

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE: Via delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel.: 57971 Telex: 625852-625853 FAO I Cables: Foodagri Rome Facsimile: (6) 57973152-5782610

ALINORM 91/28

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Nineteenth Session
Rome, 1-10 July 1991

REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE
CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA
Cairo, Egypt, 3-7 December 1990

N.B.: This report incorporates Codex Circular Letter CL 1990/47-AFRICA.

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CX 3/5.2

CI 1990/47-AFRICA
December 1990

TO: - Codex Contact Points
- Participants at the Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating
for Africa
- Interested International Organizations

FROM: Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme,
FAO, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: Distribution of the Report of the Ninth Session of the Codex
Coordinating Committee for Africa (ALINORM 91/28)

The report of the Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa is attached. It will be considered by the 19th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be held in Rome from 1-10 July 1991.

PART A: MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION ARISING FROM THE REPORT OF
THE NINTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

The following matters will be brought to the attention of the 19th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

1. Draft African Regional Standard for Cassava Flour at Step 8 (ALINORM 91/28, paras. 49-53 and Appendix II)

Governments wishing to propose amendments or comments on the Draft African Regional Standard for Cassava Flour should do so in writing in conformity with the Guide to the Consideration of Regional Standards at Step 8 (see Codex Alimentarius Procedural Manual, Seventh Edition) to the Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy not later than 31 March 1991.

2. Proposed Draft African Regional Standard for Processed Couscous at Step 3 (ALINORM 91/28, paras. 54-59 and Appendix III)

PART B: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM GOVERNMENTS

1. Implementation and Use of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food (ALINORM 91/28, para. 69)
2. Notification on the Status of Acceptance of Codex Standards, Regional Codex Standards and Codex Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs with reference to the new system of acceptance (ALINORM 91/28, paras. 31-33)
3. Information concerning the activities of National Codex Contact Points and the functioning of their National Codex Committees

Comments and information on items 1-3 in Part B should be sent to the Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, not later than the end of December 1991.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa reached the following conclusions during its deliberations:

- Acceptances of Codex Standards: The Coordinating Committee agreed to support the Commission continuing its efforts to obtain more acceptances of Codex standards and Codex MRLs by member governments, (para. 33);
- Agreed to forward the Draft Codex African Regional Standard for Cassava Flour for adoption by the Commission at Step 8, (paras. 49-53);
- Agreed to forward the proposed Draft Codex African Regional Standard for Processed Couscous for adoption by the Commission at Step 3, (paras. 54-59);
- Regional Non-Tariff Technical Barriers to Trade in Foods: The Coordinating Committee agreed that in future more efforts should be made by the countries of the Region to: enforcing international standards; improving national systems of control; developing a better exchange of information on imported/exported commodities among them, and further stimulating the interest of inter African trade, (paras. 60-65);
- Supported the widest distribution and use of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food, (paras. 66-69);
- Endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Workshop on Contaminants that, in general, food control infrastructures need to be strengthened and that an African network be established to transfer appropriate technologies successfully developed on food contaminants, especially aflatoxins, from certain countries to other countries of the Region. The Coordinating Committee urged the Codex Alimentarius Commission to take quick action on legislation regarding acceptance of aflatoxin detoxified groundnut extractions, (paras. 70-76);
- Codex activities regarding control of pesticide residues in food: The Coordinating Committee agreed that information on pesticides used in developing countries, such as fumigants, should be provided to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues taking into account the interest of the Region in these topics, (paras. 77-82);
- The Coordinating Committee discussed Methods of Control for Radio-nuclide Contamination of Foods in International Trade and emphasized the importance of Codex guidelines for food and the need for several countries for training in identifying radionuclides in food, (paras. 83-86);
- The Coordinating Committee was informed of the location of Codex Contact Points and the functioning of National Codex Committees in each country of the Region, and agreed on the priority to develop a network of Codex Contact Points at regional level which would improve Codex standards and support a greater involvement by governments in Codex work concerning food control and promotion of food safety, (paras. 87-100);

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (Cont'd)

- Revised the two draft Codes of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street-Vended Foods prepared by the Codex Coordinating Committees for Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and proposed some amendments and some special features peculiar to Africa, which would be incorporated into the General Code of Practice elaborated by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, (paras. 101-111);

- Nomination of Coordinator: Prof. Dr. M. Hilal (Egypt) was nominated as Coordinator for Africa for appointment by the 19th Session of the Commission, (paras. 112-113);

- Future Work: The Coordinating Committee agreed on its future programme of work, (para. 114).

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa was held in Cairo by the courtesy of the Government of Egypt.
2. The Session was attended by Delegates and Observers from 17 countries and 4 international organizations. The list of participants, including the FAO/WHO Secretariat and Representatives of FAO and WHO, is given in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION (Agenda Item 1)

3. The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that the current Coordinator for Africa was unable to attend the Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. As referred to in the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, when the Chairman of the Committee for any reason is unable to take the Chair the host country shall designate another person to perform the functions of the Chairman for as long as the Chairman is unable to do so. The Codex Secretariat had been informed that Prof. M. Hilal, President of the Egyptian Organization for Standardization of the Ministry of Industry had been appointed by its government to chair the Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. The Committee agreed with this nomination.
4. During the opening ceremonies the participants attending the session were welcomed by several representatives of the Government of Egypt and by the Chairman of the Committee.

Opening Speech by Prof. M. Hilal, Chairman of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa

5. The Chairman in his opening speech welcomed members and guests to the meeting and informed the Committee that discussions would centre around important topics provided in the Agenda. He advised that members would have to exchange ideas and enrich themselves with information provided by all for the benefit of the Region of Africa. The Chairman highlighted the importance of coordination of activities in the Region in order to increase the capabilities of the Region and facilitate the transfer of know-how and technologies. He stressed the importance of developing a network of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees in order to improve the participation of each country of the Region in the work of Codex.

Speech by FAO Representative in Egypt

6. Mr. Abdellatif Tabet, FAO Programme Officer, presented a speech on behalf of the FAO Representative. He expressed his appreciation to the Government of Egypt on behalf of the Director-Generals of FAO and WHO for the generous offer to host the Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. He recalled the activity of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its work for the protection of the consumer against health risks in food, as well as against commercial fraud, and the facilitation of international trade in food. He recalled the collaborative programme between GATT and the Codex Alimentarius Commission concerning the elimination of non-tariff trade barriers through the harmonization of national sanitary and phytosanitary regulations as a long term goal. He pointed that the Regional Coordinating Committees of Codex had been established by the Commission as fora for bringing countries of the geographical region together to discuss common problems in the area of food standards, food control and food safety. The Coordinating Committees are excellent means of putting into practice the concept of technical cooperation between developing countries (TCDC) which has the full support of the United Nations system. Mr. Abdellatif Tabet expressed his interest

in the conclusion of the session and contributions from participating member countries in the elaboration of recommendations to the Commission.

