

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV) held its Twenty-first Session in Monterrey, Nuevo León Mexico from 7 – 11 October 2019, at the kind invitation of the Government of Mexico. Mr Alfonso Guati-Rojo Sánchez, Director General, General Bureau of Standards, Ministry of Economy of Mexico, assisted by Mr Cesar Orozco Arce, chaired the session, which was attended by 38 Member countries and one Member organisation and one observer organisation. A list of participants is included in Appendix I.

## OPENING OF THE SESSION<sup>1</sup>

2. The Chairperson welcomed the delegates and addressed the meeting emphasizing the importance of consensus in timely completion of Codex standards and their relevance to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in food trade. He also expressed the commitment of the government of Mexico towards standards work in supporting economic development.

## Division of Competence

3. The Committee noted the division of competence<sup>2</sup> between the European Union and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II of the Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)<sup>3</sup>

4. The Committee adopted the agenda.

## MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda item 2a)<sup>4</sup>

5. The Committee considered the information provided in document CX/FFV 19/21/2, and noted the matters that were presented for information.
6. The Committee further agreed on the following item referred for action.

## Matters from the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC75)

### Work management

7. The Committee agreed that the priority setting criteria for the establishment of work priorities and the decision making criteria for the development of Codex standards and related texts as laid down in the Procedural Manual, was still sufficient to ensure that standards and work areas identified as priorities were progressed in a timely manner by CCFFV.

## MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ON THE STANDARDISATION OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (Agenda item 2b)<sup>5</sup>

8. The Committee noted the activities of UNECE and OECD relevant to its work.

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<sup>1</sup> CRD2

<sup>2</sup> CRD1

<sup>3</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/1

<sup>4</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/2; CRD3 (EU), CRD8 (East African Community); CRD11 (AU)

<sup>5</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/3

**DRAFT STANDARD FOR KIWIFRUIT: TOLERANCE FOR DECAY (AT STEP 7) (Agenda item 3)<sup>6</sup>**

9. New Zealand, Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and recalled that the item had been considered by the Committee since CCFFV18, and that at CCFFV20 it had been held at Step 7 as there was no agreement on provisions concerning quality tolerances for decay in “Extra Class” and “Class I”. New Zealand further explained the process followed by the EWG noting that three rounds of consultations were held in which six guiding principles were elaborated; and that based on these principles, specific tolerances of 0.5% for “Extra Class” and 1% for “Class I” as well as their point of application in the supply chain were elaborated by the EWG. The necessity to progress the draft standard was also underlined.

**Discussion**

10. The Committee held a general discussion noting the support for the approach used by the EWG, and acknowledged that the Codex standard for kiwifruit should in general take into account the following elements:
- (i) The need to ensure fair trade be clearly demonstrated;
  - (ii) The international trade practices irrespective of the distance of supply;
  - (iii) The available trade data and experience to work with tolerances; and
  - (iv) The perishable nature of a commodity in relation to rot and internal decay.
11. The Committee discussed the draft tolerances of 0.5% for “Extra Class” and 1% for “Class I”; and their point application in the supply chain and noted the following views expressed by delegations:

Tolerance of 0% for “Extra Class”

12. Delegations in favour of tolerance of 0% for “Extra Class” noted that:
- (i) Decay and rot were serious defects that could affect the quality of kiwifruit. The “Extra” Class should only be for superior produce and its quality must be better than produce in other Classes in order to justify the high price. Hence, it would not be justified to make allowance for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown in “Extra” Class;
  - (ii) The experience gained over 30 years with the implementation of the UNECE Standard for Kiwifruit with 0% tolerances for decay in “Extra Class” demonstrated no need to depart from the current tolerance requirements, even when kiwifruits is transported over long distances; acceptance of Codex commodity standards depended on whether they reflected existing trade practices. Therefore, the closer the commercial reality is reflected, the more Codex standards would be accepted and applied in trade;
  - (iii) The proposed tolerance of 0.5% for “Extra Class” was not based on available data and experience;
  - (iv) There would be a phytosanitary risk if other tolerances were allowed, consumers would not be protected and thus the need to ensure that there was compliance at both export and import border points; and
  - (v) Firm kiwifruits are normally associated with a brix of 6.5, and with this quality characteristic, these would be resistant to decay, and proposed tolerance of 0% was consistent with most of current CCFFV standards.

Tolerance of 0.5% for “Extra Class”

13. Delegations in favour of tolerance of 0.5% for “Extra Class” noted that:
- (i) “Extra” Class should be for superior products, which would exclude any rot tolerance level. Fresh products, in the stages after harvest, naturally experience a decrease in quality and have a tendency to deteriorate for physiological reasons.;
  - (ii) This was a long standing issue and the proposed change from 0% to 0.5 % tolerances was a step in the right direction; however there may be no assurance that products would remain edible on arrival at the destination point; and
  - (iii) Based on the long history of trade exercise (implementing tolerance of 0%), slight decay could exist in Extra Class. Allowing tolerance for of 0.5 for Extra Class would be realistic and could provide a distinction between Extra Class and Class I.

