

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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Agenda Item 8a

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

25th Session
Bali, Indonesia,
25 – 29 October 2010

CONSIDERATION OF REVISION OF THE CODEX STANDARDS FOR QUICK FROZEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND REMAINING CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: Australia, Cuba, Iran, Kenya, the United States of America and the International Frozen Food Association (IFFA)

AUSTRALIA

General comments

Australia acknowledges the work of the United States in coordinating this work on behalf of the Committee and we support many of the recommendations contained in the Conclusion section of the latest document. Furthermore, Australia suggests some steps to progress this work in the physical working group and at the meeting of the Committee.

Regarding development of a framework standard (working group report, section 3), the 24th session of the Committee discussed a proposed layout and approach to be taken in its further development, and agreed to discontinue this work (Alinorm 09/32/27 paras 99 - 103). Australia is of the view that existing standards for quick frozen fruit and vegetable products generally follow the format suggested in the Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual (19th edition, page 30). Where necessary, depending on the products, this format is adapted to suit individual products. Therefore, discussion of development of an additional standard layout or format for quick frozen fruits and vegetables is unnecessary and not useful. This is also the case for the proposal to develop a framework standard for the remaining canned fruits (working group report, sections 1 and 2).

Australia supports development of standards which are inclusive of all products traded within commodity groups and for commodities which share the same or similar provisions in order to cover as many products within commodity groups as possible, as long as evidence is provided of significant international & inter-regional trade in the products to be standardised.

While Australia supports development and revision of processed fruits and vegetables standards on an as-needs basis as requested by countries when existing provisions are found to be insufficient for current trading requirements, we recall that the Committee resumed its work in 1998 at the request of the Commission, specifically to revise and simplify existing standards for processed fruits and vegetables. We conclude from this that work can proceed on that task without the need to wait for a specific request from a member country.

Australia therefore supports the start of work on development of a general standard for quick frozen fruits, another for quick frozen vegetables, and work to consolidate the remaining standards for canned fruits.

Australia agrees that simplifying standards should go part of the way to reducing the amount of revision which commodity standards require in order to meet the needs of different national requirements, and of current and future innovations of products, while still ensuring food safety and fairness in food trade.

Furthermore Australia believes that commodity standards should provide essential product definitions and avoid wherever possible establishing prescriptive or quantitative limits for quality. Consumer protection and information can be provided by labelling information consistent with horizontal texts elaborated by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling. Where provisions specific to individual commodities are required, use could be made of annexes although these should be kept to a minimum.

In that context, we believe that reducing duplication of provisions in commodity standards by referencing relevant provisions contained in horizontal standards, will further simplify standards to provide more usable documents. Such horizontal standards include Codex Stan 1-1985 *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Food*; Codex Stan 192-1995 *General Standard for Food Additives*; and in the case of quick frozen fruits and vegetables, CAC/RCP 8-1976 *Recommended International Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods*.

Specific comments

Certain Canned Fruits (remaining)

Australia suggests that provisions in several existing standards, for example canned pears (Codex Stan 61-1981), canned peaches (Codex Stan 75-1981) and canned stone fruits (Codex Stan 242-2003), as well as canned fruit cocktail (Codex Stan 78-1981) and canned tropical fruit salad (Codex Stan 99-1981) are sufficiently similar that development of a general standard for other canned fruits would encompass the requirements of these fruits and others. In a similar way, the various berry fruits could be combined into a single standard.

The next steps

The terms of reference for this working group were to “consider all the remaining standards for canned fruits and those standards for quick frozen fruits and vegetables and to establish whether these standards were still relevant and necessary, and if so, whether they needed to be revised totally, partially or at all and to examine the feasibility to group the remaining canned fruits and quick frozen fruits and vegetables into more horizontal standards similar to the approach taken with the draft Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables and **to make recommendations in this regard for consideration by the next session of the Committee**”.

