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Agenda Item 5 **CX/FFP 12/32/5-Add.1**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

Thirty-Second Session

Bali, Indonesia

1 – 5 October 2012

Draft Standard for Fresh/Live and Frozen Abalone (*Haliotis* spp)

COMMENTS AT STEP 6

(Ghana, USA)

GHANA

Comment: I–8.4 Determinations of Biotoxins

Ghana agrees with the proposed text on biotoxins and supports its inclusion in the standard.

"Competent authorities should use the "Performance Criteria and Principles for Marine Biotoxin Methods" when selecting appropriate methodology for determination of biotoxin levels in abalone."

Rationale: Biotoxins pose potential public health concerns, hence the inclusion of the above text in the standard is appropriate.

Comment: II-2.1 Product Definition

We recommend that the text in square brackets, "[**Section II-5 of this standard does not apply to processed abalone meat that has the viscera and epithelium removed**]" be placed under section II-2.1 Product Definition.

Rationale: Retaining the text under II-2-1 indicates that section II-5 which refers to the provisions under contaminants does not apply to processed abalone meat that has the viscera and epithelium removed. However, we recommend that the viscera and epithelium be removed to minimize the biotoxin levels.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In response to CL 2011/15-FFP, the United States respectfully submits the following comments on the Proposed Draft Standard for Live Abalone and for Raw Fresh Chilled or Frozen Abalone for Direct Consumption or for Further Processing (at Step 6 of the Procedure). Recommended additional language within sentences is highlighted in bold for the convenience of the reader.

PART I – LIVE ABALONE

I-7 LABELLING

I-7.4 Labelling of Non-retail Containers: Move the third paragraph to a new subsection under I-7.1 (The Name of the Food) as follows:

> **I-7.1.X The country where the product is sold can determine if the scientific name must be indicated on the label.**

Reason: This provision applies to the name of the food, and it also applies to retail containers.

I-7.4 Labelling of Non-retail Containers: Move the last paragraph into a new subsection I-7.X in a position before I-7.4 and renumber as appropriate, as follows:

> **I-7.X The durability or shelf life may be required in the country where the product is sold. Date of minimum durability may be replaced by the statement "Abalone must be alive when sold to the final consumer".**

Reason: This provision also applies to retail packages.

I-8 SAMPLING, EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS

I-8.1 Sampling, (ii): Modify as follows:

> (ii) ~~Each~~ **The** sample shall ~~contain~~ include a sufficient number of ~~abalone~~ **sample units selected throughout the lot** to ensure that the sample is representative of the lot. **The sample unit shall be a minimum of [2 kilograms and 20 individual abalones].**

Reason:

The 'sample' (under Codex) includes all product selected during sampling of the lot. The 'sample unit' is a smaller amount (often a package) selected during sampling that needs to be defined in order to apply defective criteria and acceptance numbers, as seen in other adopted standards. The sample unit could be an individual abalone, a package, or a certain weight/quantity (made up of several packages or a portion of a package depending on package size).

To minimize revisions to the existing 'Defectives' and 'Lot Acceptance" provisions, we suggest that the sample unit be a minimum weight and number of abalones (e.g., minimum of 2 kilograms and at least 20 individual abalones). The minimum number of 20 individuals allows for one abalone out of 20 to be affected with a defect (approximately 5 percent by weight) without the sample unit becoming defective and counting towards the 'acceptance number' limit.

Sample units must be selected throughout the lot (random or stratified random) in order to achieve a representative sample.

I-8.4 Determination of Biotoxins: Replace the Table with the following, and delete the bracketed sentence below the Table, as follows:

> **Where a risk exists, the marine biotoxins of concern shall be determined according to the methods specified in the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs (Codex Stan 292-2008).**
>
> ~~[Competent authorities should use the "Performance Criteria and Principles for Marine Biotoxin Methods" when selecting appropriate methodology for determination of biotoxin levels in abalone.]~~

Reason:

To align the specified biotoxin methods with the Contaminants section (I-5.2). The Table only listed a method for the 'saxitoxin group', however all 'Marine biotoxins' are included in I-5.2.

Inserting "Where the risk exists" reflects subsection I-5.2, which indicates that only some geographical areas have experienced marine biotoxins in abalone.

The biotoxin methods in the bivalve standard are likely to be replaced with method criteria; however, the Bivalve Standard should be cited to ensure that the Abalone Standard remains aligned without need for further revision.

I-9 DEFINITION OF DEFECTIVES: Modify as follows:

> The sample **unit** shall be considered ~~as~~ defective when it exhibits any of the properties defined below.

Reason: See comment for I-8.1

I-9.1 Foreign Matter: Revise as follows:

> The presence in the sample **unit** of any matter which has not been derived from abalone, does not pose a threat to human health and is readily recognized without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification, that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing and sanitation practices.

Reason: See comment for I-8.1.

I-9.2 Dead or Damaged Product: Revise as follows:

I-9.2 Dead or Damaged ~~Product~~

A dead abalone is characterized by lack of muscle movement when touched and/or complete muscle stiffness due to the rigor mortis process setting in after death of the animal. **A damaged abalone** ~~Animals~~ **is** ~~damaged~~ **flawed** to the extent that ~~their~~ **its** integrity is affected~~, are considered to be defective~~. The sample **unit** is defective if more than 5% of the abalone**s by count** in the sample **unit** are dead or damaged.

Reason: See comment for I-8.1.

The definitions for dead and damaged are aligned for clarity.

The term 'defective' was removed for a damaged abalone to prevent confusion with a 'defective sample unit'.

'By count' was added for clarity. 'By weight' is used for dehydration in frozen abalone.