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<sup>6</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/4; CRD3 (EU); CRD4 (Republic of Korea); CRD8 (East African Community); CRD9 (Morocco); CRD12 (Thailand)

Tolerance of 1% for “Extra Class”

14. Delegations in favour of tolerance of 1 % for “Extra Class” noted that:
  - (i) The proposed tolerance fully justified the codex principle of fair trade, irrespective of the complexity of the supply chain; and the existing trade practices fully justified the proposed value of 1% for this Class;
  - (ii) This tolerance had been implemented for more than 30 years in North America and beyond using national standards, without any reported trade problem for this commodity at the World Trade Organisation (WTO);
  - (iii) Codex had already adopted standards for other commodities with similar tolerance; and there should be consistency among all standards.
15. On the proposal by one delegation to include the reference to National Plant Protection Organisations as decay and rot was a phytosanitary matter, the Chair of EWG explained that the standard related to quality matters, while phytosanitary matters were already covered in various protocols of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).
16. The Chairperson summarised the discussion noting that despite the divergent views expressed by delegations, there was a general recognition on the need to bridge the gap between the tolerances in “Extra Class” and “Class I”; as well as to further clarify the point of application of such tolerances within the supply chain taking into account the experiences and existing trade practices. It was proposed that the Committee, should continue with ad-hoc informal discussions in the margins of the meeting, led by the EWG Chair (New Zealand), in order to arrive at consensus on the aforementioned issues.
17. The plenary considered the proposed text for tolerances as revised during the ad-hoc informal discussions and took the following decisions:

Section 5.1.1 “Extra Class”

- (i) Deleted the square brackets on the statement on tolerances i.e. “Included therein is 0.5% tolerance for decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown”; and
- (ii) Added a statement on point of application reading: “only applies beyond export control point”, in order to signify the superior quality within this Class as well as ensure practicality in trade.

Section 5.1.2 “Class I”

- Deleted the draft text on point of application i.e. “tolerance for decay shall not be acceptable at the stages of preparation; packaging and at the export control”, to ensure distinction between “Extra Class and “Class I”; as well as to support the practical implementation of provision in line with the current trade practices.
18. The following delegations, while not opposing the advancement of the draft standard for kiwifruit, expressed their reservations:
    - (i) The European Union (EU) expressed their strong reservation to the provisions allowing a tolerance for decay in “Extra” Class. The EU maintains its view that a tolerance for decay in “Extra” Class is not in line with the concept of “Extra” Class, which is a special status granted to products of exceptionally high quality. The EU recalls that CAC41 confirmed that provisions for decay in “Extra” Class are optional and, depending on the nature of the produce, may not be applicable or necessary. In the case of kiwifruit, the experience gained over 30 years with the implementation of the UNECE standard FFV-46 for kiwifruit confirms that there is no need to introduce a tolerance for decay in “Extra” Class of kiwifruit, including when transported long distances. Therefore, the EU will continue to apply a zero tolerance for decay in “Extra” Class of kiwifruit as provided in the UNECE standard. This position was supported by the United Kingdom.
    - (ii) The United States of America (USA) expressed their reservation to the proposed tolerance for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown in the provisions for “Extra” Class noting that: i) the fractional tolerance of 0.5% adopted is both logistically and statistically difficult to apply when conformity is done by count (sample size) as it could result in fractions of a fruit (e.g. 0.5% of 100 fruits would result into a sample of 0.5 fruits). When decay is present in any form, the entire fruit is rejected which negates the proposed fractional percentage; ii) the tolerance does not reflect established trade practices in the USA where for 36 years the tolerance for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown has been set at 1.0% in the USA equivalent of Extra Class; iii) the adoption of a fractional percentage tolerance in “Extra” Class for Kiwifruits would set an untenable precedent for future adoption of fractional percentages in Codex that the USA considers to be both a practical problem for inspectional activities as well as a deviation from standard usage of whole percentages in Extra Class. This position was supported by, Costa Rica, Chile and Jamaica.

- (iii) Colombia expressed their reservation regarding the inclusion of the tolerances for decay in the quality tolerance due to the sanitary and phytosanitary risks associated with the trade of products affected by rot. There was no definition at Codex level of what is generally understood as products affected by rot, and the inclusion of such a provision in a standard intended to promote quality and safety of the products was rather contradictory. Tolerances for decay were part of the agreements between the customer and the supplier and this was beyond the Codex standard.
19. New Zealand, speaking as the Chair of the EWG, noted that there were diverse national standards being implemented in international trade and that the above proposed tolerances (see para. 17) provided a compromise position that took into account the concerns raised by delegations in particular: Extra Class was of superior quality; the practicality of trade; distinction between Extra Class and Class I; as well as alignment with other Codex Standards. Therefore, the Standard for Kiwifruit would provide support to fair trade and recommended for the adoption of the proposed tolerances.
20. Regarding a concern on the implication of adopting a standard with relatively wide reservations, the Chairperson explained that not all reservations were on the same issue and consensus had been reached but from different perspectives.
21. The Codex Secretariat explained that reservations were recognised in the Procedural Manual and that the way consensus was implemented in Codex allowed the application of tools such as reservations to disagree with decisions while allowing Codex Standards to progress within the Step process.

