

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2

**CX/FH 07/39/2
August 2007**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

Thirty-ninth Session

New Delhi, India, 30 October - 4 November 2007

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES TO THE FOOD HYGIENE COMMITTEE

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 30TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (ROME,
ITALY, 2 – 7 JULY 2007)¹**

1. 30th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission had considered different issues that are relevant to the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. For details of consideration see ALINORM 07/30/REP which is available from:

<http://www.codexalimentarius.net>

A MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

AMENDMENTS TO THE PROCEDURAL MANUAL OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Proposed Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

Amendments concerning the role of coordinators and members elected on a geographical basis (ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 21-23)

2. The Commission adopted the above amendments and noted that the amendments to the Rules of procedure would enter into force only after approval by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO.

Amendments to Other Sections of the Procedural Manual (ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 24-38)

3. The Commission adopted the following texts to other sections of the Procedural Manual:

¹ Full report of the 30th Session of the Commission is available from:
<http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/archives.jsp?lang=en>

- Amendments to the Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related texts - *Guide to the Procedure for the Revision and Amendment of Codex Standards and Arrangements for the Amendments of Codex Standards Elaborated by Codex Committees which have been adjourned sine die*;
- Amendments to the *General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius*;
- Amendment to the *Principles Concerning the Participation of International Non-Governmental Organizations in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*;
- Proposed amendments to the *Format for Commodity Standards*;
- Draft Risk Analysis Principles Applied by the Committee on Pesticide Residues;
- Proposed Draft Risk Management Methodologies, including Risk Assessment Policies in the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods;
- Proposed Amendment of the *Principles for the Establishment or Selection of Codex Sampling Procedures*;
- Proposed Procedure for Consideration of the Entry and Review of Food Additive Provisions in the *General Standard for Food Additives*;
- Proposed amendments to harmonise the text concerning the membership of the Coordinating Committee for Europe with that of the other Coordinating Committees;
- Proposed Amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Committee on Food Additives;
- Proposed Amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Committee on Contaminants in Foods;
- Proposed Amendments to the *Risk Analysis Principles Applied by the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants*;
- Proposed Amendments to the *CCFAC Policy for Exposure Assessment of Contaminants and Toxins in Foods or Food Groups*;
- Proposed Definition for *Codex Maximum Level for a Contaminant in a Food or Feed Commodity*;
- Proposed Amendments to the *Format for Codex Commodity Standards – Food Additives and Relations between Commodity Committees and General Committees*.

4. The adopted amendments will be included in the 17th Edition of the Procedural Manual.

DRAFT STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS ADOPTED AT STEP 8

5. The Commission adopted at Step 8 the following texts elaborated by the Committee on Food Hygiene (ALINORM 07/30/REP, para. 39):

- Code of Hygienic Practice for Eggs and Egg Products;
- Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Management.

6. The Commission also adopted the *Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Listeria Monocytogenes in Foods* with amendments, as proposed by Brazil and Guatemala in their written comments, to reinsert “ready-to-eat foods” in the title and to insert a reference to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* in Section 9.3 (ALINORM 07/30/REP, para.51).

Proposed Draft Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Food Safety for Application by Governments (ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 56-60)

7. The Commission **adopted** the Proposed Draft Principles at Steps 5/8, with the omission of Steps 6 and 7 elaborated by the Committee on General Principles². The Commission noted the reservations of the delegations of Costa Rica, Mexico, Paraguay and Thailand, who requested another round of discussion on this document before final adoption, on the decision to omit Steps 6 and 7, as well as the reservations of Argentina, Costa Rica, Paraguay and Thailand with the respect to the inclusion of the first sentence of paragraph 12 of the Proposed Draft Principles.

B MATTERS FOR ACTION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013 OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION³

8. The Commission adopted the Strategic Plan 2008-2013. In view of this, the Committee is invited to review all the Activities presented in Part 2 Programme Areas and Planned Activities 2008-20013 relevant to its work (see below) and report back to the Commission on the outcome of its consideration.

Goal 1 “Promoting Sound Regulatory Frameworks”

1.1 : Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food safety

Description: Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food safety, taking into account scientific and technological developments, to ensure that they: emphasize a horizontal approach; employ an approach to food safety that is based on risk and that addresses the entire food chain; and reflect global variations so as to avoid being more trade restrictive than necessary, while respecting the basic objectives of the CAC, taking into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs of developing countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capabilities.

Timeline : Continuing

Responsible parties: CCFH, CCFA, CCCF, CCPR, CCRVDF, CCNFSDU, relevant Task Forces and Commodity Committees

9. Output/Measurable indicators: Standards related texts adopted at respective steps.

Goal 2 “Promoting Widest and Consistent Application of Scientific Principles and Risk Analysis”.