Speech by Dr. Youssef Wally, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation

7. The Minister's speech was read by Dr. Akhila Saleh. The Minister, in his speech, apologized for his absence, but sent his best wishes. He stated that African countries are regarded as main producers of cereals, oil seeds and other essential crops and so should be concerned about their quality and safety. He gave figures for production of wheat, maize and rice in Egypt. In order to facilitate trade, all African countries should come to a common conclusion concerning specifications and measures for controlling all contaminants. He informed the Committee that Egypt had gone far in the field of inspection concerning mycotoxins, pesticides and heavy metals and was therefore willing to make available the Egyptian experience and facilities for the benefit of solving African problems and to facilitate trade.

Speech by Eng. Abdel Sattar Saliman, Food Industries Corporation

8. Eng. Abdel Sattar Saliman presented background information on the development of the Food Industries Corporation and of its 19 associated companies. He expressed the status of collaboration with the Egyptian Organization for Standardization and the important results obtained in the standardization of food quality in commodities. He highlighted the interest of his organization in the work of Codex and in the elaboration of international standards in foods.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 2)

9. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda (CX/AFRICA 90/1) as the Agenda for its session without change.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMEN (Agenda Item 3)

10. Mr. Cheikh Kane (Senegal) was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman for the Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa. His nomination was proposed by the Delegation of Egypt and supported by Kenya.

IN MEMORIAM

11. The Committee observed one minute's silence in memory of its former friend and colleague, Dr. E.O. Idusogie, Regional Food Policy and Nutrition Officer, Regional Office for Africa who had passed away since its previous session.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 4)

12. The Committee had before it working paper CX/AFRICA 90/2 containing matters of interest arising from the 18th Session of the Commission and of a number of Codex Committees.

Elaboration of Standard for Coffee and Coffee Products

13. The Committee noted that the Commission will discuss at its next session the status of international standards for coffee on the basis of comments from governments. The Delegation of Egypt stated that it had elaborated coffee standards derived from the ISO standards and requested that the standards be circulated among other members. The Delegation of Algeria supported the elaboration of international standards for coffee.

African Regional Standard for Pearl Millet Flour

14. The Committee was informed that this standard had been published in Supplement 1 of Volume XVIII of the Codex Alimentarius and that a method to measure colour in the flour should be selected because the method proposed by Senegal could not be endorsed by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) due to the fact that it was not a validated method. The Delegation of Senegal informed the Committee that this method was currently being used in the country and that they were ready to adopt any method that the CCMAS proposed.

African Regional Standard for Gari

15. The Committee noted that amendment of the Codex African Regional Standard for Gari had been adopted by the Commission and that new methods should be selected for the determination of hydrocyanic acid and acidity expressed as lactic acid.

16. The Delegation of Tanzania informed the Committee on its proposal to use the Cooke's method and had circulated the method to Kenya, Nigeria and Mozambique for collaborative studies. The Delegation reported that response had been obtained from Kenya, but not from the other two countries. The Committee noted some communication problems among participating African countries and highlighted the importance of improving the collaborative study among producer and consumer countries through the assistance of the African Regional Standards Organization (ARSO).

Elaboration of a Worldwide Standard for Rice, including Milled Rice

17. The Committee noted that the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (CCCPL) at its Seventh Session had amended the proposed draft standard for rice taking into consideration the ISO standard and government comments. The amended proposed draft was attached to the report as Appendix IV, requesting comments at Step 3. Several delegations supported the elaboration of this standard. The Delegation of Egypt informed the Committee that Egypt had prepared a standard for rice which would soon be published. The Delegation of Nigeria, supported by other delegations, requested copies of the above report. The Secretariat assured delegations that copies of the report of the CCCPL would be sent not only to Codex Contact Points, as is the normal practice of Codex, but also to each participant at the Ninth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa.

Types of Acceptance for Maximum Limits (MRLs) for Pesticide Residues and for Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods

18. The Committee noted that a new system of acceptance had been adopted by the Commission at its 18th Session in July 1989, and that member countries were requested to reply to the form of acceptance for Codex MRLs sent to Codex Contact Points.

19. The Delegation of Egypt stated that it had begun to reply to the form of acceptance which would be sent to the Codex Secretariat as soon as possible. The Delegation requested information in case of many non-acceptances of Codex MRLs. The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that each country should give particular importance to the form of acceptance of free distribution and that the collaboration between Codex and GATT supports the use of international standards for foods moving in international trade.

20. The Delegation of Algeria stated the importance of organizing national systems to detect residues of pesticides in foods as a priority to setting up international limits for residues. The Codex Secretariat pointed out that international limits and their acceptance were an important system to protect countries particularly those without an effective national food control system.

Elaboration of Standards for Durum Wheat Semolina and Durum Wheat

21. The Committee noted that the above standards had been advanced by the CCCPL to Step 8 of the Codex Procedure for endorsement at the 19th Session of the Commission. The Delegation of Algeria stated that this standard should be considered in the elaboration of the proposed draft standard for couscous, taking into account the quality factor of raw material used in couscous.

Draft Guidelines for the Preservation of Raw Milk by Use of the Lactoperoxidase System

22. The Committee noted that at its 24th Session the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) had recommended the omission of Steps 6 and 7 in order to allow the rapid adoption of the Guidelines by the Commission at Step 8.

23. It was emphasized that the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) recognized that the use of the lactoperoxidase system would increase total thiocyanate exposure, but that this would not pose any toxicological hazard, provided that iodine intake was adequate.

24. The Committee supported the use of the lactoperoxidase method and recommended particular attention in the use of this technology in areas where goitre is endemic.

Code of Hygienic Practice for Products of Aquaculture

25. The Committee was informed of the elaboration of a Code of Hygienic Practice for Products of Aquaculture and on an expert consultation which would be held between 10-13 December 1990 in Rome.

26. The Delegation of Egypt pointed out the importance of setting maximum residue limits for pesticide residues in fish. The Delegation of Senegal informed the Committee that the use of pesticides in some countries in order to store processed fish was common practice.

Priority List of Veterinary Drugs requiring evaluation

27. The Committee noted that at the Fifth Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs (CCRVDF) several delegations from developing countries had expressed concern for some drugs used extensively in their countries and not yet evaluated due to a lack of data.

