



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS**

First Session

Kochi (Cochin), India, 11- 14 February 2014

ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCSC

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO and WHO

(Prepared by FAO and WHO)

Introduction

1. As Codex endeavours to provide risk management guidance on a wide range of issues pertinent to the safety and quality of food in international trade in order to protect consumer health, FAO and WHO aim to provide the relevant scientific advice in a timely manner.
2. Also FAO supports member countries in developing their capacities to effectively manage food safety and quality as a key step to safeguarding the health and well-being of people as well as to accessing domestic, regional and international markets.
3. This paper provides a summary of recent activities undertaken by FAO and WHO in both scientific advice and capacity development that may be relevant to the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH).

FAO/WHO Scientific advice

4. The 44th session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) requested FAO and WHO to 1) undertake a risk assessment to determine whether there is a significant public health risk from *Salmonella* associated with consumption of spices and dried aromatic herbs and 2) evaluate whether criteria for *Salmonella* are meaningful to ensure adequate consumer health protection; identify any other foodborne pathogens of concern in spices; and identify the range of the spices to be covered in the Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Herbs which was approved as a new work at the 36th Codex Alimentarius Commission.
5. The CCFH also requested scientific advice on which low-moisture foods are considered the highest priority and the associated microbiological hazards and information relevant to the risk management of microbiological hazards associated with the identified range of low-moisture foods. Certain spices and culinary herbs can be included in the scope of low-moisture foods..
6. To facilitate above requests, FAO and WHO issued call for data on low moisture foods in general and also specifically on spices in December 2012. 10 countries, 1 region and 1 expert responded to the call for data on spices and dried aromatic herbs and 7 countries, 3 experts and 1 industry organization to the one on low-moisture foods.
7. Based on the data and information received, together with a number of additional scientific literatures, FAO and WHO have conducted a rapid structured review on the microbial food safety of low-moisture foods, including spices and dried aromatic herbs. The preliminary results of the review are available at http://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/CCFH/CCFH45/fh45_03e.pdf (CX/FH 13/45/3a).
8. Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) is evaluating annually various pesticides which may be used for raw materials of spices and culinary herbs, according to requests from the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR). The meeting reports are available at <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/chem/jmpr/publications/en/index.html> and the recent summary report of 2013 meeting is on:

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/Pests_Pesticides/JMPR/Report13/JMPR_2013_Report.pdf.

9. JMPR also published in 2009 a guidance on data submission for estimation of residue levels in/on spices: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/Pests_Pesticides/JMPR/JMPRreport09.pdf.

FAO Capacity development

10. FAO is currently providing a capacity development support to the Government of Nepal with a Trust Fund Project entitled *Enhancing Sanitary and Phytosanitary Capacity of Nepalese Ginger Exports through Public Private Partnerships (2012-2014)*. Ginger represents Nepalese most important spice export and the project's safety and quality assurance programme is applied to many other spice commodities. Training manuals, capacity development tools and guidance documents elaborated from the project can be made available to international audience on the FAO website.

11. FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP) has developed a training manual on implementing ASEANGAP in fruit and vegetable sector. The manual includes certain culinary herbs and is targeted towards supporting countries in establishing a certification scheme for GAP in line with accreditation requirements. Although the focus has been on ASEANGAP, the manual could also be used to provide guidance for any GAP schemes at global, regional or national level whether voluntary or mandatory. The training manual will be available in the first quarter of 2014. In addition to this training manual development, FAORAP will provide a capacity development assistance to countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to develop a regional GAP Scheme for fruits and vegetables, including certain culinary herbs.