focal points to libraries, schools and interested members of the public and government ministries. The booklet is also available online for free downloading.

The Codex secretariat has also introduced a periodic newsletter. Launched in December 2008, the newsletter will keep all Codex partners in the loop on official activities but also has feature articles about the activities of some of the Codex members and their contact points. The most recent issue included a “Facts & Fiction” segment, aimed at dispelling misunderstandings of the work of Codex.

In addition, a series of video products has been produced to take the story of Codex to the widest audience possible.

All of these products are made available by Codex to any organization or entity that requests them – dispatch of a reasonable number of copies is free of charge for Codex Contact Points. They are for use in such activities as briefings of parliamentarians, at national Codex fairs, during World Food Day activities and training of governmental personnel. They also can be used for private sector informational sessions and for school and university courses that are related to food safety or food trade. In addition, all of these products – the booklets, leaflets, newsletters and videos – are posted and accessible on the Codex Web site. Whatever purpose these products are used for, Codex Contact Points are in the best position to identify the target audience and maximize the impact of information campaign. The advocacy material is there to support Codex Contact Points in their efforts to raise awareness and increase understanding of the important work they are carrying out and develop partnerships within and outside the government.

The following table sums up the material available and the intended use and audiences.

#	Title	Description	Language	Audience	Possible Use
1	Understanding the Codex Alimentarius (2006)	Overview booklet introducing Codex, its history, its activities and its future	English French Spanish Arabic Chinese	Students, interested public, government officers	An introduction for those who do not know the work of Codex but also a refresher for those who want to expand their knowledge.
2	Posters, post cards, leaflets (2006/2007)	Public awareness and promotion materials	English French Spanish Arabic Chinese Russian	General public	Displays at Codex offices and Codex events; take-away items
3	Leaflet (2006/2007)	Public awareness material giving basic information about Codex	English French Spanish Arabic Chinese Russian	General public, conference participants	Take-away item at Codex fairs and events; handout in education/training seminars
4	The Pepper Trail (2004)	An entertaining video story that shows the process involved in the use and trade of one basic food – pepper. (8:24 minutes)	English	Policy-makers, students, interested public	Projection during Codex-related meetings; lecture/training on food safety
5	Keeping Food Safe (2006)	A lesson in transparency, this video presents interviews with delegates to CCNFSDU set within the reality of	English French Spanish Arabic	Policy-makers, students, interested public, consumers	Projection during Codex-related meetings; lecture/training on food safety

		the Thailand Royal Project. (10:47 minutes)			
6	The Invisible Link (2006)	An introductory-level multimedia presentation explaining how Codex links producers, processors and consumers (6:00 minutes)	English French Spanish Arabic Italian	Policy-makers, general public, students	Projection during Codex-related meetings; lecture/training on food safety
7	Codex Newsletter (published periodically and posted on the Web)	Team-building publication that keeps all Codex partners aware of news, ongoing activities and emerging topics, and personalizes Codex by featuring individual contributors to the Codex process.	English	Government officials responsible for Codex, Codex observers, interested public	As enclosure to periodic circular from the CCP to the members of the national Codex committees
8	Codex FAQ (published on the Codex Web site)	Answers to questions from both those who need specific information about Codex work and those who have doubts or misunderstandings about the role of Codex.	English French Spanish	General public, Codex Contact Points	Replies to individuals who send questions to Codex Contact Points; handout in Codex-related seminars and lectures

The Codex Secretariat would welcome comments about how the materials it has made available have been used and their impact. In addition, the secretariat will try to honour requests for other types of advocacy and communication materials that could be helpful.