

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CRD24

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON RESIDUES OF VETERINARY DRUGS IN FOODS

Twenty-third Session

Houston, Texas, United States of America, 17 – 21 October 2016

REPORT OF THE SIDE-EVENT: “TESTING OF PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM FOR NEW WORK”

Background

The CCRVDF at its last session, with regard to the Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019, settled an EWG led by France with the mandate to explore the feasibility and the appropriateness of developing a systematic approach for prioritization of emerging issues within the framework of the Committee. This EWG proposed a tool that could be tested in order to determine if this new approach could help the Committee to:

- Plan its work with a pluriannual prospective;
- Keep a memory of what decisions were taken at a given point and their rationale;
- Facilitate the communication between CCRVDF and other relevant bodies (other Codex committees and the CAC, international bodies, etc.)
- Facilitate the discussion between all CCRVDF stakeholders before undertaking new work.

With that view, France selected a few examples of issues that were already brought to CCRVDF and proposed to run them through the proposed device. The documents underlying the presentation can be uploaded on the 23rd CCRVDF webpage (<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings-reports/fr/> - see CCRVDF23, then Side event 2. presentation). The goal of the side-event was to determine if using the proposed device in those cases would have shown advantages.

Presentation

The proposed device is composed of three steps:

- 1/ Qualitative step (decision-tree) to define the issue and confirm that CCRVDF is the appropriate area to address it;
- 2/ Project document submission (when necessary)
- 3/ Quantitative steps (matrix) to attribute rates regarding specific criteria. Those criteria and their relative weighing were proposed to clarify the importance of the problem raised regarding public health and international trade, the feasibility of new work, and the way the proposed new work to be undertaken would improve public health and trade.

It was stressed that further considerations should be developed when CCRVDF is in the process of setting priorities, even if those are not always possible to encompass through a standardized matrix. For instance, the need to ask assistance from other relevant bodies can, depending on the case, appear as a negative criterion (risk to undertake new work that won't be achieved within a reasonable timeframe) or as a positive one (possibility to get additional data if those body are in the position to share or to obtain those data).

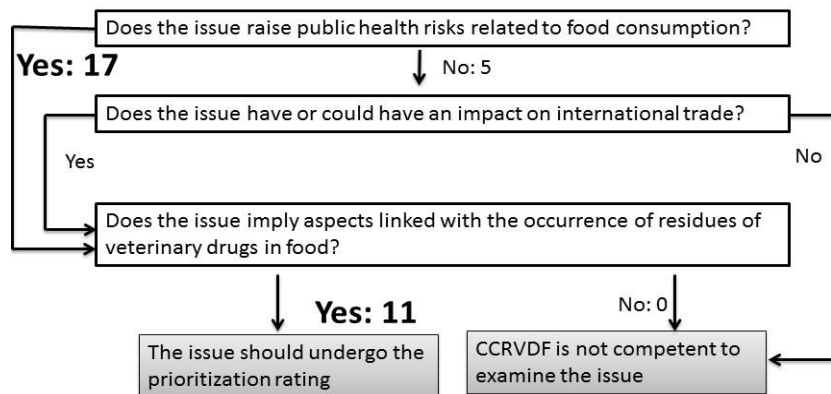
Discussions

The participants of the side-event agreed to participate to a practical exercise, which consisted in testing the proposed matrix with an example: the settlement of MRLs in honey.

Indeed, following a request from JECFA, the CCRVDF agreed to establish guidance regarding the policy of establishing MRLs and other limits in honey. Thus, this exercise was totally virtual. However, it gave birth to a very fruitful, open and transparent discussion. It thus confirmed the thought of the EWG participants, who were of the view that a systematic approach could provide a flexible and open basis to discuss the possible issues that might challenge the achievement of a consensus between the CCRVDF members, in a very early stage of the process.

Basically, the issue raised with the settlement of MRLs in honey is due to the fact that national authorities have developed their own guidelines, which can diverge worldwide. On a scientific ground, honey can't be considered as the usual animal tissues CCRVDF examines when settling MRLs.

Firstly, the participants were asked to confirm that the issue of the settlement of MRLs in honey was of interest for CCRVDF.



Using the Step 1 of the proposed tool, participants recognized that CCRVDF was the appropriate area to address this question.

Step 2 of the tool being the submission of a project document, it was not developed during the side-event.

Finally, the participants undertook to test the proposed matrix with the example of honey. The third column gathers the number of respondents that agreed to each rate.

Criterion	Rating	Position of participants
New information/data/technology Is there new information/data/technology that would justify the need to review the existing code(s), standard(s) or establish a new one?	Yes = 20 points Intermediate = 10 points No = 0 point	0 participant were of the view that conclusive new data were published 6 thought that some new information has been reported 2 thought that no new data has been reported
Positive impact of new work on public health - Whether new work would result in a document/recommendation that could have a positive impact on public health	Yes = 20 points Intermediate = 10 points No = 0 point	3 participants 5 participants 1 participant
Public health risk raised by the emerging issue	High = 20 points Medium = 14 points Low = 8 points	1 participant 6 participants 3 participants
Impact on international trade raised by the emerging issue	High = 20 points Medium = 14 points Low = 8 points	3 participants 1 participant 1 participant

In the context of the first test of the matrix, the chairman proposed to retain, for each criterion, the rate that gathered the highest number of favorable answers. As a result, the issue of the policy regarding the settlement of MRLs in honey achieved a total score of 54 out 80.

During the discussion, some comments were made:

- The three numerical values proposed to rate each of the criteria could be modified if needed;
- The process leading to the attribution of intermediary rates to each criterion needs to be formalized;
- Regarding the specific issue of the settlement of MRLs in honey, the participants that felt this issue has a high impact on international trade, and thus proposed to attribute a rate of 20 explained their view. They *inter alia* noted that issues originated by diverging between national policies or threatens for animal health have to be anticipated;

Other participants furthermore underlined that the proposed tool, if retained, have to be carefully articulated with existing prioritization tools, and more specifically with the WG on the establishment of the priority list for evaluation or reevaluation by JECFA.

Future

The side-event indicated that the proposed tool, while it would probably benefit from amendments, could provide a basis for the discussion regarding the timetable of the Committee. Nevertheless, it remains unclear if it would be useful for prioritizing between issues raised within CCRVDF, as this Committee usually doesn't have to face a lot of new issues at the same time. Thus, three options are submitted to the Committee:

- Option 1: Discontinuation of work, considering that the use of the proposed approach would not facilitate the work of CCRVDF;
- Option 2: Adoption of the proposed prioritization device, with amendments were needed;
- Option 3: Adoption of the proposed approach as a facilitation and discussion tool but not leading to prioritize between several issues.

Regarding option 2 and 3, a testing period could be implemented to further explore the effectiveness of the proposed tool. More particularly, the modalities that should allow the implementation of the tool (pre-session physical WG or EWG) would need to be developed.