

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 3

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
Twentieth Session, Washington D.C., U.S.A, 11-15 September 2000

**MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND
OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES**

Consideration of the Draft Medium-Term Plan 1998/2002

1. The 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) adopted its Medium-Term Plan for 1998-2002.¹ The following element of the Medium-Term Plan is directly related to the work of the CCPFV:

- Commodity Standards: Finalization of revision/simplification of Codex Commodity Standards. Elaboration of specific Commodity Standards where justified.

Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities and Criteria for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission

2. The 23rd Session of the CAC adopted the amendments separating the criteria for work priorities from the criteria for establishing subsidiary bodies, which include provisions for the establishment of *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces operating for a limited period of time under closely defined terms of reference, but functioning in the same manner as Codex Committees.² The Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual section related to the "Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities" is attached at Annex 1 to this document.

Relations Between Commodity Committees and General Committees: Draft Amendment to the Food Hygiene Provisions

3. The 23rd Session of the CAC adopted the amendment concerning the food hygiene provisions to be used in commodity standards as proposed.³ The Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual section related to the establishment of food hygiene provisions in Codex standards is attached at Annex 2 to this document.

Review of Subsidiary Bodies

4. The 23rd Session of the CAC confirmed the abolition of the Joint UNECE/Codex Groups of Experts on the Standardization of Fruit Juices and on the Standardization of Quick Frozen Foods. It decided that revision of the Codex Standards for quick frozen fruits and vegetables be transferred to the responsibility of the Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables. It also decided that any revision of the Recommended International Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods that might be required should be undertaken by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.⁴

¹ ALINORM 99/37, para. 34 & App. II

² ALINORM 99/37, para. 67 & App. IV

³ ALINORM 99/37, para. 68 & App. IV

⁴ ALINORM 99/37, para. 219

Consideration of New Work Proposals

5. The 45th Session of the Codex Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC) approved the elaboration of proposed draft Codex standards for *canned stone fruits; canned citrus fruits; canned berry fruits; canned vegetables; jam, jellies and marmalades; soy sauce; and, guidelines for packing media for canned fruits and canned vegetables* as new work. In taking this decision, it expressed concern that careful consideration had to be given by Codex Committees when proposing new work. It was also stated that Codex Committees should also follow the instructions of the guidance established by the Commission by giving preference to standards which were inclusive of all products traded within commodity groups rather than highly specific standards, in order to avoid problems of achieving consensus at the time of adopting these standards.⁵

Consideration of Proposed Draft Standards and Related Texts at Step 5

6. The 45th Session of the CCEXEC adopted the proposed draft standards for Applesauce and Canned Pears at Step 5 and advanced them to Step 6. The CCEXEC also adopted the proposed draft Standards for Pickles and Kimchi at Step 5 and advanced them to Step 6 for further development by the CCPFV. In doing so, it requested the respective Codex Committees to take into account the technical comments which had been made on the proposed draft standards by Member governments and interested international organizations.⁶

7. The 47th Session of the CCEXEC adopted the proposed draft Standard for Aqueous Coconut Products at Step 5 and advanced it to Step 6 for further development by the CCPFV.

Standards for Chutney and Mango Chutney

8. The 45th Session of the CCEXEC confirmed that the CCPFV would be responsible for the further development of the proposed draft standard for Chutney, and that the proposed draft Standard would be integrated with the existing Codex Standard for Mango Chutney.⁷

Codex Standard for Dried Figs

9. The 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) agreed to the request of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa to elaborate a proposed draft Codex Standard for Dried Figs and entrusted the work to the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV).⁸

Responsibility for Standards

10. The 45th Session of the CCEXEC allocated the work below to the responsibility of the following Codex Committees at the request of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables:⁹

- ***European Regional Standard for Fresh Fungus “Chantarelle”*** to the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for revision and conversion into a world-wide standard.
- ***European Regional Standard for Vinegar*** to the Codex Coordinating Committee for Europe for revision as a European Standard only.

Requirements for Minimum Fill

11. The CCPFV agreed to seek guidance of the Executive Committee on the minimum fill provisions in the standards for canned fruits and vegetables since that provision was not included in the standards for canned fishery products which had been adopted by the Commission.¹⁰

⁵ ALINORM 99/3 paras. 26-27 & App. 3

⁶ ALINORM 99/3, para. 29 & App. 4

⁷ ALINORM 99/3, para. 33

⁸ ALINORM 99/37, para. 208

⁹ ALINORM 99/3 para. 38

¹⁰ ALINORM 99/27, para. 28

12. The 45th Session of the CCEXEC took note of the divergent opinion as to whether such a requirement was primarily a commercial consideration or whether it was essential for consumer protection and the assurance of fair practices in the food trade. It noted that the technical requirements for processed fruits and vegetables might be different to those for fish and fishery products. It decided not to take a position on the matter, but to ask the CCPFV to provide additional technical information.¹¹

Status of Codex Texts in the Framework of the TBT Agreement

13. The 14th Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) agreed that all Codex texts, including standards and their annexes, were covered by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) definition for “standard”, and that distinctions based on Acceptance (under the Codex Procedures) were not relevant in the framework of the WTO.¹²

Vitamin C Fortification in Commodity Standards

14. At the 21st Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU), it was pointed out by several delegations that this issue was already covered by the “General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods” (CAC/GL 09-1987) in which there were provisions for nutrient fortification. The Committee discussed the need for a clear distinction between use of vitamin C as an additive and for fortification purposes: when used as an additive it should be declared as such and when used for fortification purposes it should be declared in accordance with the General Guidelines on Claims.

