

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 5

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Fifty-third Session, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, 4-6 February 2004

MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

A. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEES HELD SINCE THE 26TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

1. COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES¹

The 19th (Extraordinary) Session of the Committee on General Principles considered several proposals for amendments to the Procedural Manual as a follow-up to the decisions of the 26th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission concerning the Joint FAO/WHO *Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards*.

The Committee agreed on the following amendments to the Procedural Manual for adoption by the 27th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission²:

- Proposed Amendments to Rules IV *Executive Committee* and Rule XII *Budget and Expenses* in order to incorporate the new functions of the Executive Committee in the Rules of Procedure;
- Proposed Amendments to the *Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts* related to the critical review of standards and related texts;
- Draft Criteria for the Appointment of Chairpersons;
- Draft Guidelines to Host Governments of Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces;
- Draft Guidelines on the Conduct of Meetings of Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces; and

¹ 19th (Extraordinary) Session, 17-21 November 2003, ALINORM 04/27/33

² ALINORM 04/27/33, Appendices II to VII

- Draft Guidelines to Chairpersons of Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces.

As regards matters related to observers, the Committee agreed to consider further the revision of Rule VIII. 5 and the review of the *Principles Concerning the Participation of International Non-Governmental Organizations in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission* at its 20th (Regular) Session, and the status of observers in the Executive Committee at its 21st (Extraordinary) Session.

The Committee also agreed that the revision of the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*, the *Draft Guidelines on Physical Working Groups* and the *Draft Guidelines on Electronic Working Groups* would be further considered at its 21st (Extraordinary) Session.

2. COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS³

Traceability/Product Tracing

The Committee agreed to continue its discussion on traceability/product tracing in the context of food inspection and certification systems at its next meeting. It was agreed that the Australian Secretariat would prepare a document containing a preliminary set of “principles on traceability/product tracing”, based on the discussion that has occurred over the past two years in the Regional Coordinating Committees, and this document will be circulated for comment through a Circular Letter to all Member countries and international organizations with observer status in Codex. Furthermore, the Committee agreed that the Australian Secretariat would prepare a discussion paper, based on the above document, together with the comments received, the outputs and recommendations from seminars and workshops (as appropriate), discussions in the Codex Committee on General Principles and other relevant Codex Committees and Regional Coordinating Committees, and other relevant documents, for circulation and discussion at its next meeting (ALINORM 04/27/30, paras. 72-74).

B. MATTERS RELATED TO SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

The matters related to scientific advice arising from the Commission and Codex Committees and Task Forces should be considered in conjunction with Agenda Item 4 - Other Matters Arising from FAO and WHO.

1. COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES⁴

Functional Foods

The Committee noted that the request for scientific advice on functional foods requested by the FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia would be considered by the Executive Committee with the other requests for scientific advice in order to establish priorities.

Some delegations noted that functional foods should not be considered as a separate category of foods and that this issue could be addressed in the framework of health claims. It was noted that scientific advice was more urgent in the area of establishment of safe upper limits for vitamins and minerals. The Committee was of the view that the issue of functional foods could be also addressed while considering item 9 on the Scientific Basis for Health Claims (ALINORM 04/27/26, paras.10-12).

2. CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Committee on Fats and Oils

The Commission considered the request from the Committee on Fats and Oils to elaborate evaluation criteria for substances to be included in the List of Acceptable Previous Cargoes as well as to evaluate the substances proposed in the current List at Step 4. The Commission was of the opinion that the elaboration of criteria was a risk management procedure that should be conducted by the Committee rather than as a risk assessment procedure by JECFA. The Delegations of the United States and Canada objected to this opinion since, according to these delegations, the Committee had insufficient competence to manage the list due to lack of clear procedure for amending the list, and that the list could not be revised in a timely manner. The Commission requested FAO

³ 12th Session, 1-5 December 2003, ALINORM 04/27/30

⁴ 25th Session, 3-7 November 2003, ALINORM 04/27/26

and WHO to convene an expert consultation in order to assist the Committee to develop risk management principles which would include evaluation criteria for inclusion of the substances in lists of acceptable cargoes. The Secretariat of JECFA expressed the view that JECFA could provide technical advice to the Committee on risk assessment and evaluation of substances (ALINORM 03/41, para. 212)

Committee on Food Hygiene

The Commission noted the necessity to address concerns with pathogens that may be present in infant formula and agreed that an expert consultation on the Enterobacter genus, including *Enterobacter sakazakii*, and *Clostridium botulinum* should be added to the list of requests for scientific advice from FAO and WHO for consideration and prioritization by the Executive Committee (ALINORM 34/41, para 220).

3. COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS⁵

Following consideration of the request for scientific advice on biotoxins by the 26th Session of the Commission (ALINORM 34/41, para 219), the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products agreed to clarify the Scope for an FAO/WHO Expert Consultation pertaining to marine algal biotoxins and agreed that the following items should be addressed: scientific advice for the establishment of safe upper limits; guidance on the application of different methods of analysis concerning each toxin group; monitoring; and geographic distribution (ALINORM 04/27/18, paras. 130-131).

C. OTHER MATTERS

Committee on Fish and Fishery Products: Methylmercury in Fish

The 26th session of the Committee recalled that following the adoption of the Guideline Levels for methylmercury (1991) the Committee had initiated work on the development of a list of predatory fish as requested by the Commission. The Committee had informed the Executive Committee of the difficulties related to this work and the Executive Committee had requested the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants to undertake a new risk analysis (1996). The 29th Session of the CCFAC (1997) had agreed to defer any decision until JECFA had performed the necessary risk assessment. The Committee recalled that pending further advice, the development of the list of predatory fish had been suspended but had not been formally discontinued.

The Committee therefore agreed to ask the advice of the Executive Committee as to whether it should discontinue work on the establishment of a list of predatory fish and to give direction on how future work should proceed in the CCFFP and in the CCFAC in view of the re-evaluation of methylmercury carried out by JECFA in 2003 (ALINORM 04/27/18, paras. 11-12).

⁵ 26th Session, 13-17 October 2003, ALINORM 04/27/18