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Agenda Item 24

ALINORM 74/22(A)

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Tenth Session, Rome, 1-12 July 1974

REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING
Rome, 26-27 June 1974

1. The Ninth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, under the chairmanship of the Government of Canada, was held at FAO headquarters, Rome, on 26 and 27 June 1974. The session was opened by His Excellency the Ambassador of Canada to Italy, Mr. Klaus Goldschlag. Mr. G.O. Kermode, Chief, Food Standards and Food Science Service of the Food Policy and Nutrition Division, FAO, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Director-General of FAO and asked that the appreciation of both FAO and WHO be conveyed to the Canadian authorities for their generosity in hosting this meeting. Dr. D.G. Chapman, Assistant Director-General, Food Directorate, Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa, Canada, was Chairman of the session. Representatives and observers from 30 countries were present. Observers were present from 4 international organizations (see Appendix I for the List of Participants).

Adoption of the Agenda

2. The provisional agenda was adopted as presented in document CX/FL 74/1, with the exception that item 5(k) was deleted because the working paper on the subject was not available.

ENDORSEMENT OF LABELLING PROVISIONS IN CODEX COMMODITY STANDARDS

DRAFT STANDARD FOR TABLE OLIVES (ALINORM 74/21, App. V, Step 8)

Name of the Food

3. In connection with the Standard for Table Olives, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany raised the question of the location of the declaration of preservatives and suggested that when preservatives were used a declaration to this effect should appear in close proximity to the name of the product. After some discussion, the Committee agreed that this was a matter of general principle concerning not only preservatives but other classes of additives such as colours and flavours and it was decided to have a full discussion on this matter at the next session of the Committee.

Net Contents

4. The delegation of Cuba stated as a general point that the title in Spanish of this section of the standards had to be amended, using a more adequate expression, for example, "Contenido de los envases" (contents of containers). The delegation of Cuba further insisted that if the metric ("Système international" units) system was not to be used exclusively on the labels of products, there should be no limitation on the use of other systems of measurement, and that the use of the system of measurement most convenient to each country should be permitted. This question had already been raised at previous sessions of the Committee.

Optional Labelling

5. Some delegations questioned the necessity of retaining the section 8.6 which gave detailed examples of optional labelling, as in their opinion, it was redundant. It was pointed out that some of the optional labelling provisions appeared to be so similar to the mandatory provisions of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CAC/RS 1-1969) that they would tend to undermine the force of these mandatory provisions. The Committee, however, agreed that this section should be retained in the standard.

6. The labelling provisions in the Standard for Table Olives were endorsed.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR CANNED CORNED BEEF (ALINORM 74/16, App. II, Step 8)

Name of the Food

7. It was pointed out that the name 'corned beef' could only be used by itself when the product conformed to the compositional requirements of the standard. However, the Committee noted that the term 'corned beef' could be used in conjunction with a suitable qualifying term such as: "Corned beef with X" for products not covered by the standard (e.g. to which ingredients such as broth, gelatine, cereals, etc., were added) to ensure that such products could continue to be traded. The Committee suggested that they would like governments, when accepting the standard, to indicate the type of qualifying terms used.

Country of Origin

8. The Committee noted that the Commodity Committee had taken into account its suggestions relating to 'country of origin' as stated in para 13 of ALINORM 74/22 and agreed that the present section 6.5 was a clarification of the wording in the Recommended International General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods and related specifically to this standard.

Lot Identification

9. As a general point, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany indicated in connection with section 6.6 that the date of manufacture should be 'in clear' in order that it can be read by the consumer and that there should be some indication of the date after which the products are no longer stable. The delegation of Sweden considered that it should be clearly indicated that 6.6 did not deal with date-marking. The Committee agreed that this subject would be dealt with at its next full session.

10. The labelling provisions of the Standard for Canned Corned Beef were endorsed.

AMENDMENT TO THE STANDARD FOR CANNED PEACHES (ALINORM 74/20, App. IV, Step 8)

11. Considerable discussion took place regarding the declaration of "L-ascorbic acid as an antioxidant" and whether it should be declared in the list of ingredients or elsewhere. Some delegations felt that labelling provisions for the declaration of the various classes of food additives should be as uniform as possible and that the amendment should not be endorsed pending discussion in the next full session of the Committee. It was decided, however, to endorse the amendment as submitted. The delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom objected primarily to the inclusion of the words 'or elsewhere' as they considered that it might prejudice the eventual solution of the overall problem.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR YOGHURT (CX 5/70 - 16th Session, App. III-A, Step 5)

List of Ingredients

12. In accordance with the general principle that a complete list of ingredients should be required to be given on foods, a number of countries insisted that milk should be listed as an ingredient of yoghurt as well as the sugars mentioned in section 4.2, and the use of bacterial cultures should also be indicated on the label. In addition, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany requested that the quantity of added sugar should also be declared. This section of the labelling provisions of the Standard for Yoghurt was therefore not endorsed. However, the delegations of France, New Zealand, Switzerland and the Netherlands were of the opinion that the present section 4.2 was an adequately detailed listing for a food which the consumer recognized as being a cultured milk product. In view of the fact that yoghurt was often eaten for dietetic reasons, the delegations of Norway and Sweden considered that under section 4.1.4 the most important information for consumers was the declaration of the fat content and of the quantity of added sugars in terms of percentage.