28. The Delegation of Egypt stated that several veterinary drugs used in their country should be submitted for evaluation through the JECFA. These drugs were the following: tetracyclines, tylosin, tosamycin, piramycin, luicomycin, flumiguine, nalidixic acid and oxalenic acid and some penicillins. The Delegation of Nigeria informed the Committee that a national drug formulary had been produced which included veterinary drugs.

29. The Secretariat informed the Committee that lists of veterinary drugs should be submitted through the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs which has a proper system to define priority lists of products to JECFA.

Proposed Draft Worldwide Codex Standard for Pineapple, Papaya and Mango

30. The Committee noted the statement of work of the Codex Committee on Tropical Fresh Fruits and Vegetables with reference to some tropical fruits. The Delegation of Senegal informed the Committee that a standard for mango elaborated by OECD would be finalized by December 1990 and therefore it requested the harmonization of these standards.

REVIEW OF ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS (Agenda Item 5 (a))

31. The Committee had before it the document CX/AFRICA 90/3-Part I which referred to the status of acceptances and notifications received by member countries of the Region since the 8th Session of the Coordinating Committee held in December 1988.

32. The Delegation of Egypt pointed out that for the acceptance of MRLs its country considered the national consumption data an important factor which was taken into consideration in the review of all proposed Codex MRLs.

33. The Committee agreed to support the Commission continuing its efforts to obtain more acceptances of Codex standards and Codex MRLs by member governments in anticipation of developments through GATT.

Report on the Status of the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations on Agriculture (Agenda Item 5 (b))

34. The Committee had before it document CX/AFRICA 90/3-Part II concerning background information on the programme of cooperation between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and GATT and the establishment of a Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Regulations and Barriers. The Committee noted that the draft text for the framework of an agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary measures was finalized, but not all points of difference were resolved and that a final agreement was expected to be reached at the close of negotiations of the Uruguay Round.

35. The Committee recognized that developments in GATT required all member countries in the framework of GATT to seriously consider utilizing Codex standards or to modify their laws and regulations so that the effect would be much the same. The Committee agreed that a positive development and acceptance of Codex standards by the more developed countries would no doubt result in a significant improvement of international trade possibilities for food commodities between developed and developing countries.

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION SINCE THE 8TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 6)

36. The Committee had before it documents CX/AFRICA 90/4 and CX/AFRICA 90/4 - Add. 1. The representatives of the two organizations elaborated the various activities of relevance to Africa that had been taken in collaboration with member governments at the country, regional and global level.

Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)

37. Taking into consideration the use of natural sweeteners by some countries in Africa, the Delegation of Egypt recommended that the following natural sweeteners: thaumatin, miraculine and monelliene be submitted to JECFA through the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC). The Delegation of Algeria informed the Committee of a study in their country for the development of appropriate legislation to control the use of artificial sweeteners, as a substitute for sugar, in several food products.

38. The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that the established procedure for submitting new chemicals for evaluation should be followed through the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants. The Codex Secretariat stated that it would provide the regulations governing submission of new chemicals to members.

Joint FAO/UNEP/WHO GEMS/Food Contamination Monitoring Programme

39. The Delegation of Egypt, supported by Lesotho and Nigeria, informed the Committee that non-participation of member countries in the GEMS/Food Monitoring Programme could be due in part to non-availability of infrastructural facilities and thereby requested assistance in this area. The Committee was informed on the efforts being carried out by FAO in strengthening food control systems in the Region and that the existing capabilities in several African countries could also be used for the GEMS/Food Monitoring Programme.

International Conference on Acceptance, Control of, and Trade in Irradiated Food

40. The representative of WHO presented information to the delegates concerning (i) Consultation on Microbiological Criteria for Foods to be further processed, including by irradiation, held in Geneva from 24 May to 2 June 1989, and (ii) the International Conference on Acceptance, Control, of and Trade in Irradiated Food, held in Geneva in December 1988. Reference was also made to the WHO Publication "Food Irradiation - A Technique for Preserving and Improving the Safety of Food".

41. The Delegation of Egypt stated that small scale irradiation of selected foods was already being undertaken, while in Algeria there was a programme in the pipeline to initiate the treatment by irradiation of several agricultural products such as potatoes, onions and garlic in order to improve storage. The Delegation of Cameroon expressed concern for the need to ensure strict safety control over all stages of the process. This was particularly important for developing countries who lacked expertise in these techniques. Assistance in developing this technology by IAEA would be welcomed.

International Conference on Nutrition (ICN)

42. The Committee was informed that an International Conference on Nutrition had been planned for December 1992 organized by FAO and WHO. The Delegation of Cameroon requested that the Conference take into consideration the issue of malnutrition due to diarrhoea in view of its effect on malnutrition and related problems in Africa. The Committee requested to be kept informed on all documentation available for the Conference due to its importance in the Region.

Report on WHO Activities (Global and Inter-regional Activities)

43. The representative of WHO outlined the activities undertaken by WHO since the 8th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa, as contained in document CX/AFRICA 90/4 and Conference Room Document 4.

44. The subsequent discussion centred on the Report of the WHO Consultation on Health Surveillance of Food Handling Personnel. (WHO Technical Report Series No. 785, Geneva 1989). Both delegates of Kenya and Egypt indicated that there was still a need for periodic medical examinations in their countries. In response it was explained that the most effective means of preventing the transmission of pathogens from food handling personnel via food to consumers was the strict adherence to good personal hygiene and to hygienic food handling practices.

45. The Representative of the WHO African Region presented the report for both WHO/EMRO and WHO/AFRO (document CX/AFRICA 90/4-Add.1).

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF FOOD SAFETY ACTIVITIES IN THE CODEX REGION OF AFRICA (Agenda Item 7)

46. The representative of WHO in introducing the topic, explained that a Circular Letter (CL 1990/25-AFRICA) had been sent to all National Codex Contact Points in July 1990, attached to which was a list of indicators which was intended

to serve as a basis for collection of information on national food safety and related programmes. The Circular Letter had been sent on the basis of the deliberations of the previous session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa which had concluded that "Monitoring of national policies, programmes, services and institutions would provide a useful tool in facilitating the development of food safety/food control activities in the countries of Africa". Nevertheless to date, no responses had been received from the countries. This led the Secretariat to consider whether there was a need to review and strengthen the existing mechanisms for eliciting, through National Codex Contact Points, the information requested.

