

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

Agenda Item 6(a)

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Fiftieth Session, FAO Headquarters, Rome, 26-28 June 2002*

TRACEABILITY: Report of the meeting of Committee Chairmen and women

Paris, 18 April 2002

(Note transmitted by France)

C. GESLAIN LANEELLE chaired this informal and non decision-making meeting, on the margins of the 17th session of the CCGP, in response to the request of the CCEXEC inviting the Chairmen and women of the committees concerned to coordinate their approach to avoid divergences or duplication in work.

#### **Participants:**

T. BILLY (Chairman of the CAC)  
S. SLORACH (Vice-Chairman of the CAC)  
C. GESLAIN-LANEELLE (Chairwoman of the CCGP)  
B. LAKE (for the Chairman of the CCFH)  
M.N. LARSEN (Chairman of the TFAF)  
A. McKENZIE (Chairwoman of the CCFL)  
A. OCHIENG PERNET (Chairwoman of the CCFICS working group)  
A. RANDELL (Codex Secretariat)  
G. READ (Chairman of the CCFICS)  
H. YOSHIKURA (Chairman of the TFBT)  
(R. LECOURT).

T. BILLY participated at the beginning of this meeting, emphasising the message from developing countries regarding potential trade barriers.

A. RANDELL emphasised the need to avoid different approaches. He mentioned the work undertaken by ISO on traceability in agriculture and food - (Hungarian secretariat). He suggested using the ISO definition. He recalled that Regional Committees could be an appropriate venue for exchanging experiences.

G. READ presented his analysis on the key components of traceability and the main issues involved: What is traceability? How can it be applied? When is it appropriate?

He underscored a certain number of points entailed: impact on trade, costs/benefit analysis, traceability and developing countries, traceability and responsibility, equivalent measures ...

A. OCHIENG PERNET supplied information on the work methods of the drafting group which covers all parts of the world. It will use the document prepared by the Secretariat for the CCEX as well as the Australian Secretariat's document. Consultation has been started with the group members and a basic paper should be drafted before the end of June. The working group will meet in Fribourg on 19 and 20 August 2002.

H. YOSHIKURA analysed the situation in his committee: after a stand-off, a compromise has been found, no doubt because of the practical work on the concerns over risk management in the face of a wide variety of perceptions on traceability. He observed that raising questions more globally leads straightaway to a stalemate. However all the concerns have to be identified.

B. LAKE explained that the concerns over terrorism have led to a greater awareness of the need to be able to recall products rapidly and that a bill was under consideration in the USA. For its part, the CCFH felt that it was pressed for time to examine this question even if, as emphasised by A. RANDELL, this is the committee that has conducted most detailed work on the subject.

We need to ask ourselves about our aims. The results of the product committees should be taken up again.

A. MCKENZIE praised this meeting as it could form an innovatory manner of working in that it provides help to chairmen and should allow an inter-committee approach. Indeed traceability is an extremely difficult topic—particularly when it comes to GMOs

Priorities should be defined. The Canadian Secretariat is preparing a discussion document for the next CCFL session.

"Identity preservation", as for example by means of organically farmed products, could also be considered (suggestion by A. RANDELL).

M.N. LARSEN emphasised the need to work pragmatically. The animal feed sector has a good understanding of traceability, particularly after the disastrous contamination experiences of 1999.

G. READ informed the group of the setting in place in Australia of an electronic cattle identification system.

S. SLORACH pointed out that in some cases traceability has got into its stride (e.g. low-acids canned foods). Products should therefore be identified that could interest *inter alia* developing countries. Also, how can product committees be included (e.g. fish, fruit juices)?

On this point, it was acknowledged that all should be able to advance if that is their desire.

All the participants welcomed this experience which should be renewed. (for instance before the CCFICS). Exchanges, by e-mail, should continue. The presence of the Secretariat is essential since it has an important role in 'monitoring' whether this question is addressed coherently.

It will prepare a short note on this meeting for use by the CCEXEC. It has indeed been unanimously emphasised that the results of such meetings, albeit informal, should be made public.