



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NEAR EAST**

Ninth Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 15-19 May 2017

CODEx WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION

(Prepared by the Coordinator for CCNE
with the assistance of the Codex Secretariat)

BACKGROUND

1. Information on Codex work relevant to the Region was collected in the past month via a questionnaire distributed to CCNE member countries and the replies were utilised as the basis for the document.
2. The survey was conducted via email in English and French and Members were given a period of one month to provide answers.
3. Questions of Codex work relevant to the region focused on general issues, e.g.: Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) – pesticides (development of maximum residue limits (MRLs) for products of interest to the Region), and specific issues, e.g. development of commodity standards of interest to the region.
4. Member countries were also invited to identify issues related to the active participation of the country in Committees of interest, e.g.: administrative issues (e.g. funding, visa issuance, etc.), technical issues (e.g. availability of data to feed into the risk assessment process for the establishment of food safety standards).

ANALYSIS

5. The questionnaire on Codex work relevant to the Region had a response rate of 35 percent (6 out of a possible 17 Member countries) in the Near East region (as of April 2017).

Table 1: Overview of respondents
(Respondents are in **bold- 35%**)

Algeria	Kuwait	Sudan
Bahrain	Lebanon	Syrian Arab Republic
Egypt	Libya	Tunisia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Oman	United Arab Emirates
Iraq	Qatar	Yemen
Jordan	Saudi Arabia	

6. Survey results can be found in the Annex. The following is a summary.
 - i. *General issues relevant to CCNE (work of general committee):*
 - 65 percent of the respondents recognized the importance to enhance Codex guidelines on the reduction of mycotoxins in cereals, along with the possibility to develop an annex on ergot alkaloids for CAC/RCP 51-2003.
 - Requests for the establishment of MRLs for pesticides on products of interest to the region, e.g.: grain products, were indicated by the 65 percent of the respondents.
 - 33% of the respondents requested Codex to continue the work on requirements for nutrient reference values (NRV-R) and infant formula to further inform consumers and protect the health of infants.
 - ii. *Specific issues relevant to CCNE (work of commodity committees):*
 - 83 percent of the respondents stated the importance of the work of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for the region, highlighting the necessity to start work on dried fruits e.g. dates.
 - Among collected replies, interest was also expressed by countries Codex work in general (food quality and safety) to ensure fair practices in the food trade and in doing so to facilitate trade (16%) and on the work of the Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (33%) to further develop a standard on date syrup.

- iii. *Issues related to the active participation of the country in the Committees on which interest have been identified in point 2a/b (2014-2017):*
- All respondents (100%) stated that they have faced issues related to visas when accessing countries hosting Codex Committees.
 - Availability of data to support the risk assessment for the establishment of food safety standards was also pointed out as a technical issue by all respondents (100%).

CONCLUSIONS AND POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Conclusions

7. CCNE08 recognized that common problems are faced in the region with regard to food safety systems. The problems related specifically to national legal frameworks governing food control systems, the existence of different authorities involved in this control with the absence of a good coordination, and the difficulties in performing food safety risk assessment and applying traceability systems. In addition, war and refugee problems faced by the region are well recognised with relation to the above issues
8. Member countries responses to the questionnaire and also the information taken out from the reports of CAC and Codex Committees (2015-2016), have indicated minimal and in some cases negligible participation by a number of countries from the Near East region in the Codex Committees and work related to Codex activities. Some impediments for an effective involvement in Codex work, identified in this context, include, lack of funding, non-availability of relevant experts, and underdeveloped National Codex structures. Difficulties in availability of scientific data to support the risk assessment for the establishment of food safety standards has been identified as an issue.
9. For many countries in the Near East region difficulties in the use of Codex standards are related to their adaptation to the national context followed by the resource investments and capacity building required in order to use Codex standards (see also Agenda Item 4).

Points for discussion

10. *CCNE may discuss the following points during its Meeting:*
11. The survey provides information that could support future actions of CCNE member countries to better participate in Codex work. Therefore, it is important to encourage more Member countries to respond to the questionnaire(s) in future. Member countries may wish to discuss
 - (i) the relevance of this item on the agenda of CCNE (note that this is a standing item on the agenda of all regional coordinating committees),
 - (ii) the approach taken to gather such information (i.e. use of the questionnaire or other approaches that could be used instead of / in addition to the questionnaire);
 - (iii) the appropriateness of the questions raised in the questionnaire (see Annex); and
 - (iv) whether there is a merit to continue to discuss Codex work relevant to the Region between CCNE sessions and if so, to determine the best approach to follow-up this matter.
12. Taking into account the 35% percentage of collected replies, member countries are invited to provide their comments on Codex work relevant to the Region during the meeting (e.g.: agreement with survey results, other issues not identified in the survey, etc.).
13. This agenda item could provide the basis for identification of new work on food quality and safety issues relevant to the Region that CCNE member countries could present singly or jointly to CAC and/or its subsidiary bodies.
14. This agenda item could also provide the basis for identification of ongoing work on food quality and safety issues relevant to the Region in CAC and/or its subsidiary bodies that CCNE member countries may wish to prioritize as of regional relevance to the Near East Region.
15. By identifying and prioritizing Codex work relevant to the Region (points 13 and 14), this item will require information exchange amongst CCNE member countries as to availability of technical / scientific data / information within the Region to prepare the proposals for new work or to work more effectively on the issues relevant to the Region being discussed in CAC and/or its subsidiary bodies. This could in turn lead to the identification of possible solutions to overcome development and provision of national / regional technical / scientific data to Codex and/or FAO/WHO e.g. application to Codex Trust Fund (CTF2), establishment of twinning collaboration between less / more developed countries within the Region.
16. By identifying and prioritizing Codex work of interest to the Region (point 15), this item will also require information exchange amongst countries of the Region as to administrative issues identified as barriers for effective participation of CCNE member countries in Codex work e.g. lack of funding, visa issues and how Codex, FAO, WHO could assist in this regard.

