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Agenda Item 4.3

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-sixth Session

WORK FROM THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE (CCFH) FOR ADOPTION OR APPROVAL BY THE COMMISSION

1. The Commission is invited to adopt the standards and related texts submitted for final adoption. The relevant texts from CCFH are listed in **Part 1** of this document.
2. Comments received regarding standards and related texts from CCFH submitted for adoption are contained in CX/CAC 23/46/5 Add.1.
3. The Commission is furthermore invited to approve new work proposals from CCFH. These are listed in **Part 2** of this document, including the reference of the project document in the relevant report. The project documents are also compiled in this document for ease of reference and to ensure availability in all six languages. The Commission is invited to consider these proposals in the light of its *Strategic Plan 2020-2025* and the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* and *Criteria for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*.
4. The critical review of these texts was undertaken by the 84th Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC84).

Part 1 – Standards and related texts submitted for final adoption

Codex body	Standards and Related Texts	Reference	Job No.	Step
CCFH	Guidelines for the control of Shiga Toxin-Producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> (STEC) in Raw Beef, Fresh Leafy Vegetables, Raw Milk and Raw Milk Cheeses, and Sprouts (General Section, Annex I on raw beef and Annex III on raw milk and raw milk cheeses)	REP23/FH, Paragraph 75, Appendix III	N02-2019	5/8
	Guidelines for the Safe Use and Reuse of Water in Food Production and Processing (General Section and Annex I)	REP23/FH, Paragraph 124, Appendix IV	N05-2020	5/8

Part 2 – Proposals to undertake new work or revise a standard

Codex body	Text	Reference and project document
CCFH	New work proposal on the development of Guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REP23/FH, Appendix V • Annex I of this document
CCFH	Proposed Revision of the <i>Guidelines on the Application of the General Principles of food Hygiene to the control of Pathogenic Vibrio Species in Seafood</i> (CXG 73-2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REP23/FH, Appendix VI • Annex II of this document

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Development of Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets for Food

(For approval)

1. Purpose and Scope of the Standard

Proposed new work to develop Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets for Food would provide national and local governments worldwide with relevant advice to ensure that traditional markets for food are designed and managed effectively to promote food safety for the food sold in the markets. The proposed global guidelines would be informed by four regional guidance for street-vended food that have content on the management of markets and could also provide food business operators with advice on food handling, health and hygiene relevant to ensuring the safety of food sold in the markets.

Traditional markets for food have many names around the globe. In some areas they are called street food markets, local markets, public markets, municipal markets, open air markets and farmers' markets. Traditional markets for food are dedicated spaces for consumers, food retailers and wholesalers to purchase food for home preparation, and other food processing. Markets frequently also have street-vended food available for sale and consumption.

Traditional markets for food need focused attention and support if they are to improve food safety. In addition to being an important food source, markets are community gathering areas and an ideal place for sharing food safety, nutrition and community health information. Having a normative global exercise to update and harmonize guidelines will equip stakeholders (regulators, vendors, FBOs, consumers) to strengthen capacities in those markets so they can provide safer food, market access, and help in delivering the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This was recognized by the World Health Organization in its Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030, which says, "Developing guidance and scale-up plans to improve the safety of food traded in traditional food markets is a priority."¹

2. Relevance and Timeliness

Street-vended foods are defined by Codex as "ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later time" (see Guidelines and Codes of Practice described in section 6). Codex Guidelines and Codes of Practice also provides definitions for "Street Food Centers" and "Street Food Stalls" as the places where street foods are prepared, displayed, served and sold to the public. The term "Traditional markets," is broader, and used to describe dedicated spaces where consumers, food wholesalers and retailers can purchase fresh food for home preparation. They also frequently allow vendors to sell street-vended prepared food.²

Traditional markets for food in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) play a critical role in food security and nutrition. In some regions, researchers estimate that up to 85% of food is purchased in those markets.³ They are a particularly important source for lower-income and food insecure populations to access fresh, highly nutritious foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables. They also provide hotels, local and international food companies with ingredients for the food they produce. Most of the small exporters source their products from the traditional markets and they find their way to international trade.

