

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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CL 2016/15-CS
May 2016

TO: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: Request for Comments: Report on the draft standard for non-centrifuged dehydrated sugar cane juice

DEADLINE: 10 June 2016

COMMENTS:

To:	Copy to:
Secretariat Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 Rome, Italy E-mail: codex@fao.org	Contact Point of Colombia Nutritional Health Branch, Food and Beverages Ministry of Health and Social Protection. E-mail: bolarte@minsalud.gov.co Copy to: jmunoz@mincit.gov.co

BACKGROUND

1. The draft Standard for Non-Centrifuged Dehydrated Sugar Cane Juice were issued for comments at Step 6 by Circular Letter CL 2015/19-CS.
2. The comments received in response to CL 2015/19-CS have been analysed by the Host Country Secretariat (Colombia), and their review and proposal document is contained in the Appendix. This document, together with comments received in response to this CL, will be considered by the 39th Session of the Commission.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

3. Comments are hereby requested on the conclusions and recommendations as presented in the Appendix.
4. Governments and international observer organizations wishing to provide comments should do so in writing **by e-mail** to the above addresses before 10 June 2016.

Appendix**DRAFT STANDARD FOR NON-CENTRIFUGED DEHYDRATED SUGAR CANE JUICE
REVIEW AND PROPOSAL DOCUMENT OF RESPONSES TO CL 2015/19-CS
(COMMENTS AT STEP 6)**

This document analyses the comments received at Step 6 on the draft Standard for Non-Centrifuged Dehydrated Sugar Cane Juice, in particular on some core sections of the standard as described below, and makes recommendations based on the analysis.

Comments were requested in [CL 2015/19-CS](#), and responses were received from six member states and one observer organisation¹. The comments in original language are available at:

ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/CCS/ccs8/Comments in reply to CL2015-19-CS_Compilation.pdf

REVIEW OF COMMENTS

Following the review of the latest comments received from the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in CL 2015/19-CS, and faced with the difficulty of reaching a consensus through correspondence on provisions considered as fundamental by member countries, Colombia, as host country of the Committee on Sugars of work by correspondence on the draft standard for “panela”, which is now known as “non-centrifuged dehydrated sugar cane juice”, informs the Commission of the following observations and proposal.

Although the latest comments received from Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, the United States of America, Philippines, Japan, Mexico and the European Committee of Sugar Manufacturers are centred on the aspects recommended in paragraph 48 of REP15/CAC and those requested in CL 2015/19-CS, such as the name of the product, scope, chemical characteristics, labelling and methods of analysis, some of the positions conveyed, especially on chemical characteristics, make the planning of a new proposal document difficult. For example:

Name of the product

Although there are still some reservations about the name of non-centrifuged dehydrated sugar cane juice, agreement could be reached if the process through which the end product passes is analysed and there is no intention of incorporating it as a common sugar. Even though the product originates from sugar cane, the proposal to name it as sugar, with a descriptive term related to its process, goes against the initial intention of the work proposed and approved by the Commission, which was to cover a product that is different in nature to sugar.

In the draft standard, the common names by which the product is known in the different regions are listed next to the name of the product. A more detailed review would be necessary to verify if one or two of the regional names requested for inclusion correspond in nature and composition to the product that is to be standardized.

Scope

It should be noted that although it is related to the name of the product, consensus could be reached if the product were also considered to be intended for purposes other than direct consumption, including catering, a term commonly used in Codex standards, as well as for pre-packaging or for subsequent processing.

Chemical characteristics: ash

From the comments received, only one delegation disagrees with this provision. It should be remembered that the minimum value for ash is intended to preserve the mineral content during processing, adding a nutritional differentiating factor to the processed food. These are minerals that are normally lost during the refining process of common sugar. A maximum value for ash content is not included in the draft standard, as requested by the same delegation. This is due to the high variability of soils where sugar cane is grown and the use of different fertilization schemes practised across the regions. What is sought is a differentiating minimum, that no member nor observer disagrees with.

Chemical characteristics: saccharose, reducing sugars

The content of sugars in the form of saccharose and reducing sugars are the requirements that generate the most comments. With the maximum value of 91 percent saccharose submitted as a proposal in the latest version of the draft standard, only one country stated that it did not agree with the provision. A lower content of saccharose, equivalent to 80 percent as suggested, would result in a higher value of reducing sugars to over 15 percent, which would complicate the appearance and preservation of the product, and lead to product degradation.

Alternatively, a very low value of reducing sugars would lead to a very high saccharose value, which would once again go against the product that was originally proposed and against reaching the right balance of components, compromising the intention of introducing a differentiating factor to enrich its nutritional value.

Given the previous considerations it is necessary to promote direct technical communication between the parties in order to reach a consensus on the composition of sugars in the final product.

Chemical characteristics: protein

The elimination of the requirement for protein content in the form of nitrogen in the product, as proposed by one delegation, also goes against the original intention of the work, which was to offer a nutritionally superior product. As in the previous section, it is necessary for the interested parties to analyse this aspect in greater detail, which is considered to be just as important for the draft standard.

In conclusion to this section on chemical characteristics, it would not be viewed kindly if, as one member country proposed, it were permitted to submit its product as an exception, as well as that of another member country, with significantly lower levels of reducing sugars and protein to those established for the product in general.

Labelling

Having reached consensus on the name of the product, the issue of labelling would follow accordingly, given that from the comments received it has been accepted that the name would be followed by the common name currently used in the country of origin or retail sale.

Methods of analysis

This aspect has two strands, one related to ICUMSA methods and the other to AOAC. In the latest version of the draft standard AOAC methods were submitted, however member country consensus on this issue is that proposed methods for the draft standard must pass through the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS), who will have the final word on the matter.

In line with previous approaches, and mediating a more detailed review between the interested parties on the aspects yet to be defined by the draft standard, we believe that the product can and should be standardized, thereby offering consumers food that satisfies new requirements and expectations, including nutritionally.

PROPOSALS

Taking into account that the aspects that are preventing consensus are few, but technically specific, meriting review and direct dialogue between the interested parties to achieve better understanding and real progress towards an agreement, Colombia, as host of the Committee on Sugars, recommends a physical meeting of the Committee on Sugars. In order to achieve this, Colombia formally requests that consideration be given to vital support from the Commission through the Codex Trust Fund or another multilateral financial mechanism to cover the incurred costs and expenses from holding a physical meeting.

Finally, Colombia states that at this time it is unable to offer any indication on the possibility of assuming some of the costs associated with holding the meeting. Colombia's course of action will depend on the Commission's decision on the raised proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission:

- **Note** the review and proposals presented in this document;
- **Note** that the comments submitted in response to CL 2015/19-CS highlight the continuing differences among members on the core issues relating to the name of the product, scope, chemical characteristics, labelling and methods of analysis;
- **Note** that these differences are the very same issues that have previously impeded advancement of the standard; and
- **Consider** the next steps in relation to this work taking into account the review and proposals presented in this document, the responses to [CL 2015/19-CS](#) and the discussion and recommendation made at CAC38 in relation to further work on this standard ([REP15/CAC](#), paragraph 48).

¹ Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, the United States and CEFS