

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Proposal for the Development of a Regional Standard for Cooked Rice Wrapped in Plant Leaves

The purposes and the scope of the standard

The regional standard for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves aims to protect consumers' health, ensure the quality of this product and promote fair trade. In the whole regional trade, there is no regional or international standard for this product. Certain countries in the region have formulated standard for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves, but the standards are not uniform. Establishing a cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves standard is beneficial to promoting regional and international trade.

1. Product definition

The product is made of glutinous or other rice as the main raw material with or without adding ingredients such as beans, nuts, meat, poultry and eggs and their products as the fillings, whose proportion is generally not more than 40% of the total weight of the product. It is completely wrapped and molded with *indocalamus* leaves, reed leaves, banana leaves, lotus leaves etc., tied with cotton threads, etc. and steamed and cooked to ensure the inherent flavor and texture of the product. After steaming and cooking, vacuum packaging or quick freezing or other methods are adopted to preserve the product at normal temperature or low temperature respectively.

Cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves is called *Zongzi* in China. The production process of *Zongzi* in China is shown in Figure 1.

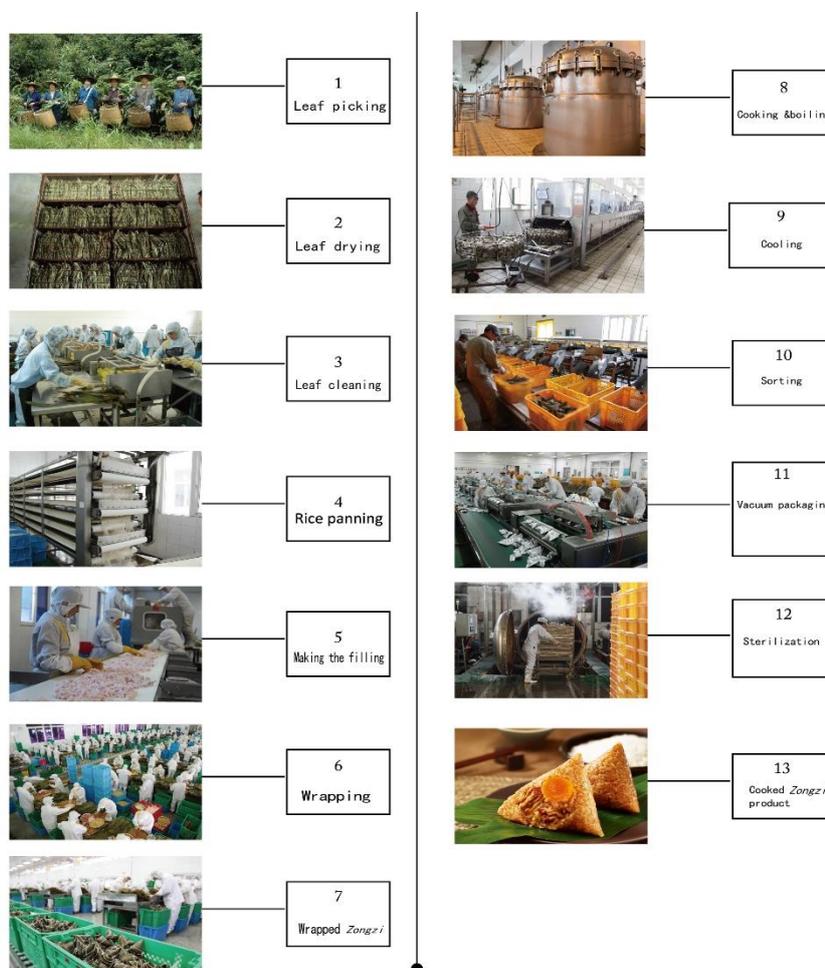


Figure 1 Production process of *Zongzi* in China

For different kinds of Chinese *Zongzi*, see Figure 2.



Figure 2 Different kinds of Chinese *Zongzi*

There are also many similar products in the international market, see Table 1.

