

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Twenty-sixth Session, FAO Headquarters, Rome, 30 June – 7 July 2003*

#### SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO CODEX AND FAO/WHO MEMBER COUNTRIES (Submitted by FAO and WHO)

#### SELECTION OF EXPERTS AND WORKING PROCEDURES OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEES AND EXPERT CONSULTATIONS: 2002-2003

##### Selection of experts

1. Scientific advice to the Codex Alimentarius Commission and FAO and WHO member countries is elaborated by expert committees (JECFA, JMPR) and ad-hoc expert consultations (e.g. JEMRA), which are convened according to Article VI of the Constitution of FAO and the Regulations for Expert Advisory Panels and Committees of WHO. Experts participate in these meetings in their personal capacities, and not as representatives of their employers, governments or other institutions.

2. FAO and WHO have developed procedures for the selection of experts to assure that the scientific advice provided by experts meets the criteria of excellence, independence and transparency. Although the procedures vary slightly for the specific scientific body there are key elements that are respected by all of them.

- a) Public call for experts: “Calls for experts”, including details on the selection process, are now disseminated using the FAO and WHO webpages, the Codex list and other means such as scientific journals, scientific associations, electronic mailing lists, regional offices, etc. In this way, scientists from all parts of the world are encouraged to apply, thus ensuring experts in a range of disciplines and from a wide geographical area are available to serve on these scientific groups.
- b) Panel review: The applications are reviewed by selection panels, which determine whether the applicants meet the essential requirements and selection criteria outlined in the “calls for experts”. Such a panel consists of external independent experts and the secretariat of the scientific body in question.

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Most FAO meeting documents are available on Internet at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

- c) Roster of experts: The proposed list of experts is subject to review and approval by the Directors-General of FAO and/or WHO. Thereafter the rosters of experts are published on the FAO and WHO webpages. Rosters are reviewed regularly and are subject for renewal after maximum four years.
- d) Declaration of interests: In order to assure the independence of the expert advice, the procedure for appointment of experts includes a declaration of interests by the selected experts. These declarations are scrutinized by the Joint Secretariats who decide whether the interest declared could constitute a conflict in relation to issues being considered; they inform the Chairperson of the specific meeting about possible conflicts and decide jointly whether or not the experts should participate in the discussion and be involved in the decision-making on a specific agenda item.

3. All documents related to the selection process of experts are available at the following webpages at FAO and WHO:

[www.fao.org/es/esn](http://www.fao.org/es/esn)      [www.who.int/pcs](http://www.who.int/pcs)  
[www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpp](http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpp)      [www.who.int/fsf](http://www.who.int/fsf)

4. The Joint Secretaries for JECFA and JMPR have recently finalized for the period of 2002 to 2006 the renewal of the FAO and WHO rosters of experts for the evaluation of food additives, contaminants, residues of pesticides and residues of veterinary drugs.

5. The Joint Secretaries for JEMRA are reviewing the roster of experts for risk assessment on microbiological hazards in food.

## **PROJECT TO UPDATE THE PRINCIPLES AND METHODS FOR THE RISK ASSESSMENT OF CHEMICALS IN FOOD**

6. In response to a request expressed by the *Conference on International Food Trade Beyond 2000* (Melbourne, 1999), FAO and WHO have initiated a joint project to update the principles and methods for the risk assessment of chemicals in food. The Project is managed by Dr Sam Page (WHO) and the Joint Secretariats of JECFA and JMPR. The project's progress depends entirely on the sufficient contribution of extra-budgetary funds (e.g. hosting of expert meetings).

7. The objectives of this project are to

- assure the continuation of transparent and sound risk assessments of chemicals in food;
- review principles and procedures used by JECFA and JMPR and reaffirm those that remain valid in view of current scientific knowledge;
- facilitate the incorporation of new scientific approaches and knowledge;
- harmonize, to the extent possible, risk assessment procedures for different classes of chemicals in food (e.g., additives, contaminants, pesticide residues, veterinary drug residues, and natural toxicants); and
- harmonize, to the extent appropriate, approaches to risk assessment by JECFA and JMPR with those of other scientific bodies (including national, regional, other public health, and environmental).

8. The final product will be a treatise composed of a series of modules to provide guidance criteria for carrying out risk assessments of chemicals in food. This treatise on good risk assessment practices will serve as a basis for the co-ordination and harmonization of risk assessment approaches for chemicals in food and will contribute to improvements in the quality and timeliness of risk assessments by JECFA and JMPR and provide guidance to member countries in their risk assessment activities.

9. This project will be carried out through a series of scientific working groups and technical consultations on specific topics. Experts will be participating in these activities as independent internationally recognized specialists who act in their personal capacities and not as representatives of their employers, governments, or other institutions.

10. A Project Steering Group, whose members are senior independent experts and senior FAO/WHO officers, provides guidance to the Project Management. This group determines the specific subjects and scopes of the working groups and consultations.

