

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

Agenda Item 2

**CX/NMW 08/8/2
November 2007**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON NATURAL MINERAL WATERS

**Eighth Session
Lugano, Switzerland, 11 - 15 February 2008**

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

BACKGROUND

The Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (CODEX STAN 108-1981) was first adopted in 1978 as a European regional standard and was published in 1981 after certain pending sections had been finalized.

A revised standard was adopted as a worldwide standard in 1997, with the exception of Section 3.2 “Health-Related Limits for Certain Substances”, which was referred to the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants for endorsement. The 31st Session of the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants decided that these levels should be aligned with the levels in the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality. The 23rd Session of the Commission in 1999 adopted the limits for health related substances except those for arsenic, barium, manganese and selenium¹. The 24th Session of the Commission in 2001 adopted the limits for these substances, as recommended by the 7th Session of the Committee on Natural Mineral Waters and endorsed by the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants, to make them consistent with the WHO guidelines.

WHO recently completed a revision of the above-mentioned guidelines and published its 3rd Edition (Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality, Third Edition, Volume1, Recommendations, WHO, Geneva, 2004)². This resulted in discrepancies of the values of certain substances between the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (CODEX STAN 108-1981) and the current edition of the WHO Guidelines. No problem has arisen with the Codex General Standard for Bottled/Packaged Drinking Waters (Other than Natural Mineral Waters) (CODEX STAN 227-2001), since this Standard does not include numerical limits but refers to the WHO Drinking Water Guidelines.

¹ ALINORM 99/37 paras 197-200.

² Available at http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/dwq/guidelines/en/index.html

Working documents will be uploaded onto the Codex website:

www.codexalimentarius.net/web/index_en.jsp

Delegates are kindly requested to bring with them to the meeting all documents which have been distributed, as the number of additional copies which can be made available at the session is limited.

GENERAL DECISIONS OF THE 30TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Rome, Italy, 2 – 7 July 2007)

The Commission **adopted** a number of amendments to the Rules of Procedure and other amendments to the Procedural Manual and took other important decisions. The Commission also adopted 44 new or revised Codex standards or related texts elaborated by the Codex Committees and Task Forces. A complete list of these texts and details of their consideration could be found in ALINORM 07/30/REP which is available from: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net>

DECISIONS OF THE 30th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 164-167)

The following consideration by the Commission have direct relation to the work of the Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters (CCNMW).

Revision of WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality³

The Commission recalled that the completion of the revision of the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality (Third Edition, 2004) resulted in discrepancies of the values of certain health related substances between the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters (CODEX STAN 108-1981) and the above WHO Guidelines. The Commission also recalled that an in-session working group chaired by Switzerland, acting as host country for the Committee on Natural Mineral Waters, had met during its present session to review the written comments received and provide recommendations to the Commission on whether the amendment to the Codex Standard on Natural Mineral Waters was necessary and, in the affirmative, how to proceed.

The Commission **endorsed** the conclusions of the working group presented in document CAC/30 LIM/19 that:

- the health-related limits for certain substances in the Codex Standard on Natural Mineral Waters should be reviewed and amended as necessary;
- this review and amendment should consider substances listed in the Annex to the Codex Circular Letter CL 2006/13-NMW on a case-by-case basis; and
- due to the complexity of issues involved, it would be difficult to reach agreement on the alignment of certain health related substances in the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters working by an electronic working group or by correspondence.

The Commission therefore **agreed** that:

- work should be initiated through a Circular Letter, seeking further comments on each of the substances listed in the Annex of CL 2006/13-NMW including new discrepancies between the health-related limits for certain substances in the Codex Standard and the current version of the WHO guideline values for chemicals of health significance in drinking water;
- the Committee on Natural Mineral Waters (CCNMW) should be reactivated with a scope necessary to the review and amendment outlined above, in the light of comments already received and comments to be received in reply to the new Circular Letter; and

³ CL 2006/13-NMW; ALINORM 07/30/9D (comments of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, European Community, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Vietnam, ICBA, ICBWA); ALINORM 07/30/9D-Add.1 (comments of Mexico); LIM 19 (Report of an intrasessional working group of the Codex Alimentarius Commission on the Need to for Amendment of Health Related Substances in the Standard for Natural Mineral Waters).

- the CCNMW should complete this task in no more than two sessions, and should propose a revised Section 3.2, “Health-related limits for certain substances” of the Codex Standard for Natural Mineral Waters for final adoption by the Commission at its Session in 2009.

The Delegation of Switzerland informed the Commission that a session of the CCNMW could be convened in Switzerland, in February 2008, with the exact dates and venue to be determined by the Host Government and the Codex Secretariat in due course.

The Committee is therefore requested to follow the Commissions decisions.