

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 - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 2

CX/NE 17/09/02

May 2017

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NEAR EAST

Ninth Session

**FAO Headquarters
Rome, Italy, 15-19 May 2017**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON FOOD INTEGRITY / FOOD AUTHENTICITY

An overview from food quality and safety perspective in the framework of Codex

1. Food trade is an important source of income and employment for the countries of the Near East region. However, there is an increasing threat posed by the intentional adulteration of food for financial gain. Food fraud is an emerging issue that includes adulteration, deliberate and intentional substitution, dilution, simulation, tampering, counterfeiting, or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients, or food packaging; or false or misleading statements made about a product. This can have a negative impact on both quality and safety aspects of foods as well as the integrity of food preferences and cause significant negative ramifications in consumer confidence and on the standing and financial viability of food businesses.
2. In order to preserve the reputation of countries in the Near East as producers and suppliers of safe, high-quality and regionally unique foods, and also to prevent food non-compliant with national regulations from entering the market, there is a need to ensure food authenticity and integrity of food being traded. The maintenance of food integrity is also an important public good for the protection of consumers both within and outside of the region.
3. A coordinated approach is needed at the national and international level to ensure food integrity. Containment of food fraud is complex and requires a range of strategies and activities on the part of relevant authorities, including inspection and certification, traceability and enforcement of control measures in the food chain. Building on a strong regulatory foundation, uncovering fraudulent practices requires communication and intelligence, strategic regulatory programs, robust laboratory methodology, and effective enforcement practices.
4. Dr Chris Elliot, Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences of Belfast has been invited to give an overview of food integrity / food authenticity from a food quality and safety perspective and share his views on how CCNE Member States can work together to strengthen Codex work on this important topic and contribute to controlling fraud in the food chain.
5. Food fraud has also been identified in other Codex regional coordinating committees as a critical and emerging issue for food quality and safety. The Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) is currently discussing how to address food integrity / authenticity in the framework of food import and export inspection and certification schemes.
6. Using the keynote speech as a basis for discussion, members are invited to use the opportunity afforded by the regional coordinating committee to consider how they can work together to preserve and strengthen the reputation of food produced in the region by ensuring food integrity / food authenticity. Given the complex nature of the issue that often transcends national borders, it is fundamental that CCNE Members share their experiences and knowledge to better understand the issue and identify ways how to enhance food authenticity for the long-term betterment of the region.