

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 2**

**CX/AFRICA 00/2-Add.1**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

#### **Fourteenth Session**

**Kampala, Uganda, 27 – 30 November 2000**

#### **MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES**

#### **MATTER ARISING FROM THE NINTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

##### **VOLUME OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN CASSAVA<sup>1</sup>**

The Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, at its ninth session, considered the Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Cassava.

The Committee was informed that both sweet and bitter varieties of cassava were traded internationally and therefore, it was decided to delete references to “sweet roots” in the section. In this regard, it was noted that bitter varieties of cassava might contain high levels of the naturally occurring toxicant cyanogenic glycosides and therefore, it was suggested that a provision should be included in the standard to indicate that cassava should not contain levels of the compound which might be injurious to human health.

The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that if a specific maximum level for cyanogenic glycoside was included in the standard, it would require endorsement by the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants. However, as it was noted by several delegations that cassava was only consumed after peeling and cooking, the levels of cyanogenic glycosides remaining in the product as consumed did not present a threat to consumers. Other delegations, however, noted that the product was not familiar to consumers in many parts of the world and therefore, toxic levels of the substance might be unintentionally consumed if the product was not adequately prepared.

The Committee noted that there were several options available to address this issue, namely:

- limiting the definition of produce section to sweet roots of cassava only;
- establishing a maximum level for the compound;
- establishing a specific warning statement on the label; or,
- establishing specific preparation instructions on the label to indicate that the product must be peeled and adequately cooked prior to consumption.

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 01/35, paras. 82-85.

As the Committee could not reach a consensus position on this issue, it was decided to seek specific comments on the aforementioned options for further discussion and consideration at the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCFFV. **It was also agreed to request information on this matter from the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA) and the Comité de Liaison Europe-Afrique/Caraïbes/Pacifique (COLEACP) as well.**

This Committee is invited to provide comments on the inclusion or otherwise of the bitter varieties of cassava in the Standard and figures on international trade of these varieties.