Example	Country of origin	Descriptions
	Japan	Non-glutinous rice is used as the main raw material or mixed with other ingredients.
	Vietnam	Glutinous rice is used to wrap pork, peas, shrimps, etc., which can be eaten together with fish sauce after being steamed and cooked.
	Philippines	Glutinous rice is used as the main raw material stuffed with other ingredients.
	Thailand	Ba- Jang is made of glutinous rice and other ingredients, such as mushroom, nut, meat and egg, for example, then it is completely wrapped and molded with leaves etc., After tied, it will be steamed.
	Thailand	Khao Tom Mat is made of glutinous rice and other ingredients, such as coconut milk, bean, banana and taro, for example, then it is completely wrapped and molded with banana leaves. After tied, it will be steamed.

	Malaysia	It is made of glutinous rice and coconut milk, and wrapped in banana leaves.
	Indonesia	Products made from steamed white sticky rice are then formed flat, filled with finely sliced chicken meat, and wrapped in banana leaves or other. Can be served directly, roasted or steamed again.
	Indonesia	Rice-based cakes with coconut milk, salt with or without other ingredients, put in bamboo covered with young banana leaves and baked.

Table 1 Similar products in the international market

2. Its relevance and timeliness

Relevant data show that the trade volume of this product is growing year by year, and the output is also increasing. Due to the adoption of advanced production technology in cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves production, the production volume also witnesses a fast increase, which creates broad market potentials. However, since there is no regional standard among trading countries, various obstacles arise in regional trade of this product.

The establishment of a commodity standard will bring convenience to international trade. It is expected that this product will have greater consumption demand and trade potential in the international market in the future.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The standard for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves will be drafted according to the uniform CAC format. The standard covers the following aspects:

- Scope;
- Description;
- Essential composition and quality factors;
- Food additives;
- Contaminants;
- Hygiene;
- Weights and Measures;
- Labeling;
- Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

4. An assessment against the *Criteria for the establishment of work priorities*

General criterion

The proposed standard should protect consumer from the point of view of health, food safety, ensure fair practices in the food trade and take into consideration the identified needs of the developing countries.

The new standard will cover the following aspects to meet the above requirements:

- Protect consumers and preventing fraud;
- Improve the quality of products, and solve the food safety concerns of consumers;

- Resolve trading barriers.

Criterion applicable to commodities

a) Volume of production and consumption in China and volume and pattern of trade between countries

- In 2018, China's production volume of *Zongzi* is 502,170 tons.
- China is the world's leading exporter of *Zongzi*. At present, there are more than 180 registered export enterprises for *Zongzi* in China. In recent years, Chinese *Zongzi* is exported from China to more than 20 countries and regions, such as America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong, Macao etc. According to the estimation of relevant industry associations in China, the total sales from 2016 to 2018 reached 36.4 million, 39.04 million and 42.31 million US dollars respectively.
- China is also an importer of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves, the main import sources of which include Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Australia, Italy, Thailand, Netherland, Denmark etc. In 2018, the total import volume amounted to 257 tons with the total sales of 2.79 million US dollars (see Table 3).
- In the international market, the trade value of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves is 110 million US dollars per year, which is expected to grow rapidly along with increasing production capacity. China, Japan and South Korea are the major producers and exporters of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves.
- Trade amount of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves increases at a rate of 10% each year. China, Southeast Asian countries, North America and European countries are also the major consumer markets.

Table 2 Export data of *Zongzi* from China to some countries/regions in 2018

Volume: kilograms, Value: US dollars

Country / Region	Export volume	Export value
America	1,267,356	10,138,848
Saudi Arabia	262,021	2,358,189
South Korea	364,400	3,279,600
Japan	380,742	2,958,678
Canada	83,658	752,922
Singapore	90,145	631,015
Australia	85,665	959,448
Thailand	28,068	224,500
Other regions	2,618,485	21,016,280
Total	5,180,540	42,319,480

Source: estimated by relevant industrial associations in China.

