

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2(a)

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

*11th Session,
Mexico City, Mexico, 8 – 12 September 2003*

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

A. CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

26TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Rome, Italy, 30 June - 7 July 2003)

AMENDMENTS TO THE PROCEDURAL MANUAL

Clarification of Rule VI.4 (Voting and Procedures)

1. The Commission amended Rule VI.4 on Voting and Procedures to include a reference to Rule X.2 related to the adoption or amendments of Codex standards by consensus.¹

Membership of Regional Economic Integration Organizations

2. The Commission amended Rule I on Membership by adding a new Rule 1.3 (current Rule 1.3 renumbered as Rule 1.4). The Commission also added a new Rule II (subsequent Rules renumbered accordingly) to allow regional economic integration organizations to exercise rights of membership within the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies.²

Measures to Facilitate Consensus

3. The Commission adopted the *Measures to Facilitate Consensus* for inclusion in the Procedural Manual as a general decision of the Commission.³

JOINT FAO/WHO EVALUATION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND OTHER FAO AND WHO WORK ON FOOD STANDARDS

4. The Commission approved most of the proposals submitted by the Codex Secretariat for the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of Codex Alimentarius, enacting some immediately and requesting the Codex Committee on General Principles to act in special sessions to draft the Rules required to implement others. Some selected decisions are summarized below. Further details on this matter can be found in the report of the 26th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (ALINORM 03/41, paras. 149-183).

¹ ALINORM 03/41, paras. 15-18 and Appendix II.

² ALINORM 03/41, paras. 19-24 and Appendix II.

³ ALINORM 03/41, paras. 28-31 and Appendix III.

General Aspects

Annual meetings of the Commission

5. The Commission agreed to meet annually for the next two years, but that in future each session would consider the timing for the following session and the general nature of the agenda in order to achieve the appropriate balance between standards issues, general direction of work and policy matters, and taking into account the resources available for adequate participation.

Implementation of the Evaluation

6. The Commission decided that the responsibility for following up and monitoring progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the Evaluation Report would be entrusted to the Executive Committee. Twice-yearly sessions of the Committee would be scheduled in order to absorb the additional workload.

Priorities for implementation

7. The Commission decided that the priorities should be:

- (a) Processes for standards management, with due regard to the special needs of developing countries.
- (b) Functions and composition of the Executive Committee, including the participation of observers in the Executive Committee and Executive Committee procedures.
- (c) Review of the Committee structures and mandates (including Regional Committees).
- (d) Review of Rules and Procedures including guidelines for Codex Committees.

The Commission concluded that all four priorities were of equal importance, and that the ranking was made on the grounds of speed of potential progress.

Review of Codex Committee Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces, including Regional Committees

8. The Commission decided that all the Committees and Task Forces would be reviewed together bearing in mind the objective of reducing the number of meetings while also keeping them short and focused. The Commission endorsed the recommendation made by the Executive Committee concerning the selection of consultants that would be entrusted with the review,⁴ and stressed the critical importance of transparency in the process.

Improved Processes for Standards Management

Critical review of proposals to undertake work and monitoring progress of standards development

9. The Commission decided to endorse the critical review process, including the preparation of project documents for major standards as well as the closely related proposal to revise the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities in order to ensure the relevance of Codex standards at the international level.

Standards management responsibility

10. The Commission decided that the Executive Committee be the body to undertake the critical review of new work. The Commission did not favour the replacement of the Executive Committee with an Executive Board.

Time-bound decision-making

11. The Commission decided that the body responsible for standards management (i.e. the Executive Committee) should review the status of development of draft standards at the end of a specified time-frame, normally not more than five years, and report its findings to the Commission. The time-frame could be less than five years, where this was appropriate or had been established during the critical review process for new work.

⁴ ALINORM 03/4, para. 23.

Simplified procedures for standards development

12. The Commission decided to retain the 8-Step process, with the existing mechanisms to accelerate the process when necessary.

