

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 7

CX/FL 05/33/9-Add. 1

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Thirty-third Session

Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 9 – 13 May 2005

CONSIDERATION OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING

Comments of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees

FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific

The 8th Session of the Committee considered the issue of country of origin labelling that was discussed during the 27th Session of the Commission. It was noted that the issue was important for the Pacific Island Countries, which have a developing food industry, and that new country of origin requirements for labelling would entail additional costs, would have important implications on international food trade and would create a burden for national authorities responsible for the inspection of food import/exports. The Delegations expressed several views: that the current provisions were sufficient and adequate and did not pose problems of interpretation; that additional requirements would imply additional barriers in trade, in particular for processed foods; and, that the safety of a product was not linked to its country of origin.

The Committee concluded the discussion on this matter by unanimously agreeing that there was no need for further elaboration of the provisions related to the country of origin labelling in the *Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*, which were considered sufficient to provide adequate information to the consumers (ALINORM 05/28/32, paras. 81- 84).

FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean

The 14th Session of the Committee recalled that the Commission had agreed to ask the following questions for subsequent consideration of the answers in the Committee on Food Labelling: whether current provisions were adequate to address Members' needs with respect to country of origin labelling; and whether countries had encountered difficulties with interpretation of these provisions. The Committee noted that Circular Letter CL 2004/56-FL had been circulated for this purpose. The Committee therefore encouraged its Members to reply in a timely manner to CL 2004/56-FL to the effect that current provisions were sufficient and adequate and did not pose problems of interpretation; that additional requirements would imply additional barriers to trade, in particular for processed foods; and that the safety of a product was not linked to its country of origin.

The Committee concluded by unanimously agreeing to confirm its historical position that there was no need for further elaboration of the provisions related to country of origin labelling in the *Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*, which were considered sufficient to provide adequate information to consumers (ALINORM 05/28/36, paras. 100-102).