

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
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Agenda Item 9

FH/47 CRD/4

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

### Forty-seventh Session

Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America, 9 – 13 November 2015

### REPORT OF THE PHYSICAL WORKING GROUP ON CCFH WORK PRIORITIES (PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK AND/OR REVISION OF EXISTING STANDARDS) (Prepared by the United States)

Ms. Jenny Scott, United States Delegate to the CCFH and Chair of the physical working group, opened the working group meeting by welcoming the delegates. The chair stated that the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the CCFH agreed to the forward work plan (Appendix VI, Rep 15/FH). The working group would use the *Process by Which the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene Will Undertake its Work* in ranking new work (see Appendix IX of Rep 14/FH). The chair noted that this process includes criteria and weighing values to be applied when considering new work proposals.

The chair noted the *Request for Proposals for New Work and/or Revision of Existing Standards* (CL 2015/17-FH) and the receipt of two project documents, specifically:

- The discussion paper and project document of France and Thailand to revise the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969) (GPFH) and its HACCP annex (See CX/FH 15/47/9).
- The discussion paper and project document of Brazil and France to revise the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 53-2003) (See CX/FH 15/47/8).

#### **The Revision of the General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and its HACCP Annex**

France acknowledged the co-chair Thailand and participants of the eWG for the input on the revision of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and its HACCP annex and presented the findings and the summary of the recommendations of the eWG. The recommendations included:

- Establish a new WG to revise the GPFH and its annex, with an introduction and keeping two distinct parts and seven HACCP Principles;
- Make the text simple, providing flexibility to small and medium enterprises and innovative processes, while achieving consumer safety;
- Consider a variety of issues, such as whether to include management aspects, primary production, and definitions for good hygiene practice, prerequisite programs, potable water, clean water, and others;
- Consider the need for a class of essential control measures (“key hygiene programmes”) for which management as CCPs presents challenges;
- Address the distinction between validation and verification; and
- Consider elaborating guidance on controlling chemical contaminants.

Most delegations agreed that the GPFH and its HACCP annex are very important documents and there is a need to revise the current GPFH and its HACCP annex. While some delegations would like to include management aspects in the revision, one delegation suggested the focus of the GPFH and its HACCP annex should be on hygiene and safety and not focus on managerial aspects. Some delegations considered that the project document as written was too prescriptive and should be more general. Several delegations preferred to keep the text of any revision as simple as possible to allow for flexibility in accommodating the different sizes and nature of food businesses. One delegation was unclear whether establishing guidance on chemical contaminants would be outside the scope of CCFH. The Codex Secretariat and the chair noted that HACCP is applicable to control chemical hazards. One delegation expressed the need for further clarification on potable water and clean water.

While the scope of work was proposed to be divided into three scheduled phases, the intention, as clarified by one delegation, is to adopt a final document as a whole, even if the work is done section by section. It was also noted that CCFH would need to address what aspects are appropriate for Codex guidance and what aspects are more appropriate for FAO/WHO guidance on implementation.

The chair stated that the revision of the GPFH and its HACCP annex is a massive undertaking. To accomplish the revision, one approach could be to create sub-groups to work on various aspects of this revision. The chair suggested that these sub-groups may serve as a training/mentoring opportunity for participating members.

The chair invited France to revise the project document with the input from the EU, the Codex Secretariat, FAO/WHO and other interested members and to present the revision at plenary.

#### Recommendation

The working group agreed to recommend to CCFH to revise the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and its HACCP annex and to give priority to this proposed new work over the revision of the *Code of Hygienic Practices for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 53-2003).

#### **The Revision of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003)**

Brazil acknowledged the co-chair France and participants of the eWG for the revision of the *Code of Hygienic Practices for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 53-2003) and presented the reasons for proposing this revision as new work.

Several delegations supported that this revision should be considered as new work. One delegation suggested that the issue related to the parameter of clean water should be considered at a later time, perhaps as an annex, to avoid delaying this code. Another delegation suggested that this revision should be treated as a new edition. The Codex Secretariat clarified that the revision will be published as a new edition of the code. One delegation questioned what aspects of the code would be amended as new work. The chair clarified that the code is more than a simple rearrangement of previous code and the information such as new definitions and new provisions would be new work. One delegation expressed concern that moving provisions designed for “high risk” fruits such as melons and berries to the main code actually changes the context of the code. The delegation suggested changing “delete redundancies/duplication” to “restructuring of the code” in the Purpose and Scope of the new work section of the Project Document.

