

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 3**

**CX/PR 01/2  
January 2001**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES**

**Thirty-third Session**

**The Hague, The Netherlands, 2 - 7 April 2001**

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

##### **A. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 47<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

###### **1. MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2003-2007<sup>1</sup>**

The Executive Committee agreed that all issues and areas (for details see ALINORM 01/3) should be considered as the basis for building Medium-Term Plan and invited a small group consisting of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons together with the Secretariat to prepare a draft of the Medium-Term Plan 2003-2007 and develop a strategic statement of the Commission's vision for the future. It also decided to request the opinions of Regional Coordinating Committees. The Executive Committee agreed that the drafts of these documents should be made available for consideration and discussion by the next session of the Commission.

###### **2. IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE 23<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION<sup>2</sup>**

The Executive Committee noted the progress made in implementing the general decisions of the Commission as reported in the working paper. In relation to the implementation of the decisions in respect of risk analysis, the decisions of Executive Committee are presented in Annex of the present paper. The Executive Committee clarified that in this table, reference to "relevant Committees" meant those Committees that make recommendations on risk management measures based on risk assessments: at the moment these Committees include the Committees on Food Hygiene, Food Additives and Contaminants, Pesticide Residues, Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods, and Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (on some matters), and the *ad hoc* Task Forces on Foods derived from Biotechnology and Animal Feeding.

###### **3. CONSIDERATION OF NEW WORK PROPOSALS AT STEP 1 OF THE PROCEDURE<sup>3</sup>**

The Executive Committee considered proposals for new work at Step 1 of the Procedure: proposals for new work under the Accelerated Procedure and proposals for the discontinuation of previously-

<sup>1</sup> CX/EXEC 00/47/6

<sup>2</sup> CX/EXEC 00/47/7.

<sup>3</sup> CX/EXEC 00/47/8; CX/EXEC 00/47/8-Add.1; CX/EXEC 00/47/8-Add.2.

approved individual work items. The decisions of the Executive Committee relevant to the Committee on Pesticide Residues regarding new work proposals are as follows\*:

Item	Proposal	Committee	Status
1.	Proposed Draft Amendments to the Guidelines on Good Laboratory Practice in Pesticide Residue Analysis	CCPR	Approved
2.	Proposed Draft Amendments to the Introduction Section of the Recommended Methods of Analysis for Pesticide Residues	CCPR	Approved
3.	Proposed Draft Amendments to Codex Classification of Foods and Animal Feeds (Definitions of meat, mammalian fats, poultry fats and milks)	CCPR	Approved under the accelerated procedure

\* These matters are placed on the Provisional Agenda of the Committee.

The Executive Committee made the general observation that justification for new work in terms of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities<sup>4</sup> should be well documented when making such proposals. It also noted the practice in some Committees of developing discussion papers or positions papers that explored the merits of proceeding with new work proposals, and encouraged this practice provided that it was not being used as a substitute for taking decisions.

#### **4. RISK ANALYSIS PRINCIPLES: REFFERAL FROM THE COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES AND CONTAMINANTS**

The Committee had asked for clarification of the status of a discussion paper entitled Risk Analysis Principles for Food Additives and Contaminants in the context of a uniform approach to the application of risk analysis in different committees.<sup>5</sup> The Executive Committee noted that the origin of this work was the recommendation of the 1991 FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade the "the CAC and the relevant Codex Committees responsible for the development of standards, codes of practice or guidelines concerned with the protection of human health **should make explicit the methods they have used to assess risk**".<sup>6</sup> This recommendation was endorsed by the 19th Session of the Commission (1991).<sup>7</sup>

The Executive Committee noted that general principles for risk analysis were being finalized by the Committee on General Principles and there was no need for the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants to duplicate this work. It was expected that the discussion of risk analysis by the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission would conclude the mandate established by the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission for the Commission and its subsidiary bodies to make explicit their risk methodologies. The Executive Committee was therefore of the opinion that the matter was urgent and requested the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants to complete the report on the scientific basis used in risk analysis of food additives and contaminants as soon as possible.

