

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
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ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2

CX/LAC 01/2-Add.2

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

12<sup>th</sup> Session

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 13 – 16 February 2001

### MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER COMMITTEES

#### CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

1. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Rome, Italy, 28 June - 3 July 1999) adopted the *Draft Guidelines for the Development of Equivalence Agreements regarding Food Imports and Export Inspection and Certification Systems* as final text.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently the CCFICS has met twice (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> sessions) and made the following progress that may be of interest to the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean:

#### DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE JUDGEMENT OF EQUIVALENCE OF SANITARY MEASURES ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

2. The 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Food Inspection and Certification Systems (Melbourne, Australia, 22-26 February 1999) requested the Commission to approve the elaboration of proposed draft *Guidelines on the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* as new work.<sup>2</sup> The 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee (Rome, Italy, 24-25 June 1999) was of the opinion that priority should be given to the development of judgement of equivalence regarding matters of food safety, and proposed that a paper be prepared for the next Session of the CCFICS on the matter of judgement of equivalence systems for controlling the safety and quality of foods and outlining the issues involved.<sup>3</sup> Noting this opinion, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission decided that the CCFICS should continue to consider this item as a discussion paper, and as concepts in this area fell within the mandates of other Codex committees, the discussion paper would need to be circulated to these committees for their comments.<sup>4</sup>

3. As a result of the above discussion, the 8<sup>th</sup> CCFICS (Adelaide, Australia, 21-15 February 2000) agreed to proceed with the development of *Guidelines on the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* for circulation and comment at Step 3 prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCFICS. This decision was taken with the understanding that the development of the Guidelines would be subject to subsequent approval as new work by the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee. The Committee also noted that its work in this area would be drawn to the attention of other Codex committees, including the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) and the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 99/37 App. VII-Part 1

<sup>2</sup> ALINORM 99/30A, paras 69-84

<sup>3</sup> ALINORM 99/4, paras. 24-26

<sup>4</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 203

<sup>5</sup> ALINORM 01/30, paras. 62-65

4. The 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee (Geneva, Switzerland, 28-30 June 2000) approved the elaboration of *Guidelines for the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* as new work for the CCFICS. The Executive Committee recognized the need to develop guidelines for determining equivalence of food control systems, covering not only safety but also quality and conformity.<sup>6</sup>

5. The 9<sup>th</sup> CCFICS's Session (Perth, Australia, 11-15 December 2000) agreed to advance the *proposed draft Guidelines for the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* to Step 5 of the Codex Procedure and recommended that the Commission adopt the Guidelines at Step 8 with the omission of Steps 6 and 7. A number of countries expressed concern about the omission of Steps 6 and 7 and recommended that the document advance through the normal Codex step procedure in order to benefit from further discussions and contributions at national level. The Committee noted that the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7 meant the option of returning the text for a further round of comments was available to the Commission if the comments received at Step 5 suggested that this would be appropriate. If, on the other hand, the comments received favored the advancement of the text, the Commission had the option to proceed directly to Step 8.<sup>7</sup>

#### **DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE JUDGEMENT OF EQUIVALENCE OF TECHNICAL REGULATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS**

6. The 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCFICS requested the advice of the Executive Committee and the Codex Alimentarius Commission on the possible development of guidelines on the judgement of equivalence of technical regulations other than sanitary measures.<sup>8</sup> The 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius<sup>9</sup> agreed with the views of the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee<sup>10</sup> that CCFICS should proceed to develop guidance on the equivalence of systems for inspection and certification in relation to technical regulations other than sanitary measures in parallel with food safety issues.

7. The issue has been discussed at the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> CCFICS's Sessions. The Committee noted that considerable work was required to finalized the document and therefore returned the text to Step 2 for further revision, comment and discussion at its next Session.<sup>11</sup>

#### **OTHER TEXTS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE**

##### **Draft Guidelines for Generic Official Certificate Formats and the Production and Issuance of Certificates**

8. The 9<sup>th</sup> CCFICS finalized the above Draft Guidelines and submitted it to 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, 1-7 July 2001) the for adoption as final text.<sup>12</sup>

##### **Risk Management Guidelines for Food Control Emergency Situations Involving International Trade**

9. The 8<sup>th</sup> CCFICS discussed this issue at the request of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to consider risk management options in situations that can cause disruption in international trade.<sup>13</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> CCFICS agreed to address this issue by revising the *Codex Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Control Emergency Situations* (CAC/GL 19-1995)<sup>14</sup> to include elements related to generic guidance and/or specific food emergency control plans. It was understood that the revision of the Guidelines would be subject to approval as new work by the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission.

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<sup>6</sup> ALINORM 01/3, paras. 26, 43 and Appendix III

<sup>7</sup> ALINORM 01/30A, paras. 90-92 and Appendix III

<sup>8</sup> ALINORM 99/30A, paras. 69-84

<sup>9</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 217

<sup>10</sup> ALINORM 99/4, paras. 24-26

<sup>11</sup> ALINORM 01/30A, para. 100

<sup>12</sup> ALINORM 01/30A, para. 30

<sup>13</sup> ALINORM 99/37, paras. 235-238

<sup>14</sup> ALINORM 01/30, para. 72