Australia believes that much of the task of agreeing on the relevance and necessity of these standards and on the feasibility of grouping products into more horizontal standards has been addressed. In order to progress this work, we propose that the physical working group at its meeting on 24 October 2010, commence drafting project documents for:

- i) development of a standard for the remaining canned fruits;
- ii) development of horizontal standards for –
 - a) quick frozen fruits, and
 - b) quick frozen vegetables.

CUBA

Annex I

General Comments

1. Whether the Remaining Standards should be Revised, Simplified and Grouped into Horizontal Standards

Cuba supports the following:

- The recent experience that made it possible to revise the standard for Certain Canned Vegetables (CODEX STAN 297-2009) using an expedited process. This working style is advisable and should be maintained to advance the Committee's work and achieve tangible results in the short term regarding the standards pending revision.
- Grouping standards of similar commodities as was done in Codex Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables (CODEX STAN 297-2009).
- Revising the CCPFV pending standards since all of them pertain to products relevant to the international trade; it is necessary to simplify the process used in revising standards.
- Each revision should not only take into account changes in commercial practices and product evolution but also consumer protection and fair trade practices.
- Codex commodity standards should provide essential product definitions and, wherever possible, avoid establishing prescriptive or quantitative limits for quality.

2. The Remaining Canned Fruit Standards

Cuba supports the following:

- I. The development of a standard for Canned Berry Fruits - which would include the various berry fruits.

II. The development of a standard for Canned Fruits - which would include general common provisions and appendices for products such as canned pears, canned pineapples, canned mangoes, with the possibility of adding new appendices for other new canned fruits; or the development of a general standard for fruits that are sufficiently similar. Cuba proposes including the following fruits in the standard for Canned Fruits: guava and papaya.

III. The development of a standard for Canned Mixed Fruits - which would include Canned Fruit Cocktail, Canned Tropical Fruit Salad, and with the possibility of widening it to other canned fruit mixtures. Cuba proposes including the following fruits in the standard: guava and papaya.

IV. The development of a standard for Chutneys by widening of the scope of the standard for Mango Chutney, since chutney is also made with other fruits and vegetables.

3. The Standards for Quick Frozen Fruits and Vegetables

Cuba supports the following position:

Instead of expending limited CCPFV resources on “revision/simplification” of CCPFV Standards for Quick Frozen Fruits and Vegetables when all the facts indicate that this is not needed, the existing standards should be left “as is” (with the potential, as always, for individual revision if deemed necessary due to trade issues.)

Annex II

General Comments

Cuba supports the following:

- The examples of possible merging for standards on canned fruits and vegetables and quick frozen fruits and vegetables. Cuba proposes including the following fruits: guava and papaya, in the Canned Fruit Standards for *Fruit salad* and *Canned fruits*.

Comments on the Workload and work output (1998-2008)

Cuba believes that it is advisable to maintain and strengthen the electronic working groups and to retain the biennial interval for holding the global sessions.

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE APPROACH TO BE TAKEN FOR CONSIDERATION OF CODEX STANDARDS FOR CERTAIN PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Codex Standards for Canned Fruits (remaining)

	Yes	No	Rationale
1. Codex standards for remaining canned fruits are irrelevant to international trade and therefore should be revoked.		X	
2. Codex standards for remaining canned fruits are relevant to international trade and should remain as they currently stand.		X	It is necessary to update them and revise the changes in the technological design of this type of products.
3. Codex standards for the remaining canned fruits are relevant to international trade and should be revised:	X		
3.a Partially	-	-	
3.b Fully	X	X	It is necessary to update them and revise the changes in the technological design of this type of products, taking into account the changes in other complementary standards, from other Committees, which have been revised, such as for additives, labelling, etc.
4. If they should partially be revised, the revision should focus on:	-	-	