Table 3 Import data of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves from some countries/regions to China in 2018

Volume: kilograms, Value: US dollars

Country / Region	Import volume	Import value
Malaysia	56,000	616,000
South Korea	53,208	585,288
Chile	2,877	34,524
Australia	17,014	187,159
Japan	20,138	181,242
Thailand	20,334	223,674
Canada	10,483	115,318
Other regions	77,451	851,961

Country / Region	Import volume	Import value
Total	257,505	2,795,166

Source: estimated by relevant industrial associations in China.

b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade

Countries in the region have different classifications for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves products. The applicable standards or regulations for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves are quite different. For example, there are different requirements on indocalamus leaves, reed leaves etc. to wrap, additives as well as sterilization and vacuum packaging measures for this product.

The lack of regional standard for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves commodity hinders regional fair trade, so the formulation of this standard should ensure the improvement of product quality, ensure consumer health, solve food safety concerns and reduce trade frictions.

c) International or regional market potential

According to the statistics, the demand for cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves has been increasing in recent years and is expected to continue to grow steadily in the future. From 2015 to 2018, the total sales of international trade of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves reached 71.93 million, 79.07 million, 107.07 million and 117.78 million US dollars respectively, representing an annual increase of approximately 10 percent.

The international trade data of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves show that the global demand for this product is growing rapidly. With the support of the advancement of science and technology and international logistics, more and more traditional food with distinctive characteristics of various countries are circulating in the international market. Thus, cross-regional purchases have become much easier. This product can be used as daily consumer goods due to its characteristics of easy storage, satiety, low price and delicious taste, and its consumer population and consumption will continue to increase.

d) Amenability of the commodity to standardization

China has already formulated national standard for this product as early as more than ten years ago. The implementation of the standard plays a positive role in guiding the healthy development of the industry and improving the quality of this product. It can be seen that the standardization of this product is feasible.

CAC has not formulated relevant standards for this product at present. Although Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods (CXC 8-1976) can provide guiding principles for major categories of frozen food, it is not targeted at specific product.

The proposed standard will put forward specific requirements for raw materials, such as glutinous rice and plant leaves; ingredients of the product and types of ingredients; product processing technology, such as cooking temperature, time and pressure; processing process management; quality indexes (moisture, fat, protein, stuffing content, etc.); sampling and analysis methods; temperature and environment of product storage and transportation; product labeling and etc. The use of additives and the limit of pollutants in this product should comply with the requirements of existing CAC related documents.

e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards

There are no existing standards specifically covering cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves.

f) Number of commodities which would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi-processed or processed

Currently there is no need of any other separate standard other than the proposed, since the proposed standard will cover both raw and processed products and the hygienic conditions of production.

g) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)

None identified.

5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives

With regard to the CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 – 2025, developing such a regional standard of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves is closely associated to the objective 1.1 Identify needs and emerging issues, and 1.2 Prioritize needs and emerging issues. As the regional standard of cooked rice wrapped in plant leaves will

help to enhance food safety of Asian consumers and ensure fair international trade practice on this specific food product.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents as well as other ongoing work

The proposed standard will take into account existing applicable Codex guideline documents such as:

- *Code of Practice General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969),*
- *Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods (CXC 8-1976),*
- *Code of Practice Concerning Source Directed Measures to Reduce Contamination of Food with Chemicals (CXC 49-2001),*
- *General Standard for the Labeling of Prepackaged Foods (CXS 1-1985),*
- *General Standard for Food Additives (CXS 192-1995),*
- *Recommended methods of Analysis and Sampling (CXS 234-1999).*

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Currently there is no identified need for expert scientific advice.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

Currently there is no identified need for technical input from external bodies.

9. The proposed time-line for completion of the new work

Subject to consideration by CCASIA21 in 2019, proposal for standard development will be submitted for review and approval by CAC in 2020. As per proposed time schedule the process will take approximately five years.

Procedures	Timeline
Consideration of the proposal by the 21 st CCASIA	2019
Critical review by Executive Committee and approval by CAC for new work	2020
Preparation of draft standard and circulation for comments	2020-2021
Consideration of draft standard by the 22 nd CCASIA	2021
Adoption by the CAC as draft standard	2022
Consideration of draft standard by the 23 rd CCASIA	2023
Adoption as regional standard by CAC	2024