15. The 21st CCNFSDU took note that there might be a need for a review of the General Principles in order to address the issue of fortification in commodity standards and agreed that a circular letter should be prepared in order to ask for government comments on the necessity of the review.¹³

Tolerances Permitted for the Declaration of Net Drained Weight

16. The 22nd Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) noted the CCPFV request for advice on tolerances permitted for the declaration of net drained weight. The CCMAS noted that it would not seem feasible to establish general tolerances for net drained weight and therefore, referred the issue back to the CCPFV.¹⁴

Endorsement of Food Additive and Contaminant Provisions in Codex Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables

17. The Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC) endorsed food additive and contaminant provisions in various Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables with the following exceptions:

- Canned Applesauce: Changed the maximum level for ascorbic acid to good manufacturing practice (GMP) as the additive had an acceptable daily intake (ADI) of “not specified”. Referred the levels for lead and tin to the CCPFV for further consideration, as the levels were felt to be too high.
- Canned Pears: Tartaric Acid (used at GMP) was temporarily endorsed because this substance had a numerical ADI. Referred the levels for lead and tin to the CCPFV for further consideration, as the levels were felt to be too high.
- Canned Bamboo Shoots: Tartaric Acid (used at GMP) was temporarily endorsed because this substance had a numerical ADI. Referred the levels for lead and tin to the CCPFV for further consideration, as the levels were felt to be too high.

¹¹ ALINORM 99/3, para. 37

¹² ALINORM 99/33A, para. 61

¹³ ALINORM 99/26, paras. 7-8

¹⁴ ALINORM 99/23, para. 6

- Pickles: The proposed use for paprika oleoresins was referred back to the CCPFV for clarification. Referred the level for arsenic to the CCPFV for further consideration, as the level was felt to be too high.
- Kimchi: Changed the maximum levels for Carrageenan and Xanthan Gum to good manufacturing practice (GMP) as the additives had “not specified” ADIs.

Endorsement of Food Labelling Provisions in Codex Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables

18. The Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) endorsed food labelling provisions in various Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables with the following exceptions:

- Pickles: Did not endorse Section 7.2 since the CCFL could not decide whether the labelling of pickles as “vegetarian” should be mandatory or voluntary. It agreed that the text should be further considered by the next Session of the CCPFV when finalizing the standard.¹⁵
- Aqueous Coconut Products: Did not endorse the labelling provisions since the CCFL could not reach consensus on the use of the term “light” and “skim” in coconut milk as well as on the possibility to combine ‘coconut cream concentrate’ and ‘concentrated coconut cream’ as they appeared to describe the same product. It agreed that these should be brought to the attention of the next CCPFV when finalizing the standard.¹⁶

¹⁵ ALINORM 99/22, paras. 7-8

¹⁶ ALINORM 01/22, paras. 19-21

Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

When a Codex Committee proposes to elaborate a standard, code of practice or related text within its terms of reference, it should first consider the priorities established by the Commission in the Medium-Term Plan of Work, any specific relevant strategic project currently being undertaken by the Commission and the prospect of completing the work within a reasonable period of time. It should also assess the proposal against the criteria set out below.

If the proposal falls in an area outside the Committee's terms of reference the proposal should be reported to the Commission in writing together with proposals for such amendments to the Committee's terms of reference as may be required.

CRITERIA

Criteria applicable to general subjects

- (a) Consumer protection from the point of view of health and fraudulent practices.
- (b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.
- (c) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.
- (d) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field.

Criteria applicable to commodities

- (a) Consumer protection from the point of view of health and fraudulent practices.
- (b) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries.
- (c) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.
- (d) International or regional market potential.
- (e) Amenability of the commodity to standardization.
- (f) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.
- (g) Number of commodities which would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi processed or processed.
- (h) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field.

Relations Between Commodity Committees and General Committees

Codex Committees may ask the advice and guidance of committees having responsibility for matters applicable to all foods on any points coming within their province.

The Codex Committees on Food Labelling; Food Additives and Contaminants; Methods of Analysis and Sampling; Food Hygiene; Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses; and, Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems may establish general provisions on matters within their terms of reference. These provisions should only be incorporated into Codex Commodity Standards by reference unless there is a need for doing otherwise.

Codex Commodity standards shall contain sections on hygiene, labelling and methods of analysis and sampling and these sections should contain all of the relevant provisions of the standard. Provisions of Codex General Standards, Codes or Guidelines shall only be incorporated into Codex Commodity Standards by reference unless there is a need for doing otherwise. Where Codex Committees are of the opinion that the general provisions are not applicable to one or more commodity standards, they may request the responsible Committees to endorse deviations from the general provisions of the Codex Alimentarius. Such requests should be fully justified and supported by available scientific evidence and other relevant information. Sections on hygiene, labelling, and methods of analysis and sampling which contain specific provisions or provisions supplementing the Codex General Standards, Codes or Guidelines shall be referred to the responsible Codex Committees at the most suitable time during Steps 3, 4 and 5 of the Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts, though such reference should not be allowed to delay the progress of the standard to the subsequent steps of the Procedure.

Subject and commodity Committees should refer to the principles and guidelines developed by the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems when developing provisions and/or recommendations on inspection and certification and make any appropriate amendments to the standards, guidelines and codes within the responsibility of the individual committees at the earliest convenient time.

Food Hygiene

Commodity Committees should use in the commodity standards the following text:

- It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev 3-1997), and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.
- The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).