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Agenda Item 4(a)

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

**16<sup>th</sup> Session  
Mexico City, Mexico, 2 – 6 May 2011**

**PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX STANDARD FOR CHILLI PEPPERS**

**(At Step 3)**

**Prepared by the Electronic Working Group led by Mexico**

Codex Members and Observers wishing to submit comments on this proposal should do so in conformity with the Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts (Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual) before 15 April 2011 to: the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr. Christian Turégano Roldán, Director General, Dirección General de Normas (DGN), Av. Puente de Tecamachalco 6, 2do piso, Lomas de Tecamachalco Sección Fuentes, C.P. 53950 Naucalpan de Juárez, Estado de México, México (Tels.: +52 (55) 57 29 94 80, +52 (55) 57 29 91 00, Ext.: 43220, 43218; Fax: +52 (55) 55 20 97 15; E-mail: [dni.mexico@economia.gob.mx](mailto:dni.mexico@economia.gob.mx)), with a copy to the Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy (Fax: +39 (06) 5705 4593; E-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org))

## BACKGROUND

1. The 16th Session of the Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables considered the Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Chilli Peppers and decided to return the Proposed Draft Standard to Step 3 for further comments in particular on quality classification (section 2.2) and sizing (section 3). In taking this decision, the Committee re-established the electronic working led by Mexico to prepare a revised text for further comments and consideration at the next session of the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

2. The working group revised the document on the basis of the comments submitted at Step 3 at the 16th Session of the Committee (October 2009), based on the replies to CL 2009/31-FFV circulated in November 2009 with a deadline for comments of 31 January 2010 and taking in account the comments received from the members of the working group within the 2 rounds of internal comments that took place in September 2010 and February 2011. The revised Proposed Draft is presented in Annex I. The List of Participants is contained in Annex II.

## SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION OF THE WORKING GROUP

3. In general, this version contains editorial changes that bring the document into line with the format for Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables.

4. In particular, revision of section 2.2 was emphasized by removing the table on classification of chilli peppers according to quality as presented in the revised section 2.2.

5. Similarly, revision of section 3 was emphasized by removing sizing by weight from the table on sizing classification of chilli peppers by commercial type.

6. To clarify the text, an explanatory text was included in the Annex on definitions for commercial types of chilli peppers to explain that the purpose of the Annex is to provide an informative list that allow the identification of commercial types with a pungency above 1000 Scoville index.

7. Finally, Annex B and the tables on description of defects according to origin, Scoville index for different fresh chilli peppers and methods of analysis for pungency, were removed from the text as they fell outside the scope of the Standard, and remain as background history of the technical reference consulted for the elaboration of the Annex.

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 10/33/35, paras. 84-85 and Appendix V.

## PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX STANDARD FOR CHILLI PEPPERS

### 1. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This Standard applies to commercial types of chilli peppers<sup>1</sup> (hot ajies) grown from *Capsicum spp.*, of the *Solanaceae* family, to be supplied fresh to the consumer, after preparation and packaging. Chilli peppers for industrial processing are excluded.

### 2. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

#### 2.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the chilli peppers must be:

- whole, the stalk (stem) may be missing, provided that the break is clean and the adjacent skin is not damaged;
- sound, produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- firm;
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter;
- practically free of pests and damage caused by them affecting the general appearance of the produce;
- free of abnormal external moisture excluding condensation following removal from cold storage;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste;
- free of damage caused by low and/or high temperatures;
- practically free of signs of dehydration.

2.1.1 The development and condition of the chilli peppers must be such as to enable them:

- to withstand transport and handling; and
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

#### 2.2 CLASSIFICATION

Chilli peppers are classified in three classes defined below:

##### 2.2.1 "Extra" Class

Chilli peppers in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the commercial type. They must be free of defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects affecting an area of up to 0.5% of the produce surface, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

##### 2.2.2 Class I

Chilli peppers in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the commercial type. Slight defects, however, may be allowed, affecting an area of up to 2.0% of the product surface, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

##### 2.2.3 Class II

This class includes chilli peppers which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes, but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in Section 2.1 above. Defects, however, may be allowed, affecting an area of up to 3.0% of the product surface, provided the chilli peppers retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation.

### 3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

[ Size of types of chilli peppers is determined by length and shape in accordance with the provisions set out in Table 1 and the Annex respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Chilli peppers presenting a minimum pungency of 1000 Scoville Index.

Table 2: Classification of chilli peppers by commercial type

ANCHO ( <i>Capsicum annuum</i> L. var <i>annuum</i> )				
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	EXTRA LARGE
Length (cm.)	< 10.0	10.0 – 11.9	12.0 -14.0	>14
DE ARBOL ( <i>Capsicum annuum</i> L. var <i>annuum</i> )				
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	EXTRA LARGE
Length (cm.)	<6	6.0 – 7.9	8.0 – 10.0	>10
HABANERO ( <i>Capsicum chinense</i> Jacq. Grupo <i>habanero</i> )				
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	EXTRA LARGE
Length (cm.)	< 2	2.0 – 3.9	≥4	Not applicable
JALAPEÑO ( <i>Capsicum annuum</i> L. var <i>annuum</i> )				
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	EXTRA LARGE
Length (cm.)	3.0 – 4.9	5.0 – 7.5	7.6 – 9.0	> 9.0
MANZANO ( <i>Capsicum pubescens</i> Ruiz & Pay)				
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	EXTRA LARGE
Length (cm.)	<6	6 a 8.5	>8.5	Not applicable
SERRANO ( <i>Capsicum annuum</i> L. var <i>annuum</i> )				
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	EXTRA LARGE
Length (cm.)	3.5 – 5.0	5.0 – 7.5	8.0 – 10.0	Not applicable

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#### 4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each package (or in each lot for produce presented in bulk) for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.

