



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

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DEFINITION FOR READY-TO-EAT PEANUTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MAXIMUM LEVEL FOR TOTAL AFLATOXINS IN THIS PRODUCT

(Prepared by Electronic Working Group chaired by India)

Due to late receipt of the document, no Circular Letter will be issued at this stage.

1.1 BACKGROUND

1. At the 16th Session of the Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF16) (April 2023), India presented a proposal for establishment of Maximum Levels (MLs) for total aflatoxin (AFT) in Ready-to-Eat (RTE) peanuts and associated sampling plan.
2. There was general agreement that work should continue on developing MLs for AFT in RTE peanuts. However, comments were made requesting the precise meaning to RTE peanuts in the context of this work before proceeding on the development of MLs in order to clarify which data be considered by the Electronic Working Group (EWG).
3. The Committee noted the offer of members who were mainly importers of peanuts to submit recent data on AFT in RTE peanuts once there was clarity on a definition for RTE peanuts, also providing the country of origin so that it could be useful for looking into regional differences by the EWG.
4. The Committee therefore considered a proposal that work on the MLs could be undertaken in two stages over two years, first to address the definition of RTE peanuts, followed by the work on an ML for RTE peanuts based on an agreed definition, and associated sampling plans. It was also pointed out that there were already definitions for RTE dried figs and tree nuts in CXS 193-1995 and that if the definition for RTE peanuts would differ from the current definition in the CXS 193, then clear rationale or justification should be provided.
5. The Committee (CCCF16) agreed the following after deliberations:
 - (i) to re-convene the EWG, chaired by India, working in English, to work over the next two years on the ML for AFT in RTE peanuts and the associated sampling plan, as follows:
 - a) to prepare a proposal on a clear definition for RTE peanuts for the establishment of an ML for AFT in RTE peanuts and categorization of the occurrence data for consideration by CCCF17, working in close collaboration with the GEMS Administrator;
 - b) following discussion and agreement on the definition for RTE peanuts at CCCF17 and working closely with the EWG on data analysis to propose an ML for RTE peanuts and associated sampling plans for consideration by CCCF18.
 - (ii) the EWG should take into account the decision of CCCF15 as highlighted in REP22/CF15, paragraph 180(iii) in particular in relation to the data analysis and the need to have at least two rounds of comments each year in the EWG (REP22/CF15, paragraphs 170 and 177); and
 - (iii) to inform CCEXEC of the decision and request extension of the timeline for completion of work to 2025.

1.2 WORK PROCESS

6. The EWG was reconstituted inviting member countries and accordingly, 45 members from 24 countries conveyed their willingness to be part of EWG. The list of participants is provided in Appendix II. Based on the discussions held in the past Committees of Contaminants in Food, draft definition has been developed by India for Ready-to-Eat Peanut which was as follows:

RTE peanut includes raw shelled peanuts, raw in-shell peanuts, roasted in-shell peanuts, roasted/blanched shelled peanuts, fried shelled peanuts with or without skin, coated peanuts in all types of packaging (consumer or bulk) and any other products having preparation of more than 20% of peanuts.

7. The proposed definition was circulated among the member countries for their inputs. Inputs have been received from four members such as USA, Canada, Brazil and International Nut and Dried Fruit Council (INC) which have been examined carefully by India. Based on the inputs from the members, the definition has been revised covering wide variants of Peanut products as Ready-to-Eat. The revised definition is as follows:

Ready-to-Eat Peanuts is a product intended for direct human consumption, not intended to undergo an additional processing/treatment that has proven to reduce levels of aflatoxins, before being used as ingredients in foodstuffs, otherwise processed, packed in all types of packaging such as consumer or bulk, labeled as 'RTE Peanuts'. Includes, but not restricted to : (i) raw shelled peanuts, (ii) raw in-shell peanuts, (iii) roasted in-shell peanuts, (iv) roasted/blanched shelled peanuts, (v) fried shelled peanuts with or without skin, (vi) coated peanuts, (vii) seasoned peanuts, (viii) smoked peanuts, (ix) salted and cooked peanuts, (x) peanut butter.

1.3 KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

8. The proposed definition was shared with GEMS /Food Administrator for consensus and categorization of the available occurrence data. The primary analysis of GEMS/Food Administrator indicated that as per the definition provided, all peanuts spanning from raw in-shell peanuts are considered as ready-to-eat.
9. It has also been indicated by GEMS /Food Administrator that consequently, based on the decision of the EWG, the 'Unknown' status for peanuts intended for further processing does no longer exist in the database.
10. In addition, there is no local food name highlighting 'intended for further processing'.

	AFT (RTE)		AFB1 (RTE)	
	LB	UB	LB	UB
Count	77383		17231	
ug/kg	LB	UB	LB	UB
Median	2.0	3.3	0.0	1.0
Mean	8.7	9.0	4.2	4.6
P95	29.7	29.7	7.8	8.0

11. In order to conclude, there is no possible to compare, based on this analysis, AFT/AFB1 concentrations i) between RTE peanuts and ii) peanuts intended for further processing.

1.4 CONCLUSIONS

12. As a definition of Ready-to-Eat Peanuts is important for segregation of data, the proposed definition should be considered and agreed by CCCF in order to proceed with the development of ML for AFT in RTE Peanuts. The EWG requires to have specific data for analysis in line with the definition and therefore the GEMS/Food Administrator should be requested by CCCF17 to issue a "Call for Data" from both (i) producer and (ii) importing countries on the occurrence of AFT for defined RTE Peanuts. It is reminded that the members may submit AFT occurrence data for RTE Peanuts ensuring implementation of the Code of Practice (CoP) for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts (CXC 55-2004) as concluded at paragraph 115 by the CCCF18, REP18/CF.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

13. CCCF is invited to:

- consider and agree on the proposed definition for RTE Peanuts (Appendix I) taking into account the discussions and rationale of the EWG;
- request the GEMS/Food administrator to issue a call AFT occurrence data in RTE peanuts; and
- re-establish the EWG, chaired by India, to further elaborate the ML for AFT in RTE peanuts as defined (in accordance with phase 2 of the work on MLs for AFT in RTE peanuts).

APPENDIX I**(for comment through CL2024/4-CF)**

Ready-to-Eat Peanut is a product intended for direct human consumption, not intended to undergo an additional processing/treatment that has proven to reduce levels of aflatoxins, before being used as ingredients in foodstuffs, otherwise processed, packed in all types of packaging such as consumer or bulk, labeled as 'RTE Peanuts'. It includes but is not restricted to (i) raw shelled peanuts, (ii) raw in-shell peanuts, (iii) roasted in-shell peanuts, (iv) roasted/blanched shelled peanuts, (v) fried shelled peanuts with or without skin, (vi) coated peanuts, (vii) seasoned peanuts, (viii) smoked peanuts, (ix) salted and cooked peanuts, (x) peanut butter.

APPENDIX II**List of Participants****Chair**

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