	Yes	No	Rationale
4.a Updating the sections referencing the general Codex texts developed by horizontal committees, e.g., additives, contaminants, hygiene, etc.	-	-	
4.b In addition to the above, the revision of some sections with a view to their updating and/or simplification - indicate which sections.	-	-	
5. If they should be wholly revised, the revision should in any case:	-	-	
5.a Keep the standards as stand-alone standards	-	-	
5.b Explore the possibility to grouping them in relation to products sharing common provisions	X	-	This experience is very positive for groups of products with similar characteristics. It has been demonstrated with recent works of this Committee. They have been very well received by all countries.
6. If grouping standards, a possibility could be:	-	-	
6.a Standard for Canned Berry Fruits	X		
6.b Standard for Canned Fruit Salads	X		Cuba proposes including the following fruits: guava and papaya.
6.c Standard for Other Canned Fruits (not covered by other standards for canned fruits)	X		Cuba proposes including the following fruits: guava and papaya.
6.d Any other proposal to merging standards	-	-	
7. Any other comments you may have in relation to the approach that should be taken to consideration of the remaining Codex standards for canned fruits	-	-	

Codex Standards for Quick Frozen Fruits and Vegetables (all)

	Yes	No	Rationale
1. Codex standards for quick frozen fruits & vegetables are irrelevant to international trade and therefore should be revoked		X	
2. Codex standards for quick frozen fruits and vegetables are relevant to international trade and should remain as they currently stand	X		
3. Codex standards for quick frozen fruits and vegetables are relevant to international trade and should be revised:	-	-	
3.a Partially			
3.b Fully		X	

	Yes	No	Rationale
4. If they should partially be revised, the revision should focus on:	-	-	
4.a Updating the sections referencing to the general Codex texts developed by horizontal committees, e.g., additives, contaminants, hygiene, etc.	-	-	
4.b In addition to the above, revision of some sections with a view to their updating and/or simplification – indicate which sections	-	-	
5. If they should be wholly revised, the revision should in any case:	-	-	
5.a Keep the standards as stand-alone standards		X	
5.b Explore the possibility to grouping them in relation to products sharing common provisions	X		
6. If grouping standards, a possibility could be:	-	-	
6.a Standard for Quick Frozen Vegetables	X		
6.b Standard for Quick Frozen Fruits	X		
6.c Any other proposal to merging standards	-	-	
7. Any other comments you may have in relation to the approach that should be taken to consideration of Codex standards for quick frozen fruits and vegetables	-	-	

IRAN

Please be informed that, national codex committee of CCPFV in Iran would like to submit new proposals for in 25TH Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables , October 25, 2010 which held on , The Bali , The Indonesia as follow details:

Development of a separate standards for these categories is recommended:

- 1- Canned mixed vegetables
- 2- Canned fruits with no added sugar
 - A standard for canned mixed vegetables would be useful like the codex standard for canned fruit cocktail. It can specify the characteristics and test methods for the canned vegetables containing two or more kinds of vegetables, such as the proportion of each one in a container.
 - High consumer demanding for such a product since it would make different kinds of vegetables available at the same time in all seasons and locations.
- 2- Canned fruit containing no added sugar is a product suitable for diabetic consumers and therefore, there is a high demand for such a product.
 - Good texture, taste and odor though having no added sugar regarding the research made in Institute of Standard and Industrial Research of Iran. The national standard for this product has been developed recently in our organization.

KENYA

1. Even though in the EWG was limited to five countries, none of which included developing countries, we agree with the proposed revisions of stand-alone standards.

2. The focus should be equally spent on developing new standards as well as adjusting existing standards as the need arises.

GENERAL COMMENT: We need to use the word 'preserved' instead of canned, to be in consistent with 'Codex tomato product' and give a wider range for packaging materials.

UNITED STATES

The United States agrees with the conclusions of the Working Group.

The U.S. recommends carefully selecting commodity standards for revision in accordance with the mandate of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV) and based on the practical needs of CCPFV members.

The U.S. acknowledges the original instruction for revising standards, which is that "[t]he standards should be reviewed in order to simplify them and make their acceptance by national governments easier." (CL 1997/1-PFV) Furthermore, the Thirty-Third Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (2005) approved the amendments to the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and to the Procedural Manual (Article 1, Part (d)) to recognize the decision that acceptance by national governments is no longer a formal part of the Codex process.