### **Conclusion**

22. The Committee noted that all the outstanding issues had been addressed and agreed to forward:
- (i) the draft standard for kiwifruit to CAC43 for adoption at Step 8 (Appendix II); and
  - (ii) the draft Provisions for labelling to the Codex Committee for Food Labelling (CCFL) for endorsement.

### **DRAFT STANDARD FOR GARLIC (Agenda item 4)<sup>7</sup>**

23. Mexico, Chair of the EWG introduced the item and explained that the EWG had discussed the question on whether smoked garlic was classified under fresh produce or not. It was noted that: (i) smoking could change the flavour, colour and taste of the produce, and thus the freshness associated with it; and (ii) there was ongoing work in the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) on the elaboration of a standard for dried and dehydrated garlic as a spice and smoked garlic is excluded. Based on this consideration, the EWG had concluded that smoked garlic was not a fresh product and should be excluded from the scope of the standard for fresh garlic, however it could fall under the purview of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV).
24. The Chairperson recommended the Committee focus the discussion on those critical issues identified at CCFFV20 (i.e. inclusion of smoked garlic in the standard, the provisions concerning on sizing and etc.) as the standard had been fully considered at the previous two sessions.

### **Discussion**

#### Smoked garlic

25. Delegations expressed their support for exclusion of smoked garlic from the standard.
26. One delegation proposed to refer the development of a standard for smoked garlic to CCPFV for their discussion.
27. The Codex Secretariat explained that according to the Procedural Manual, new work proposals should be submitted by members rather than being referred by a Codex subsidiary body.
28. The Committee held a general discussion on the standard, noted the various comments made by the delegations and agreed with the Chairperson's proposal to request the EWG Chair (Mexico) to lead informal discussions in the margins of the meeting with the purpose of incorporating all the comments received if appropriate.
29. The Committee considered the revised draft standard section by section. In addition to editorial corrections and amendments for clarity, the Committee took the following decisions:

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<sup>7</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/5; CX/FFV 19/21/5 Add.1 (Algeria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Gambia, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Switzerland, Uruguay); CRD6 (Ghana); CRD8 (East African Community); CRD9 (Morocco); CRD11 (AU); CRD12 (Thailand)

Title of the Standard

30. The Committee agreed to insert the word “Fresh” in the title to make a distinction between fresh garlic and dry/dehydrated garlic.

Section 2 - Definition of produce

31. The Committee agreed to:
- (i) Insert the following footnote to provide for the description of the bulb and tooth:
    - **Bulb:** head covered by a wrapper similar to a very thin paper and it confirmed by bulbil, belonging to the genus and species of *Allium Sativum* L;
    - **Tooth:** They are bulbils gathered at their base, forming what is known as bulb each bulbil is wrapped in a white robe, sometimes something reddish, membranous, transparent and very thin;
  - (ii) Retain the use of words “with and without the skin” as it was explained that in some regions garlic without skin is traded; and
  - (iii) Revise the definitions or description for “fresh garlic”, “semi-dry garlic” and “dry garlic” as follows:
    - **Fresh garlic:** produce which preserves its moisture and turgidity in the stem, and with the outer skin of the bulb soft and flexible.
    - **Semi-dry garlic:** produce with the stem and outer skin (foliage and cataphylls) of the bulb not completely dry.
    - **Dry garlic:** produce in which the stem, outer skin of the bulb (foliage and cataphylls) and the skin surrounding each clove are completely dry.

Section 4 - Provisions concerning sizing

32. The Committee agreed to:
- (i) Insert a statement in the introductory paragraph (chapeau) reading that “this table is not applicable to solo garlic”
  - (ii) Amend the range of diameter, in mm, indicating the minimum and maximum cut off point for each diameter; and
  - (iii) Insert a new size code “N” to accommodate garlic varieties with diameters less or equal 15 mm ( $\leq 15$ ) to cater for products with smaller diameter sizes noting that these products were being traded.

Section 5 - Provisions concerning tolerances

33. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that this section had been extensively deliberated..
34. The Committee agreed with the proposed provisions.
35. Colombia reiterated their reservation regarding the inclusion of the tolerances for decay in the quality tolerance (see para 18(iii)).

Section - 7.2.2 Name of Produce

36. The Committee agreed to change “commercial type” to “commercial denomination” and that this amendment should be made to all the standards adopted at this session (see para 101 for further clarification).

**Conclusion**

37. The Committee noted that all the outstanding issues had been addressed and agreed to forward:
- (i) the draft standard for garlic to CAC43 for adoption at Step 8 (Appendix III); and
  - (ii) the draft Provisions for labelling to CCFL for endorsement.

**PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR WARE POTATOES (AT STEP 7) (Agenda item 5)<sup>8</sup>**

38. India, the Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and highlighted the progress made in preparation of the draft standard, and explained that based on the comments submitted at the session, a revised draft standard had been prepared (CRD10).
39. The Committee agreed to discuss the draft standard section by section, taking into account comments submitted, and made appropriate editorial corrections, amendments to provide clarity and consistency of the text, and took decisions as outlined in the following paragraphs.

**Discussion**

40. There was general agreement on the sections on: Definition of Produce (Section 2), Provisions concerning presentation (Section 6), and Food Hygiene (Section 9).

Section 1 - Scope

41. The Committee agreed to the deletion of the text on the descriptive characteristics of the potatoes i.e. shape, external skin colour; fresh colour; depth and colour of the eye cavities noting that the standard applies to all commercial varieties of ware potato as indicated in Section 2 - definition of produce.

Section 3.1 - Minimum requirements

42. The Committee discussed the various provisions and took the following decisions:
- (i) *Sprouting (bullet 11)* – noted the explanation that sprouting was a natural phenomenon normally associated with ware potatoes during different conditions of storage, and increased the maximum length of the sprout(s), to 3 mm;
  - (ii) *Superficial potato common scab* (see bullet 12, Indent 8) – noted that powdery potato scab was a quarantine disease and agreed to insert the following footnote:

*“Provisions for pests and damage caused by pests apply without prejudice to the applicable plant protection rules applied by governments in line with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)”*

Section 3.2 - Classification

43. The Section was amended to provide for optional classification of ware potatoes.

Section 4 - Provisions concerning sizing

44. The Committee noted the explanation that globally there were many variations in sizes/shapes for ware potatoes and that size codes were used to describe such variations, and agreed to further clarify this section as follows:
- (i) Amended the paragraph describing the sizing methods for ware potatoes (i.e. sized by diameter, count or weight or in accordance with trading practices) to indicate that the different sizing methods were optional;
  - (ii) Changed the sizing codes from numerical values (1, 2, 3, 4) to alphabetical letters (A, B, C, D) and assigned a descriptor to each code indicating the physical characteristics (size/shape) for potatoes so as bring clarity to the codes i.e. A (large); B (Round); C (long); D (small).

Section 5.1 - Quality Tolerances

45. The Committee discussed the Table for quality tolerances and took the following decisions:
- (i) Noted that the presence of soil in fresh agricultural produce was highly regulated due to phytosanitary risks associated with it, and agreed to separate the quality tolerance for soil from extraneous matter; and assigned soil a value of 0.25% for all classes;
  - (ii) Agreed to assign values to extraneous matter of 0.25% for extra class, 0.50% for both class I and II;
  - (iii) Clarified the provisions for: Sprouts (i.e. less than 3mm); and that Green coloration should not exceed 2mm in depth;
  - (iv) Deleted the defects on bites to align it with section 3.1 (Minimum requirement)

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<sup>8</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/6; CX/FFV 19/21/6 Add.1 (Algeria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, European Union, Gambia, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Uruguay, the United States of America); CRD4 (Republic of Korea); CRD6 (Ghana); CRD8 (East African Community); CRD9 (Morocco); CRD10 (India); CRD11 (AU); CRD12 (Thailand)

(v) Deleted the defects on “brown stains” and “internal defects including late blight, bacterial wilt, ring rot and or internal breakdown” as this was already covered under provision 1 (i) a “Frozen, decay, soft and 1 (i) d “defects Grey, blue or black sub-epidermal stains”.

(vi) Inserted the following notes/footnote:

- a note to restrict the total sum of the percentages of defective produce arising from a) Frozen, decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown; b) Extraneous matter; c) Soil; and d) defects not to exceed the total tolerances for ware potatoes, in each class;
- a note to clarify that if the product is not classified, the tolerances for Class II apply.
- a footnote to make reference to IPPC (see para42 (ii); Section 3.1 - Minimum requirements)

46. The Committee noted the following reservations related to quality tolerances:

- (i) Thailand expressed their reservation that the proposed values for quality tolerances for extra class.
- (ii) Costa Rica expressed their reservation on the proposed percentage of tolerance for soil.
- (iii) Colombia reiterated their reservation regarding the inclusion of the tolerances for decay in the quality tolerance (see para 18(iii)).

#### Section 7.2 - Non-Retail Containers

47. The Committee agreed to the proposal to align the text in this section with the current technological advances on electronic solutions that were being used in trade. As a consequence, the section was amended to read as follows:

“Each package must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside, either printed on the package itself or on a label secured to the fastening (if the labels are placed inside the packages (string bag), this should be done in such a way that the indications concerning marking are readable from the outside). For produce transported in bulk these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the good, and attached in a visible position in the transport vehicle, unless the document is replaced by an electronic solution in that case the identification should be machine readable and easily accessible.”

