

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2

CX/FL 05/33/2

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Thirty-third Session

Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 9 – 13 May 2005

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

A. DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE¹

Draft Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims

The Delegation of Malaysia expressed the view that the Draft Guidelines should not be adopted at this stage since the criteria for the scientific basis of health claims, currently under consideration in the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, had not been finalized.

The Delegation of South Africa objected to the adoption of the Draft Guidelines as the Preamble referred to Section 3.4 of the General Guidelines on Claims prohibiting “claims as to the suitability of a food for use in the prevention, alleviation, treatment or cure of disease”, which was not consistent with current scientific evidence. The Delegation therefore proposed to delete this reference and to initiate the revision of the General Guidelines on Claims.

Many delegations supported the adoption of the text as proposed as it resulted from extensive detailed discussion in the Committee.

The Commission adopted the Draft Guidelines as proposed and noted that the Committee on Food Labelling could review the Guidelines in the light of the criteria for the scientific basis of health claims being developed by the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses at a later stage.

The Delegation of South Africa expressed its reservation on this decision.

Draft Amendment to the Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Sticks (Fish Fingers), Fish Portions and Fish Fillets, Breaded or in Batter (Labelling Section)

The Delegation of South Africa, while not objecting to the amendment, expressed its concern with the methodology for the determination of fish content since no nitrogen conversion factors were defined for several species commonly used in fish sticks, and Good Manufacturing Practices were not defined. The Delegation pointed out that trade problems might arise from different interpretations of the current provisions.

The Delegation of Thailand proposed several amendments for clarification purposes and expressed the view that the list of fish species in Table 2 should be revised to include other species of importance in international trade, when additional data became available. The Commission corrected the reference to the routine method AOAC 996.15.

¹ ALINORM 04/27/41, paras. 48-59

The Committee adopted the Draft Amendment with the understanding that further consideration could be given to the methodology and that Table 2 (nitrogen factors) could be amended as required in the light of additional data on other fish species.

Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods: Draft Revised Annex 2 – Tables 1 and 2

The Commission agreed to amend Table 2: Preparations of Neem to clarify that the need recognized by the certification body or authority applied to “commercial preparations/ products” and to clarify the conditions of use for Extract from Mushrooms (Shiitake fungus) with the addition of “need recognized by the certification body or authority”, as proposed by the Delegation of India. The Delegation also proposed to delete the entry for “Tobacco tea” as it was excluded from “Natural plant preparations”.

The Commission agreed to amend Table 1 to refer to “sorted composted or fermented home refuse” as proposed by the Delegation of Tunisia. The Delegation also proposed to add olive and date palm by-products to the entry for by-products from oil palm, coconut and cocoa. The Commission agreed that these proposals should be put forward in the Committee on Food Labelling.

The Commission noted that minor amendments could be made for clarification purposes but proposals for addition or deletion of substances in the lists should be considered by the Committee on Food Labelling.

The Commission adopted the Draft Revised Annex 2: Tables 1 and 2 with the adopted amendments mentioned above.

Proposal for New Work: Revision of the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods

The Delegation of the United States expressed the view that the regular review of the *Guidelines* specified in the *Guidelines* themselves was not consistent with the principle of the Critical Review and should be reconsidered. The Delegation also pointed out that the need for the revision of the Guidelines should be reconsidered in the light of the work priorities of the Committee.

The Delegation of Ireland, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union present at the session, stated that the revision of the Guidelines would be necessary in the future in order to improve their internal coherence. However, the Delegation proposed to defer it until 2007 as the latest amendments had been adopted in 2003.

The Chairperson, referring to the discussions of the Executive Committee, recalled that the general issue of the workload of Codex Committees should be taken into account when considering new work. The Chairperson proposed not to endorse new work on the revision of the Guidelines and to hold this matter at the Commission for further consideration by the 28th Session. The Commission agreed with this proposal (ALINORM 04/27/41, paras.100-102).