#### **5. OTHER LEGITIMATE FACTORS: REFFERAL FROM THE COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES AND CONTAMINANTS :**

The Committee had asked the Executive Committee to clarify the current status of the consideration of "other legitimate factors" within Codex with a view towards providing advice on a uniform approach to the matter and is considering the inclusion of a separate Annex concerning "other legitimate

<sup>4</sup> Procedural Manual, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2000, pages 66-67.

<sup>5</sup> ALINORM 01/12, para 52.

<sup>6</sup> Report of the FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade, ALICOM 91/22, para. 210, FAO/WHO, Rome, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> ALINORM 91/40, para.78.

factors” in the Discussion Paper on the Application of Risk Analysis Principles for Food Additives and Contaminants.<sup>8</sup> The Executive Committee noted that the matter of "other legitimate factors" was under consideration by the Committee on General Principles at the request of the Commission. The Committee on General Principles had requested relevant Codex Committees to provide examples of other legitimate factors taken into account in their decision-making processes so as to facilitate the general debate in the Committee on General Principles on other legitimate factors.<sup>9</sup> The Executive Committee confirmed that responsibility for a system-wide approach to the consideration of "other legitimate factors" rested with the Committee on General Principles and that no further action in this matter should be taken by the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants **(or any other Committee)** at the moment.

## **6. CONSIDERATION OF THE CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION PLAN**

The Executive Committee expressed unanimous appreciation of the initiative of the Chairperson in drawing up an Action Plan to address many of the issues facing the Commission in its desire to improve efficiency, timeliness and responsiveness, and ensure inclusiveness of participation and transparency of operations, thereby giving the work of the Commission higher international credibility and relevancy.

### **B. MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES**

#### **1. CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

##### **1.1. RISK ANALYSIS: WORKING PRINCIPLES FOR RISK ANALYSIS (ALINORM 01/33, PARAS 8-62)**

While considering the above subject matter the Committee noted that significant progress had been made on most sections of the Working Principles; however, the application of precaution in risk management still needed additional discussion, and it was preferable to retain the text at Step 3 for further consideration therefore the Committee agreed to return the Proposed Draft, as amended at the current session, to Step 3 for further comments and consideration by the next session

##### **1.2. RISK ANALYSIS: FOOD SAFETY OBJECTIVES (ALINORM 01/33, PARAS 63-66)**

The Committee discussed whether there was a need to define “food safety objectives” and how it would proceed to consider the concept in relation to risk analysis specifically. The Committee noted that the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) had discussed the Proposed Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Management that included a section on food safety objectives. It also noted that the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import Export Inspection and Certification Systems decided to develop the Guidelines on the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems pending approval as new work by the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee.

The Committee was of the opinion that the application of “food safety objectives” concept was of a technical nature and it was premature to generalize the concept with a specific definition.

The Committee agreed that the concept of “food safety objectives” could be further developed by other relevant Committees in order to identify how it could be applied to specific food safety issues, and that the Committee should continue to oversee the consistency in the definition and application of the concept.

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<sup>8</sup> ALINORM 01/13, para. 146.

<sup>9</sup> ALINORM 99/33A, para. 76.

**1.3. REVIEW OF THE STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE ON THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH OTHER FACTORS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT: ROLE OF SCIENCE AND OTHER FACTORS IN RELATION TO RISK ANALYSIS (ALINORM 01/33, PARAS 85-95)**

While reviewing the statements of principle on the role of science and the extent to which other factors are taken into account: role of science and other factors in relation to risk analysis, the Committee agreed that it should proceed with its consideration of this issue at its next session on the basis of the current text, taking into account the amendments made at the current session. The conclusions of the committees involved in risk management (including CCFH, CCFAC, CCRVDF and CCPR) would also be taken in account, with the understanding that these Committees might need to clarify further the integration of other factors in their work, as necessary. It was also agreed that the CCNFSDU should be invited to consider the integration of other legitimate factors in its activities involving risk analysis aspects. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat would develop draft general guidance and circulate the revised text for comments and consideration by the next session (for details see the ALINORM 01/33).