2.2 Review risk analysis principles developed by relevant Codex Committees

Description: Review risk analysis principles developed by relevant Codex Committees in the light of the experience gained when all relevant Codex Committees have elaborated risk assessment policies pertaining to their area of work, these policies having been adopted by the CAC.

As these risk assessment policies play a pivotal role in the interaction between risk managers and risk assessors, communication between these two parties should be further improved, where appropriate. The result of such a review may be revised documents on risk analysis principles for adoption by the Commission. The review should also take into account the outcome of the activities described under 2.1 and 2.3.

Timeline: Completion by 2013

Responsible parties: CAC, CCEXEC, CCFA, CCCF, CCPR, CCRVDF, CCFH, CCNFSDU

10. Output/Measurable indicators: Report by relevant Committees of completed review, taking into account the review of the Activities 2.1 and 2.3.

² ALINORM 07/30/33, Appendix VIII.

³ ALINORM 07/30/REP paras 131-138 and Appendix IX.

2.3 Enhance communication among relevant Codex subsidiary bodies and the FAO/WHO scientific expert bodies
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Description: Enhance communication between the risk managers and risk assessors in accordance with paragraph 38 of the Working Principle for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius.
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Timeline: Ongoing

Responsible parties: CCFA, CCCF, CCPR, CCRVDF, CCFH, CCNFSDU

11. Output/Measurable indicators: Incorporated into report as required in Activity 2.2.

2.5 Encourage countries to channel their requests for scientific advice to FAO / WHO through the CAC

Description: Encourage countries to channel their requests through the CAC in order to make the best use of the limited resources available at FAO and WHO for the provision of scientific advice. Encourage FAO and WHO to inform the CCEXEC and the CAC of all requests on provision of scientific advice on food safety received from member countries.

Timeline: Continuing

Responsible parties: CAC, CCEXEC, all subsidiary bodies
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Goal 3 “Strengthening Codex Work-Management Capabilities”

3.3 Develop committee-specific decision making and priority setting criteria

Description: Develop committee-specific decision-making and priority-setting criteria and use these criteria for management of work. Implement and review criteria where necessary.

Timeline: Completion of decision making and priority setting criteria by 2008. Review of criteria, beginning in 2008.

Responsible parties: All General Subject Committees and some other subsidiary bodies as appropriate
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12. Output/Measurable indicators: Committee-specific decision-making and priority-setting criteria. Confirmed review of criteria beginning in 2008.

REVIEW OF CODEX COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MANDATES OF CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES (ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 144-156)

13. The Commission considered 11 Proposals as contained in Circular Letter CL 2006/29-CAC. Due to time constraints, the Commission only made decisions regarding Proposal 1 (numbers of meetings), Proposal 2 (number of subsidiary bodies), Proposal 3 (interval of meetings), Proposal 4 (duration of meetings) and Proposal 8 (conversion of regional standards into world-wide standards) and agreed to request the 60th Session of the Executive Committee for further consideration of the other six Proposal⁴.

14. The Committee should draw attention to the Proposals 3 and 4, reproduced below, when discussing the date of its next meeting (Agenda Item 12: Date and Place of the next Session).

- **Proposal 3 (interval of meetings):** The Committee should consider adopting a longer interval with the understanding that a structured, effective inter-session working mechanism should then be put in place in accordance with the Guidelines on Physical Working Groups and on Electronic Working Groups.

⁴ ALINORM 07/30/REP paras 146-161.

- **Proposal 4 (duration of meetings):** The duration of a Codex session should be kept within seven days, including the pre-session meetings of working groups, if any, in order to keep its proceedings well focused, ensure transparency, and facilitate effective participation of the members, with the understanding that certain margin of flexibility should be allowed, depending on the workload of each subsidiary bodies.

ELABORATION OF NEW STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS

Guidelines for the Control of Campylobacter and Salmonella spp. in Broiler (young bird) Chicken Meat (ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 110-112)

15. The Commission agreed to the recommendation of the Executive Committee⁵ that the scope of the new work be expanded to cover chicken meat in general, thereby deleting reference to “broiler (young bird)” in the title, and that the Committee for Food Hygiene be invited to consider re-scoping the document, as appropriate, taking into account all relevant factors including the availability of risk assessments.

16. The Commission noted that this decision would impact on the proposed work plan for the new work and might require a longer time-frame for the completion of the guidelines since the guidelines would follow a novel farm-to-fork approach based on quantitative risk assessment to the widest extent practicable; that there existed considerable scientific data and a risk assessment by JEMRA for broiler chickens but not for non-broiler chickens with different risk profiles, production and processing conditions; that a new worldwide call for scientific data for the latter category of chicken meat might be necessary before a risk assessment be conducted by JEMRA.

