

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2

CF11/CRD28

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

Eleventh Session

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 – 7 April 2017

To be held at the Windsor Marapendi Hotel, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Report on workshop on very low levels of chemicals in food (submitted by New Zealand).

The workshop began with an overview of the new work proposal and a presentation on principles and guidelines from across the Codex system that would help provide a framework for development. These included the need for measures to be risk-based and proportional to the assessed risk.

Risk assessment tools that are currently available to provide scientific advice to risk managers were then summarized. Among these, the TTC was shown to have been successfully applied to assessment of a several different types of chemicals in food.

Case studies from several countries illustrated several regulatory approaches to assessing and managing the inadvertent presence of low levels of chemicals in foods of interest. Risk assessment tools and general aspects of risk management were well illustrated.

General discussion followed. Given the possibility of a wide range of chemical contaminants falling under the umbrella of the new work proposal, others called for a clear description of scope. There was general accord that the guidelines should be non-prescriptive but should describe best practice for risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. It was recognized that guidelines of this sort were new to CCCF but common to other Codex committees.

The purpose of the new work was agreed as:

- To provide guidelines which will promote an internationally harmonised approach to addressing possible public health and trade issues arising from detections of low levels of chemicals inadvertently present in the food of interest.

The scope of the new work was agreed as:

- Chemicals* which are inadvertently present at low levels in the food of interest and are not subject to international recommendations or national legislation.
- Chemicals within the mandate of the CCCF and excluding chemicals fraudulently added to food

New Zealand, in summarising the preparatory work to date, emphasized that the CCEXEC and the CAC had agreed on the value of the work proposal last year and there had been considerable socialization with Members prior to this meeting of the CCCF. New Zealand hopes that the new work can commence as soon as possible.

Several delegations noted that the new work might provide a vehicle for international harmonization and promotion of the TTC as a scientifically substantiated and pragmatic risk assessment tool.