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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAM

FIFTH MEETING OF THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE
Vienna, 6-8 September 1967

Report of the Second Meeting of the Codex Committee on
Natural Mineral Waters
Montreux, 6-7 July 1967

1. The Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters held its second meeting on 6 and 7 July 1967 at Montreux under the chairmanship of Prof. O. Hoegl (Switzerland). Seven countries were represented at the meeting. The list of participants is given in Annex I.
2. Opening of the meeting
After opening the session and welcoming the delegates, Prof. O. Hoegl summarized the work on the standardization of natural mineral waters carried out so far by the Committee and its drafting sub-committee.
3. Adoption of the agenda
The draft agenda was adopted by the Committee.
4. Examination of the Draft Provisional Standard for Natural Mineral Waters
The Committee had before it the draft provisional standard for natural mineral waters drawn up by its drafting sub-committee. The Committee examined the text and the reservations made on certain provisions of the document. The text as amended by the Committee appears in Annex II.

Section I of the text

Definitions and designations

Paragraph 1

The Committee approved the following text:

"Natural mineral water is water from a natural or drilled source which

- a) has properties favourable to health because of its particular qualities, or
- b) contains in one kg, at its origin and after bottling, at least 1,000 mg of dissolved salts or at least 250 mg of free carbonic gas and which has favourable physiological properties.

The recognition of water as natural mineral water is a matter for the competent authority in the country of origin."

The new wording of the definition of natural mineral waters allowed the delegations of France and of the Federal Republic of Germany, which had entered reservations about the previous definition, to withdraw their reservations. The Committee noted that the new wording would facilitate international trade in the commodity since it involved that natural mineral waters, recognized as such by the competent authority in the country of origin, would be accepted in importing countries.

Paragraph 2

Although the Committee decided not to change this paragraph, it considered that it would be necessary to define more exactly the meaning of the word "decantation" for its next session. The delegation of Czechoslovakia maintained its reservation on this paragraph, in view of the fact that re-aeration is not permitted in Czechoslovakia.

Paragraph 3

The only change made by the Committee in this paragraph was to replace the words "of the source" in the first part of the sentence by the words "of the water". The delegation of Czechoslovakia maintained its reservation (see Paragraph 2).

Paragraph 4

No change was made in this paragraph. The French delegation maintained its reservation because the use of carbonic gas other than that of the source is prohibited in France for natural mineral water. The delegation of Czechoslovakia also entered a reservation.

Paragraph 5

No change was made in this paragraph.

Section II of the text

Production (exploitation) and hygiene

It was agreed that it would be necessary to insert a reference to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene at the beginning of this chapter in order to show that the provisions on food hygiene in the text must be endorsed by that Committee. The Committee also decided to delete the following sentence:

"The exploitation of a source of natural mineral water is subject to authorisation and examination by the competent authority". Apart from these two modifications, no other change was made in this chapter.

The WHO representative declared that a natural mineral water must fulfil the bacteriological requirements applicable to drinking water.

Section III of the text

Labelling (guarantee of genuineness)

It was agreed that it would be necessary to insert a reference to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling at the beginning of this section, in order to show that the provisions regarding labelling in the text must be endorsed by that Committee.

Paragraph 1

No change was made in this paragraph.

Paragraph 2

It was agreed that it would be necessary to envisage a fourth sub-paragraph (d), to provide for a reference to "decanted", if the product has been decanted, subject to finding another term which would express more precisely the meaning of the word "decanted".

The French delegation maintained its reservation regarding the optional provision "The date of authorization to commence production (exploitation) may also appear on the containers", in view of the fact that French legislation at present makes such an indication obligatory. As regards the optional provision "Information regarding properties favourable to health may also appear on the containers", it was agreed that this provision would have to be the subject of further comment. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany proposed that if advertising made reference to properties favourable to health, these should be confirmed by chemical tests on a sufficiently large sample, under the control of a physician with the necessary qualifications for this purpose, especially in balneology. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany added that these tests would have to be carefully entered in clinical observation reports with precise particulars of the methods used.

Paragraph 3

The Committee decided not to modify the text, but to envisage specific waivers limited in time and limited to countries of origin, in order to take established situations into account.

Paragraph 4

The Committee decided to delete the following part of this paragraph from the text of the draft standard:

"Terms such as: "digestive", "stimulates the appetite", "cleanses the kidneys", "diuretic", and all others of the same kind are prohibited. The use of the words "natural", "mineral", "thermal", "cure", "regimen", or derivations of these words, and use of the term "aerated with natural gas" is also prohibited". However, the Committee considered that these particulars should appear in the report, for explanatory purposes.

Section IV of the text

Use of mineral water in the manufacture of refreshing non-alcoholic drinks (soft drinks)

Apart from the deletion of the word "sweetened" (French version: French text referred to "sweetened refreshing non-alcoholic drinks"), no change was made in this paragraph. The French delegation maintained its reservation in view of the fact that under present French legislation mineral waters may not be used in the manufacture of soft drinks.

