

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

# E

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org) - [www.codexalimentarius.org](http://www.codexalimentarius.org)

CL 2020/52/OCS-CF

July 2020

**TO:** Codex Contact Points  
Contact Points of international organizations having observer status with Codex

**FROM:** Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission,  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

**SUBJECT:** Request for comments on MLS for methylmercury in additional fish species, including sampling plans and other risk management recommendations

**DEADLINE:** 15 October 2020

## BACKGROUND

1. In view of the postponement of 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF14) from 2020 to 2021 due to the pandemic situation, Codex members and observers are kindly invited to consider the conclusions and recommendations in the discussion paper regarding the development of maximum levels (MLs) for methylmercury in additional fish species, including sampling plans.
2. For information, please refer to document [CX/CF 20/14/11](#).
3. Maximum levels: The replies will allow the Electronic Working Group (EWG) established by CCCF13 to further progress work on MLs for those fish species for which the need and feasibility to establish MLs for methylmercury have been identified should there be support for the proposal for new work as presented in Appendix II of the discussion paper namely to already submit proposals for MLs for orange roughy and cusk-eel.
4. Sampling plans: The replies will allow the EWG, chaired by New Zealand and co-chaired by Canada, to further develop the sampling plans in Appendix IV of the discussion paper. Specifically in regard to those fish species under consideration for which sufficient data can be gathered through available databases or datasets or through the call for data to be issued to this effect as per recommendation in paragraph 44 of the discussion paper if supported by Codex members in their replies to this CL.
5. Other risk management recommendations: The replies will allow the EWG to make a preliminary assessment of the need and suitability to develop such guidance as well as the quantity, quality and relevance of the information available to support the possible development of guidance and what such guidance could be e.g. code of practice, guidelines, etc. for consideration by CCCF14.

This additional task is dependent on time available in the EWG to complete the task entrusted to it by CCCF13 for the consideration of MLs and sampling plans if the replies submitted to this CL indicate the support to do so. The findings of this preliminary assessment, i.e. the feasibility and type of document that could be developed based on the needs identified and the information available would be considered by CCCF14 as per the further steps that could be followed in this regard.

## REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

6. Codex members and observers are invited to submit comments on:
  - a. Maximum levels: The proposal for new work on maximum levels (MLs) for methylmercury for orange roughy and cusk-eel as presented in Appendix II, including proposals for MLs for these fish species, considering the recommendations in paragraphs 40-41, the summary discussion for the establishment of MLs for additional fish species in paragraphs 15-25 and the information provided in Appendix III relevant to these two species.
  - b. Sampling plans: To develop sampling plans with species-specific annexes in line with the approach recommended in paragraph 43, taking into account the summary discussion in paragraphs 26-37, and the information and outline provided in Appendix IV. In the affirmative please provide replies to the following specific points:
    - i. Whether sufficient data, considering the recommendations in paragraph 44, can be gathered through available databases or datasets for the species under consideration, providing links if such information is available.

- ii. Alternatively, whether a call for data as recommended in paragraph 44 should be issued to assist the further development of the species-specific annexes to sampling plans.
  - iii. Whether the evidence, or statistical basis, used by national authorities in the development of national sampling plans for methylmercury in fish can be provided to the EWG to further develop the sampling plans.
- c. Other risk management recommendations: The need for a consolidated source of guidance for methylmercury to capture risk management recommendations at the catch, sorting and processing level as indicated in paragraph 46 considering the summary discussion in paragraphs 38-39. In the affirmative, please provide links if such information is available from the website or send the publication directly to the EWG Chair [Andrew.Pearson@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Andrew.Pearson@mpi.govt.nz) cc to [codexnz@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:codexnz@mpi.govt.nz) and [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org).

7. In submitting comments on the above, Codex members and observers are invited to consider the background information and conclusions provided in CX/CF 20/14/11. The document for comment has been uploaded to the Codex Online Commenting System (OCS): <https://ocs.codexalimentarius.org/>.

#### **GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF COMMENTS**

8. Comments should be submitted through the Codex Contact Points of Codex members and observers using the OCS.
9. Contact Points of Codex members and observers may login to the OCS and access the document open for comments by selecting "Enter" in the "My reviews" page, available after login to the system.
10. Contact Points of Codex members and observers organizations are requested to provide proposed changes and relevant comments/justifications on a specific paragraph (under the categories: editorial, substantive, technical and translation) and/or at the document level (general comments or summary comments). Additional guidance on the OCS comment categories and types can be found in the OCS [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#).
11. Other OCS resources, including the user manual and short guide, can be found at the following link: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/resources/circular-letters/en/>.
12. For questions on the OCS, please contact [Codex-OCS@fao.org](mailto:Codex-OCS@fao.org).