

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 5a)

CX/FL 01/6

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Twenty-ninth Session

Ottawa, Canada, 1 - 4 May 2001

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LABELLING OF FOODS OBTAINED THROUGH
CERTAIN TECHNIQUES OF GENETIC MODIFICATION/GENETIC ENGINEERING
(DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF
PREPACKAGED FOODS): DEFINITIONS**

(ALINORM 01/22, APPENDIX V)

GOVERNMENT COMMENTS AT STEP 6

COMMENTS FROM:

**MALAYSIA
NEW ZEALAND
SPAIN**

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LABELLING OF FOODS OBTAINED THROUGH CERTAIN TECHNIQUES OF GENETIC MODIFICATION/GENETIC ENGINEERING (DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS): DEFINITIONS (ALINORM 01/22, APPENDIX V)
GOVERNMENT COMMENTS AT STEP 6**

MALAYSIA:

Malaysia proposes the following comments:

Section 2. Definition of Terms

1. For the purpose of the General Standard:

“Food and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification / ~~genetic engineering~~” means food and food ingredients composed of or containing genetically modified / ~~engineered~~ organisms obtained through gene technology, or food and food ingredients produced from, but not containing genetically modified / ~~engineered~~ organism or obtained through gene technology.

We propose to retain the word ‘genetic modification’ and ‘modified’; and delete the word ‘genetic engineering’ and ‘engineered’ so as to be consistent with the term used in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Malaysia is of the opinion that the use of the word ‘modified’ is more general in order to allow new techniques in the future regarding gene modification to be included in this definition.

2. “Genetically modified / ~~engineered~~ organism” means an organism in which the genetic material has been changed through gene technology in a way that does not occur naturally by multiplication and/or natural recombination.

We propose to retain the word ‘modified’ and delete the word ‘engineered’ so as to be consistent with comments made in (1) above

3. [“no longer equivalent” / “differs significantly” means a food or food ingredient obtained through certain ~~technologies~~ techniques of genetic modification / ~~genetic engineering~~ where a scientific assessment demonstrates, through an appropriate analysis of data, that the characteristics assessed are different in comparison to those of the corresponding existing food or food ingredient, having regard to accepted limits of natural variation for that food or food ingredient”].

Malaysia proposes to replace the word ‘technologies’ with the word ‘techniques’ to be consistent with the title. We also propose to retain the word ‘genetic modification’ and delete the word ‘genetic engineering’ so as to be consistent with comments made in (1) above.

NEW ZEALAND:

The New Zealand Government would like to make the following comments.

Section 2: Definition of Terms

New Zealand supports progressing to step 5 of the Codex process the definitions relating to the recommendations for the labelling of food and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification/genetic engineering. We consider that it is useful to have clear definitions so that during discussions on labelling requirements, all countries clearly understand the meaning of terms being used.

We note that in the title of the first definition, the word used is "... obtained through certain *technologies* of..." when it should be "... certain *techniques* of..." This is the language that was agreed to in the report of CCFL. This same change should also be made in the definition for "no longer equivalent/differs significantly".

New Zealand supports the development of a comprehensive labelling regime for food and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification/genetic engineering. A recent decision will extend the labelling requirements of the Australia/New Zealand standard for genetically modified food to require, by late 2001, labelling based on the presence of genetically modified material in the product. We would support a Codex standard that included a mandatory requirement to label a product to state that it was genetically modified or contained genetically modified ingredients.

However, it is important that the consumer receive additional information about the product if it has different characteristics from an existing food. If this is to be a requirement in the standard, it will be necessary to have a definition for "differs significantly". New Zealand supports the inclusion of the proposed definition for "differs significantly".

SPAIN:

Spain would like to make the following comments:

Spain proposes the following definition of "**Organism**": Means any biological entity capable of reproduction, of replication or of transferring genetic material.

With regard to definition of the term "**no longer equivalent**" / "**differs significantly**", it would be interesting to set out the characteristics to be evaluated, and so we propose the following definition:

"**No longer equivalent**" / "**differs significantly**" means food and food ingredients obtained through modern biotechnology where a scientific assessment demonstrates, through an appropriate analysis of data, that the characteristics assessed on their composition, nutritional value, metabolism, intended use and undesirable substance content, are different in comparison to those of the corresponding existing food or food ingredient, having regard to accepted limits of natural variation for that food or food ingredient.