Despite the original intent to simplify existing standards, the Committee has, instead, developed complex standards. In addition, the revision process has taken many years and substantial CCPFV resources with little improvement to the standards. Therefore, the U.S. agrees with the eWG conclusion that the CCPFV revise existing standards on an "as needed" basis, and any such revisions should be drafted in accordance to the rules in the Codex Procedural Manual.

The U.S. supports the following principles for development of standards for processed fruits and vegetables to ensure that the process of simplifying standards will lead to standards that are no more prescriptive than necessary:

- Adhering to the recommendation of the 58th Session of the Executive Committee of Codex Alimentarius, as further endorsed by the 28th Session of the Commission, which states "the GSFA should be the single authoritative reference point for food additives and this should be made clear in all commodity standards" (ALINORM 05/28/3A paragraph 56 [15]).
- Developing standards that reflect the wide array of tastes, preferences, trade practices, growing conditions and ingredient variances, regardless of the level of economic, social and technological development.

The U.S. believes that the resources of the CCPFV would be best used by developing new standards or broadening the scope of certain single commodity standards into general standards. This would meet the immediate needs of many Codex member countries, which are transforming their agricultural sector through the processing of fruits and vegetables.

The U.S recommends that the CCPFV revise and broaden the standard for chutney (CODEX STAN 160-1987), because Chutney can be made from any fruit or vegetable; it is produced by most countries, identified by traditional/ethnic names, and traded internationally. Such a standard for an international product made from different ingredients (fruits and vegetables) could be the test case for the CCPFV in developing general standards.

IFFA

The International Frozen Food Association (IFFA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the above documents, which are on the agenda for discussion at the upcoming Codex Committee for Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV) in October of this year. IFFA's membership is comprised of frozen food trade associations and individual frozen food producers from around the world. IFFA maintains official Observer status within Codex and its primary objectives are to assist in the development of Codex texts that meet the frozen food industry's needs without being overly burdensome, as well as promoting the general Codex principles of ensuring a safe food supply and unrestricted trade.

Agenda Item 8a: CX/PFV 10/25/9; Consideration of Revision of Codex Standards for Quick Frozen Fruits and Vegetables and remaining Canned Fruits and Vegetables

IFFA strongly agrees with the conclusion presented by the Working Group that all revisions to these standards should be made on an “as needed” basis. To IFFA’s knowledge there have been no recent requests by any CCPFV delegate to initiate “new” frozen fruit or vegetable work. IFFA believes that time and effort spent in the committee debating potential ways in which revisions should or could proceed would be unproductive. Moreover, there are other committee matters that are more pressing and deserve greater attention.

IFFA fruit and vegetable producer members have not reported adverse trade effects resulting from a lack of or inadequate Codex standards. Therefore, IFFA strongly recommends that the committee discontinue work on this issue until there is a clearly defined proposal to undertake new work or revise an existing standard, according to the requirements described in the Codex Procedural Manual.

IFFA agrees with the suggestion to develop a general standard format to be utilized in developing or revising standards in the future. However, for fruit and vegetable standards to be useful, there must be a degree of specificity maintained within a standard for establishing product descriptions/specifications for the various styles, defect tolerances, etc. that are essential for distinguishing one product from another – e.g., *frozen chopped spinach* versus *frozen whole leaf spinach*.

A general frozen fruit and vegetable standard format could be developed, which would simply outline the major/minor headings (e.g., 1. Scope; 2. Description – 2.4 Presentation; 3. Essential Composition and Quality Factors – 3.2.3 Definition of Visual Defects; etc.) and some of the standard text and references (e.g., the *General Standard for Food Additives* and *General Principles of Food Hygiene*). This work would certainly require the committee’s time and resources initially, but would potentially save time and resources in the future. IFFA suggests that committee members carefully consider these constraints by engaging interested stakeholders in their respective countries before taking any further action, to determine whether a true need actually exists.