

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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Agenda Item 6

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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS
4th Session
Izmir, Turkey, 26 – 30 April 2010**

**PROPOSED DRAFT MAXIMUM LEVELS FOR TOTAL AFLATOXINS IN BRAZIL NUTS
(N11-2008)**

Comments at Step 3 submitted by Japan

JAPAN

Japan appreciates the efforts of Brazil and other countries contributed to the work for the preparation of the document on the proposed draft maximum levels for total aflatoxins in Brazil Nuts.

Japan has carefully reviewed the document and, for the reasons below, reserves its position on the proposed maximum levels (MLs) in Brazil nuts, in particular 20 ppb for total aflatoxins in in-shell Brazil nuts:

Given that the MLs for total aflatoxins in other tree nuts (almonds, hazelnuts and pistachios) were established in Codex without making any distinction between shelled and in-shell, Japan is of the view that an exception for Brazil nuts should be justified by sound arguments to be held during the forthcoming 4th Session of CCCF.

Japan believes that it is in the first place the responsibility of producing/exporting countries to guarantee the product's safety and wholesomeness. They should never leave to consumers the burden of reducing risks. On the other hand, Japan takes note of the characteristics of Brazil nuts, especially difficulty in controlling hygiene of facilities under rain forest environments and in selecting rotten in-shell nuts from other sound ones once they are distributed on the market.

However, Japan, reiterating the importance of the above mentioned producing/exporting countries' responsibility for making every effort to eliminate/reduce risks of aflatoxins, in this case, associated with consumption of Brazil nuts, would like to propose the following practice to be applied in producing countries:

- i) the in-shell Brazil nuts, if they are found to exceed the MLs (10 ppb for Ready-to-eat nuts (RTE) and 15 ppb for the nuts destined for further processing (DFP)) by analysis prior to export, should go through further treatment (i.e. shelling and selecting only good nuts, including appropriate processing); and
- ii) the above retreated nuts should be re-examined to prove aflatoxin level below the MLs (10 ppb for RTE and 15 ppb for DFP), for export as shelled nuts.

Japan believes that this practice would be feasible and would not become an over-burden for the economy of Brazil Nuts business in international food trade because shelling nuts to select good nuts by visual inspection is practice already followed, in accordance with the document (see paragraph 48 in ANNEX III Background information). Furthermore, this practice could mitigate the possible economic loss to be created by eliminating from the market all in-shell Brazil nuts exceeding the MLs set for other tree nuts (10ppb for RTE and 15ppb for DFP).

Meanwhile, if it is impossible to eliminate all rotten nuts even by establishing low MLs, Japan is of the opinion that appropriate labeling should be imposed for in-shell Brazil nuts in order to give necessary instructions for consumers, especially for ones who are less familiar with Brazil nuts consumption.

Minor comment on Annex III:

The reference to “Paragraph 63” in bracket in Point VII of Paragraph 65 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS concerning the processing factor (PF) should be replaced with Paragraph 50.