

May 2009

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Thirty-second Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 29 June – 4 July 2009

THE INTERNATIONAL PORTAL ON FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH (IPFSAPH)

(Submission from FAO)

PURPOSE

1. The International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant health (IPFSAPH) was launched by FAO in 2004 to provide a reliable means of accessing official information on food safety, animal and plant health relevant to the SPS Agreement. Accessing a range of source data sites means that the portal helps facilitate cross-cutting queries (i.e. it does more than merely access the published data from each standard-setting body or the WTO).
2. Overall, the goal of the portal is to facilitate trade in food and agriculture products and to support the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement by providing a reliable single-access point for authorized international and national information across the sectors of food safety, animal and plant health.
3. A cross-sectoral approach to information management will support an integrated approach to biosecurity, in line with FAO Biosecurity Toolkit (2007), and would facilitate access to relevant information while avoiding information gaps resulting from the dispersal of data sets across various organizations.

INTENDED USERS

4. IPFSAPH is aimed to serve individuals and institutions with an interest in food safety, animal and plant health. These may include the following:
 - National government agencies and bodies such as:
 - Agriculture or health ministries/departments
 - Biosecurity agencies
 - WTO inquiry points and notification authorities
 - Standards organizations
 - Export-promotion agencies
 - National scientific and private sector institutions such as:
 - National research institutes and universities
 - Industry associations
 - Large producers, exporters and traders
 - International and regional organizations and bodies such as:
 - FAO, OECD, OIE, WHO and WTO
 - Secretariats for international agreements (e.g. IPPC and CBD)

- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Asia-Pacific Economic cooperation Council (APEC) or Mercosur

CONTENT

4. IPFSAPH contains official information related to food safety, animal and plant health. It operates as a portal (single-access point) to relevant source database sites, and stores metadata on material from nine international and regional organizations, as well as national records from a number of countries. To access the original material, links are provided to data on source sites. Overall, the portal accesses over fifty relevant data sets that are owned and managed by different organizations, and comprises almost 40,000 individual records (May 2009).
5. Following collaboration over the past five years with the Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology and the OECD, IPFSAPH has recently incorporated data and information on food safety–risk assessments associated with food derived from genetically modified organisms (GMOs).
6. Through linkages to *EFSA Scientific Opinions* and to several other related sources, the IPFSAPH has facilitated access to significant sets of data and information related to r-DNA Low Level Presence (LLP) plant material food and/or feed safety assessment (almost 200 updated references). An ongoing development within IPFSAPH includes broadening keyword search terms to simplify locating data and references related to GMOs (May 2009).
7. IPFSAPH references, among others, the following types of content:
 - International and national standards, official guidelines and recommended codes of practice
 - National laws and regulations
 - Trade notifications
 - Maximum residue limits
 - Risk analyses from, among others, the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), the Joint Expert Meeting on Risk Assessment (JEMRA), and the Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)
 - National contact points for international organizations and agreements such as Codex Alimentarius, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the WTO SPS Agreement
 - Supporting documentation such as evaluations, reports and standards specifications
8. To date, IPFSAPH development and management has been supported by FAO (through dedicated staff time and the Multi-donor Partnership Programme) and by the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) of the WTO.
9. IPFSAPH can be used in three main ways: 1) searching for information, 2) sharing information and 3) feeding national portals. The downloadable user guide¹ is available on the IPFSAPH homepage in three languages at: <http://www.ipfsaph.org/>.
10. Users may search for variety information on general and specific topics using keywords, chemical compounds, titles and documents. National institutions can use IPFSAPH to disseminate their own laws, regulations, standards or other official information of relevance to the SPS Agreement. National information can be uploaded directly into IPFSAPH or linked through official websites where these exist.² Data in IPFSAPH can also be accessed to feed national portals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

11. For further information, please contact Judith Crews, IPFSAPH portal manager (judith.crews@fao.org), Mike Robson, Secretary of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Biosecurity (mike.robson@fao.org).

¹ English: http://www.ipfsaph.org/En/Help/IPFSAPH_UserGuide_EN.pdf,
Español: http://www.ipfsaph.org/Es/Help/IPFSAPH_UserGuide_ES.pdf,
Français : http://www.ipfsaph.org/Fr/Help/IPFSAPH_UserGuide_FR.pdf.

² Adding national material (available only in English):
http://www.ipfsaph.org/En/Help/IntegratingNationalContentIntoIPFSAPH_ver2.pdf