#### Section 8 - Contaminants

48. The Committee aligned the paragraph on requirements for maximum pesticide residue limits to the requirements of the Procedural Manual.

49. The Committee noted that all the outstanding issues had been addressed and that the draft standard was ready for final adoption by the Commission.

#### **Conclusion**

50. The Committee noted that all the outstanding issues had been addressed and agreed to forward:

- (i) the draft standard for ware potatoes to CAC43 for adoption at Step 8 (Appendix IV); and
- (ii) the draft Provisions for labelling to CCFL for endorsement.

#### **PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR FRESH DATES (AT STEP 4) (Agenda item 6)<sup>9</sup>**

51. India, Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and informed the Committee that, in response to the comments submitted, a revised version of the standard had been prepared for consideration by the Committee. India also presented the comparison between the *Standard for Dates* (CXS 143-1985) and proposed draft standard, and concluded that there was no overlap and contradiction between products covered by the two standards.

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<sup>9</sup>CX/FFV 19/21/7; CX/FFV 19/21/7 Add.1 (Algeria, Columbia, Cuba, European Union, Gambia, India, Iraq, Mexico, Peru, Somalia, Switzerland, the United States of America); CRD5 (Philippines); CRD8 (East African Community); CRD9 (Morocco); CRD11 (AU); CRD12 (Thailand); CRD14 (CCFFV22 revised version)

52. Saudi Arabia, co-Chair of the EWG further explained the developmental stages of fresh dates and elaborated that the proposed standard was intended for fresh dates, which might be early harvested in partially ripened stage( i.e. khalal or baser and rutab), or late harvested in fully ripened stage (tamer stage). It was further explained that tamer stage could be separated into tamer soft stage and tamer dry stage and the proposed standard would only cover tamer soft stage.

### Discussion

53. The Committee held a general discussion focusing on how to best differentiate products to be covered by the proposed draft with those already covered by CXS 143-1985; and how to ensure that there would be no overlap between the two standards.
54. Some delegations were of the view that:(i) the language used in CXS 143-1985, to define the product (i.e. dates “may” be dried or hydrated to adjust moisture content) could imply that dates with a high moisture were also covered under this standard; and that there was no clear distinction between fresh date and dried date; (ii) the moisture content of 10-25% at tamer stage as proposed in the draft standard was lower than moisture content for cane sugar varieties of dates (26%) as stated in CXS 143-1985; thus the fresh dates at tamer stage could fall within the scope of CXS 143-1985; (iii) in some national requirements, dates at tamer stage were categorised as dried dates; (iii) based on different climate situation and harvesting time, characteristics of each cultivar of fresh dates could vary significantly. This situation, however, had not been reflected in the proposed scope.
55. Other delegations pointed out that: (i) CXS 143-1985 covered processed dates in pitted or un-pitted styles and permits optional ingredients such as glucose syrups, sugar flour, vegetables oils, while the proposed standard could cover fresh dates without any treatment and in un-pitted style; and (ii) the fact that dates were classified as either fresh dates and/or dried dates was well supported by scientific studies; and that fresh dates and dried dates could be easily distinguished by using scientific method e.g. moisture determination, brix determination and etc.
56. India further explained per the existing standard CXS 143-1985, the date with high moisture content is raw material to further adjusting to desired moisture level for development of various products through processing such as dehydration, treatment with ingredients and additives for development of different products,
57. It was also proposed that a definition for what is generally known as fresh dates could be developed, and such a definition would characterize the different stages of maturity indices (characteristics) and the cut-off point for the dried product. The use of efficiently scientific methods to support this definition was also emphasized.
58. Delegations indicated that there were remarkable trade volumes of fresh date in the international market and emphasized the necessity to speed up the development of a standard for this produce. They also expressed the need to replace the terms used in the proposed standard with simple and understandable terms such as colour, ripeness/sweetness; etc.
59. In view of divergent views on this subject, it was proposed to request CCPFV clarify the scope of CXS 143-1985.

### Conclusion

60. The Committee:
- (i) noted that the scope of the standard needed clarifying and the proposed draft standard was not ready for advancement in the Step process;
  - (ii) agreed to return the proposed draft Standard (CRD14) to Step 2; and
  - (iii) agreed to establish an EWG, chaired by India and co-chaired by Saudi Arabia, working in English, to consider the comments received and the discussions at CCFFV21 and to revise the proposed draft Standard for further consideration by CCFFV22.
61. The report of the EWG should be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months before CCFFV22.
62. The Committee further agreed to inform CCPFV, that it was in the process of the developing a standard for fresh dates; and to request CCPFV to provide clarification on whether CXS 143-1985 had covered all stages of fresh dates with different level of moisture content i.e. for khalal stage not exceeding 85%, rutab stage not exceeding 45% and tamer stage not exceeding 25%, which dates were freshly harvested and consumed without any processing, addition of ingredients and food additives,.



**PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR YAM (AT STEP 4) (Agenda item 7)<sup>10</sup>**

63. Costa Rica, Chair of the EWG, introduced this item and informed the Committee that, in response to the comments submitted, a revised proposed draft standard had been prepared for consideration by the Committee.