Date Marking

13. It was also noted that the Joint FAO/WHO Committee of Government Experts on the Code of Principles concerning Milk and Milk Products had inserted a section on date marking but had not indicated how the product should be stored. The delegation of Sweden made the general point (which also applies to Flavoured Yoghurt) that this whole matter of storage instructions would be discussed next year and this section of the labelling provisions of the standard would therefore be subject to revision in the light of decisions made at that time.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR FLAVOURED YOGHURT (CX 5/70 -16th Session, App. III-B, Step 5)

Flavouring

14. The delegation of Poland, supported by other delegations, pointed out that there should be an explicit distinction between synthetic and natural flavourings in section 4.1.1. It was pointed out that this question of flavourings would be discussed at the next session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives. Furthermore, certain delegations felt that this general point should be covered by an amendment to section 3.2(c)(ii) of the Recommended International General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods to deal with synthetic flavourings which are equivalent to natural flavourings, natural flavourings and to truly artificial flavourings not found in nature as separate classes of additives. The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany was of the opinion that an indication of the quantity of the added flavouring foods or other flavouring substances should be made. The Committee endorsed the labelling provisions in the Standard for Flavoured Yoghurt and agreed to draw the above discussion to the attention of the Committee of Government Experts on Milk and Milk Products.

COMMENTS TO THE COMMITTEE OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS ON MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS CONCERNING THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR CHEESE (CX 5/70 -16th Session, App. IV-A, Step 5)

15. The following suggestions were made concerning the labelling aspects of the re-drafted General Standard for Cheese to serve as guidance to the Milk Committee on the provisions in the revised labelling section. It was suggested that, in accordance with the paragraph from Article 4 of the Code of Principles, a section be inserted in this standard ensuring the labelling of the source of the milk when it was not cow's milk. The declaration of the net weight of prepackaged cheese and a complete listing of ingredients should also be required on the label. There was also considerable discussion as to the desirability of labelling cheese in general as to fat content on a total weight basis. This proposal was supported by a number of delegations. Caution was urged, however, and it was subsequently pointed out that there were two reasons for the need for knowledge about fat content. One was for the benefit of the consumer in giving the absolute quantity of fat on a total weight basis. The other reason was that technologists preferred to express the fat content on the dry matter, in view of the fluctuation of the moisture content in cheese. It would perhaps be appropriate to give the consumer some information concerning the milk used for cheese-making, indicating whether the cheese has been prepared from whole milk or partly skimmed milk. It was recommended that the terminology of sections 4.2 and 4.4 concerning the name and address should follow that of the Recommended International General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods.

DRAFT GENERAL STANDARD FOR QUICK FROZEN FILLETS OF FLAT FISH (ALINORM 74/18A, App. II, Step 6)

16. The labelling provisions in the standard were endorsed by the Committee. Note was taken that the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products had considered storage instructions for these frozen products but had decided not to include a provision for such additional information in the draft standard. The suggestion was reiterated by the Food Labelling Committee that storage instructions were still needed for these products. The delegation of Switzerland stated that, in their opinion, the date the final product was packaged for final sale should be declared in clear.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR CANNED CRAB MEAT (ALINORM 74/18A, App. III, Step 6)

17. The labelling provisions of this standard were endorsed by the Committee.

OTHER DRAFT STANDARDS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

18. It was agreed that for the following standards the Committee should simply pass on the views of delegates to the appropriate Codex Commodity Committee.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR COOKED CURED HAM (ALINORM 74/16, App. III, Step 6)

19. In this connection, it was suggested that the list of ingredients be brought into line with the list in the Corned Beef Standard. It was also indicated that the use of the class name "phosphates" be continued in the labelling of this standard until a final decision was made on this as a class name for both meat and fish products. It was also recommended in the section on storage instructions (6.6) that a distinction be drawn between the recommended maximum temperature for the use of consumers and the maximum permissible temperature for the use of retailers and wholesalers. To remove the

contradiction as to the mandatory nature of the name of the food between sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.3, the word "if" should also be removed from the first sentence of section 6.1.3.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR COOKED CURED PORK SHOULDER (ALINORM 74/16, App. IV, Step 6)

20. The remarks under the paragraph above on Cooked Cured Ham also apply to this product.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR COOKED CURED LUNCHEON MEAT (ALINORM 74/16, App. V, Step 6)

21. The relevant comments on Cooked Cured Ham also apply to this product, and in particular the remarks concerning the list of ingredients and "phosphates" as a class name.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR FOODS FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN BASED ON CEREALS (ALINORM 74/26, App. VI, Step 5)

