



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS**

**Fourth Session**

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**Proposed Draft Standard on Dried Oregano**

(Comments from Mexico, and Morocco)

**Mexico**

**(i) General Comments**

Oregano is an aromatic plant, grown in several areas of the world, with a commercial value that can be explained by its characteristics as a spice, as a condiment, and for its medical properties (Koksai *et al.*, 2010).

According to Kintzios (2004), oregano is the common name for an aroma and general flavor, mainly derived from more than 60 species of plants used throughout the world as a spice. Most of them belong to the families *Lamiaceae* and *Verbenaceae*.

There are different varieties of oregano in the world including Greek, Mexican, African, Italian, Turkish, Spanish, Moroccan, that have been put in commercial use. World oregano production is beyond 15 000 tones, Mexico being the second producer.

The species of oregano with the highest economic importance are:

*Origanum vulgare* L. ssp. *viride*, *Lippia graveolens* H. B. K., Hayak, *Origanum onites* L. *Thymus capitatus* (L.) Hoffmanns and Link and *Coridothymus capitatus* (L.) Rchb. (Oliveira *et al.*, 2007; Villavicencio *et al.*, 2018).

The name oregano, likewise has been given to all plants rich in phenolic monoterpenes, mainly carvacrol and thymol. *Lippia graveolens* Kunth has the same classification as oregano (Tropicos, 2016; Villavicencio *et al.*, 2007).

**Table 1. Oregano Chemical Components**

Component	Mexican oregano <i>Lippia graveolens</i>	Greek oregano <i>Origanum vulgare</i> , subsp. <i>hirtum</i>	Turkish oregano <i>Origanum vulgare</i> , subsp. <i>gracite</i>
Essential oil	2.0%	1.5%	1.5%
Thymol	10.4%	23.9%	15.1%
Carvacrol	43.7%	12.2%	9.9%
p-cimeno	6.4%	15.9%	8.1%

Source: Huerta, C. 1997. "Orégano Mexicano: Oro Vegetal". CONABIO. Biodiversitas 15:8-13

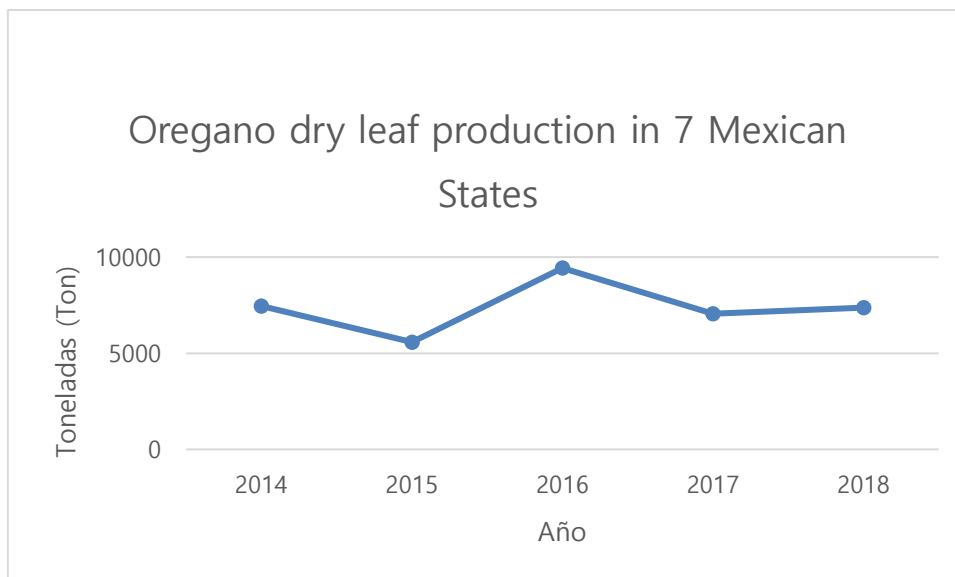
The greater distribution and use of oregano in Mexico belongs to the species *Lippia graveolens* Kunth and its synonym *Lippia berlandieri* Schauer (IPNI, 2005, SEMARNAT, 2007, Rueda, 2015, Villarreal, 2001 and Tropicos, 2016).

Oregano is distributed in at least 24 entities of the arid and semi-arid regions of Mexico; being the Northern country regions (Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango and Tamaulipas), where the most important producing areas are located, representing more than 50% of the harvesting permits; followed by Jalisco, Zacatecas, Querétaro, Hidalgo and Baja Southern California (Huerta, 2002; Conafor, 2017; Villavicencio *et al.*, 2018). Its distribution covers more than 15 physiographic regions, estimating an annual dry leaf production of 6,500 tons. This production generates an economic spill for primary sector in the productive chain (rural sector) of approximately 8 million dollars, becoming an extremely important productive activity, that benefits more than 79 townships in the country, where a population with a high degree of economic and social poverty is located.

This commercial activity, altogether with the rest of the rural activities, has promoted the development of approximately 233 regions of the North of Mexico, where rural population is dedicated to the production of the oregano, increasing the need of promoting and strengthening this productive chain.

According to statistics from SEMARNAT (Figure 1 below), the production of 7 states (Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, San Luis Potosi, Hidalgo and Zacatecas) has been identified as permanent and continuous.

**Graphic 1. Oregano dry leaf production in 7 Mexican States**



Graphic 1. Records and authorizations for oregano use in México SEMARNAT, 2018.

Ninety percent of México’s oregano production is for exportation satisfying about half of the consumption of this product in the United States (Huerta, 1997; CONAFOR,2009).

The Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes in its plants’ database the named “Mexican oregano”, which is commercialized internationally as oregano.

**(ii) Specific Comments**

**2 DESCRIPTION**

**2.1 Product Definition Table 1. Dried Culinary Herbs covered by this standard**

Mexico requests to eliminate Column 1 from Table 1. with the “General Name” classification.

The mandate of the Committee establishes that all species marketed as oregano must be included in the Draft Standard for Dried Oregano (REP17 / SCH). This statement is not being complied, as the proposal excludes the *Lippia* of the generic name of oregano.

In the current draft, Mexican oregano is classified outside the "General Name" oregano, this would represent an important barrier to trade, as well as an international competitive disadvantage for Mexico, especially considering that Mexico is the second producer of oregano worldwide.

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## Morocco

### **Point 3.1 de l'ordre du jour : Avant-projet de norme pour l'origan :**

Le Maroc propose d'ajouter les espèces suivantes à la liste des espèces d'origan proposées au niveau de l'avant-projet et qui sont les plus exploitées au niveau nationale, à savoir :

*L'Origanumcompactum et l' Origanumelongatum*

#### Concernant la classification :

Le Maroc propose de définir les classes proposées (Extra, Classe I et Classe II) et d'ajouter la définition de l'origan en poudre ou moulu : « l'origan moulu doit passer entièrement à travers un tamis de 500µm d'ouverture de maille ».

#### Concernant les caractéristiques chimiques :

Le Maroc est favorable pour les valeurs minimales de **1,7** pour la classe I et **1.5** pour la classe II.

Le Maroc propose d'ajouter un paragraphe concernant l'identification commerciale classe/grade tel que spécifié dans le projet de modèle général des normes pour les épices.

#### Concernant les facteurs de qualité :

Au niveau du paragraphe odeur, saveur et couleur, ajouter que l'origan peut être aussi **légèrement piquant**.