**Discussion**

64. The Committee agreed, to discuss the draft standard, section by section, taking into account comments submitted, and made appropriate editorial corrections, amendments to provide clarity and consistency of the text, and took decisions as outlined in the following paragraphs.
65. There was general agreement on the sections on: Scope (Section 1), Contaminants (Section 8); and Food Hygiene (Section 9).

**Section 2 – Definition of produce**

66. The Committee agreed to introduce a new paragraph to provide for the colour description for skin, and flesh of yam and also punctuated the term "*Dioscorea*" after the first time and inserted footnote to make reference to IPPC (see para 42(ii))

**Section 3.1 - Minimum requirements**

67. The Committee discussed the various provisions under minimum requirements as follows: i) amended and aligned the terminology (i.e. "whole or transversely cut pieces") to the trade practices for yam (bullet one); ii) deleted the quality characteristic "fresh in appearance"; iii) merged footnote "excluding coconut fibre, saw dust and other materials used as protective" with the provision on "clean and practically free of any visible foreign matter" (bullet five) to exclude these materials from being classified as from foreign matter; iv) inserted a new quality characteristic to cover damages from pests i.e. "practically free from damages caused by pests" (bullet 6).

**Section 3.2.1 "Extra" Class**

68. The Committee agreed to include the following permitted slight defects under this provision:
- (i) Non-transversal cuts or surfaces and/or scars, as long as they do not exceed 5% of the surface of the product; and
  - (ii) Very slight defects in shape.

**Section 4 - Provisions concerning sizing**

69. The Committee, noted the explanation that globally there were many variations in sizes/shapes for yam and that the table under this section was intended to be inclusive of all species, irrespective of their shape and size, and endorsed the provision..

**Section 5 - Provisions concerning tolerances**

70. The Committee discussed the tolerance for decay and decided to retain a 1% tolerance in Extra Class and modified the tolerance for decay in Class I to 2% to create a distinction between the two classes. The Committee also agreed with the inclusion of 1% dirty and impurities quality tolerance for all the three classes noting that due to their nature, yams were not normally cleaned (washed) under the similar conditions like other fresh fruits and vegetables.
71. The Committee noted the following reservations related to quality tolerances:
- (i) Colombia and the European Union reiterated their reservation for the same reasons advanced under para 18. Thailand expressed their reservation on the provision allowing a tolerance for decay in "Extra" Class.
  - (ii) Costa Rica expressed their reservation on the inclusion of the 1% of dirt and impurities in the three classes due to phytosanitary reasons related to their national legislation.

**Section 7.2.2 - Name of Produce**

72. The Committee agreed to include "name of the produce" and "name of variety and/or commercial type" under this section.

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<sup>10</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/8; CX/FFV 19/21/8 Add.1 (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, European Union, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, the United States of America); CRD5 (Philippines); CRD6 (Ghana); CRD8 (East African Community); CRD11 (AU); CRD12 (Thailand)

### Section 7.2.4 - Commercial Specifications

73. The Committee agreed on the proposal to include “cooking type (optional)” and to delete “net weight” from this section.

### Conclusion

74. The Committee noted that all the outstanding issues had been addressed and agreed to forward:
- (i) the proposed draft standard for yam to CAC43 for adoption at Step 5/8 (Appendix V); and
  - (ii) the draft provisions for labelling to CCFL for endorsement.

### PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR ONIONS AND SHALLOTS (Agenda item 8)<sup>11</sup>

75. Iran, Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and informed the Committee that, in response to the comments submitted, and the outcome of the proposed standard layout at this session, a revised version of the proposed draft standard had been prepared for consideration by the Committee.

### Discussion

#### General consideration

76. The Committee deliberated on whether it would be more appropriate to have two distinct standards, covering onions and shallots or a single covering both commodities.
77. Delegations in support of having two separate standards highlighted the challenges in having adequate characteristics for both products in the same text and in having clear differences for onions and shallots expressed in the standard. They indicated that it would be easier to elaborate the requirements for separate individual commodities; and that stand-alone standards were easier to implement during inspection; and this was in-line with the Codex strategic plan objective related to recognition and use of Codex standards. It was also mentioned that trade related aspects should be taken into account - shallots fetch a premium price on the international market when compared to onions, and that the requirements for different products should not be mixed in the same standard.
78. Delegations in favour of maintaining one standard for both commodities recalled that the decision was made due to a number of factors including: similar botanical classification; limited available data on shallot; efficient utilisation of the committee resources; the existence of a number of Codex texts covering several products under the same standard. It was also noted that while onions and shallots belonged to the same genus, they have different requirements in some aspects, and these could be addressed by differentiating the provisions in the standard. Separation of these commodities could have an implication with other standards.
79. After extensive discussions, the Committee agreed to retain onions and shallots in the same standard.
80. The Committee agreed to discuss the revised proposed draft standard section by section, taking into account comments submitted, and made appropriate editorial corrections, amendments to provide clarity and consistency of the text, and took decisions as outlined in the following paragraphs.