22. Although this standard is likely to be substantially amended at the next meeting of the Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses later this year, the main advice to be given concerns the way in which vitamins and mineral salts should be listed as ingredients. It was suggested that they might well be arranged as separate groups, the group for the vitamins and minerals not necessarily in descending order of proportion. A second point concerns the necessity for date marking of these products which are perishable and are used by a susceptible population (infants). It was suggested that sections 9.7 and 9.8 of this standard could suitably be modified to correspond with the equivalent sections on date marking in the Draft Standard for Infant Formula.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR GRAPE JUICE PRESERVED EXCLUSIVELY BY PHYSICAL MEANS (ALINORM 74/14, App. II, Step 6)

List of Ingredients

23. The question of nomenclature for reconstituted grape juice was raised. A number of countries indicated a preference for having the name "reconstituted grape juice" for this product more prominently displayed than in the list of ingredients. After considerable discussion, it was suggested that section 7.2.2 be modified to read as follows: "In the case of grape juice entirely made from concentrates the fact of re-constitution shall be declared on the label as follows: 'grape juice made from concentrate' or 'reconstituted grape juice' or 'grape juice made from concentrated grape juice'."

Net Contents

24. As a general point for all standards sold by fluid measure, the delegation of the United Kingdom stated that the section on net contents (7.3 in this standard) should be modified by the following addition: "for British units, units of capacity measurement shall be used", thus avoiding the implication that the volume units (cubic inches) should be used and clearly indicating the use of capacity units (fluid ounces).

Additional Requirements

25. The delegation of Switzerland pointed out that the French word for carbonated (carbonaté) was incorrect and should be replaced by the word "gazéifié".

26. The delegation of the Netherlands stated, as a general point, that all Commodity Committees should consider the possibility of including a provision for lot identification in their standards.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR CONCENTRATED GRAPE JUICE PRESERVED EXCLUSIVELY BY PHYSICAL MEANS (ALINORM 74/14, App. III, Step 6)

27. In view of the fact that the concentrate could not technically be carbonated to give a reconstituted carbonated product, section 6.2 should be deleted. Concerning section 7.6.3, the statement should be modified to read "no fruit or fruit juice may be represented pictorially on the label except grapes or grape juice of the variety included therein". It was also pointed out that section 7.7 on how to reconstitute the juice should be separated into two parts; one for the information of the consumer and the other part on commercial documents specially for the information of the industry and the trade.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR SWEETENED CONCENTRATED LABRUSCA TYPE GRAPE JUICE PRESERVED EXCLUSIVELY BY PHYSICAL MEANS (ALINORM 74/14, App. IV, Step 6)

28. The main suggestion concerning this product was the general one relating to the declaration of L-ascorbic acid as an antioxidant (see para 11 above).

DRAFT STANDARD FOR CHOCOLATE (ALINORM 74/10, App. IV, Step 6)

29. In connection with section 7.4.2, the delegations of Sweden and the U.S.A. indicated that the size of small units not requiring declaration of net weight should be 25 g rather than 50 g in the interests of the consumer.

DRAFT STANDARD FOR COCOA BUTTER (ALINORM 74/10, App. III, Step 6)

30. The question raised here was why the Recommended International General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods should apply to this product which was not sold in retail. It was pointed out that the labelling information was required for the documents accompanying bulk packs (section 7.5) and that the Committee considered that this would assist the trade. It was also pointed out that section 7.4.2 should be deleted since the processes anticipated for this product (refining and deodorizing) should not be considered as changing its nature.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR PINEAPPLE JUICE PRESERVED EXCLUSIVELY BY PHYSICAL MEANS (ALINORM 74/14, App. V, Step 5)

31. As well as the applicable general remarks already recorded above, the United Kingdom indicated that it would prefer to allow for the term "sweetened pineapple juice" as well as "pineapple juice with sugar" and in section 7.7 the provision of information for bulk packs should be made mandatory by changing the word "should" into "shall".

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR CANNED MATURE PEAS (ALINORM 74/20, App.X, Step 5)

32. It was agreed that the positioning of the reference to authorize colours in section 7.1.5 should likewise be the subject of the general decision to be made concerning the positioning of such declarations at the next meeting of this Committee (see para 11 above). It was also considered that for this product, the country of origin should be the country of processing and thus section 7.5(b) should be deleted.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR QUICK FROZEN SHRIMPS AND PRAWNS (ALINORM 74/18A, App. III, Step 5)

33. The general comments made on frozen fish products, in this meeting, also apply to this product.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR QUICK FROZEN FILLETS OF HAKE (ALINORM 74/18, App. V, Step 5)

34. In analogy with the Draft Standard for Frozen Fillets of Cod and Haddock and earlier general remarks, revisions should be made in the labelling requirements of this standard and in particular the lot identification will be made mandatory by replacing the word "may" with "shall" in section 6.6.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

35. The Committee agreed that the next session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling would be a five-day meeting to be held in Ottawa, Canada, from 26 to 30 May 1975. As well as endorsements, guidelines for claims (including definition of terms) and for date marking and storage, and the labelling of bulk containers would be examined. Government comments on nutritional labelling and the harmonization of non-technical details would also be studied as well as certain problems raised at this year's meeting such as the location and use of class names for certain additives. The meeting would be conducted in English, French and Spanish.

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