Codex Work Relevant to the Region: Questionnaire

Name of the Country:

Please fill the information as per the questions below with respect to the year 2014-17

1. Participation of CCNE member countries in Codex Meetings since 2014(Insert **X** in the selected field)

- Number of CAC Sessions attended

0	1	2	3
1	1	2	2

- Number of Codex committees' sessions attended

0	<5	5-10	>10
1		2	3

Please specify the attended Committees:

- CCPR 3
- CCFA 3
- CCCF 3
- CCMAS 3
- CCFO 2
- CCRVDF 2
- CCNFSDU 3
- CCFICS 2
- CAC 2
- CCFV 1
- CCFH 3
- CCFPP 1
- CCSCH 3
- CCFL 2
- CCGP 2
- CCPF 1

- Number of EWG and PWG attended

0	<5	5-10	>10
3	2	1	

- Number of EWG and PWG chaired by your country

0	<5	5-10	>10
5	1		

- Number of CCNE meetings attended from the first meeting (2001) to the last one (2017)

0	<5	>5
	4	2

- Which difficulties have your Country faced to have an active participation in Codex meetings?
-
- (E.g. Visa issues, funds, lack of scientific data, national structures, ...)

- Funds 5

- Visa 4

2. **Issues related to Codex work of interest to the Region (currently being discussed in Codex committees and task forces)**

Please fill in the general and specific issues related to Codex work in the tables provided below:

- a. **General issues relevant to CCNE (work of general committees)** e.g.: CCPR – pesticides (development of MRLs for products of interest to the Region, revision Classification of Food and Feed to allow the inclusion of products of interest to the Region); CCCF – contaminants (establishment of MLs for mycotoxins in sorghum)

Committee	Issue	Reasons
CCFA	Review of the standard of edible gums from Acacia species.	To improve the market value of the products according to the distinctive properties of the products to establish or endorse permitted maximum levels for individual food additives
CCPR	Establishment of MRLs for pesticides for products of interest to the country / region pesticides and revision of the Classification of Food and Feed to allow the inclusion of products of interest to the Region) Review of MRLs of pesticides residues issued by Codex with others in EU, EPA	“Sudan” imports Oil seed crops and grain products for which MRLs are needed to ensure public health. Likewise the inclusion of products of interest to the country / region will allow the establishment of group MRLs to enlarge the availability of Codex MRLs to ensure safety and quality of the product and fair practices in trade to establish maximum limits for pesticide residues in specific food items or in groups of food Ensure food safety and achieve more adjust of use, registration and handling of pesticides in Egypt, these levels considered as a base of the relevant Ministerial decree in this issue.
CCCF	Inclusion of aflatoxin , ergot alkaloids and strigmatosistin Level for mycotoxins in ready to eat peanuts 3.development of COP for prevention and reduction of mycotoxinis in spices	These mycotoxins are important in sorghum , the major food and feed crop in the Sudan and important export crop Aflatoxin is a serious contamant of peanut – potential domestic death hazards and hands an important impact in the trade of the crop. Near East Countries are producing an important Spices

Committee	Issue	Reasons
	<p>Reduction of mycotoxin in cereals</p> <p>Request for comments at Step 3 on the proposed draft Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Arsenic Contamination in Rice</p> <p>Ergot level in wheat</p>	<p>Imports a large quantity of cereals and cereals are subject to ergot contamination are staple food in several countries in the region</p> <p>Imports a large quantity of Rice</p> <p>to establish or endorse permitted maximum levels or guidelines levels for contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants in food and feed</p> <p>Review the maximum level of ergot in wheat for human consumption and other limits in IPPC for planting as seeds.</p>
CCNFSDU	<p>Nutrition and infant formula</p> <p>- nutritional labeling; - VNR-B and VNR-MNT; - infant formula and preparations.</p>	<p>Continue the work on NRV-R important nutrition information for consumers</p> <p>to study specific nutritional problems assigned to it by the Commission and advise the Commission on general nutrition issues</p> <p>To better inform consumers and to strengthen the protection of the health of infants and young children.</p>
CCFICS	Food inspection and certification systems	<p>Imports a large quantity of foodstuffs from several countries in the region</p> <p>To develop principles and guidelines for food import and export inspection and certification systems with a view to harmonising methods and procedures which protect the health of consumers, ensure fair trading practices and facilitate international trade in foodstuffs</p>
CCFH	Guidance for histamine control in the Codex of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (CAC/RCP 52-2003) and sampling plans for histamines in standards for fish and fishery products	<p>State of Libya imports a large quantity of Frozen fish & Canned Tuna.</p> <p>to draft basic provisions on food hygiene applicable to all food</p>

