

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 5**

**CX/LAC 08/16/7-Add.1  
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## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**16<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Acapulco, Mexico, 10-14 November 2008**

#### **USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL**

##### **COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO CL 2008/16-LAC, PART B FROM BARBADOS, BRAZIL, HAITI AND JAMAICA**

#### **(i) Use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional level**

##### **Barbados**

Traditionally Codex standards are used as a point of reference in the absence of a national equivalent. They are also used as base documents in the development of national and regional (CARICOM) standards.

##### **Brazil**

Generally the laws and national regulations are drawn up taking into account international standards, such as the Codex Alimentarius.

In some cases, such as maximum residue limit - MRLs of pesticides, there is a lack in the establishment of the Codex MRL for a large number of active ingredients. So in this case we do not have a guideline Codex for guidance.

However, we believe that the Codex standards are relevant to harmonize the various laws in an attempt to ensure human health and facilitate trade between the countries. Because of this, there is a constant concern to harmonize the national standards with the Codex standards. Also seeing a future economic integration in which such harmonization is essential.

##### **Haiti**

Codex standards are used as references at national level. However they are not officially adopted.

##### **Jamaica**

CODEX standards are widely used and referred to in the development of national and CARICOM (Caribbean Community) standards. The first step in the development of a national standard is a survey of existing international standards, including CODEX Standards. These standards are usually adopted, adapted or referenced in our national standards. This is in keeping with the requirements of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to trade.

Technical committees of the (Caribbean Community)CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) particularly those that focus on the development of food standards, reference codex standards in the drafting of proposed regional documents in order to harmonize standards within the region.

**(ii) Non-use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional level, with reasons where applicable**

**Barbados**

Not applicable.

**Brazil**

In some cases, as in fresh fruit and vegetables, the Codex standards are subjective not allowing the implementation of measurable criteria.

**Haiti**

Not applicable.

**Jamaica**

Outdated (pre 1980) standards at the national and regional levels usually do not reference Codex standards. Codex standards are normally used to revise and update these standards.

**(iii) Difficulties encountered in the use or application of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional level**

**Barbados**

Not Applicable.

**Brazil**

The difficulties encountered are similar to the ones regarding the fresh fruits and vegetables standards and the maximum residues limits of pesticides mentioned in item (i) above.

**Haiti**

Not applicable.

**Jamaica**

There are usually no difficulties encountered in the use or application of Codex Standards at the national and regional level. CROSQ is not a member of Codex but maintains an observer status. However, Codex allows reference to and use of their standards by regional standards bodies.

Codex pesticide MRL standards will be adopted but there are several pesticides-commodities combinations that MRLs have not yet been established. Where these gaps exist, standards from individual countries or the EU have to be considered as alternatives.

**(iv) Relevance of Codex standards and related texts as a basis for harmonization of legislation and regulations, including in the perspective of economic integration**

**Brazil**

Codex Standards are very relevant, as is to fair trade among countries and protection of consumer health. It can facilitate international trade in food by establishing guidelines / recommendations in the world that consequently reinforce the prospects of economic integration.

**Haiti**

Not applicable.

**Jamaica**

The use of CODEX standards provides a basis for collaboration and acceptance by the main stakeholders. Codex standards and related texts are being adopted by many countries as minimum standards for food and are recognized by WTO as the international reference point for food related matters. Trading partners more readily agree on the specifications laid out in CODEX standards thereby reducing trade disputes in the region.

(v) **Any other health and/or trade problems related to standardization at the national or regional level**

**Brazil**

The lack of Codex standards in some cases impedes trade of food. For example, the lack of setting a maximum limit of contaminants in some foods and the lack of maximum residue limit for pesticides creates impediments to trade in foods.

**Haiti**

Trade and health problems because of poor infrastructure and weaknesses in national food control system such as lack of legislation and regulation.

**Jamaica**

In the past, there have been trade disputes as territories employ protectionist regimes and practices. Regional integration through development of regional standardization practices with the formation of CROSQ has helped in the reduction of such disputes. In the absence of regional standards, use of national standards which reference Codex standards, strengthens trade arguments for the user of such national standards.