

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2a)

CX/FFP 05/27/2

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

Twenty-seventh Session

Cape Town, South Africa, 28 February – 4 March 2005

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

A. DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION CONCERNING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Draft Standard for Atlantic Herring and Salted Sprat

The Commission adopted the Draft Standard as proposed.

Draft Model Certificate for Fish and Fishery Products (Sanitary Certificate)

The Commission noted that Section 5.2.7 Lot Identifier/Date Code referred to “traceability of the product in the event of public health investigations”. The Delegation of Thailand proposed to replace the term “traceability” with “recall”, given that the principles concerning traceability were still under consideration in the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems.

The Commission agreed to add a reference to product tracing to ensure consistency with the definition adopted at the current session and the terminology used throughout Codex. With this amendment the Commission adopted the Draft Model Certificate for Fish and Fishery Product (Sanitary Certificate) as proposed.

Draft Amendment to the Standard for Quick Frozen Lobsters

The Delegation of China proposed to include freshwater crayfish in the Standard. The Delegation of South Africa proposed to develop a specific standard for freshwater crayfish in view of the specificity of freshwater species. The Commission recalled that the purpose of the Draft Amendment was to include only certain species in the Standard and that the scope could not be amended at this stage. The Commission agreed that the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products might consider the development of provisions applicable to freshwater crayfish

The Commission adopted the Draft Amendment to the Standard for Quick Frozen Lobsters as proposed by the Committee.

Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (sections on Aquaculture and on Quick Frozen Coated Fish Products)

The Delegation of Thailand, supported by the Delegation of India, expressed the view that the section on Aquaculture should not be adopted at Step 5/8 and required further consideration in view of its importance and possible impact on aquaculture production. The Delegation also proposed to delete the reference to the OIE Codes of Practice in the Preamble.

The Delegation of Norway, speaking as the host country for the Committee on Fish and Fishery products, recalled that the section on aquaculture had been developed by consensus in the Committee and that the reference to OIE Codes already existed in other Codex texts.

The Delegation of Malaysia proposed to replace the word “fodder” with “formulated feed” in the definition of “Fish Feed” for consistency with the terminology used in the FAO *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries*.

Some delegations proposed to review the provisions on “product tracing” in order to ensure consistency throughout Codex and in the light of the discussions held at the current session.

The Commission adopted the Proposed Draft Section on Aquaculture at Step 5. The section on Aquaculture will be considered under **Agenda Item 5a**).

The Commission adopted the section on Quick Frozen Coated Fish Products at Step 5/8 for inclusion in the *Code of Practice on Fish and Fishery Products* and agreed that it would replace the provisions on fish products in the *Code of Practice for Frozen Battered and/or Breaded Fishery Products* (CAC/RCP 35-1985), while the provisions of the Code for other fishery products remained unchanged (ALINORM 04/27/41, paras. 31-43).

Proposed Draft Amendment to the Standard for Salted Fish and Dried Salted Fish of the *Gadidae* Family (Sampling and Analysis)

The Commission adopted the Proposed Draft Amendment at Step 5 as proposed.

Discontinuation of work

The Commission approved the discontinuation of work on the Establishment of a List of Predatory Fish (ALINORM 04/27/41, para. 103 and Appendix VII).

Proposed Draft Amendment to the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products

This question will be discussed under **Agenda Item 3** (CX/FFP 05/27/3).

B. DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON RELATED ISSUES

Draft Amendment to the Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Sticks (Fish Fingers), Fish Portions and Fish Fillets, Breaded or in Batter (Labelling Section)

The Delegation of South Africa, while not objecting to the amendment, expressed its concern with the methodology for the determination of fish content since no nitrogen conversion factors were defined for several species commonly used in fish sticks, and Good Manufacturing Practices were not defined. The Delegation pointed out that trade problems might arise from different interpretations of the current provisions. The Delegation of Thailand proposed several amendments for clarification purposes and expressed the view that the list of fish species in Table 2 should be revised to include other species of importance in international trade, when additional data became available. The Commission corrected the reference to the routine method AOAC 996.15.

The Committee adopted the Draft Amendment with the understanding that further consideration could be given to the methodology and that Table 2 (nitrogen factors) could be amended as required in the light of additional data on other fish species.

C. MATTERS REFERRED BY OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

Committee on Food Labelling

Draft Standard for Salted Atlantic Herring and Salted Sprat

The Delegation of the United States, while not objecting to the endorsement of the labelling provisions, expressed the view that the reference to “law and custom” required further clarification as to its interpretation and implications. The Delegation of Canada supported the current reference to “law and custom” in the labelling section in order to recognize the use of local custom in the naming of fish, and recalled that this question had been discussed extensively in the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP).

The Committee endorsed the labelling provisions in the Draft Standard and agreed to ask the CCFFP to consider how the reference to “custom” could be interpreted in relation to national legislation and whether this term should be retained in the standards for fish and fishery products.

Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling

The Use of Analytical Results: Sampling Plans, Relationship Between the Analytical Results, the Measurement Uncertainty, Recovery Factors and Provisions in Codex Standards

The Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling discussed the above document and decided to request comments on the current version, and consider it at its next session. It also agreed that the advice of Commodity Committees would be sought on this document (ALINORM 04/27/23, paras. 128-135 and

Appendix VII, attached as **Annex** to this document). The Committee is therefore invited to consider the document and to provide its comments to CCMAS.

Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods

The Committee considered the two sections of the draft Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products, related to the administration of veterinary drugs, namely: 6.3.1 Feed Supply and 6.3.2 Veterinary Drugs in the Aquaculture Section and recommended that the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products refers to the relevant Codes of Practice, instead of listing specific recommendations under the heading “Technical Guidance”. The Representative of the OIE underscored the importance of taking into account the work of the OIE Working Group on food safety that is preparing Good Farming Practices, which also includes aquaculture (ALINORM 05/28/31, para. 11). This question will be considered under **Agenda Item 5a**).

D. OTHER MATTERS CONCERNING FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants

Guideline levels for methylmercury in fish

The Committee noted the request of the 53rd Session of the Executive Committee to consider whether the current Guideline Level for Methylmercury in Fish needed to be revised in the light of the recent risk assessment performed by JECFA and/or if any other risk management options, including formulation of specific dietary advice, would be appropriate. The Committee agreed to consider a discussion paper at its next session on the need to revise the Guideline Level including the examination of other possible management options (ALINORM 04/27/12, para. 218). This question will be discussed by the 37th Session of the Committee (CX/FAC 05/37/35).

Lead in Fish

The Committee agreed to retain the draft maximum level of 0.2 mg/kg for lead in fish at Step 7 and to review the level at its next Session in the light of the result of the assessment of the 53rd JECFA Meeting, the list of the main internationally traded fish to be elaborated by Denmark, and comments received (ALINORM 04/27/12, para. 161-165, Appendices XVIII and XIX)). This question will be discussed by the 37th Session of the Committee (CX/FAC 05/37/27).

Active Chlorine

The Committee agreed to request FAO and WHO to convene a Joint Expert Consultation to conduct a comprehensive assessment of use of active chlorine, taking into account both benefits and risks. Therefore, it agreed that a working group would prepare clear terms of reference for the expert consultation for the aspects relevant to the CCFAC for discussion at its next Session. It was also agreed to request relevant Committees, including the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, to: (a) consider safety/benefit issues relevant to uses of active chlorine within their respective purviews; (b) elaborate terms of reference for the expert consultation within their mandates; and, (c) pose questions so that the Expert Consultation be comprehensive. This question will be discussed by the 37th Session of the Committee (CX/FAC 05/37/16).

Committee on Food Hygiene

The 36th Session of the Committee on Food Hygiene (2004) agreed to consider matters related to *Vibrio spp* in seafood at its next session. As regards active chlorine, the Committee agreed that a drafting group would prepare draft terms of reference for the FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on the uses of active chlorine which would include safety/benefit issues and prepare questions within its terms of reference of the Committee.

The 37th Session of the Committee on Food Hygiene (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 14 – 19 March 2005) will therefore consider the following issues:

- Risk Profile of *Vibrio spp* in Seafood (CX/FH 05/37/13)
- Draft Terms of Reference for the FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on the Uses of Active Chlorine (CX/FH 05/37/15)

THE USE OF ANALYTICAL RESULTS: SAMPLING PLANS, RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ANALYTICAL RESULTS, THE MEASUREMENT UNCERTAINTY, RECOVERY FACTORS AND PROVISIONS IN CODEX STANDARDS

ISSUES INVOLVED

There are a number of analytical and sampling considerations which prevent the uniform implementation of legislative standards. In particular, different approaches may be taken regarding sampling procedures, the use of measurement uncertainty and recovery corrections.

At present there is no official guidance on how to interpret analytical results across the Codex Community. Significantly different decisions may be taken after analysis of the “same sample”. For example some countries use an “every-item-must-comply” sampling regime, others use an “average of a lot” regime, some deduct the measurement uncertainty associated with the result, others do not, some countries correct analytical results for recovery, others do not. This interpretation may also be affected by the number of significant figures included in any commodity specification.

It is essential analytical results are interpreted in the same way if there is to be equivalence across the Codex Community.

It is stressed that this is not an analysis or sampling problem as such but an administrative problem which has been highlighted as the result of recent activities in the analytical sector, most notably the development of International Guidelines on the Use of Recovery Factors when Reporting Analytical Results and various Guides prepared dealing with Measurement Uncertainty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that when a Codex Commodity Committee discusses and agrees on a commodity specification and the analytical methods concerned, it states the following information in the Codex Standard:

1. Sampling Plans

The appropriate sampling plan to control conformity of products with the specification. This should state:

- whether the specification applies to every item in a lot, to the average in a lot or the proportion non-conforming;
- the appropriate acceptable quality level to be used;
- the acceptance conditions of a lot controlled, in relation to the qualitative/quantitative characteristic determined on the sample.

2. Measurement Uncertainty

That an allowance is to be made for the measurement uncertainty when deciding whether or not an analytical result falls within the specification. This requirement may not apply in situations when a direct health hazard is concerned, such as for food pathogens.

3. Recovery

[Where relevant and appropriate the analytical results are to be reported on a recovery corrected basis and that the recovery should be quoted in any analytical report.]

4. Significant Figures

The units in which the results are to be expressed and the number of significant figures to be included in the reported result.