47. The responses elicited during the subsequent discussion indicated that participants were unaware of the aforementioned Circular Letter. The lack of response to the Circular Letter did not indicate lack of interest by countries. In fact, there was a consensus that the information requested could help countries identify relevant food safety and related issues, which in turn would facilitate development of food safety programmes. It was also recognized that the information requested required multi-sectoral collaboration, which in turn called for an effective national coordinating mechanism.

48. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman proposed that countries should again look at their existing coordinating mechanisms, including the need to strengthen National Codex Contact Points. In addition, the information already requested should again be distributed to all country delegates for their subsequent responses.

CONSIDERATION OF AFRICAN REGIONAL STANDARDS (Agenda Item 8)

Draft African Regional Standard for Cassava Flour at Step 7

49. The Committee had before it Conference Room Document 2 referring to the Draft African Regional Standard for Edible Cassava Flour and document CX/AFRICA 90/6-Add. 1 concerning comments received from Thailand. The Delegation of Tanzania informed the Committee that after its circulation the draft standard had received comments only from Thailand which proposed a change in the name of the draft standard to "edible cassava meal" due to the fact that the product covers both dry and wet processes for cassava processing. Therefore the definition of the product should be changed to cover only products prepared from the dry process.

50. The Delegation of Thailand, present as observers at the session, informed the Committee that the reason for changing the name of the standard to "edible cassava meal" was that the bulk of global tapioca/cassava flour/starch trade is in the form of flour of much finer quality. Thus using the same product name will confuse trading of the commodity. Leading exporting countries such as Thailand and Indonesia would be adversely affected by the proposed draft. Although the name of presently manufactured tapioca/cassava flour marketed worldwide is actually starch, many countries know such product as "flour".

51. The Delegation of Tanzania pointed out that the name "meal" referred to food for animal use and therefore could not agree to Thailand's proposal. Taking into consideration that the definition of the product included both the sweet and bitter varieties, the Delegation of Tanzania proposed to include the species "*Manihot utilisima* pohl" in the definition of product.

52. The Committee agreed with these proposals and decided to advance the Draft Standard for Cassava flour to Step 8 of the Codex Procedure (see Appendix II).

53. The Committee agreed to the proposal of the Delegation of Tanzania to organize among interested countries of the Region a collaborative study to validate the method of determination of total hydrocyanic acid (R.D. Cooke's Method,

modified by O'Brien and Poulter, 1988). The results of this collaborative study would be referred to the Committee at its next session.

Proposed Draft Codex African Regional Standard for Industrial Couscous

54. The Committee had before it document CX/AFRICA 90/6 which contained the proposed draft standard for industrial couscous as prepared by Algeria.

55. The Delegation of Algeria informed the Committee on the interest of the Region to develop such a standard due to the high consumption of couscous, and its commercialization in the Magrieb area and in some European countries in order to limit problems of fraud and to protect the consumer. The Delegation informed the Committee on the different sections of the proposed draft standard introducing some modifications to the document which reflect more study with the couscous producer industry in Algeria.

56. The Delegation of Egypt pointed out that the name of the proposed draft standard should be changed from industrial to processed couscous and that the limits in Section 3.2 referring to moisture and ash should be limited only to the maximum value, not considering the minimum. The Delegation requested that in the Section on Quality Factors the minimum limit for protein should be fixed and that the Section on Food Additives should consider the possible use of some additives justified by the technology of production.

57. The Delegation of Libya requested the inclusion of the limit for ergot in the standard.

58. The Delegation of Senegal informed the Committee that in the Region two different types of couscous are commercialized, couscous obtained from millet and couscous obtained from durum wheat.

59. The Committee agreed that the proposed draft standard should be amended and attached as Appendix III to this report. Government comments would be solicited at Step 3 subject to agreement of the Commission.

EXAMINATION OF REGIONAL NON-TARIFF TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE IN FOODS (Agenda Item 9)

60. The Committee had before it document CX/AFRICA 90/7 referring to the examination of regional non-tariff technical barriers to trade in foods which included a list of issues for consideration by the Committee.

61. The Delegation of Senegal stated that in view of the organization of the EEC Common Market in 1992, some negative factors such as protection and concurrence could affect exports of some countries of the Region. A better form of organization through the development of an African common market was desirable as supported by the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

62. The Delegation of Algeria informed the Committee of the importance of its international trade with industrialized countries and particularly with the EEC. It referred to specific problems concerning quality of traded food and, supported by the Delegation of Egypt, stressed the need for strengthening food control systems, enforcement of legislation and exchange of information among African countries in matters of food control and food trade.

63. Several other delegations informed the Committee on frequent cases of imported foods not corresponding to requested quality. Non-tariff barriers had been used frequently by importing countries to lower the values of products exported from the region.

64. The Delegation of Kenya referred to the Committee an existing problem in the market among African countries which in some cases import from Europe products exported from other African countries and subjected to re-labelling and packaging changes.

65. The Committee agreed that in future more efforts should be made by the countries of the Region to:

- enforce international standards;
- improve national systems of control;
- develop a better exchange of information on imported/exported commodities among them;
- further stimulate the interest of inter-African trade.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD (Agenda Item 10)

66. The Secretariat, in introducing the paper, explained that the Code which had been adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1979, was a product of a wide measure of international cooperation and agreement, and had been developed in the light of the consideration that many countries, particularly developing countries, did not as yet have adequate food control infrastructures to protect consumers against possible health hazards in food and against fraud. Most exporting countries had indicated that the principles laid down in the Code were by and large to be already found in their national food laws, while several countries had brought the Code to the attention of the food industry including food distributors and exporters.

67. The Committee was also informed that the recently formed Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific (CCNASWP) had observed that complete protection of consumers could only be achieved through the establishment of effective food control in importing countries and stressed the need for providing assistance to developing countries to enable them to control the quality and safety of food. A working paper on Monitoring of the Effectiveness of the Code of Ethics in International Trade in Foods and the Means of its Implementation in the Region had been prepared by the CCNASWP (CX/NASWP 90/8) which, at the request of the Executive Committee, was being presented for discussion at the Codex Regional Coordinating Committees.

68. The ensuing discussion centred on country situations with regard to the Code of Ethics and suggestions for its more effective implementation. It was clearly emphasized that the Code of Ethics was no substitute for an effective food control infrastructure and activities. While countries had adopted the Code of Ethics, nevertheless there was a realization that there was also a need to improve existing national programmes of food quality control. At the same time, countries who exported sub-standard food commodities to developing countries, should be encouraged to respect the Code of Ethics.