Remark on Section IV

The following remark on Section IV appeared in the text reviewed by the Committee: "Should it be decided to lay down standards for refreshing non-alcoholic drinks (soft drinks) within the framework of the Codex Alimentarius, the ways in which natural mineral water could be used in the manufacture of these products would have to be defined".

It was agreed that this remark, which was not discussed, should appear in the report and not in the draft standard.

5. Future action

The Committee noted that this report would be submitted to the next session of the Co-ordinating Committee for Europe to be held in Vienna, Austria, from 6 to 8 September 1967, as a progress report, and that the report, as well as any observations on it made by the Co-ordinating Committee for Europe, would be presented to the next session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Although the Committee considered that certain points of detail still required to be entered in the text, as, for example, the exact meaning of the word "decantation", it was nevertheless of the opinion that the text was sufficiently advance to be sent to governments for comments at Step 3 of the Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the elaboration of regional Codex standards. It was agreed that the President of the Committee would consult with the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to determine how best the drafting sub-committee could assist in the preparation of work to facilitate progress within the framework of the Codex procedure.

Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters
Second Meeting - Montreux, -6-7 July 1967

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman Prof. Dr. O. Hoegl, Comité national suisse du Codex Alimentarius,
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Proposed Draft Provisional Standard
for
NATURAL MINERAL WATERS

I. Definitions and Designations

1. "Natural mineral water is water from a natural or drilled source which
 - a) has properties favourable to health because of its particular qualities, or,
 - b) contains in one kg, at its origin and after bottling, at least 1,000 mg of dissolved salts or at least 250 mg of free carbonic gas and which has favourable physiological properties.

The recognition of a water as natural mineral water is a matter for the competent authority in the country of origin."

2. A natural mineral water may be called "naturally aerated" if, after decantation, and bottling, the proportion of carbonic gas from the source is the same as on emergence, taking into account the usual technical tolerances.
3. If, after decantation, and bottling, the content of carbonic gas in the water is not the same as on emergence, it must be called either "natural mineral water re-aerated with gas from the source", or "natural mineral water strengthened with gas from the source".
4. The addition of carbonic gas of another origin must be indicated by the word "aerated", to the exclusion of any statement as to the origin of the gas.
In this case, the water must be called "aerated natural mineral water".
5. The treatments provided for in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above may only be carried out on condition that the mineralization of the water is not modified in its essential constituents which give it its properties.

II. Production (exploitation) and hygiene requirements

Natural mineral water must issue from an underground water source.

The provisions on food hygiene set out in this Section must be endorsed by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.

The source or the point of emergence must be protected against risks of pollution.

The composition, the temperature, and generally the essential characteristics of the water must remain stable, in possible variations in flow not being able change them.

The installations intended for the production (exploitation) of natural mineral waters must be such as to exclude any possibility of contamination, and to preserve the properties of the water in conformity with its definition.

For this purpose and in particular:

1. The catchment, the pipes and the reservoirs must be made from materials suited to the water and in such a way as to prevent the incursion of substances foreign into this water.
2. The equipment and the use thereof for production (exploitation), especially installations for washing and bottling, must meet hygiene requirements.
3. The transport of natural mineral waters in mobile tankers for bottling or any other processing is prohibited.
4. If during production (exploitation) it is found that the water is polluted, the producer must eliminate the cause of pollution without delay.
5. The observance of the above provisions will be subject to periodic checks.

III. Labelling (guarantees of genuineness)

1. Natural mineral waters move in trade in containers equipped with suitable devices for closing them to avoid any possibility of falsification.
2. The provisions of the General Standard on the Food Labelling are applicable; the labelling provisions specifically concerning this product must be endorsed by the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

Containers shall bear the following statements:

- a) the designation "natural mineral water", accompanied by one of the complementary statements prescribed in Section I,
- b) the location of the source, the name of the source in the manner laid down in Section I, and possibly the brand,
- c) an inscription to identify the producer,
- d) the word "decanted", if the product has been decanted. 1/

The following particulars may also appear on containers:

- the date of authorization to commence production (exploitation)
- the results of analyses,
- statements concerning properties favourable to health.

1/ Subject to finding another term which would express more precisely the exact meaning of the word "decanted".

The use of any statement or of any pictorial device which may create confusion in the mind of the public about the nature, origin, composition and properties of natural mineral waters put on sale, is prohibited.

3. The name of a locality, hamlet or specified place may not form part of a brand, unless it refers to a natural mineral water (produced) exploited at the place designated by the brand.
4. Containers, commercial documents, and advertising of water for beverages which do not correspond to the definition of natural mineral water, may not bear any statement liable to create confusion with the latter.

In particular, no allusion may be made to properties favourable to health and to statements of analyses.

IV. The use of natural mineral water in the manufacture of refreshing non-alcoholic drinks (soft drinks)

1. The use of natural mineral water is permitted in the manufacture of soft drinks and may be mentioned, but without any reference to properties favourable to health.
2. The manufacture of these drinks, when they bear the name of a natural mineral water, may only be effected at the places where the natural mineral water is produced at the source.