11. The first workshop was held at and sponsored by the United Kingdom Food Standards Agency in London from 9-13 December 2002. The participants discussed draft working papers related to toxicology, use of human data and hazard characterization. The workshop also agreed on a proposal for the structure and the contents of the final document and adopted a work plan for the project.

12. Further planned workshops will deal with intake assessment, characterization of food chemicals and development of maximum residue limits (MRL). Draft chapters developed at workshops will be posted on a webpage for a limited period in order to solicit comments from interested third parties. A final Joint FAO/WHO Consultation will consolidate and adopt the Principles and Methods for the Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food.

13. FAO and WHO are encouraging Codex member governments to consider to support this Project by e.g. hosting a workshop or consultation, or contributing financially or in kind.

## **WORK SHARING OF AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE REVIEWS**

14. A pilot project on work sharing is being initiated by FAO/WHO in collaboration with OECD, national governments and regional/subregional authorities to reduce the workload of the reviewers and at the same time facilitate the harmonization of data requirements/formats and /or MRL recommendations without implication to the independence of experts advice. The parts that, in principle, will not pose problems for mutual use include toxicology, plant and animal metabolism, animal feeding, processing studies and the physico-chemical data.

15. A group called "Friends of the JMPR" was formed in order to act as an intellectual resource which will give advice to FAO, WHO and Codex on ways to improve the efficiency of the system of evaluation, including the provision of additional financial resources, and consequently the establishment of MRLs. The present system, which relies heavily on the goodwill of experts working voluntarily in their own time, is not sustainable with the increasing workload and complexity of evaluation while the resources remain the same.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT OF MICROBIOLOGICAL HAZARDS IN FOOD**

16. JEMRA is finalising the preparation of the guidelines on hazard identification, exposure assessment and risk characterization that will facilitate the implementation of microbiological risk assessment worldwide.

## **RISK COMMUNICATION: IMPROVEMENTS IN TRANSPARENCY**

17. FAO and WHO recognize the importance of trustworthy communication on risks related to food and the provision of information that enables a full understanding of all steps of the risk assessment process by the stakeholder. Both organizations are continuously improving the means for dissemination of such information:

- **Webpages:** All joint activities on scientific advice are documented on the corresponding webpages at FAO and WHO. Calls for experts, rosters, guidelines, reports etc. are up-loaded in a timely manner.
- **Guidelines:** Each scientific body that provides advice to Codex works according to procedural and scientific guidelines which are developed by the Joint Secretariat and the body itself taking into account relevant comments from Codex committees. These guidelines are revised regularly and made available on the corresponding webpages.
- **Newsletter:** Since January 2003 the FAO Food Quality and Standards Service publishes a regular electronic newsletter entitled *Food Safety and Quality Update* that provides subscribers with relevant information of FAO's activities related to food safety ([www.fao.org/es/esn/fsqu\\_en.stm](http://www.fao.org/es/esn/fsqu_en.stm)). This newsletter is received by more than 2400 persons, the majority of them being involved in the work of Codex.
- **Publication of reports and monographs:** Improved publication procedures allow a more rapid editing, printing and circulation of reports. The report of the FAO/WHO Consultation on the Health Aspects of Acrylamide in Foods was for example available just eight weeks after the meeting; the report of the 59th meeting of JECFA (June 2002) was published in February 2003, shortly before the 35th session of

CCFAC. In some cases reports are also pre-published electronically. In addition, FAO has initially, on a pilot basis, distributed publications of the JMPR (both reports and monographs) in CD ROM as an advance copy and for easy distribution.

- Internet archive: The Joint Secretariat to JECFA succeeded in making all documents ever published since 1956 available on the internet. The last outstanding modules, specifications for food additives and residues of veterinary drugs, were added in July 2001 and June 2002 respectively.

**Table 1. Codex requests to FAO and WHO on scientific advice until April 2003**

<b>Request for advice</b>	<b>Originator</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Required activity by FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Status of planning</b>	<b>Availability of funds</b>
Safety evaluation of fourteen food additives and 173 flavouring agents	CCFAC	35th session ALINORM 03/12A para 183 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	63rd or 64th meeting of JECFA	Regular budget
Safety evaluation of eighth contaminants (e.g. acrylamide, arsenic, ethyl carbamate)	CCFAC	35th session ALINORM 03/12A para 183 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	63rd or 64th meeting of JECFA	Regular budget
Safety evaluation of Residues for four new three existing veterinary drugs	Codex Committee of Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods	14th session ALINORM 03/31A para 110 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	62nd meeting of JECFA	Regular budget
What to do with veterinary drugs with no ADI and/or MRL	Codex Committee of Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (Delegation of Thailand)	14th session ALINORM 03/31A para 90	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	Not started	Not available yet; Thailand to provide possibly "seed" funds
To provide scientific advice on biotoxins, especially as it related to their levels in bivalve molluscs.	Codex Committee On Fish And Fishery Products	25th session ALINORM 03/18 para 92	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	IPCS to draft terms of reference	Not available yet
Safety and regulatory problems related to functional food	FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Asia	ALINORM 03/15 para 93	FAO/WHO Expert Consultation	First discussion and draft terms of reference at ESNS	Regular Budget