69. In concluding the discussion, it was emphasized that the Code of Ethics should not be considered as a substitute for effective food safety control measures, but rather as a supportive instrument. Nevertheless at the international level the Code was having an important impact on the production of food, as such the Committee should support the widest distribution and use of this Code.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PROGRAMMES ON CONTROL OF MYCOTOXINS IN FOOD (Agenda Item 11)

70. The Delegations of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa who had earlier attended the Regional Workshop on Aflatoxins met under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. Kane of Senegal, and endorsed the Workshop recommendations (see attached Appendix IV).

71. The Committee had before it Conference Room Document 1 which was the Report of the African Regional Workshop on Contaminants (Aflatoxins), held in Cairo, Egypt on 2 December 1990. The paper was introduced by Dr. R.V. Bhat, FAO Consultant. 23 participants from 13 countries of the Region: Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gambia, Lesotho, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, besides observers from Egypt, attended the meeting. During the Workshop technical papers and country reports on contaminants were presented.

72. The Workshop had taken note of the useful work on prevention and control measures carried out in selected countries of the Region. The Committee endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Workshop, that in general, food control infrastructure needed to be established in countries lacking such systems and strengthened and expanded in countries already having such a system. The suggestion for establishment of an African network be established for transfer of appropriate technologies successfully developed on food contaminants, especially aflatoxins, in certain countries to other countries of the Region in the form of TCDC by FAO and other UN/bilateral/multilateral agencies was strongly recommended. Those items pertaining specifically to aflatoxins identified were:

- i) Segregation approach for groundnuts to ensure availability of aflatoxin free groundnuts in Malawi;
- ii) Detoxification of groundnut extractions by ammonia process on an industrial scale in Senegal;
- iii) Regulatory aspects of aflatoxins for animal feeds in Zimbabwe;
- iv) Education and extension network by way of information dissemination in Tanzania;
- v) Identification and cultivation of groundnut cultivars with useful level of resistance to fungal invasion and colonization in several countries like Burkina-Faso and others.
- vi) Appropriate produce handling practice for groundnuts in Nigeria.

73. The Committee took note of the need to formulate a model legislation regarding acceptance of aflatoxin detoxified groundnut extractions and urged the Codex Alimentarius Commission to take quick action in this regard. The Committee also emphasized the need to introduce legislation on contaminants in general and harmonization. Besides, the need for monitoring environmental contaminants using uniform sampling methodologies and analytical quality assurance programmes in the countries of the Region, and strengthening of regional training programmes on inspection, analysis and sampling was stressed. The Committee also endorsed the need to give special attention to detection of adulterants and contaminants in items like edible gums moving in international trade.

74. Background information on Codex work on aflatoxins was presented by the Codex Secretariat. The Secretariat especially brought to the notice of the delegations that the limit proposed for aflatoxins was 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ of total aflatoxin for all foods. It also informed the Committee about the guidelines on aflatoxins for supplementary feeds proposed by the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants, the discussion of the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes on aflatoxin limits for peanuts and the recommendations of JECFA on aflatoxins. The Codex Secretariat requested countries to supply their suggestions and brought to their notice the problems of sampling and analysis of aflatoxins.

75. The Delegation of Senegal stressed the need of many countries to introduce legislation on aflatoxins at the national level and suggested that FAO should play a catalytic role to accelerate the process by preparing a document with model

legislations and providing it to countries of the Region. He also stressed the need to organize more training in inspection/analysis procedures. Reacting to these suggestions, the Codex Secretariat informed the delegations of the various FAO programmes on mycotoxins undertaken in Africa and requested countries to send information on successful programmes on prevention aspects of aflatoxins undertaken in their countries to FAO so that they could all be documented and circulated amongst the countries of the Region.

76. The Delegation of the Gambia, supported by other delegations, expressed gratitude to FAO for the Workshop and for sponsoring some participants. The Committee then requested that FAO arrange another workshop on a relevant topic in food control which should precede the Tenth Session.

CODEX ACTIVITIES REGARDING CONTROL OF PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN FOODS (Agenda Item 12)

77. The Committee had before it document CX/AFRICA 90/9 which referred to the activities regarding establishment of Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues in Food and the problems arising from developing countries in setting MRLs of interest for the Region.

78. The Delegation of Egypt informed the Committee of the benefits derived through the participation of this country from 1984 at sessions of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR). The Delegation stated its continued interest in participating in environmental monitoring systems. The major problem for developing countries relating to the maintenance of pesticide control laboratories was the lack of financial resources. The Delegation referred to proposals discussed at the last session of the CCPR using dues paid by manufacturers to finance the needs of laboratory activities. The Delegation highlighted the importance for developing countries to refer the list of pesticides and pesticide/commodities combinations of interest at national level for appropriate action by the JMPR.

79. The Delegation of Nigeria commended the Egyptian achievements and efforts and mentioned that Nigeria had a system for monitoring the use of pesticides. Its country however requested assistance by FAO for logistic support for its national pesticide monitoring unit, and added that a list of nationally approved pesticides was being compiled for future consideration.

80. Several delegations referred to specific problems concerning pesticide labelling, their use, control, disposal, the non-availability of methods of analysis and specific infrastructure for pesticide analysis and the need for extension services in training farmers in the use of pesticides.

81. The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that all these technical requirements were supported by FAO through strengthening national infrastructures, training personnel and distribution of codes and guidelines on this issue. The Codex Secretariat invited the delegations to consider problems in the framework of the Codex and systems which could permit developing countries to generate data for evaluation of pesticides and pesticide commodity combinations of interest to the Region.

82. The Committee agreed that generation of data on Good Agricultural Practice by the manufacturer for geographical areas with similar climatic conditions in developing countries should be a prerequisite for registration of the pesticide and that information on pesticides used in developing countries, such as fumigants, should be provided to the CCPR taking into consideration the interest of the Region on these topics.

METHODS OF CONTROL FOR RADIOISOTOPE CONTAMINATION OF FOODS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE (Agenda Item 13)

83. The Committee had before it document CX/AFRICA 90/10 which referred to information on action taken after the Chernobyl accident in order to establish guideline levels for radionuclides in foods following accidental nuclear contamination for use in international trade. The Committee was informed that these guidelines had been adopted by the Commission, but it had been agreed that future consideration by the Codex Coordinating Committee would be useful for a faster, improved understanding of the problem.

84. The Delegation of Egypt pointed out that it supported the use of these guidelines which remain applicable for one year following a nuclear accident and, with reference to established levels of Codex guidelines, recommended that increased radio-sensitivity due to parasitic infestation, dietary intake of other contaminants, iodine intake and infant sensitivity should be taken into consideration.

