

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Agenda Item 2**

**CX/FFP 00/2**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS**

Twenty-fourth Session

Ålesund, Norway, 5-9 June 2000

#### **MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES**

##### **A. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMISSION**

##### **1) Decisions of the Commission concerning the work of the Committee**

##### **Draft Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories**

The Commission adopted the Draft Guidelines as proposed. Editorial comments were taken into account in the preparation of the final text, which is currently available on the Codex website.

##### **Draft Amendment to the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products: Inclusion of *Clupea bentincki***

The Chairman of the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products recalled that the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission had requested that the Accelerated Procedure should be generally used for the inclusion of additional fish species to the Standards, with a view to facilitating trade, and especially the exports from developing countries. The procedure specific to the Committee, whereby three independent laboratories examine samples provided by interested countries, was applied to *Clupea bentincki* (proposed by Chile) and as the results indicated that this species could be added to the list of sardine-type product covered by the Standard, the Committee had reached consensus on this amendment.

The Delegation of Morocco expressed its opposition to the adoption of the amendment and pointed out that as a major exporter of sardines (*Sardina pilchardus*), especially to the European market, the competition from sardine-type products seriously affected its economic interests. The Delegation recalled that it had not been involved in the procedure carried out by the Committee and was unable to provide and evaluate such samples, and proposed that the Committee should consider this matter further before reaching a decision. This position was supported by several delegations.

The Delegations of Chile and Peru supported the adoption of the amendments proposed by the Committee and referred to the scientific data provided by their technical institutes concerning the characteristics of *Clupea bentincki*.

The Commission recognized that there was no consensus on the inclusion of the new species and agreed to return the Proposed Draft Amendment to Step 3 of the Procedure for further consideration by the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (ALINORM 99/37, paras. 117-120).

The Committee is invited to consider how to proceed further with the addition of the species *Clupea bentincki* in Codex Standard for Sardines and Sardine Type Products.

The procedure for the inclusion of additional species into standards for fish and fishery products was approved by the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (ALINORM 79/38, para. 339). It was reproduced in CL 1995/30-FFP (August 1995) asking governments for proposals for the addition of new species, following the decision of the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission that the Accelerated Procedure should be used for additional species. It is reproduced in **Annex 1** to the present document for ease of reference.

## 2) **Decisions of the Commission concerning related matters: Committee on Food Labelling**

### **Draft Amendment to the Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Sticks (Fish Fingers), Fish Portions and Fish Fillets, Breaded and in Batter (Declaration of Fish Core)**

The Commission recalled that the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products had asked the advice of the Committee on Food Labelling concerning the requirement to declare the proportion of fish core, and that the Committee had proposed to introduce a requirement for such a declaration in order to provide clear information to the consumer on the quality of the product.

The Delegation of Canada expressed its objection to the adoption of the draft amendment at this time, recalling that since the initial proposal had been made, additional issues had been put forward in the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products, especially the definition of fish core and fish content and the methodology for the determination of fish flesh. This position was supported by some countries. The Delegation of France supported the adoption of the amendment as it would provide information on the proportion of fish as compared with batter, and therefore allow the consumer to make an informed choice.

There was no consensus on this issue and the Commission agreed to return the Draft Amendment to Step 6 for further consideration by the Committee on Food Labelling to determine the need for labelling requirements and by the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products as regards the technical aspects such as the definition of fish core/fish content and the methodology (ALINORM 99/37, para. 127-129).

Updated information on the conclusions of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Food Labelling (May 2000) on this matter will be presented orally.

The Committee is invited to consider the document prepared by the Delegation of the United Kingdom (CX/FP 00/2-Add.2) on the technical aspects of the determination of fish core/fish content in conjunction with the above information.

## **B. MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

### **COMMITTEE ON METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING**

#### 1) **Quick Frozen Fish Sticks: Proportion of fish fillet and minced fish**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the CCFPP considered the WEFTA method and the proposal from South Africa concerning species of hake from the Southern Hemisphere and a 5% allowance for soft flesh species such as hake. The Committee noted that the CCMAS was due to consider the endorsement of the WEFTA method in the light of the data to be submitted, and agreed that the additional proposals provided by South Africa would also be forwarded to the CCMAS for review at its next session (ALINORM 99/18, paras. 18-19).

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CCMAS considered document CX/MAS 98/9 which included the WEFTA method in Annex 2 and the information from South Africa in Annex 3. The CCMAS did not come to a conclusion on the WEFTA method and the note in Appendix III to ALINORM 99/23 indicates: "The Commodity Committee is asked to review the collaborative study data, which was available late at this session". However, this data is not available in the working documents of the CCMAS.

The CCMAS endorsed the proposal from South Africa as a Type IV method (note in Appendix III, ALINORM 99/23). However, this had not been submitted for endorsement as a specific method but for consideration in conjunction with the method for the determination of fish fillet and minced fish flesh in quick frozen fish sticks. The study from South Africa referred to the determination of minced fish flesh in frozen blocks and was intended to substantiate the specific allowance factor for soft flesh species.

The Committee is invited to consider the WEFTA method (see Annex 2) and the specific provision for soft flesh species. Member countries are invited to provide additional information on this method, especially collaborative study data, for consideration by the Committee.

In addition, the CCMAS also noted that there was no provision in the standard for the proportion of fish fillet and minced fish flesh. The Committee may need to consider whether there is a need for a method since there is no corresponding provision in the standard.

