



Agenda Item 2

CX/NASWP 10/11/2
July 2010

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

Eleventh session

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 28 September - 1 October 2010

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

I. MATTERS ARISING/REFERRED FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (32ND AND 33RD SESSION)

A. Items for Information

Terms of Reference of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees¹

1. Following the discussions in the 25th Session of the CCGP, the 32nd Session of the Commission confirmed that the full freedom was given under the current Terms of Reference of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to issue regional opinions on all themes under discussion in Codex of strategic importance to the region concerned and to promote the adoption of regional positions on strategic subjects, and therefore there was no need to modify the Terms of Reference.

B. Items for Action

Consideration on the Impact of Private Standards²

2. The 33rd Session of the Commission considered a paper (CX/CAC 10/33/13) prepared by FAO/WHO on private food safety standards (PFS) which addressed the following issues: the extent to which PFS are consistent with Codex and the impact of these standards on market access and public health, particularly in developing countries. The paper did not cover the issue of whether the SPS agreement should apply to PFS, which was a question that would continue to be discussed within the WTO SPS committee.

3. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the replies to CL 2010/33-NASWP on problems encountered with private standards and make recommendation for follow up by the next session of the Commission.

Proposed draft Standard on Processed Cheese³

4. The 33rd Session of the Commission agreed to defer decision on the discontinuation on work on a standard for processed cheese is matter until its 34th Session. The Commission further agreed to request the interested Coordinating Committees to discuss the necessity and the scope of regional standards for processed cheese and report their findings to the 34th Session of the Commission. The Commission would then base its decision on the discontinuation of work on the basis of the findings and recommendations of the coordinating committees.

5. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the replies to CL 2010/33-NASWP on the necessity and the scope of regional standards for processed cheese.

¹ ALINORM 09/32/REP para. 222

² ALINORM 10/33/REP paras 218-243

³ ALINORM 10/33/REP paras 89-93

Development of Guidelines for Traceability/Product tracing⁴

6. The 32nd Session of the Commission endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems to request the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee to discuss whether there was a need for further guidance on traceability/product tracing and report back to the 34th Session of the Commission.

7. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to discuss the need for further guidance on traceability/product tracing for further consideration by the 34th Session of the Commission.

II. MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**A. Items for information****26th Session of the Committee on General Principles (CCGP)*****Timely Availability of Documents⁵***

8. The 26th Session of the CCGP considered a discussion paper (Ref. CX/GP 10/26/10), prepared by Chile, on ways to approach the timely and simultaneous distribution of documents and the lengths and content of reports taking into account concerns raised at the Commission and from the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Committee agreed that the document would be discussed in the CCLAC and submitted for information to the other coordinating committees and the issue would remain on the agenda of the CCGP for discussion at its next session.

B. Items for action**64th Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*****Implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2008-2013 - General Implementation Status⁶***

9. The Committee reviewed the checklist presented in CX/CAC 10/33/10, noted that many activities were ongoing or would be addressed under other agenda items, and in addition made the following comments and recommendations, relevant to the coordinating committees.

Goal 4: promoting Cooperation between Codex and other relevant international organizations and Goal 5 (Promoting Maximum and Effective Participation of Members)

10. The Committee, while noting that Activity 4.5 “Promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level” was completed in 2009, recommended that it should be continued and that the questionnaire sent in 2008 on interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level should be circulated again for consideration by the forthcoming sessions of Coordinating Committees.

11. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the replies to CL 2010/33-NASWP on activities 4.5 “Promote interdisciplinary coordination at the national and regional level” and 5.5 “Enhance participation of non-governmental organizations at international, regional and national levels” for further consideration by the Executive Committee.

Development of new Strategic Plan for 2013-2018

12. After some discussion, the Committee recommended that an electronic working group consisting of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs should prepare a questionnaire or a revised proposal for a new Strategic Plan, as feasible, which would be distributed in a Circular Letter for comments and consideration by all Coordinating Committees. The revised proposal would be submitted for consideration to the next session of the Executive Committee.

⁴ ALINORM 09/32/REP, para. 196

⁵ ALINORM 10/33/33, paras. 99-104

⁶ ALINORM 10/33/3A paras 44-56

*New Options for Physical Working Groups*⁷

13. The Committee agreed that a survey should be carried out through a letter to Committee Chairs to collect information about their experience with physical working groups. The Committee recommended that the Commission ask the Committee on General Principles to consider new options for physical working groups. If the CCGP did not meet in 2011, the Committee proposed to consider this question at its next session, on the basis of a discussion paper that would be prepared by electronic consultation by the Chair and Vice-Chairs and other interested members of the CCEXEC, involving committee chairs as required, and taking into account the discussions held in the regional Committees. The next session of the Committee would present its recommendations to the Commission who could then ask the Committee on General Principles to consider new options for working groups. The Committee agreed with the proposal of one coordinator to forward the following options to the Coordinating Committees, especially as the proposed process referred to the involvement of regional representatives.

- Limiting the number of participants in physical working groups (pWGs) by requiring that membership be restricted to two or three relevant experts from each of the Codex Regions (This provision would limit the total number of working experts in a group to a much more practical limit of 12-18 members, instead of 30-50 members);
- Develop a mechanism that would ensure Codex Trust Fund support for developing country representatives to working groups organised along these lines (This provision would ensure developing country participation, as at the present time, it is a stated goal but nothing is done to ensure that it occurs);
- Develop a set of expected responsibilities that would apply to the expert representatives from the various regions to the countries in their region. For example, working group experts could be expected to circulate draft working group documents for comments to countries in their region (This provision would ensure that the process remains as transparent as the present process).

14. The Coordinating Committee **is invited** to consider the above options for further consideration by the Executive Committee.

⁷ ALINORM 10/33/3A paras 164-177