However, these markets frequently lack the infrastructure and hygienic conditions needed to ensure food safety. These markets can be especially risky for foodborne hazards.

¹WHO global strategy for food safety 2022–2030: towards stronger food safety systems and global cooperation. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022.

² DeWaal et al; Regional Codex Guidelines and *Their Potential to Impact Food Safety in Traditional Food Markets*; J Food Prot (2022); <https://doi.org/10.4315/JFP-22-052>.

³ Anenu, Kebede, Researcher, ILRI/Addis Ababa University, oral remarks at the International Association of Food Protection, August 2022. See also Tschirley, D., Reardon, T., Dolislager, M., & Snyder, J. (2015). The Rise of a Middle Class in East and Southern Africa: Implications for Food System Transformation: The Middle Class and Food System Transformation in ESA. *Journal of International Development*, 27(5), 628–646. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3107>.

This is due to poor market infrastructure, including limited access to potable water, poor hygienic conditions, and poor storage practices, among others.⁴

While four regional committees considered the food safety issues of street-vended foods, their scope has not addressed the hygienic conditions of traditional markets generally. While the content of the regional guidance is useful, it does not cover all aspects of market operations, with variability in coverage from region to region. Given the global burden of disease estimates of 600 million consumers a year, the need to improve conditions in traditional markets is acute. Given the importance of traditional markets for food in many areas of the world, global guidance would be very timely, and provide important health protection to consumers. As food security is of paramount importance for countries, updated and harmonized guidance to address food hazards will provide incentives for governments to address conditions in and modernize existing traditional markets.

3. Main aspects to be covered

Appropriate food safety regulation, inspection and enforcement in traditional markets for food have an important role in preventing and controlling foodborne and zoonotic diseases, improving health, enhancing food security and strengthening the economy. The proposed Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets for Food would be developed by the Committee, using a process to identify the relevant food safety topics from the existing Codex guidelines and codes of practice for street-vended foods. A 2021 comparative review of the regional guidance found there are many common food safety content areas and also gaps in the existing regional guidelines.⁵ The common areas relevant and important to harmonized global guidelines for traditional markets for food include:

- **Policy and regulation** Common topics include the roles of stakeholders and authorities; regulation and monitoring of markets; and registration of vendors.
- **Market infrastructure** Common topics include design and infrastructure of markets; and maintenance and sanitation in markets.
- **Food handling** Common topics include food sourcing and handling in markets; requirements for food preparation; and protection and sale of ready-to-eat food.
- **Personal health and hygiene of market participants.**
- **Training and education.**

In addition to this relevant content, WHO and FAO have published recommendations for governments on their oversight of traditional markets. This advice could also inform harmonized global guidelines for traditional markets for food.

4. Assessment against the Criteria for the establishment of work priorities

4.1 The text needs to be revised in order to meet the General criterion: Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and considering the identified needs of developing countries.

Traditional markets for food provide consumers with both the ingredients for preparing meals at home and also fully prepared and ready-to-eat foods. The conditions at the markets, including access to clean water, waste management and proximity to live animals, can lead to the spread of food pathogens and unsafe food handling. Conditions and practices that promote food safety are vital for both raw ingredients and prepared foods.

⁴ Alves da Silva, S., Cardoso, R. de C. V., Góes, J. Â. W., Santos, J. N., Ramos, F. P., Bispo de Jesus, R., Sabá do Vale, R., & Teles da Silva, P. S. (2014). Street food on the coast of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil: A study from the socioeconomic and food safety perspectives. *Food Control*, 40, 78–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2013.11.022>

Cortese, R. D. M., Veiros, M. B., Feldman, C., & Cavalli, S. B. (2016). Food safety and hygiene practices of vendors during the chain of street food production in Florianópolis, Brazil: A cross-sectional study. *Food Control*, 62, 178–186. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2015.10.027>

Gadaga, T. H., Samende, B. K., Musuna, C., & Chibanda, D. (2008). The microbiological quality of informally vended foods in Harare, Zimbabwe. *Food Control*, 19(8), 829–832. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2007.07.016>

Muyanja, C., Nayiga, L., Brenda, N., & Nasinyama, G. (2011). Practices, knowledge and risk factors of street food vendors in Uganda. *Food Control*, 22(10), 1551–1558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodcont.2011.01.016>

⁵ DeWaal et al; *Regional Codex Guidelines and Their Potential to Impact Food Safety in Traditional Food Markets*; *J Food Prot* (2022); <https://doi.org/10.4315/JFP-22-052>.