## **2) Quick Frozen Fish Sticks: Proportion of Fish Flesh in Fish Sticks (Fish Core)**

The CCFFP agreed at its last session to include in the standard a reference to AOAC Method 996.15 with an adjustment factor of 2% for raw breaded and batter-dipped products; 4% for pre-cooked products, subject to endorsement by CCMAS.

The CCMAS noted that AOAC 996.15 is a modified method of AOAC 971.13 which was endorsed previously and referred the matter back to the CCFFP for further consideration regarding the application of adjustment factors. The Committee is invited to consider this question to decide whether the adjustment factors should be confirmed.

## **3) Determination of Salt in Salted Fish of the *Gadidae* Family**

The last session of the CCFFP, following the request of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCMAS Session, confirmed that a specific method was necessary for the determination of salt in salted fish, and that the general method for the determination of salt was not adequate in such cases, and the Committee agreed to retain the current method (ALINORM 99/18, para. 7). The 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CCMAS did not endorse the method proposed since collaborative study data was not available (note to Appendix III, ALINORM 99/23).

## Procedure for the Inclusion of Additional Species

### **Background<sup>1</sup>**

The 13th Session of the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (1978) established a procedure for the incorporation of species as an amendment to a standard (referred to as "amendment of Step 9 standard") (ALINORM 79/18, para. 111), which was approved by the 13th Session of the Commission (ALINORM 79/38, para. 339). The text agreed upon is reproduced in its entirety for the information of governments on the technical requirements to be fulfilled for the inclusion of additional species, and the information to be provided to the CCFFP for consideration of any proposal to this effect. However, it will be noted that the Elaboration Procedure has been amended since and the Accelerated Procedure currently applies.

### **Procedure**

" As the Codex Alimentarius Commission recognized the usefulness of elaborating international product standards as a means of promoting trade of food products which have international market product potential, the Committee proposes the following procedure for accelerating the amendment of Step 9 Standards for fish and fishery products to allow for the incorporation of new fish species.

A country wishing to propose the incorporation of a new species into a standard at Step 9 will, when submitting the proposal, provide the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products with:

- (1) An attestation from appropriate recognized institutions regarding the scientific name, and other relevant taxonomic information for the species in question.
- (2) Data on existing and potential resources, and on products derived therefrom
- (3) Form to be marketed, and proposed processing technology for each form of presentation, including samples.
- (4) Reports from at least 3 laboratories from those to be nominated by the Committee, stating that the organoleptic properties of the new species after processing conform with those of the processed species currently included in the pertinent standard

To develop such a procedure, the Committee should appoint a Working Group on this subject, which shall formulate criteria and parameters, as well as scoring systems, to be used by the laboratories nominated by the Committee in the evaluation of new species and products derived therefrom. The nominated laboratories shall reflect as far as possible the different world regional criteria for acceptance and the interests involved. A prerequisite for the application of the proposed procedure shall be the prior approval of the above mentioned criteria by the Committee.

The Committee, after having agreed to the incorporation of the species in question into the standard, would submit its proposal to the Commission for immediate endorsement and incorporation into the Step 9 standard. This is in effect a submission of the amendment at Step 5 of the procedure for amending Step 9 standards, with the proposal to omit Steps 6, 7 and 8.

It is noted that although this procedure would be mandatory only in the case of a Step 9 amendment, it could be usefully used by countries to facilitate the incorporation of new species into draft standards in the process of elaboration."

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<sup>1</sup> As presented in CL 1995/30-FP

## CODEX STANDARD FOR QUICK FROZEN FISH STICKS (FISH FINGERS), FISH PORTIONS AND FISH FILLETS - BREADED OR IN BATTER

### 7.6 Estimation of proportion of fish fillet and minced fish flesh<sup>2</sup>

The procedure provides a method for the determination of minced fish flesh in quick frozen fish sticks (fish fingers) and fish portions, breaded or in batter, processed from quick frozen fish blocks from a mixture of fillets and minced fish flesh.

- (i) Take as many breaded or battered fish sticks or fish (portions) as needed to provide a fish core sample of approx. 1000 g.
- (ii) Strip off the coating using AOAC method 18.002<sup>3</sup>.
- (iii) Thaw the fish cores in portions of 200 g each in sealed water-tight plastic bags in an agitated water bath maintained at 20°C or ambient temperature.
- (iv) Place thawed fish cores on a pre-weighed circular sieve which consists of wire mesh with square openings of 2.8 mm x 2.8 mm.
- (v) Drain any drip loss and determine weight of fish cores after 2 min ( $W_{\text{fish}}$ ) using a scale sensitive to 0.5 g.
- (vi) Place the drained fish cores on an aluminium or plastic plate and separate the minced fish flesh from the fillet flesh using a fork and a soft, rubber edged spatula to scrape off the minced fish flesh.
- (vii) Weigh fish fillets ( $W_{\text{fillet}}$ ).
- (viii) Count the sum of fish fillet weights obtained from all thawed portions of fish cores.
- (ix) Calculate the proportion of minced fish flesh:

$$\text{Minced fish flesh (\%)} = \{(\sum W_{\text{fish}} - \sum W_{\text{fillet}}) / \sum W_{\text{fish}}\} \times 100$$

<sup>2</sup> Prepared by Federal Research Centre for Fisheries, Germany, assisted by the Analytical Working Group of West Europe Fish Technologists Association (WEFTA).

<sup>3</sup> Needs to be updated.