#### Section 2 – Definition of produce

81. The Committee agreed to make the following changes:
- (i) Added *Allium fistulosum* L. in the list of onion bulbs varieties;
  - (ii) inserted the following descriptive characteristics of onions and shallots, i.e.:
    - Onions or shallots may be distinguished of the following shapes: round, elongated, long or demi-long.
    - Onions and shallots may be of the following skin colours: white, purple, pink, red, grey or yellow, and brown.

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<sup>11</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/9; CX/FFV 19/21/9 Add.1 (Algeria, Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, European Union, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Switzerland, the United States of America); CRD4 (Republic of Korea); CRD5 (Philippines); CRD6 (Ghana); CRD7 (Indonesia); East African Community (CRD8); Morocco (CRD9); African Union (CRD11); Thailand (CRD12); CRD15 (CCFFV21 revised version)

### Section 3.1 - Minimum requirements

82. The Committee discussed the various provisions for minimum requirements, noted the comments on the different aspects of minimum quality requirements and agreed to:
- (i) Replace the term “intact” with “whole”;
  - (ii) Delete “free from mould and yeast” as these were covered under pests;
  - (iii) Insert a new quality requirement i.e. “free of damage caused by low and/or high temperature” to take into account extreme temperature induced defects; and
  - (iv) Insert a new section “3.1.1 Sufficiently developed -Onions and shallots must be sufficiently developed. They must be firm, and present dry outer skins that are dry and papery”.

### Section 3.2 - Classification

83. The Committee agreed to introduce an “Extra Class” with the following descriptor:

#### 3.2.1 Extra Class

*“Onions and shallots in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial denomination. They must be free from defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and the presentation of the package.*

*The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided that they do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:*

- *a very slight defect in shape;*
- *very slight defects in colouring;*
- *very light staining, provided it does not cover more than one fifth of the bulb’s surface; and*
- *for onions, bulbs should be free from doubles and/or double centers;*
- *for shallots, bulbs should be free from doubles or three bulbs.*

#### Section 3.2.2 – Class I

84. The Committee introduced the following two new allowable defects i.e.
- (i) For onions, slight glassiness not exceeding the outer fleshy ring; and
  - (ii) For onions, bulbs should be free of double centres.

85. The Committee deleted the bullet on “light staining covering not more than 1/5 of the bulb surface”.

#### Section 3.2.3 – Class II

86. The Committee made the following changes:

- (i) introduced a new allowable defects under this class i.e. “For onions, slight glassiness not exceeding the outer fleshy ring”; and
- (ii) Amended the value related to stains in bullet seven to read “25%”.

### Section 4 – Provisions concerning sizing

87. Under paragraph 4.1, the following changes were made:
- (i) Introduced a statement in Paragraph 1, - “when sized in accordance with existing trade practices”- to clarify that declaration of labelling requirements for size and method used; and
  - (ii) Clarified the minimum diameters that were applicable to Onions and shallots

Section 5 – Provisions concerning tolerances

88. The following changes were introduced:

- (i) Inserted Section 5.1.1 Extra Class and its related tolerances with the following descriptor;  
*Five per cent, (5.0%) by number or weight, of onions and shallots not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II is allowed. Within this tolerance not more than 1 per cent in total may consist of produce satisfying neither the requirements of Class II quality nor the minimum requirements, or of produce affected by decay.*
- (ii) In Section 5.1.2 Class I inserted a statement reading - “In addition, 4.0%, by weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth not exceeding 1cm”; and
- (iii) In Section 5.1.3 Class II inserted a statement reading - “In addition, 10.0%, by weight, of bulbs may present externally visible shoot growth not exceeding 1cm”.

**Conclusion**

89. The Committee:

- (i) noted that the proposed draft standard for onions and shallots still required further review and was therefore not ready for advancement in the Step process;
- (ii) returned the draft standard at Step 2 (CRD15) for redrafting;
- (iii) established an EWG chaired by Iran and co-chaired by India, working in English only, to revise the standard based on the written comments submitted and the discussions in plenary for further consideration by CCFFV22.