Traditional markets for food are an important source of nutritious and culturally appropriate food contributing to food security for billions of people all over the world. The markets also have a critical social function as settings where people purchase their food and meet with others. They provide a source of income for the community and attract tourists.⁶ Considering street food alone, an estimated 2.5 billion people eat street food worldwide every day. It is a source of income for a vast number of people, particularly women.⁷

In addition to providing guidance for governments, some of the regional codes of practice have useful advice for small and/or less-developed food businesses in both developed and developing countries. This objective should be retained in the new work.

4.2 Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade

While there is not a survey of national legislation on traditional markets, the gaps evident in the regional guidelines for street-vended foods are indicative of gaps that may exist in national legislation. For example, the Latin America Code of Practice has specific details on food handling relevant to street-food vendors but lacks infrastructure requirements for the markets.

4.3 Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field

The World Health Organization published its Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022- 2030 and identified traditional markets for food as an important area of focus. It says, ‘Developing guidance and scale-up plans to improve the safety of food traded in traditional food markets is a priority.’ In addition, the Global Strategy recognizes the role that Codex standards play in helping national governments develop effective food safety programs: “Member States should promote the uptake of Codex standards within domestic legislation, setting public health goals that the food industry can use as a benchmark when bringing innovation and economic change to sustainable national food systems. Member States should also consult the guidance from Codex standards to improve food safety by implementing measures to improve food hygiene and food handling,

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition has undertaken research on the normative standards that apply to traditional markets for food, including a comparative review of the four regional texts on street-vended food. It also examined WHO and FAO documents that can inform the Committee’s work on traditional markets, including those developed during COVID to address conditions in markets that handle live animals.⁸

4.4 Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization

The four regional guidance for street-vended food provide many areas of overlap that indicate that global standardization would be achievable.

4.5 Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue

Traditional markets for food exist all over the world and provide affordable fresh food for millions of consumers globally. In low- and middle-income countries, traditional markets for food can be the primary source of household foods, and they provide employment for many in the community. For consumers living in low- and middle-income countries, traditional markets are frequently their primary source of fresh foods, like meat, fish, fruits, and vegetables.

Markets that sit near country borders often sell foods to consumers, retailers and wholesalers on both sides of the border, so they are a source of food in regional trade. In addition, many fruits, spices, nuts and grains can enter international trade, as the markets are a source of products for commercial food processors and distributors. Examples of foods that might be sourced from traditional markets for food that enter international trade include frozen and dried fruits, vegetables, nuts, spices and grains. Lack of hygienic conditions in the market can impact the safety of all those foods.

The proposed Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets for Food, as a harmonized global standard, could give governments relevant guidance on the market conditions and practices that can improve food safety and provide more efficient food control.

5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives

The proposed work directly relates to the following Codex Strategic Goals from the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1 Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner

⁶ FAO and WHO World Food Safety Day Poster on traditional markets for food

⁷ FAO and WHO World Food Safety Day 2022 Poster on street food vending

⁸ See <https://www.gainhealth.org/resources/reports-and-publications/regional-codex-guidelines-and-their-potential-impact-food-safety>. This research was also adapted for the Journal of Food Protection, previously cited.

COVID 19 illustrated the importance of addressing conditions in traditional markets for food, where food, people and animals all come together. Codex, through its regional Committees, has never directly addressed food safety issues in traditional markets, though its work on street-vended foods does indirectly provide some guidance in this area.

Goal 2 Develop standards based on science and Codex risk-analysis principles

Risk analysis as it applies to food safety across the food chain is an internationally accepted discipline and forms an integral part of any well-designed food safety control system. Through an active involvement of scientific and technical experts from many Codex members and observers we aim for a harmonized global standard addressing developments in the field of food safety risk management as they apply to traditional markets.