85. The Delegation of Algeria informed the Committee of a recent national control system concerning the contamination of food by radionuclides. This system should be in addition to the requirement for imported food consignments to be accompanied by certificates of clearance from contamination by radionuclides according to international limits. The Delegation requested that importing countries should keep to the provisions provided by the Code of Ethics in International Trade in Food. Many delegations expressed the need for training in identifying radionuclides in food.

86. The Secretariat informed the delegations of a proposed training course in the analysis of radionuclides in foods to be held in 1991 in Ghana.

GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP A NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEE FOR COORDINATION OF NATIONAL POSITIONS ON FOOD STANDARDS QUESTIONS (Agenda Item 14)

87. The Committee had before it document CX/AFRICA 90/11 which requested progress reports by member countries to the Circular Letter CL 1990/18-AFRICA. The Secretariat pointed out that only five countries had responded to the Circular Letter. This might be indicative of the inactivity of the Codex Contact Point or non-functioning of the National Codex Committee.

88. The Committee was therefore requested to report on the location of their Codex Contact Points and the functioning of their National Codex Committees.

89. The Delegation of the Gambia explained that due to ministerial re-organization in the Gambia, there had been changes in locations of certain functions. The Delegation promised on its return to the Gambia to locate the Codex Contact Point in order that Codex texts might receive the necessary attention for the benefit of its country.

90. The Delegation of Algeria reported that the Codex Contact Point was located in the Central Algerian Institute for Quality Control and Packaging in the Ministry of Economy. This Committee, which works in collaboration with the Institute of Standardization in drafting various standards, is composed of representatives from various institutions and organizations concerned with public health. It further stated that the Codex Contact Point collaborated with the Institute of Standardization in drafting various standards which had not been approved due to legal bottle-necks.

91. The Delegation of Kenya reported that it had in place a Codex Contact Point which is located in the Kenya Standards Board and that it was performing satisfactorily. The Delegation also informed that there was an effective National Codex

Committee comprising many ministries and Codex texts were well distributed within the appropriate ministries.

92. The Delegation of Lesotho reported that it had a Codex Contact Point located in the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office which in time past had not been as active as would be expected, but from now onwards would improve in order to be more effective. Lesotho is yet to establish its National Codex Committee.

93. The Delegation of Malawi also informed the Committee that it had in place a Codex Contact Point and an effective National Codex Committee.

94. The Delegation of Mozambique informed the Committee that it would establish its National Bureau of Standards by 1991, probably in February. The Codex Contact Point would be closely related to it.

95. The Delegation of Nigeria reported that the Codex Contact Point was located in the Standards Organization of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Industries, but that a new National Codex Committee had been formed in May 1990 with an increased membership and that it planned to hold its meetings quarterly.

96. The Delegation of Tanzania also informed the Committee that it had an effective Codex Contact Point in the Bureau of Standards. It also had in place a National Codex Committee.

97. The Delegation of Sao Tome and Principe, while informing the Committee that it had no Contact Point or National Codex Committee, it would however on return initiate action. It further stated that its presence at this session should be regarded as the beginning of its effective participation in Codex work.

98. The Delegation of Egypt reconfirmed its statement made during the 8th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa that it had a Codex Contact Point located in the Egyptian Organization for Standardization and that it had high powered National Codex Committee which considered food control/food safety matters. It had approved 327 food standards which had become Egyptian standards, and it had a number of sub-committees on various relevant topics, in addition to other Codex Committees which would be developed as and when required.

99. The Delegation of Senegal stated that its National Codex Committee was located in the Ministry of Health and that it was regarded as a technical committee which supported the Senegalese Institute of Standardization. The Delegation further requested that Codex texts should be sent to participants and not only to Codex Contact Points in order to widen the circulation of Codex documentation, and so overcome any inactivity on the part of the Codex Contact Points.

100. The Chairman encouraged all countries with appropriate capabilities to assist others in setting up their Codex Contact Points or National Codex Committees on request.

ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA ON STREET FOODS AND A PROPOSED CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STREET VENDED FOODS (Agenda Item 15)

101. The Committee had before it document CX/AFRICA 90/12 which discussed the socio-cultural and economic factors with regard to street vending of foods, as well as its health hazards and FAO activities in this regard in the Region. The Committee was informed that the topic had been discussed at the Regional Committees of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean and draft codes of hygienic practice had been produced by these Committees. The Committee was required, having regard to different socio-cultural backgrounds, economic development, educational advancement, governmental structures, etc., to provide "core" codes specific to

Africa, for inclusion in an omnibus code to be prepared by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.

102. The Delegation of Egypt, in support of the elaboration of such a code, revealed that various documentation of foodborne outbreaks in Egypt had implicated street vended foods. However, street vending of food had its economic impacts. The Delegation therefore supported the upgrading of this informal food distribution sector by improving their services and facilities by:

- i) increasing the awareness of vendors to food hygiene;
- ii) providing needed infrastructural requirements, e.g. safe water and electricity supplies and garbage disposal centres and to provide adequate sites.

103. The Delegation of Senegal, in support of elaboration of a code of hygienic practice, emphasized the need for training and education of street-food vendors. Such training was to include proper presentation of their wares to avoid dust, flies and other extraneous matter in order to protect health of the consumer, and also prohibiting the handling of food with bare hands.

104. The Delegations of the Gambia and Malawi agreed to the training and education of vendors, but also requested that consumers should be well informed on basic hygiene. The Delegation of the Gambia emphasized the need for the production and distribution of illustrative educational documents for educating vendors. It also suggested that "extension workers" should go out to educate the vendors.

105. The Delegation of Nigeria mentioned the role of sanitarians in its country, but observed that their effectiveness was not as it used to be due to population growth, manpower requirements and lack of logistic support. It therefore supported the elaboration of the code.

106. The Delegation of Egypt offered to provide a report of a study concluded in by the governorate of the country in collaboration with the Center for Disease Control of the United States.

107. The Delegation of Algeria advised the Committee that in elaborating a Code of Hygiene on Street-Vended Foods, it would be appropriate to take account of the specificity and characteristics of this informal sector of food distribution in order that the recommended code could be efficient and operational. Following the proposal of the FAO representative to initiate a survey on street-vended food, the Delegation of Algeria volunteered to carry this survey through the National Institute of Public Health.

108. The Delegation of Senegal requested that information regarding street food surveys or workshops could best be addressed to: Direction de l'Hygiène et de la Protection sanitaires du Ministère de la Santé Publique et de l'Action Sociale.

109. The Delegations of Gambia and Sao Tome and Principe also informed the Committee that they hoped to start studies on street foods and would request funding from WHO.