90. The report of the EWG should be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months before CCFFV22.

**PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR BERRY FRUITS (Agenda item 9)<sup>12</sup>**

- 91. Mexico, Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and outlined the process used by the EWG to prepare the draft standard. She informed the Committee that the Co-chairs of the EWG had reviewed the Comments submitted at Step 3, and prepared a revised version of the proposed draft standard (CRD13). It was highlighted that some comments proposed to develop a separate standard, while others proposed the inclusion of new commercial varieties in the draft standard, and that these issues were outside the scope of the approved project document.
- 92. The Committee held a general discussion focusing on broad issues that may need due consideration during the elaboration of the standard. The following views were expressed by delegations on this topic:
  - (i) To ensure inclusivity in such a broad horizontal standard, CCFFV should take into consideration the broader definition for berries as stated in the Classification of Food and Feeds (CXA 4-1989) developed by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (CCPR). Similar approach was used by the Codex Committee for Food Hygiene (CCFH) to complete the work on Annex V for Berries under the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetable (CXC 53-2003);
  - (ii) The title of the standard be changed to “Berry fruits and other small fruits”; and the Scope of the Standard need careful consideration to ensure that at the time of completion and implementation of the standard international trade is not disrupted;
  - (iii) The scope of the Standard, should be limited to only berry fruits or berries as laid down in the project document, as not all small fruits were berries;
  - (iv) The varieties to be listed in the standard should be commercially feasible or viable; and to ensure a concise list, where necessary, some of the listed commercial varieties should be grouped together (e.g. all blue berries);
  - (v) Any proposed new addition(s) to the list of commercial varieties may require assessment before being added to the list, as some of the berries were already covered by other existing codex standards; and

<sup>12</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/9; CX/FFV 19/21/9 Add.1 (Algeria, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, European Union, India, Iraq, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Somalia, Switzerland, the United States of America); CRD4 (Republic of Korea); CRD8 (East African Community); CRD9 (Morocco); CRD11 (AU); CRD12 (Thailand); CRD13 (Mexico and Argentina); CRD16 (CCFFV21 revised version)

(vi) When proposing a new commercial variety name for inclusion in the standard, an indication on special requirements, if any, should be indicated.

93. The Chair of the EWG explained that list of commercial varieties in the proposed draft standard was based on the original list in the approved Project Document, and that changing the title to include small fruits would require changing the scope. It was explained that to ensure integrity to the already identified commercial varieties in the project document, proposed new additions would need evaluation. She called for submission of new varietal names so that they can be evaluated for inclusion in the standard.
94. Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that any amendments to the scope of approved work in the project document, would require CCFFV to inform the Commission.
95. The Committee further considered the revised version of the proposed draft standard (CRD13), noted concerns on the following provisions that still needed to be addressed:
  - (i) **Title of the Standard** – whether to change it to reflect draft standard to berries and other small fruits;
  - (ii) **Section 1: Scope** – examine the necessity of the second paragraph under the scope (either to retain it or to delete it);
  - (iii) **Section 2: Definition of produce** – The list on commercial varieties of berries be reviewed to: remove duplication, ensure rationalisation and include missing commercial varieties after their assessment;
  - (iv) **Section 3: Provisions concerning quality requirements** – for all provisions under this section- ensure consistency with the standard layout and other FFV standards; examine the necessity for inclusion of additional or deletion of some quality attributes (e.g. intact, firm etc.); review the classification for completeness and where appropriate create clarity or exceptions around some parameters (e.g. red and white currant panicles must be completely filled);
  - (v) **Section 5: Provisions concerning Tolerances** – Review the proposed tolerances for Extra Class;
  - (vi) **Section 6: Provisions concerning presentations** – Review the provisions for uniformity (6.1);
  - (vii) **Section 7: Provisions concerning Marking or Labelling** – Review the different provisions to ensure consistency and alignment with existing practices.

### Conclusion

96. The Committee noted there were some fundamental concerns in several provisions of the proposed draft standard and these concerns required further review and therefore the standard was not ready for advancement in the Step process.
97. The Committee agreed to:
  - (i) return the proposed draft Standard (CRD16) to Step 2, for redrafting; and
  - (ii) establish an EWG, chaired by Mexico and co-chaired by Argentina and working in English and Spanish to consider the critical issues identified by the Committee and prepare a revised proposed draft Standard for further consideration by CCFFV22..
98. The report of the EWG should be made available to the Codex Secretariat at least three months before CCFFV22.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE LAYOUT FOR CODEX STANDARDS FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (Agenda item 10)<sup>13</sup>**

99. The Committee agreed:

- (i) with the proposal of the USA to consider the Item at its next session, as this would enable the review of all comments received at this session; and
- (ii) that the USA would continue with the development of the discussion paper taking into account all comments received at the session.

**OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 11)****Use of “commercial type”**

- 100. Brazil expressed a concern on the possible erroneous use of the wording “commercial type” in various standards developed by CCFFV, in particular in Spanish version.
- 101. The Committee agreed to: (i) differ the implementation the previous decision on change “commercial type” to “commercial denomination”; and (ii) further discuss the issue under the agenda item for glossary of terms at its next session.

**Late availability of addendum documents**

- 102. One delegation expressed concern on the late availability of comments (addendum) documents at this session, and that they had been no adequate time to conduct internal consultations. It was further proposed that the addendum documents should be available at least three weeks before the meeting.
- 103. The Committee noted this comment.

**DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 12)**

- 104. The Committee was informed that the exact time and venue of CCFFV22 would be determined by the Host Government in consultation with the Codex Secretariat.

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<sup>13</sup> CX/FFV 19/21/11; CRD3 (EU); CRD8 (East African Community); CRD11 (AU)