Goal 3 Increase impact through the recognition and use of Codex standards

By creating standards of importance for many countries in managing domestic food trade, Codex will increase its relevance to low- and middle-income countries where traditional markets for food play a vital role in food distribution.

Goal 4 Facilitate the participation of all Codex Members throughout the standard setting process

Development of harmonized guidance for traditional markets has already generated support from countries in three Codex regions. The new work should generate great interest and broad participation from all members, with the objective to produce a user-friendly document that could be adopted and enforced as widely as possible. It provides specific attention to the food safety activities of small enterprises and to developing countries.

Goal 5 Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals

More expeditious and efficient work by Codex is necessary to provide members and international organizations with the standards, guidelines, and recommendations that they need. During the development of this harmonized guideline, all working documents and electronic discussions will be distributed in a timely and transparent manner, using web-based technologies available freely to all.

This strategic goal is one of the core objectives of the Committee for Food Hygiene, as it will provide a solid ground for all Codex works related to food hygiene in traditional markets.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

While there are four separate Codex regional guidance on the regulation of street-vended foods, there is no guidance specific to traditional markets for food where both raw and prepared foods are often sold at the same location. Taken as a group, the regional guidance on street-vended foods has significant information relevant to the regulation of traditional markets for food. However, taken individually, gaps in each of the Codex documents show that global guidance is needed.

The regional guidance is listed below:

- *Regional Guidelines for the Design of Control Measures for Street-Vended Foods (Africa) (CXG 22R-1997)*
- *Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Foods (Latin America and the Caribbean) (CXC 43R-1995)*
- *Regional Code of Practice for Street-Vended Foods (Near East) (CXC 71R-2013)*
- *Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for Street-Vended Foods in Asia (CXC 76R-2017)*

Many of the topics covered in the four regional guidance for street-vended foods are relevant to traditional markets for food, and many food safety topics overlap. But the approach varies widely between the regional guidance. For example, the African Guidelines contains specific advice on market infrastructure and cleaning practices; whereas the Latin American Code of Practice contains minimal content in those areas but has the most comprehensive information on the handling of raw foods in the market. Each of the regional guidance has content that should be considered in developing a uniform Codex text to cover the broader topic of traditional markets for food.

The proposed Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets for Food will provide advice on food safety regulation and oversight activities relevant to traditional markets for food where both raw and prepared foods are often sold. It would be informed by the existing regional guidelines described above that cover street-vended foods and can co-exist with that guidance if the Committee chooses.⁹

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

The FAO and WHO could facilitate this effort by reviewing their recommendations related to traditional markets for food and determining if there is useful information to address food safety that should be considered by the Committee. Also, a number of Codex observer organizations are willing to provide their expertise to aid in improving the content of the document or to make it easier to use.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

Technical input is expected from Codex observer organizations, including the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and the Consumer Foods Goods Forum. Such input is important as these organizations would be among the organizations that would be advocating for and applying harmonized guidance.

9. The proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission

Subject to the approval of the 46th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 2023, the aim will be to complete the work within three sessions of CCFH, i.e., by CCFH56 for submission for final adoption to CAC.

⁹ We note some of the regional guidance have not been updated recently (e.g., the Africa Guideline was last updated in 1997; the Latin American Code of Practice was updated in 2001).

PROJECT DOCUMENT
REVISION OF THE GUIDELINES ON THE APPLICATION OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE TO THE CONTROL OF PATHOGENIC VIBRIO SPECIES IN SEAFOOD (CXG 73-2010)

(For approval)

1. Purpose and Scope of the Standard

The purpose of the work is to revise and update the *Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the control of pathogenic Vibrio species in seafood* (CXG 73-2010) to provide risk management options based on the latest scientific advice from FAO/WHO and to incorporate some relevant aspects of the revision of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969).

The intended scope of the guidelines will not be changed from the original guidelines.

