

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

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Agenda Item 3b



World Health
Organization

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

14th Session

Port Vila, Vanuatu, 19 - 22 September 2016

PRIORITIZATION OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THEM

(prepared by FAO and WHO)

Introduction and Background

1. The paper follows from the summary and analysis of critical and emerging food safety and quality issues in agenda item 3a, CX/NASWP 16/14/3 and is to promote discussion by the Committee in order to;
 - i. comprehend and further explore the priority issues highlighted in the responses to the questionnaire on critical and emerging food safety and quality issues and;
 - ii. consider and recommend appropriate follow up action, which may occur at national, regional or international levels.
2. The CCNASWP provides an important platform for collaboration between Members and prioritization of interventions across the region.
3. The outcome of the discussion will be documented in the Committee report, with a focus on issues and approaches to follow up action and solutions.

Priority critical and emerging food safety and quality issues

4. With reference to agenda item 3a, Table 4, the most frequently cited combined critical and emerging issues from the collective feedback, and the frequency of each are;
 - Robust national food control systems (9)
 - Issues related to food supply (9)
 - Issues related to climate change (8)
 - Food safety capacities, awareness, training and education (7)
 - Nutrition challenges (7)
5. As indicated in Table 4 CX/NASWP 16/14/3, this combined priority listing of critical and emerging issues differs from the priority issues and ranking given to “critical issues” and “emerging issues” when viewed separately.
 - a. Priority critical issues include the same issues except, “Issues related to climate change”, are not included, and instead “Trade-related issues” are cited.
 - b. Priority emerging issues include the same issues, except “robust national food control systems” and “food safety capacities, awareness, training and education” are not included, and instead “issues related to scientific and technical innovation”, “trade-related challenges” and “changing attitudes of consumers” are cited.
6. Detailed explanations of the issues are provided in Annex 2 of CX/NASWP 16/14/3.
7. A number of critical and emerging issues are affecting the way food safety authorities manage food safety risks. Food safety authorities in the CCNASWP region are addressing the identified issues in line with their country context, capacity and resource availability.

8. Food safety is a multisectoral challenge and effective coordination and collaboration across sectors and national borders is needed.

Recommendations for discussion on critical and emerging issues

9. The Committee is encouraged to begin the discussion on these priority issues highlighted most frequently, when critical and emerging are combined. This should not limit the Committee in picking up some less highly ranked critical or emerging issues that they may also wish to discuss.

10. To support the discussion, the Committee is asked to reflect prior to CCNASWP on the importance of the issues to your country and the region, and identify any suitable and feasible follow up action that might be needed (within or outside of Codex). In doing so, member countries may want to consider:

- i. Sharing information during CCNASWP on the relevance of the issue to your country and the region. This may include sharing experiences on how an issue is being addressed, and providing input to the discussion on best practices or lessons learned.
- ii. Updating the Committee on any ongoing activity in your country and the region relevant to the priority issues;
 - o If one or more issue(s) is currently being addressed through government initiatives
 - o If one or more issue(s) is currently being addressed through an ongoing FAO, WHO or bilateral capacity development programme
- iii. Whether one or more issue(s) merits any additional follow up action such as;
 - o Whether this issue requires any work through Codex?
 - o Whether a direct activity to be carried out by your government (with industry or consumers if relevant)
 - o Whether support of one or more issues(s) is needed through ongoing and/or future capacity development from FAO, WHO or bilateral organisations
- iv. Issues not requiring action now that should be monitored to see how they evolve.

11. For the identified critical and emerging issues, CCNASWP may want to consider identifying specific priority action that can be implemented at national level.

12. Considering country specific contexts, member countries may want to identify the most appropriate stakeholder(s) at country level to implement the identified priority action as well as possible technical support from FAO and WHO.

Conclusion

13. Based on comments of Members, CCNASWP is encouraged to identify and propose suitable and feasible follow up actions and approaches to address the identified priority issues for the region.

14. The discussion, including reporting on initiatives and activities to address priority critical and emerging issues, will be a standing item on the agenda for CCNASWP.