110. The Delegation of Tanzania, in its contribution, admitted that the problems associated with street vending of food increased yearly and the law enforcement agents had not been effective. The authorities therefore had decided to educate street-food vendors and consumers. The Delegation further informed the Committee that a project proposal on street-food studies had been submitted to FAO and WHO for possible assistance.

111. In order to respond positively to the preparation of a core code, a Working Group comprising of Egypt, the Gambia, Algeria, Tanzania, Nigeria and the Secretariat was formed. The Working Group was requested to examine the draft codes prepared by the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and that of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia and thereafter provide the required core codes. The Working Group, in its report, recognized the similarities between the two draft codes and accepted both codes. However, it listed a few amendments to the codes and some special features peculiar to Africa. The report of the Working Group is attached to this report as Appendix V.

NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 16)

112. The Committee had before it Conference Room Document 3. The current Coordinator for Africa, under Rule II.4 (b) of the Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is ineligible to hold the Office of Coordinator for the next succeeding term.

113. The Delegation of Gambia proposed that Prof. M. Hilal be nominated for appointment as Coordinator for Africa to serve from the end of the Nineteenth session to the end of the Twentieth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The nomination was supported by all delegations attending the meeting at that time. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Prof. Hilal and to the Government of Egypt for offering to host the next session.

FUTURE WORK AND OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 17)

114. The Committee agreed that the following represented its on-going and future work:

- study of the existing food control infrastructures in the Region, and ways and means of developing a strategy for increasing awareness, at a high level, of the need to strengthen the infrastructures in the interest of increasing food safety/control availability and promoting food exports;
- promotion of training facilities for food inspection;
- promotion of safe food through primary health care;
- consideration of reports on Codex activities generally, and especially pesticides and their residues in foods;
- identification of food (processed foods, fresh produce) of interest to the Region with a view to the elaboration of world-wide Codex standards;
- recommendations on and measures taken by countries of the Region with respect to aflatoxins in food and feed;
- establishment of a collaborative study for the validation of methods of analysis for hydrocyanic acid in cassava flour and gari conducted by Tanzania with the support of Kenya, Nigeria and Mozambique;
- consideration of the report on developments concerning the establishment of an African Regional Data Bank on standardization, certification and quality control;
- monitoring the implementation of the Code of Ethics in International Trade in Foods;

- consideration of reports on street vending of foods in Africa and other regions;
- consideration of guidelines for setting up National Codex Committees and progress report on action taken in Africa;
- report on collaboration with ARSO;
- examination of non-tariff trade barriers with special emphasis on export trade;
- monitoring national policies, programmes, services and institutions related to food safety;
- establishment of an African Regional Standard for couscous.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

115. The Committee was informed that the Tenth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa would be held in Egypt towards the end of 1992.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Subject/Standard	Step	For Action by:	Document Reference
Draft African Regional Standard for Cassava Flour	8	CAC	paras. 49-53, App. II ALINORM 91/28
Proposed Draft African Regional Standard for Processed Couscous	3	CAC	paras. 54-59, App. III ALINORM 91/28
Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street-Vended Foods	--	Regional FAO/WHO Meeting; CCFH CCAFRICA	paras. 101-111, ALINORM 91/28
Implementation of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food	--	Countries in the Region of Africa	paras. 66-69, ALINORM 91/28
Monitoring national policies, structures, services and institutions related to food safety and food control in Africa	--	WHO Codex Secretariat CCAFRICA	paras. 46-48, ALINORM 91/28
Identification of food products for standardization of interest to the Region of Africa	--	Countries in the Region of Africa CCAFRICA	para. 113, ALINORM 91/28
Guidelines for setting up National Codex Committees	--	Countries in the Region of Africa Codex Secretariat CCAFRICA	paras. 87-100, ALINORM 91/28
Identification of non-tariff barriers to African food trade	--	CCAFRICA	paras. 60-65, ALINORM 91/28
Identification of pesticide/commodity combinations of interest to developing countries	--	Countries in the Region of Africa CCAFRICA	paras. 77-82, ALINORM 91/28

ALINORM 91/28
Appendix I

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ALINORM 91/28
Appendix II

DRAFT AFRICAN REGIONAL STANDARD FOR EDIBLE CASSAVA FLOUR
(Advanced to Step 8 of the Codex Procedure)

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to cassava flour intended for human consumption.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Definition of the product

Edible cassava (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) flour is the product prepared from dried cassava chips or paste by a pounding, grinding or milling process, followed by sifting to separate the fibre from the flour. In case of edible cassava flour prepared from bitter cassava (*Manihot Utilisima* Pohl), detoxification is carried out by soaking the tubers in water for a few days, before they undergo drying in the form of whole, pounded tuber (paste) or in small pieces.

2.2 Classification

Edible cassava flour is classified into two categories, as follows:

(a) "Fine" cassava flour

Edible cassava flour of which not less than 90 percent by weight shall pass easily through a sieve of 0.60 mm aperture size (Section 9.2).

(b) "Coarse" cassava flour

Edible cassava flour of which not less than 90 percent by weight shall pass easily through a sieve of 1.20 mm aperture size (Section 9.2.).

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Raw materials

The cassava tuber from which the edible cassava flour is milled shall be peeled, clean and in good physiological condition.

3.2 Organoleptic properties

The colour, taste and odour of edible cassava flour shall be characteristic of the product.

3.3 Analytical characteristics

3.3.1 Hydrocyanic acid content

The total hydrocyanic acid content of edible cassava flour shall not exceed 10 mg/kg (Section 9.5).

3.3.2 Moisture content

The moisture content of edible cassava flour shall not exceed 13 per cent m/m (Section 9.3.).

3.3.3 Crude fibre content

The crude fibre content of edible cassava flour shall not exceed 2 percent m/m (Section 9.6).

3.3.4 Ash

The ash content of edible cassava flour shall not exceed 3 percent m/m (Section 9.4.).

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

No food additive shall be added to edible cassava flour.

5. CONTAMINANTS

Edible cassava flour shall be prepared with special care under good manufacturing practices, so that residues of those pesticides which may be required in the production, storage, or processing of the cassava, cassava chips, cassava flour, or the premises and equipment used for processing do not remain, or if technically unavoidable, are reduced to the maximum extent possible.

6. HYGIENE

6.1 It is recommended that the product covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice, General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 2 - 1985).

6.2 When tested by appropriate methods of sampling and examination the product shall be:

6.2.1 To the extent possible in Good Manufacturing Practice, free from objectionable matter.

6.2.2 Free from microorganisms, substances originating from microorganisms or other poisonous substances in amounts which may reasonably represent a hazard to health.