2. Relevance and Timeliness

An FAO/WHO expert working meeting¹⁰ held in 2019 noted several critical developments in the last decade: 1) The emergence of highly pathogenic strains, in particular the Pacific Northwest (PNW) *V. parahaemolyticus* strain (ST36), which have spread to the East coast of the United States of America, Europe, South America, and New Zealand. The pandemic spread of these highly pathogenic strains is of global concern for seafood safety. 2) In response to climate change, there has been a significant geographical spread regarding where seafood-associated vibrio infections have been reported, with a general trend in the poleward spread of *V. parahaemolyticus* and *V. vulnificus* cases. Over the last decade in particular, there has been an increase in reported illnesses as well as the geographical spread of foodborne infections associated with these bacteria into regions where reported infections were previously absent. 3) Globally, an increased at-risk population, increased population densities in coastal regions and improvements in diagnosis of infections may also have played a role in accentuating reported cases. 4) A range of new approaches for best practice, such as high-pressure treatment, harvesting curfews, relaying and temperature controls appear to offer effective and cost-effective approaches for reducing human health risks postharvest associated with these pathogens. Finally, 5) a range of new methods, such as those utilizing genomics and satellite imagery, provide novel means of complementing approaches outlined in previous risk assessment exercises for these globally important foodborne pathogens. New scientific information provided by FAO/WHO justify the need and timeliness of the revision of the Guideline.

New information provided by FAO/WHO can offer significant benefits to competent authorities and food businesses to minimize the risk associated with pathogenic vibrios.

While the fundamental principles in the original document (CXG 73-2010) are likely to largely remain the same, practical guidance covering the specific implementation of control measures will help national competent authorities to reduce the burden of food-borne vibriosis and to ensure fair practice in the international seafood trade.

3. Main aspects to be covered

The new work is intended to update Guidelines on the application of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Pathogenic Vibrio Species in Seafood* based on the latest scientific information, and to incorporate some relevant aspects of the revised *General Principles and Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969). The guidelines will provide guidance on selection of the most appropriate risk management options and risk management tools.

The new work will consider factors relevant to the control of *V. parahaemolyticus* and *V. vulnificus*; including:

- microbiological monitoring methods, particularly molecular-based approaches,
- recently available scientific data, in particular information on new pathogenic strains and their geographical spread and clinical incidence,
- methods for the detection and characterization of vibrio's,
- remote sensing-based techniques to measure variables such as temperature and salinity, climate change,
- practical interventions that can be used to reduce vibriosis risks associated with the consumption

¹⁰ FAO and WHO. 2021. Advances in science and risk assessment tools for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and *V. vulnificus* associated with seafood. Meeting report. Microbiological Risk Assessment Series No. 35. Rome.
<https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5834en>

of seafood, include preharvest intervention e.g., relaying, at harvest (such as reduced cooling times), and post-harvest treatments, e.g., high pressure processing, freezing and pasteurization etc.

4. An assessment against the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*

General Criterion

Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries

The proposed new work will support competent authorities and food business operators to implement practical interventions that can be used to reduce the risk of vibriosis.

Criteria applicable to general subjects

(a) Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.

Additional guidance by Codex might assist countries in amending their legislation to reduce the risk of vibriosis and support fair practice in international seafood trade.

(c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies).

Codex has already undertaken risk management work on *Vibrio* spp. in seafood.

(e) Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue.

There is some evidence for the global spread of pathogenic *Vibrio* strains. Codex guidance is an essential contribution to reducing the global public health burden of vibriosis.

5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives

The proposed work is directly related to the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Namely, goals one and five of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, to “Address current, emerging and critical issues in a timely manner” and to “Enhance work management systems and practices that support the efficient and effective achievement of all strategic plan goals”. In particular, this work is relevant to Strategic Objective 1.2 “Prioritize needs and emerging issues” where the outcome is a “Timely Codex response to emerging issues and the needs of members.” This work will address the gap in guidance, in particular new information provided by FAO/WHO.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents as well as other ongoing work

The amendment of specific guidance on pathogenic vibrio will complement existing CCFH texts. This includes the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXG 1-1969).

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Not required at this moment, but during the course of the revision, the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) may need additional scientific advice.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

Not required at this time.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the time frame for developing a standard should not normally exceed five years.

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval at its 46th Session in 2023, it is hoped that the new work can be expedited (i.e., within two sessions of CCFH).