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

**TRADE VULNERABILITIES RESULTING FROM THE LENGTHY CODEX MAXIMUM RESIDUE LIMIT (MRL) PROCESS (ALINORM 01/32. PARAS 71-73)**

The US introduced this issue by outlining some key concerns by Codex member countries in regard to the intervals from the time chemicals are nominated for assessment until Codex adopts an MRL and the vulnerability of some products moving in international trade during these periods. The United States also pointed out that growers might delay use of new safer compounds approved for national use because of the absence of a Codex MRL. Several countries and the representatives from Consumers International and ITIC noted that this was of public health concern. The Committee agreed that its priority in relation to this issue was in terms of establishing if there was a significant issue to bring before the attention of the CAC and relevant subsidiary bodies, including the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) and the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF).

In this regard, it was noted that the Chairman's Action Plan contained proposals that were relevant to any efforts to speed the MRL setting process. These included the proposal for annual meetings of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and reforming the expert advisory committees. It was considered that emphasis should be focussed on improving the pace in which Codex responds to such issues while having the utmost regard for public health and safety and that priority should be given to the assessment of new safer versions of agricultural chemicals.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the Commission to accelerate the elaboration procedures for Codex standards, the Committee recommended that the Commission might address the elaboration of standards for pesticide and veterinary drug residues within the development of the Medium-Term Plan for 2003-2007. In addition, the Committee agreed that this issue should be brought to the attention of the CCPR, CCRVDF and other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Commission.

## Annex

**Implementation of the Commission's Recommendations Concerning Risk Analysis**

The Executive Committee made the following decisions to implement the Commission's recommendations on risk analysis:

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
Programmes that contribute to risk analysis should have high priority;	This should be taken up in the context of Agenda Item 6: Preparation of the Medium-Term Plan 2003-2007.
Relevant Codex Committees should continue to develop and to apply risk analysis principles and methodologies appropriate to their specific mandates within the framework of the Action Plan and report their progress to the Commission on a regular basis;	Noted: On-going.
Proposals for new or amended definitions for use within the framework of risk analysis, as appropriate, should be considered by the Codex Committee on General Principles;	Noted: On-going.
To overcome confusion about the usage of the terms "risk analysis" and "hazard analysis", the Commission should reiterate its definitions for these concepts and explain how they apply in practice;	The Executive Committee referred this matter to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene for a clear statement of the difference between the two terms and to the Committee on General Principles for subsequent action.
The Commission should continue and expand its efforts to increase the participation of those national governments and NGOs that are members or observers but that are not presently active participants in Codex matters;	The Executive Committee noted that the issue was relevant to all Codex work and not only to risk analysis and drew the attention of the countries concerned to the Commission's recommendation.
Relevant Codex committees should consider developing quality criteria for data used for risk assessment. To the extent possible such criteria should be consistent with one another, taking into account the technical differences in the disciplines covered;	The Executive Committee referred these recommendations to the Committees concerned (see also para. 42 of the report).
Relevant Codex committees should consider the acute aspects of dietary exposure to chemicals in food;	
Recognizing that primary production in developing countries is largely through small and medium enterprises, risk assessment should be based on global data, including that from developing countries. This data should particularly include epidemiological surveillance data and exposure studies;	
Risk management should take into account the economic consequences and the feasibility of risk management options in developing countries. Risk Management should also recognize the need for flexibility in the establishment of standards, guidelines and other recommendations, consistent with the protection of consumers' health.	The Executive Committee referred this recommendation to the Codex Committee on General Principles for consideration in relation to the development of appropriate texts for inclusion in the Procedural Manual.