Country of Origin Labelling

The background is presented in CL 2004/56-FL and this question will be considered specifically under **Agenda Item 7**.

B. MATTERS REFERRED BY OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

1. COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS²

Draft Standard for Fat Spreads and Blended Spreads (at Step 7)

The Committee recalled that the section had been endorsed by the Committee on Food Labelling, with the exception of the second sentence of section 7.1 that had been referred back to the Committee and was currently in square brackets. The Delegation of Canada supported the declaration of the name of the fats and oils in a generic or specific manner in order to provide clear information to consumers and as this was consistent with the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the name of the product “may incorporate the name of fats and oils in a generic or specific manner” both for blended fat spreads and for fat spreads and the text was amended accordingly. The Committee also agreed that this sentence would appear as a separate paragraph (7.1.2).

Note: The labelling section will be sent for endorsement upon finalization of the Draft Standard (the next

² ALINORM 05/28/17, paras. 13-14

session of the CCFO will be held in 2007).

2. COMMITTEE ON PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES³

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON CODEX STANDARDS FOR PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Sweeteners

The Committee noted the different combinations of the terms “nutritive”, “carbohydrate”, and “sweeteners” and the prefix “non” in front of any of these combinations in Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables without a consistent application of these terms. The Committee also noted that this might have the potential to create confusion on whether terms such as “(nutritive) carbohydrate sweetener” or “nutritive sweetener” applied only to food ingredients (e.g. sugars, honey, syrups, etc.) or to certain types of food additive sweeteners with some caloric/nutritive (e.g. sugar alcohols). Similarly, it was not clear if terms such as “non-carbohydrate (nutritive) sweeteners” or “non-nutritive sweeteners” applied only to certain types of food additive sweeteners, usually regarded as “artificial” or “intense/high intensity sweeteners”, or to any type of food additive sweetener being used in the production of food for special dietary uses (e.g. diet foods). The Committee further noted the possible use of terms such as “artificial” vs. “natural” sweeteners to differentiate between food additive sweeteners and other sweetening agents such as sugars, honey, etc.

The Committee noted that within the Codex system the terms “sugars” (including certain syrups), “honey”, and “sweetener” were defined in the Codex Standards for Sugars and Honey, and in the Codex Class Names and International Numbering System for Food Additives respectively. In addition, the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods did not differentiate between the different kinds of food additive sweeteners and grouped them under the general term “sweetener” while all types of sucrose were designated as “sugar” and considered as ingredients. In addition, in a Codex Standard, the reference to “sweetener” was usually considered as a food additive regardless of its caloric/nutritive value and listed under the Section on Food Additives under the general name “Sweetener”; whereas any reference to compounds which were not considered as food additives, but performing a sweetening function, were regarded as a food/food ingredient and listed under the Section on Essential Composition and Quality Factors. The Committee also noted that when discussing the Codex Standard for Applesauce, it had decided that the term “sugars” or “nutritive sweeteners” appearing in the Standard should be replaced by “*sugars as defined in the Codex Alimentarius and/or other carbohydrate sweeteners such as honey*”.

The Committee agreed that this matter was a cross cutting issue that should be resolved in a horizontal manner through the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants and the Codex Committee on Food Labelling so that substances used as food ingredients for sweetening purposes and substances used as food additives for sweetening purposes can be designated in a consistent manner within the Codex system. As a result, the Committee agreed to put forward the following questions to the aforesaid Committees:

- a) Codex Committee on Food Labelling: In terms of foodstuff sweeteners (natural) (i.e., non-food additive), what terms (e.g., carbohydrate, nutritive) should be used in Codex commodity standards to indicate sweeteners other than those conforming to the Codex Standards for Sugars and Honey)?
- b) Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants & Codex Committee on Food Labelling: In terms of food additive sweeteners (artificial), what terms are appropriate to describe sweeteners (e.g. non-carbohydrate, non-nutritive, high/low intensity)?

³ ALINORM 05/28/27, paras. 11-13