

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2

CX/FL 03/2

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Thirty-first Session

Ottawa, Canada, 28 April - 2 May 2003

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

A. DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The 50th Session of the Executive Committee considered the three texts advanced to Step 5 by the 30th Session of the Committee on Food Labelling as follows.

1) **Draft Amendment the *Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods* - Section 5. Criteria (ALINORM 03/22, para. 24, Appendix II)**

The Executive Committee adopted the Proposed Draft at Step 5 (ALINORM 03/3A, para. 71, Appendix II). This question will be considered under **Agenda Item 8**.

2) **Draft Amendment to the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (ALINORM 03/22, para. 81, Appendix VI)**

The Regional Coordinator for Asia expressed its reservations on the proposed draft amendments to the Guidelines, in particular Sections 3.2.2, 3.2.2.1, 3.2.2.2 and 3.2.2.3. The delegation proposed the deletion of these sections as they required mandatory labelling for five nutrients/components, i.e., sugars, dietary fibre, saturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids and sodium. It was suggested by the Regional Coordinator for Asia that the Codex Committee on Food Labelling reconsider this issue at its next Session because:

- Nutrition labelling was still a relatively new subject with very few countries requiring mandatory labelling of food products and in any case, where mandatory labelling was required, it was normally restricted to energy, fat, carbohydrate and protein. The labelling of additional nutrients might in fact lead to increased consumer confusion;
- Scientific data to support the role of these additional nutrients/components as related to health and diseases are still being gathered and it is therefore not justifiable to require labelling of these nutrients/components at the present time;
- There is already sufficient flexibility in the existing draft for the inclusion of any other nutrients or food components required by national legislation; and,
- The inclusion of the additional 5 nutrients/components to the 4 core nutrients in an international context would not be in the interest of all countries as they may tend to adopt these guidelines in developing their national legislations which might not address the nutritional needs and consumer understanding of nutrition labels.

The Executive Committee adopted the text as proposed and forwarded the above discussion to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling for consideration (ALINORM 03/3A, para. 76-77). This question will be considered under **Agenda Item 5**.

3) Draft Guidelines for Use of Health and Nutrition Claims (ALINORM 03/22, para. 91, Appendix VII)

The Executive Committee noted the comment that the Scope and method of application of the Guidelines should be extended to cover young children (ALINORM 03/3A, para. 76-77, Appendix II). This question will be considered under **Agenda Item 6**.

B. MATTERS REFERRED BY OTHER COMMITTEES

1. COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES

Following the request from the Committee on Food Labelling to develop criteria for the scientific basis of health claims, in conjunction with the Draft Guidelines for Use of Health and Nutrition Claims, the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses agreed to initiate new work on the elaboration of Proposed Draft Recommendations on the Scientific Basis of Health Claims, with the understanding that further consideration would be given to the title and status of the document as a separate text or as a section of the Draft Guidelines. The Committee agreed that the Delegation of France, assisted by other delegations and observers, would prepare a working paper including Proposed Draft Recommendations for comments at Step 3, subject to the approval of the Commission as new work.

The Committee recalled that according to the Draft Guidelines "*[Nutrition and] Health claims are not permitted for foods for infants and young children unless specifically provided for in relevant Codex standards*" and had an exchange of views on whether the recommendations on scientific criteria should include such claims. Some delegations and observers pointed out that the development of scientific criteria should be consistent with the text of the Draft Guidelines and should not apply to foods for infants and children. Other delegations expressed the view that the scientific criteria should be generally applicable to all products for which a claim was made. The Committee agreed to discuss this question further in the development of the criteria (ALINORM 03/26A, paras. 4-6).

2. REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

Recommendation for the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods: Class Name

The Committee took note of the proposal by Indonesia¹ on the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods: Class Names, to retain only one category of products under the name "Milk Protein", namely ingredients with high milk protein content with a minimum level of 50% protein. (ALINORM 03/15, para. 13).

This question will be considered under **Agenda Item 4**.

¹ CRD 1