Committee	Issue	Reasons
CCFL		to draft provisions on labeling applicable to all foods
CCGP		To deal with such procedural and general matters as are referred to it by the Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCMAS		to define the criteria appropriate to Codex Methods of Analysis and Sampling
CCRVDF	<p>Concerns on the recorded Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and Risk Management Recommendations (RMRs) for (Estradiol-17beta, Melengestrol Acetate, Ractopamine Testosterone , Trenbolone Acetate)</p> <p>Proposed draft MRLs for zilpaterol hydrochloride (cattle fat, kidney, liver, muscle) (81st JECFA)</p> <p>Establishment of Codex MRLs for Veterinary Drugs In Camel's Tissues</p>	<p>to determine priorities for the consideration of residues of veterinary drugs in foods</p> <p>Recommendation that Estradiol-17beta, Melengestrol Acetate, Ractopamine Testosterone and Trenbolone Acetate should not be used for any food producing animals in order to protect consumer's health and respect of bad animal husbandry practice in application of these veterinary drugs and some of which are accused of being genotoxic and carcinogeni</p> <p>Recommendation to hold the MRLs for zilpaterol hydrochloride at Step 4</p> <p>Large consume amount of camel's meat</p>

- b. Specific issues relevant to CCNE (work of commodity committees):** e.g. development of quality standards of interest to the region e.g. CCSCH – saffron; CCFFV – fresh dates; CCPFV – dried and dry products

Committee	Issue	Reasons
CCFICS	Technical barriers of trade	Variation of trade import and export certificates, needs and requirements.
CCFFV	<p>High potential production of fruit,vegetables and domestic edible fruits unknown on the international trade</p> <p>Development of a Codex standard for fresh dates</p>	<p>A lot of good varieties of tropical fruits beside the production of edible fruits that that have medical and nutritional advantages.</p> <p>Countries of the region are the main producers for domestic consumption and exportation</p>

Committee	Issue	Reasons
	Development of a codex standard for fresh dates	<p>to elaborate worldwide standards and codes of practice as may be appropriate for fresh fruits and vegetables</p> <p>The region is characterized by significant potential for the production and export of these products.</p>
CCPFV	<p>Development of Codex standards for dried fruits and nuts</p> <p>Preparing a Codex Standard for Date Syrup</p>	<p>Several countries of the region are the main producers and exporters of these products. Commodity standards are important to harmonized technical regulations worldwide to ensure the overall quality of the product and ensure fair practices in trade.</p> <p>Countries of the region are the main producers for domestic consumptions and exports.</p> <p>To elaborate worldwide standards and related texts for all types of processed fruits and vegetables, including but not limited to canned, dried and frozen products as well as fruit and vegetable juices and nectars.</p>
CCCPL		To elaborate world wide standards and/or codes of practice as may be appropriate for cereals, pulses, legumes and their products.
CCFO		To elaborate world wide standards for fats and oils of animal, vegetable and marine origin including margarine and olive oil.
CCMMP		To elaborate world-wide standards, codes and related texts for milk and milk products.
CCS		To elaborate world wide standards for all types of sugars and sugar products.
CCSCH		To elaborate worldwide standards for spices and culinary herbs in their dried and dehydrated state in whole, ground, and cracked or crushed form
CCFL	Review Codex Stan. 24/1997	To cover and facilitate the global market of Halal.

Issues related to the active participation of the country in the Committees on which interest have been identified in point 2a/b (2014-2017)

- a. Administrative issues (e.g. funding, visa issuance, etc.)
- b. Technical issues (e.g. availability of data to feed into the risk assessment process for the establishment of food safety standards)

Administrative Issues	Technical issues
Funding	<p>Availability of data to support the risk assessment for the establishment of food safety standard</p> <p>Availability of data to support the risk assessment for the establishment of food safety standard, lack of scientific data, Difficulty of being local data availability of data to feed into the risk assessment process for the establishment of food safety standards</p> <p>Needed data and scientific studies to support risk assessment</p> <p>Scientific evidence on risk assessment in the region, including contaminants.</p>
Visa issues	<p>Visa issues may also affect and cause delay of our delegate participation.</p> <p>More facilitation in issuing visas for some countries</p>