17. The Commission further noted that the OIE would undertake work on *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in broiler chickens that could contribute to this new work in the Committee on Food Hygiene.

18. The Committee therefore is invited to follow the above decision of the Committee while developing the *Guidelines for the Control of Campylobacter and Salmonella spp. in Chicken Meat* (see Agenda Item 7).

*The Use of the Lactoperoxidase System for Milk and Milk Products in International Trade*⁶

19. The Commission recalled that, during the adoption of the Code of Practice for Milk and Milk Products at its 27th Session, it had added as footnote 9 that the use of the lactoperoxidase system for milk and milk products would be examined by the Committee on Food Hygiene following the completion of an expert review by FAO and WHO of available data and considering the FAO Lactoperoxidase Expert Group Report about potential risks and benefits of lactoperoxidase.

20. The Commission was informed that the Committee on Food Hygiene had examined the issue as requested, based on the conclusions and recommendations of the FAO/WHO Technical Meeting on the Benefits and Potential Risks of the Lactoperoxidase System of Raw Milk Preservation (Rome, Italy, 28 November – 2 December 2005), but that it could not reach consensus because of the divergent views held by members on the recommendation for the removal of the restriction on the use of the lactoperoxidase system in milk and milk products intended for international trade as agreed to by the 19th Session of the Commission.

21. The Delegation of Cuba, supported by several other delegations, requested the removal of the restriction since the FAO/WHO Technical Meeting on the Benefits and Potential Risks of the Lactoperoxidase System of Raw Milk Preservation mandated by the Commission had taken place and had concluded that the lactoperoxidase system was safe if used in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preservation of Raw Milk by Use of the Lactoperoxidase System* (CAC/GL 13-1991) and had recommended that this restriction be lifted.

22. The Delegation of the United States of America opposed the removal of the restriction and raised their concern that the technical meeting had mainly based their decisions on toxicological data, but had not considered literature that suggested that reduced rates of acid production might result in the possibility of outgrowth of pathogens, particularly acid-resistant strains of pathogens.

⁵ ALINORM 07/30/3 paras 43-45.

⁶ ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 168-177.

23. The Delegation of Singapore questioned the addition of chemicals to raw milk as this could constitute an adulteration of milk and questioned the safety of the chemicals used to activate the lactoperoxidase system in milk.
24. The Representatives of WHO and FAO emphasized the recommendations of the technical meeting, based on assessment of all available data, that the lactoperoxidase system was safe for use if used in accordance with CAC/GL 13-1991 and that there was a scientific basis for Codex to consider the removal of the restriction on the international trade of milk and milk products treated with the lactoperoxidase system. It was further explained that the technical meeting had considered the issue of the lactoperoxidase system not only from a human health and nutrition perspective, but also from microbiological, processing and economic perspectives.
25. The FAO JECFA Secretariat further clarified that the 29th and 35th Sessions of JECFA had evaluated hydrogen peroxide and thiocyanate used to activate the lactoperoxidase system and had concluded that at the levels used, these chemicals did not pose a hazard to human health, but that thiocyanate could have a toxicological effect if iodine intake was not adequate and that the reports of these sessions of JECFA had been taken into account by the FAO/WHO technical meeting.
26. In view of the diversity of views and lack of consensus, the Commission **agreed** to refer the matter back to the Committee on Food Hygiene and to request, by Circular Letter, government comments that would facilitate the identification of additional information regarding the potential risks in respect of the lactoperoxidase system, for consideration by the Committee on Food Hygiene. The Committee on Food Hygiene would then evaluate all available evidence regarding the safety of the lactoperoxidase system when used in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preservation of Raw Milk by Use of the Lactoperoxidase System* (CAC/GL 13-1991). The Committee should take into account the report of the FAO/WHO technical meeting and all other information submitted in response to the Circular Letter. The Commission agreed to remove footnote 9 from the Code of Hygienic Practice in Milk and Milk Products in view of the discussions that had taken place in the Committee on Food Hygiene.
27. The Delegations of Cuba, Colombia, Costa Rica and Burundi expressed their reservations on the decision to refer the matter back to the CCFH, observing that there was sufficient scientific evidence allowing the Commission to take a decision on the removal of the restriction.
28. The Commission also noted the concern of the Delegation of Cuba that the Delegation had not been able to attend the last session of the Committee on Food Hygiene held in the United States of America and that this matter was being addressed through channels outside Codex.
29. Following the decisions of the Commission, the Circular Letter CL 2007/31-FH was issued requesting additional information regarding the potential risks in respect of the lactoperoxidase system with the understanding that this would facilitate discussion of this matter at the Food Hygiene Committee.
30. The Committee is therefore invited to take a decision on this matter.