

codex alimentarius commission E



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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Agenda Item 10a

CX/FH 09/41/10

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

Forty first Session

Coronado Hotel, San Diego, United States of America, 16 – 20 November 2009

16 -20 November 2009

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE PROPOSALS OF NEW WORK AND/OR REVISING EXISTING STANDARDS¹

Background

At the 40th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, held in Guatemala City, December 1-5, 2008, the Committee decided:

- To take up new work on the presence of viruses in foods, based on the recommendations of the CCFH special working group; and also agreed that it would be presented for approval at the 32nd Session of the CAC, and that a working group under the leadership of the Netherlands would be created to develop it.
- To create an electronic working group to assess the need to revise the Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for the Collecting, Processing and Marketing of Natural Mineral Waters (CAC/RCP 33-1985), based on the request from the 31st session of the Commission to give priority to revising this standard.
- To start new work on the development of a Code of Hygienic Practices for the Production and Processing of Cocoa (Cacao) and Chocolate, due to the committee's interest in the UK proposal, a circular letter would be sent requesting information about the same to assess the need for developing it.
- To present the proposals for new work in response to the regular circular requesting proposals to take up new work for analysis at the next session of the special working group to set the priorities of the CCFS: for more information, see ALINORM 09/40/13, paragraph 147.

Viruses in foods:

The working group led by the Delegation of France, during the 40th Session of the CCFH, presented the document “*Project for new work on the code of hygienic practices to control viruses in food*,” which was approved as a proposal for new work by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in its 32nd session. The following document was therefore created: *CX/FH 09/41/8 Proposed draft guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food at step 3* (Prepared by the Netherlands with the assistance of Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand, FAO, Codex secretariat and CIAA.

¹ Detailed information on individual proposals will be presented in CRDs.

Based on the above:**Mineral water:**

The discussion paper from the EWG led by Switzerland was received, regarding revising the *Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Collecting, Processing and Marketing Natural Mineral Waters (CAC/RCP 33-1985)*, which contains the comments and conclusions of countries that joined the EWG by the invitation sent by the Codex secretary, January 20, 2009. According to what was agreed in this document, the code should be revised so that it agrees with the new developments in food safety and hygiene, such as HACCP and microbiological criteria. Consequently, the following proposal was developed: *Draft Project for new work on the Code of Hygienic Practices for Collecting, Processing and Marketing Natural Mineral Waters*. The purpose of this Project will be to revise the current applicable standard and its amendment, so that it is in line with new advances in food safety, as there have been significant advances since the adoption of this standard. Although the revision will be general, emphasis will be on sections 2, 3, and 4, as well as on the micro-biological criteria. This document does not duplicate any work and is stipulated to begin in November 2009, and finish in July 2012.

Recommendation:

- Include this work as the first priority within the new work proposed by the Committee on Food Hygiene.
- Develop a circular letter for member countries to present their comments.

Microbiological criteria in food:

In March 2009, circular letter **CL 2009/5-FH** was circulated to all member governments, with a response deadline of July 1, 2009 to propose new work to be examined by the mentioned working group. In response to CL 2009/5 and based on the General Criteria for establishing priorities of work (see Codex Alimentarius Commission, Procedural Manual, Seventeenth edition) the following proposal was received: *Principles for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria for foods*. Document prepared by Finland, Japan, Canada, China, Hungary, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and ICMSF.

The purpose of this document is to update the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods CAC/GL 21-1997, given that it was approved more than twelve years ago and it should highlight certain aspects developed in principles and guidelines for the application and management of microbiological risks (MRM). The scope of it would be the establishment and application of microbiological criteria for foods by governments and industry, in line with the latest knowledge and practices, as well as the relationship between microbiological criteria, risk management parameters and other quantitative microbiological limits. The work will begin in November 2009 with final approval in July 2012.

Recommendation:

- Establish as the second priority for the development of proposals for new work by the CCFH.
- This discussion paper includes proposals received from member governments and international observer organizations on quality, and also provides some background about each of the proposals, as well as an evaluation of its relationship to the Committee's mandate.
- It is recommended that the Committee evaluate the proposals in regards to their development and importance and the time available for debate, and determine the priorities of the same for its own work agenda.

Code of Practices for the Production and Processing of Cocoa (Cacao) and Chocolate:

The proposal was received for the possible development of the *Code of Hygienic Practices for the Production and Processing of Cocoa (Cacao) and Chocolate*, prepared by the United Kingdom (UK), based on comments received in response to **CL 2003/9-FH**. Said document compiles the comments of several countries regarding the need to develop a new Code of Practices and can be summarized in that there was widespread interest in its development, and upon receiving the comments it can only be concluded that no consensus was reached for its development. Some countries think that existing Codes of Practices, such as

the basic Codex Food Hygiene texts can cover the aspects and that producers refer to them and national legislation; while others question if these standards are sufficient for the control of Cocoa.

Recommendation:

- For the moment no proposal for new work is recommended for this specific topic.
- Decide if the Committee really wants to undertake a proposal for new work, and if so, specify the scope of the same very well.
- Leave this proposal as a last priority for the Committee given that no consensus on its development was reached.