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Safety of active chlorine used in and on foods	Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants	35th session ALINORM 03/12A para 65	WHO to consider and evaluate the risk and health benefits of the use of active chlorine in food processing when reviewing the WHO Guidelines on Drinking Water Quality.	Not started	Mainly WHO funding
Antimicrobial resistance: FAO/WHO to advise the Commission on possible directions to be taken including the establishment of a new task force if necessary.	Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission	ALINORM 01/4 para 37	A multidisciplinary expert consultation in cooperation with OIE and if required the IPPC, that should consider all uses of antimicrobials in agriculture and veterinary use (including aquaculture) and take into account the role played by antimicrobials as essential human and veterinary medicines.	Preliminary discussions between FAO, OIE, WHO	WHO is in the lead, funds promised by FDA but not available yet
FAO/WHO to extend their current work on Reference recommended nutrient intakes to include ULs for vitamins and minerals	Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses	23rd session ALINORM 03/26 para 138ff		Not started; first discussion between ESNS, ESNA, IPCS	Available at FAO (ESNA)

Request for advice	Originator	Reference	Required activity by FAO/WHO	Status of planning	Availability of funds
The risk associated with <i>Enterobacter</i> genus, including <i>E. sakazakii</i> , and <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> in powdered infant formula.	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene	35 <sup>th</sup> session ALINORM03/13A Para 169	FAO/WHO expert consultation	Not started. Some discussions have taken place with WHO	Extra budgetary resources required (may be available from USA & UK)
Evaluation of pre-harvest control measures, post-harvest treatment technologies, how <i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i> causes illness and methods for analysis of toxin producing gene	Codex committee on Fish and Fishery Products	25 <sup>th</sup> session ALINORM 03/18 para 91	Consideration of these issues in the ongoing risk assessment of <i>Vibrio</i> spp in seafoods and in an expert consultation on <i>Vibrio</i>	Considered at an expert consultation in Bangkok in August 2002  Being incorporated into the Vibrio RA	Regular Programme
Final risk assessments on Salmonella, Listeria, Vibrio & Campylobacter	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene	34 <sup>th</sup> & 35 <sup>th</sup> session ALINORM 03/13 & 03/13A	Completion of the risk assessments	Salmonella finalised.  Planning finalisation of others through consultation with the drafting groups	Regular Programme
Expert consultation to assist the committee integrate risk assessment results in the development of standards and related text	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene	34 <sup>th</sup> session ALINORM 03/13 Para 83	Finalisation of the draft guidelines that were already developed at a consultation held in Kiel Germany in 2003	Peer review not started	Regular Programme
Risk assessment based advice on a range of 32 pathogen-commodity combinations	Codex Committee on Food Hygiene	32nd session ALINORM 01/13 Paras 12 - 20	4 underway  Remainder not started	Some discussions with WHO	Extra budgetary resources required

<b>Request for advice</b>	<b>Originator</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Required activity by FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Status of planning</b>	<b>Availability of funds</b>
Request to convene a consultation to review the status and procedures of the expert bodies on additional ways to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of scientific advice to the Commission.	24 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and 25 <sup>th</sup> (Extraordinary) Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission	24 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 01/41 Para. 61  25 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/25/5 Para 23.	First planning meeting of FAO/WHO scheduled for 29/30 May 2003.  Inter-departmental FAO group set up	FAO/WHO agreement on project document for consultative process	Extra budgetary funds required
Establishment of criteria for the evaluation of safety of acceptable previous cargoes (transport of fats and oils in bulk) and evaluation of specific substances on that basis	Codex Committee for Fats and Oils	18 <sup>th</sup> Session ALINORM 03/17, Para 78-79	Proposed for consideration by JECFA		
Food Safety Risk Assessment of GM Animals, including fish	Codex Task Force on foods derived from biotechnology – 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sessions		FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on GM animals	Nov. 2003	FAO and WHO Trust Fund – Japan
Evaluation of residues and toxicology of 19 pesticides for the establishment of MRLs	Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR)	35 <sup>th</sup> Session of the CCPR (ALINORM 03/24 A)	Joint FAO/WHO Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues	Upcoming meeting of the FAO Panel of Experts on Pesticide Residues in Food and the Environment and the Core Assessment Group-15-24 Sept 2003 with pre-meeting on 10-14 Sept 2003	Regular Fund
Work sharing of pesticide residue and toxicology evaluation at national and international level	Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR)	35 <sup>th</sup> Session of the CCPR (ALINORM 03/24 A)	Joint FAO/WHO pilot project in collaboration with OECD countries	First meeting on 9 June 2003	Regular budget of the JMPR

<b>Request for advice</b>	<b>Originator</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Required activity by FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Status of planning</b>	<b>Availability of funds</b>
York meeting and Zoning Report on minimum data requirements for establishing MRLs and Import Tolerances	Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR)	35 <sup>th</sup> Session of the CCPR (ALINORM 03/24 A)	Expert Consultation	Proposal stage	Not available yet