##### 4.1 QUALITY TOLERANCES

###### 4.1.1 "Extra" Class

5 % by number or weight of chilli peppers not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class I or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

###### 4.1.2 Class I

10% by number or weight of chilli peppers not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

###### 4.1.3 Class II

10% by number or weight of chilli peppers satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements, with the exception of produce affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption.

##### 4.2 SIZE TOLERANCES

For "Extra" Class, 5% by number or weight of chilli peppers corresponding to the size immediately above and/or below that indicated on the package.

For Classes I and II, 10% by number or weight of chilli peppers corresponding to the size immediately above and/or below that indicated on the package.

## 5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

### 5.1 UNIFORMITY

The contents of each package (or lot for produce presented in bulk) must be uniform and contain only chilli peppers of the same origin, quality, size and commercial type. The visible part of the contents of the package (or lot for produce presented in bulk) must be representative of the entire contents.

### 5.2 PACKAGING

Chilli peppers must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly. The materials used inside the package must be new<sup>2</sup>, clean, and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly of paper or stamps bearing trade specifications is allowed, provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Chilli peppers shall be packed in each container in compliance with the Recommended International Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 44-1995).

#### 5.2.1 Description of Containers

The containers shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preserving of the chilli peppers. Packages (or lot for produce presented in bulk) must be free of all foreign matter and smell.

### 5.3 PRESENTATION

The chilli peppers may be presented under one of the following forms:

- (a) In bulk (bags);
- (b) In consumer packages.

## 6. MARKING OR LABELLING

### 6.1 CONSUMER PACKAGES

In addition to the requirements of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

#### 6.1.1 Nature of Produce

If the produce is not visible from the outside, each package (or lot for produce presented in bulk) should be labelled as to the name of the produce and may be labelled as to name of the commercial type<sup>3</sup>.

### 6.2 NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

Each package must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside, or in the documents accompanying the shipment. For produce transported in bulk, these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the goods.

#### 6.2.1 Identification

Name and address of exporter, packer and/or dispatcher. Identification code (optional)<sup>4</sup>.

#### 6.2.2 Nature of Produce

Name of the produce if the contents are not visible from the outside. Name of the commercial type (optional)<sup>3</sup>.

#### 6.2.3 Origin of Produce

Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.

#### 6.2.4 Commercial Identification

- Class;
- Size;
- Commercial type.

#### 6.2.5 Official Inspection Mark (optional)

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this Standard, this includes recycled material of food-grade quality.

<sup>3</sup> The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the commercial type.

<sup>4</sup> The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference "packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)" has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.

## 8. CONTAMINANTS

8.1 The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

8.2 The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

## 9. HYGIENE

9.1 It is recommended that the produce covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969), Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003), and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

9.2 The produce should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).

## ANNEX

## DEFINITIONS FOR COMMERCIAL TYPES OF CHILLI PEPPERS

The purpose of the list is to identify different types of chilli peppers. The list is for information only and is not a positive list of approved varieties or commercial types.

Specific definitions are included herein for the different types of commercial chilies governed by this Standard

1.1 **Ancho** (*Capsicum annuum* L. *var annuum*)

Fruits are conic-shaped (heartlike), with cylindrical or flat body with well-defined hollow. They have pointed or truncated apex (flat), with two or three cores and the wall or thick and resistant pericarp. Its color ranges from light to dark green.

1.2 **De Árbol** (*Capsicum annuum* L. *var annuum*)

Long and thin cylindrical and waved-body fruits, from 6 to 12 cm length and from 0.7 to 1.0 cm diameter, with two to three cores. Its color is emerald green to bright red when totally ripe. They have pointed apex.

1.3 **Habanero** (*Capsicum chinense* Jacq.)

These fruits are hollow berries formed by 2, 3 and 4 cores (cavities), being predominant the three-core fruit. They present characteristic forms and sizes (flared or triangular core); they are green in physiological ripeness (ripeness point) and orange when totally ripe, as well as intermediate colors characteristic in the ripeness process (partially green, yellow, orange or red). The fruit surface (epidermis) is smooth and slightly rough with bright appearance. These fruits may be very hot or extremely hot and have a characteristic smell.

1.4 **Jalapeño** (*Capsicum annuum* L. *var annuum*)

Conical or long fruits, with cylindrical or marked bodies according to the number of cores (3 or 4 cores). Smooth body or with intermediate cork-like body ( $\pm 30\%$ ). They must have thick pericarp (0.4 to 0.6 cm thick) and solid.

1.5 **Manzano** (*Capsicum pubescens* Ruiz & Pay)

Fruits of fleshy berries, from two to four cores, bright light yellow or red color; they have different sizes and characteristic forms, flat or pointed apex, smooth and marked body, depending on the amount of cores. They must be of thick pericarp and generally an apple-like form. The seeds are black and they are housed in whiten placentas.

1.6 **Serrano** (*Capsicum annuum* L. *var annuum*)

Straight and long cylindrical-form fruits, smooth and bright epidermis, emerald to dark green color that present from two to three cores and no internal cavities.

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