#### Recommendation

The working group agreed to recommend to CCFH to revise the *Code of Hygienic Practices for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 53-2003).

#### **Verotoxigenic E. coli**

The chair noted that FAO/WHO would like to have more time in developing its scientific advice and that to do so the WG could consider requesting information in advance of developing a project document. While there is not yet a project document, interest has been expressed in doing work on verotoxigenic *E. coli*. The working group considered whether CCFH should seek scientific advice from FAO/WHO on verotoxigenic *E. coli*, which is one of the top ranking topics in the forward workplan.

Several delegations agreed that verotoxigenic *E. coli* is important to public health, with documented foodborne disease outbreaks, and there is a need to seek scientific advice proactively from FAO/WHO. Some delegations expected that a long timeline is needed to complete review of the extensive literature. Other delegations emphasized the need for data and scientific advice on this topic.

#### Recommendation

The working group agreed to recommend to plenary that CCFH consider requesting FAO/WHO to develop a literature review on verotoxigenic *E. coli*, which will allow CCFH to decide on whether to move forward with the development of a project document.

#### **Scientific Advice from FAO/WHO**

With respect to seeking scientific advice from FAO/WHO, it was noted that CCFH needs to provide a clearly defined scope for any work requested. It was also noted that when CCFH submits multiple requests for advice the requests need to be prioritized.

It was noted that the group revising the project document on the revision to the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and its HACCP annex would need to clarify the request in the project document for FAO/WHO advice.

## APPENDIX

## CCFH FORWARD WORKPLAN

Ranking	Title of Work	Last Revision	Currency of Information (Yes/No) <sup>1</sup>	Positive impact of new work on public health (Yes/No)	Project document/discussion paper (Yes/No)	Public Health Risk (20/14/8)	Trade Impact (10/5/4/2/0)	Comments	FAO/WHO assistance needed? (Yes/No)	Total
	General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 2003) Annex: Guidelines for the Application of HACCP Systems	2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	20	10		Yes	30
	Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003)	2013	No			20	10		No	30
	Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005)	2005	Yes	Yes	No	20	10			30
	Control of Verotoxigenic <i>E. coli</i> in Beef	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	20	10			30
	Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products (CAC/RCP 57-2004)	2009	No			14	10			24
	Development of an annex on tomatoes for the Code of	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	14	5			19

<sup>1</sup> Currency of information: Is there new information/data that would justify the need to review the existing code(s) or establish a new one? Are there new technologies that would justify the need to review existing codes or establish a new one? If there is an existing code in place and a determination is made that the code is sufficient, no new work should proceed.



Ranking	Title of Work	Last Revision	Currency of Information (Yes/No) <sup>1</sup>	Positive impact of new work on public health (Yes/No)	Project document/discussion paper (Yes/No)	Public Health Risk (20/14/8)	Trade Impact (10/5/4/2/0)	Comments	FAO/WHO assistance needed? (Yes/No)	Total
	Procedures for the Visual Inspection of Lots of Canned Foods for Unacceptable Defects (CAC/GL 17-1993) Code of Hygienic Practice for Canned Fruit and Vegetable Products (CAC/RCP 2-1969)	1969								
	Code of Hygienic Practice for the Storage of Cereals	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	8	5			13
	Development of an annex on carrots for the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003)	N/A	No			8	5			13
	Code of Hygienic Practice for Bottled/Packaged Drinking Waters (other than natural mineral waters)(CAC/RCP 48-2001)	2001	No			8	5			13
	Code of Hygienic Practice for Refrigerated	1999	No			8	5			13

Ranking	Title of Work	Last Revision	Currency of Information (Yes/No) <sup>1</sup>	Positive impact of new work on public health (Yes/No)	Project document/discussion paper (Yes/No)	Public Health Risk (20/14/8)	Trade Impact (10/5/4/2/0)	Comments	FAO/WHO assistance needed? (Yes/No)	Total
	Packaged Foods with Extended Shelf-life (CAC/RCP 46-1999)									
	Code of Hygienic Practice for the Processing of Frog Legs (CAC/RCP 30-1983)	1983	No			8	2			10