

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 8(a)

CX/MMP 00/18

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

Fourth Session

Wellington, New Zealand, 28 February - 3 March 2000

PROPOSAL FOR NEW STANDARD FOR “PARMESAN”

Governments are invited to comment on whether or not a standard for Parmesan is necessary. Comments should be sent to:

Ms Debra Tuifao,
Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products
MAF Policy, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
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with a copy to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy **not later than 23 January 2000.**

BACKGROUND

At its Second Session the Committee considered a proposal to elaborate a new individual cheese standard for “Parmesan” and requested Germany, in collaboration with France and IDF, to identify product(s) in question and to prepare a paper on trade statistics and justification for the elaboration of the standard for consideration by the Committee at its Third Session. Due to time constraints, however, the Committee was unable to consider a paper prepared by Germany¹ and agreed to include it on the agenda of its Fourth Session. The content of CX/MMP 98/11 is reproduced below.

INTRODUCTION

The German delegation presented the “Parmesan” proposal to the Committee in view of the fact that there is considerable international trade in cheese under this denomination. Parmesan is a generic name, but there is no clear definition of the product at international level.

Parmesan is traded in the form of loaf hard cheese, grated hard cheese and mixtures of different grated cheese varieties. To protect consumers from deception and to ensure fair border-crossing trade, the accepted views and product regulations of the individual countries should be harmonized in one standard.

Such a standard worked out on the basis of the currently prevailing economic realities would facilitate international trade because the requirements in terms of composition and quality of Parmesan cheese would be defined.

¹ CX/MMP 98/11.

The situation characterized by ambiguity and lack of transparency is reflected in statistical surveys. Parmesan cheese, in the majority of countries, is not recorded as a separate item; but the data concerning Parmesan are covered by the headings “hard cheese” or “grated cheese” or just “cheese in general”. Because of a lack of clear and uniform assignment of Parmesan to the official production and trade statistics, the German delegation cannot provide any statistical data from official sources on the production and marketing of Parmesan at international level.

However, the German delegation received the following information from the International Dairy Federation:

a) Furnished date (1995)

	Name of countries		In total
	Trade Regions	Countries	
Manufacturing countries	NAFTA: MERCOSUR: Other Latin America: EC: Non-EC Europe: Africa: Middle East: South East Asia: East Asia: Pacifics:	Canada, USA Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands South Africa Australia, New Zealand	11
Countries in which cheese is consumed	NAFTA: MERCOSUR: Other Latin America: EC: Non-EC Europe: Africa: Middle East: South East Asia: East Asia: Pacifics:	Canada, USA Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom South Africa Iran Japan Australia, New Zealand	19
Countries regulating the cheese by a legal standard	Australia, Canada (composition only), Italy, New Zealand (composition only), South Africa, USA		6
Production volume	at least 64,620 tonnes		
Export volume	at least 11,577 tonnes		

b) Assessment of justification

	Criteria:	Comments:	Conclusion:
Q1	Minimum 6 countries manufacture the cheese	Parmesan is manufactured in at least 11 countries.	Proceed to Q2
Q2	The global production volume is at least 10,000 tonnes	The volume of production of the 11 countries manufacturing the cheese is estimated to total at least 64,000 tonnes	Proceed to Q3
Q3	The volume moving into international trade is at least 7,000 tonnes	The exports of the 11 countries manufacturing the cheese are estimated to total at least 11,000 tonnes.	The establishment of a Codex standard for Parmesan is justified.