PART II – RAW FRESH CHILLED OR FROZEN ABALONE

II-2 DESCRIPTION

II-2.1 Product Definition**: Revise as shown, and remove brackets on last sentence and move last sentence to Section II-5:**

Raw fresh chilled or frozen whole abalone prepared for direct consumption or for further processing are products that were alive immediately prior to the commencement of freezing and/or processing and comply with Section I-2.2 ~~relating to harvesting~~. They have been chilled or frozen whole or shucked with the viscera removed. The epithelium, mucous or radula may be removed. ~~(The product is then chilled or frozen while essentially retaining the sensory characteristics of live abalone.)~~ ~~[~~**The biotoxin risk identified in** Section II-5 of this standard does not apply to processed abalone meat that has the viscera and epithelium removed.~~]~~ [Move bracketed sentence to II-5]

Reason:

Removed "Relating to harvesting" because I-2.2 no longer requires regulatory approval of the harvesting area (see 31st Session report comment #125).

Deleted parenthetical sentence because the product is identified as chilled or frozen in the previous sentence, and the requirement to essentially retain the sensory characteristics of live abalone is unreasonable and difficult to test. The product will have the sensory characteristics of live abalone chilled or frozen according to section II-2.2.

Added "The biotoxin risk identified in" to the last (bracketed) sentence because other contaminants are also addressed in I-5 that would still be applicable. Moved bracketed sentence to Section II-5 because this provision applies to contaminants, rather than product description.

Removed brackets because the described process removes the parts of an abalone that present a biotoxin risk.

II-4 FOOD ADDITIVES: Review antioxidants listed in GSFA for food category 09.2.1 and in Table 3 and consider a list of additives.

Reason:

We recommend reviewing the antioxidants needed for abalone and developing a list because the technologically justified antioxidants may not be currently listed in the GSFA.

The antioxidants listed in the GSFA for food category 09.2.1 may not all be technologically appropriate, and the listed antioxidants may change or be removed as the GSFA is developed. It was previously agreed and adopted in the GSFA that the additives listed in GSFA Table 3 (for use in food in general in accordance with GMP) are inappropriate and not allowed in food category 09.2.1 (frozen fishery products), therefore the additives listed in GSFA Tables 1 & 2 for food category 09.2.1 with JEFCA safety limits are questionable

and could be removed based on the previous decision, unless they are specifically identified as needed for a standardized food.

For example, the antioxidants, ascorbic acid, citric acid and sodium ascorbate are not allowed for food category 09.2.1, while BHA, BHT, and sulfites are illogically listed as allowed. The Committee should examine the antioxidants listed in Tables 1&2, and Table 3, to determine which achieve the desired technological purpose in abalone meat without degrading quality.

U.S. industry does not use any antioxidants in chilled or frozen abalone because abalone has a delicate flavor that may not be maintained if handled and distributed in a manner requiring the use of antioxidants. If antioxidants were used, we would expect that some of the antioxidants from Table 3 would work best with abalone's fragile flavor profile. We would appreciate obtaining further information on the specific antioxidants used by other countries for fresh and frozen abalone.

II-4 FOOD ADDITIVES: If after Committee review of the listed GSFA antioxidants for food category 09.2.1 (see comment above), it is determined that any antioxidant listed now and in the future is appropriate for abalone, then revise as follows:

> ~~For raw fresh chilled or frozen abalone any~~ **A**ntioxidant**s** ~~that may be~~ used **in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 of the Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA)** ~~are listed~~ in food category 09.2.1 (Frozen fish, fish fillets, and fish products, including molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms) **or listed in Table 3** of the ~~General Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192-1995)~~ **of the GSFA are acceptable for use in fresh or frozen abalone**.

Reason:

The revised language makes it clear that only the antioxidant functional class is allowed; includes the antioxidants listed in Table 3; and parallels the language suggested in the Codex Procedural Manual.

II-5 CONTAMINANTS: Insert the modified sentence moved from II-2.1, and remove brackets, as follows:

> Refer to I-5 Contaminants. **The biotoxin risk identified in** Section I-5 of this standard does not apply to processed abalone meat that has the viscera and epithelium removed.

Reason: See comment for II-2.1.

II-7 LABELLING

II-7.4 Labelling of Non-retail Containers: Move the third paragraph to a new subsection under II-7.1 (The Name of the Food) as follows:

> **II-7.1.X The country where the product is sold can determine if the scientific name must be indicated on the label.**

Reason: See comment for I-7.4

II-7.4 Labelling of Non-retail Containers: Remove the last paragraph about durability/shelf life.

Reason: Labelling of date of minimum durability is covered in II-7.3

II-9 DEFINITION OF DEFECTIVES: Modify as follows:

> The sample **unit** shall be considered ~~as~~ defective when it exhibits any of the properties defined below.

Reason: See comment for I-8-1

II-9.1 Deep Dehydration: Modify as follows:

> Greater than 10% of the weight of the abalone**s** in the sample **unit** exhibit~~s~~ excessive loss of moisture clearly shown as white or abnormal colour on the surface which masks the colour of the flesh, and penetrates below the surface, and cannot be easily removed by scraping with a knife or other sharp instrument without unduly affecting the appearance of the abalone**, and affects more than one square centimeter of the surface of the individual abalone**.

Reason: See comment for I-8-1. Small points of dehydration may not significantly affect the quality of the product. A minimum affected surface area needs to be specified in order to determine when to include an abalone toward the affected weight.

II-9.2 Foreign Matter: Modify as follows:

> The presence in the sample **unit** of any matter which has not been derived from abalone, does not pose a threat to human health and is readily recognized without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification, that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing and sanitation practices.

Reason: See comment for I-8-1