Use of facilitators and Establishment of electronic and/or physical working groups

13. The Commission agreed in principle to all three proposals but decided that the modalities would require clarification by the body responsible for reviewing the Procedural Manual. With respect to electronic working groups, the Commission noted that these were an avenue for exchanging views and not for decision making. Physical working groups should be ad hoc, open to all members, take account the problems of developing country participation and only be established where there is consensus in the Committee to do so and other strategies have been considered.

Adoption of Standards

14. The Commission decided that adoption of standards with a limited amendment should be allowed, provided that the draft standard had been forwarded to the Commission on the basis of consensus, based on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Review of the Rules of Procedure and Other Procedural Matters***Responsibility for the Procedural Review***

15. The Commission decided that the procedural review would be undertaken by the Codex Committee on General Principles, at special sessions and under a limited time-frame. The Commission agreed that the Committee would need clear instructions, terms of reference from the Commission and support from the Codex Secretariat.

Amendment of the Codex Mandate

16. The Commission decided that the current Codex Mandate as expressed in Article 1 of the Statutes of the Commission, should be retained but that it might be discussed in the future.

Criteria for the establishment of work priorities

17. The Commission requested the Codex Committee on General Principles to redraft the *Criteria for Work Priorities* to reflect the current priorities of the Commission and in a manner that would provide explicit judgment tools for assessing work proposals against priorities.

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS AT STEP 8**Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*****Draft Revised Provisions: Section 3 – Provisions concerning Sizing and Section 6.2.4 – Commercial Identification of the Codex Standards for Limes, Pummelos and Grapefruits***

18. The Commission adopted the draft revised provisions: *Section 3 – Provisions concerning Sizing and Section 6.2.4 – Commercial Identification of the Codex Standards for Limes, Pummelos and Grapefruits* at Step 8. In taking this decision, the Commission recommended the necessary follow-up on this issue by the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. It noted the request by the Delegation of Indonesia to amend the size scale for pummelos, but also noted that any change at this stage might create interference in international trade.⁵

Draft Codex Standard for Sweet Cassava and Draft Codex Standard for Pitahayas

19. The Commission adopted the *draft Codex Standard for Sweet Cassava* and the *draft Codex Standard for Pitahayas* as proposed.⁶

⁵ ALINORM 03/41, para. 56 and Appendix V.

⁶ ALINORM 03/41, paras. 57-58 and Appendix V.

Codex Committee on Food Hygiene***Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables***

20. The Commission adopted the Draft Guidelines at Step 8 with an amendment to the wording in Section 3.2.3 related to “personnel health” by deleting the reference to indirect contact of personnel with fresh fruits and vegetables. The Delegations of Canada and Finland expressed their reservations regarding this amendment.⁷

Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems***Draft Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems***

21. The Commission adopted the draft Guidelines at Step 8 as proposed.⁸

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX STANDARDS AT STEP 5***Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Table Grapes***

22. The Commission adopted the *proposed draft Codex Standard for Table Grapes* at Step 5 as proposed. The Delegation of Australia advised that it would be submitting data to support the inclusion of Australian varieties in the Standard for consideration at the 11th Session of the Committee in September 2003.⁹

PROPOSALS TO ELABORATE NEW STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS

23. The Commission approved the elaboration of a *proposed draft Codex Standard for Rambutan* as new work for the Committee.¹⁰

B. OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES**Codex Committee on Food Labelling*****Endorsement of Labelling Provisions in Commodity Standards***

24. The Committee endorsed the labelling provisions in the following Draft Standards for fresh fruits and vegetables: Sweet Cassava; Pitahayas; Oranges; and Revised Provisions for Commercial Identification in the Standards for Limes, Pummelos and Grapefruits.¹¹

⁷ ALINORM 03/42, para. 59 and Appendix V.

⁸ ALINORM 03/41, paras. 61-62 and Appendix V.

⁹ ALINORM 03/41, para. 129 and Appendix VI.

¹⁰ ALINORM 03/41, para. 138 and Appendix VIII.

¹¹ ALINORM 03/22A, para. 8.