

codex alimentarius commission E



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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Agenda Item 7

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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA
AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC**

Tenth session

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 28-31 October 2008

**NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD
STANDARD SETTING**

Replies to CL 2008/12-NASWP, Part A of Cook Islands

1. STATUS OF THE NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEM

(i) Structure and organization of official services responsible for food control (update information since the 9th CCNASWP)

COOK ISLANDS

The Ministry of Health is responsible for national food control systems as stipulated in the Public Health Act 2004 and Food Act 1992-93, in particular the area of human health. As for import and export of agricultural products including meat products in which quarantine compliance are being implemented by the Quarantine Service of the Ministry of Agriculture in accordance to the Plant Act 1973 and Animal Act 1975. The Cook Islands existing Plant and Animal Act are in many respects outdated and not consistent with international obligations in respect of trade. It also needs laws that reflect global best practice and good governance principles so as to improve its trading competitiveness and economic base. The Cook Islands has in recent months also reviewed its current quarantine laws in which a new Draft Biosecurity Bill is to be tabled in Parliament later in the month. The draft Biosecurity Bill consolidates existing laws on animal and plant imports and internal controls, uses up-to-date legislative style and techniques, and incorporates principles of transparency and accountability.

The Marine Resources Act 2005, Fish Export Regulations 2006 and the Price Control Act 1966 play an important role in the food control system as well.

(ii) Legislation and regulations on food safety and quality - including import/export matters (update information since the 9th CCNASWP)

COOK ISLANDS

The need to speed up the process of the food legislations is an immediate priority for the Cook Islands as it required covering the protection of public health, protection of consumers and conditions of fair trading.

As a result of the WHO assistance in collaboration with the Ministry of Health in which a review of the food regulations has completed and it is currently waiting for public consultation.

The Fishing Industry has in recent years been guided under the application of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCAP) standards and the Food (Fish Export Processing) Regulations 2006 for fish export.

The Biosecurity Bill once enacted will deal with the international framework includes the WTO Agreement on the application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS Agreement), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) to which Cook Islands is a party, and the agreement for the Organisation Internationale des epizooties (OIE) in which involved the animal health.

(iii) Establishment of equivalence or other trade facilitation agreements with other governments

COOK ISLANDS

In terms of Agricultural Export commodities in which New Zealand MAF and Government of the Cook Islands has a Bi-lateral Quarantine Agreement established in 1996. There is a need to strengthen the Standards for Food Imports as the quarantine risk associated poses threat to human health as well to the country pristine environment., In recent years, Cook Islands became signatory of FAO, WHO, SPC, Forum Secretariat–PICTA/PACER and there are international treaties or conventions that deal directly to line government agencies such as National Environment Service as the focal Point for Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and Ministry of Marine Resources for Western & Central Fisheries Commission (WCPC).

(iv) Identified need for capacity building and training to strengthen the national food control system

COOK ISLANDS

Capacity building is a priority in terms of strengthening key areas of the Food Industry such as National Food legislations, Consumer Protection, Food Export and Import, Pesticide residue in Foods, Food Processing, Food Hygiene and Food labelling. Codex Cook Islands welcomes opportunities in attending codex committee standards setting meetings both country and overseas to develop their understanding on how codex functions and also when standards are being discussed as well approved at step 8 prior the CAC meeting.

In regards to fish handling and processing, developing general testing procedures is needed. The establishment of a suitably qualified ‘Competent Authority’ for dealing with the export of fish and fish products.

(v) Activities to increase awareness on food safety and quality among the consumers and other specified groups

COOK ISLANDS

The general perception of the community on what is codex is low. As there is limited support available from the national budget for the NCC office to fulfil some of the obligations and therefore codex awareness programme is not widely promoted in the community but except only at the level of inter governmental agencies that involved with the development of codex .i.e. Agriculture, Health, Marine Resources (Fisheries), Environment, Foreign Affairs and Chamber of Commerce.

As for Fisheries, there is a need to conduct workshops and seminars for the producers and consumers....the Ministry of Marine Resources has access to regional experts in food handling and processing but lack the funds to acquire the participation of the experts to conduct the workshops and seminars.

(vi) Any other relevant information

COOK ISLANDS

The Draft Food Law Regulations 2008 is currently in the process of going through cabinet and parliament.

2. NATIONAL CODEX CONTACT POINT AND OTHER NATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR CODEX MATTERS

(i) Activities of the Codex Contact Point (update information since the 9th CCNASWP) and any information about change of contact details (if not yet notified)

COOK ISLANDS

The National Codex Contact Point (NCCP) is based in the Ministry of Agriculture in which facilitate linkages with Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in Rome and Codex Trust Fund in Geneva. NCCP act as the program coordinator for the distribution of Codex Documents/Texts, invitation to participate to Codex meetings and liaise with inter governmental department on training programmes on Food Control Standards.

(ii) Structure, composition and operation of a National Codex Committee (or equivalent or similar structure) or plans for its establishment (update information since the 9th CCNASWP)

COOK ISLANDS

The composition of the Cook Islands National Codex Committee (NCC) in which became as a statutory body endorsed by Cabinet on 27 July 2005, consists of Ministry of Agriculture as Chair and members of the committee has a representative from the Ministry of Health, Marine Resources (Fisheries), Foreign Affairs & Immigration and Chamber of Commerce represent the private sector. The NCC meet twice a year as well convene when subject matter are to be discussed as well selection of which codex meeting that the country will attend under the Codex Trust Fund and names of participants attending to various meeting.

(iii) Participation in Codex committees (update information since the 9th CCNASWP)

COOK ISLANDS

The Cook Islands attended the codex standards setting committees funded by the Trust Fund on CCFICS, CCNASWP, CCFL, CAC, CCFFP and CCCF. Also, participated in the FAO/WHO meeting on Food Standards to Promote Health and Fair Trade in the Pacific, Manila, Philippines, December 2007.

3. PARTICIPATION OF CONSUMERS IN STANDARDS SETTING

(i) Consumer participation in Codex related activities at national and international level (update information since the 9th CCNASWP)

COOK ISLANDS

Consumer participation in codex related activities within the country is poor. Some of the training conducted by inter governmental agencies and NGO stakeholders are not been made aware with the National Codex Committee.

The Cook Islands participated in the CCNAWSP working group on Noni & Kava setting standards in Fiji May 2008. However, the noni industry has initiated in recent years some degree of consultations with regards to the noni juice from producers to market.

(ii) Activities aimed at increasing consumer participation in food standards setting (update information since the 9th CCNASWP)

There is a need in increasing consumer participation in the area of the food industry such as food hygiene, processing, and labelling. The Cook Islands emphasized that FAO/WHO Codex in country Training must be directed in building capacity with the Food Industry as government do not provide funding to NCC for such training.