7. PACKAGING, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE

7.1 Edible cassava flour shall be packaged, transported or stored in containers which will safeguard the hygienic, nutritional, technological and organoleptic qualities of the product.

7.2 The packaging material shall be as such as to protect the product against bacteriological and other contamination, it shall protect the product as far as possible against any infiltration of moisture, rehydration and against leakage. The packaging material shall not impart any odour, taste, or colour or any other extraneous property to the product and shall not result in contamination of the product with substances of which the packaging material is made.

8. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods¹ (Ref. CODEX STAN 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

8.1 Name of the Product

The name of the product to be shown on the label shall be "edible cassava flour" preceded or followed by the common or ordinary name legally accepted in the country where the product is sold. The name shall show the particle size of the flour in accordance with the descriptions contained in Section 2.2.

¹ Hereafter referred to as the "General Standard".

8.2 Net Contents

The declaration of net contents shall be in accordance with Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 of the General Standard.

9. METHODS OF SAMPLING

9.1 Sampling

9.1.1 Instructions for drawing primary samples according to ISO 2170-1972 (Cereals and Pulses) or ICC Method of Sampling No. 101-1960 (Sampling of Milled Products).

9.1.2 The size of the sample to be taken from a homogeneous lot should be in accordance with Table 3 of the Instructions on Codex Sampling Procedures (CX/MAS 1-1987, Appendix V).

9.1.3 For all determinations the laboratory sample should be prepared in accordance with the variables plan for proportion defective (CX/MAS 1-1987, Appendix IV).

9.1.4 For all determinations, except particle size of flour (Section 2.2), analysis should be performed on the "blended bulk sample".

9.1.5 In order to verify granularity (i.e. to verify particle size of flour declared on the label) (Section 2.2), determinations in consignments of prepackaged products should be on individual packages.

9.2 Determination of Granularity (Type I Method)
According to ISO 2591-1: 1988 - Test sieving.

9.3 Determination of Moisture (Type I Method)
According to ISO 712: 1985 Cereals and Cereal Products - Determination of Moisture (routine reference method).

9.4 Determination of Ash (Type I Method)
According to ISO 2171: 1980 - Cereals, Pulses and Derived Products - Determination of Ash.

9.5 Determination of Total Hydrocyanic Acid
Method to be selected.

9.6 Determination of Crude Fibre (Type I Method)
According to ISO 5498: 1981 - Determination of Crude Fibre Content
- B.5 Separation by filtration through filter paper - General Method.

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Appendix III

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR PROCESSED COUSCOUS
At Step 3 of the Codex Procedure

Title of Draft

Codex standard for processed couscous (African regional standard)

1. SCOPE

1.1 The term "couscous", below, refers to processed couscous.

1.2 This standard applies to couscous, i.e. the product prepared from durum wheat semolina (*Triticum durum*) to which drinking water has been added and which has undergone physical treatment such as cooking and drying.

1.3 This standard does not apply to couscous intended for the same use but prepared from cereals other than durum wheat.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Couscous is prepared from a mixture of coarse and fine semolina. It can be prepared from "coarse medium" semolina.

2.1.2 Coarse semolina is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 475 and 700 microns.

2.1.3 Fine semolina is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 130 and 183 microns.

2.1.4 "Coarse medium semolina" is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 183 and 700 microns.

2.1.5 Medium semolina is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 183 and 475 microns.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Composition

Semolina proportions in the mixture intended for the preparation of couscous are roughly:

- 20-30% for fine semolina
- 70-80% for coarse semolina

"Coarse medium" semolina is a semolina obtained from a mixture of:

- 25-30% for coarse semolina
- 75-70% for medium semolina

3.2 General Specifications

3.2.1 The materials used for production of processed cous-cous should be clean, safe and fit for human consumption.

3.2.2 All processes applied to materials used for production of processed couscous must be carried out in order that:

- a) Limit the reduction of nutritive value;
- b) Avoid undesirable modification of properties of processed couscous.

3.3 Quality Factors

3.3.1 Granularity (microns): min. 920 - max. 960.

3.3.2 Moisture (%): - max. 13.5%.

3.3.3 Acidity (mg H₂SO₄/100g): max. 50.

3.3.4 Ash (%): - max. 1.1%.

3.3.5 Dry gluten (%) : to be elaborated.

3.3.6 Carotenoid pigments (%) : to be elaborated.

3.3.7 Disaggregation (%) D.M.: to be elaborated.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

No food additive shall be added during the industrial processing of couscous.

5. CONTAMINANTS

The processed couscous shall be free from heavy metals in quantities which could present a health risk.

6. HYGIENE

6.1 It is recommended that the product covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared in accordance with the appropriate sections of the "Recommended International Code of Practice, General Principles of Food Hygiene" (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 2 (1985)).

6.2 When tested by appropriate methods of sampling and examination the product:

6.2.1 shall be substantially free from undesirable matter, to the extent compatible with good manufacturing practices.

6.2.2 shall be free from microorganisms, substances originating from microorganisms or any other toxic substance in quantities which may represent a hazard to health.

7. PACKAGING

7.1 Couscous shall be packaged for retail sale in containers which will safeguard the hygienic, nutritional and technological qualities of the product.

7.2 Containers, including packaging materials shall be manufactured from safe substances appropriate to the use for which they are intended.

7.3 The volume of packaging for retail shall be between 250g and 500g.

7.4 For wholesale other size packaging should be used.

8. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

8.1 Name of the Product

The name of the product to be shown on the label shall be "Processed Couscous".

9. METHODS OF SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

9.1 ISO 2170-1980. Cereals and Legumes. Sampling for milled products.

9.2 Analytical methods

9.2.1 Granularity (to be determined).

9.2.2 Moisture

ISO 712-1979. Cereals and Cereal Products. Determination of humidity.

9.2.3 Fat Acidity

ISO 7305-1986. Cereal Milled Products. Determination of fat acidity.

9.2.4 Ash

ISO 2171-1980. Cereals, Legumes and Derived Products. Determination of ash.

9.2.5 Dry Gluten

ISO 6645-1981. Wheat Flour. Determination of dry gluten.

9.2.6 Carotenoid Pigments (to be determined).

9.2.8 Disaggregation (to be determined).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE AFRICAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CONTAMINANTS (AFLATOXINS)
CAIRO, 2 DECEMBER 1990

The FAO African Regional Workshop on Contaminants (Aflatoxins) during its deliberations reviewed the existing scenario in African countries regarding various aspects of food contaminants. The need to promote various prevention and control measures was recognized.

The following conclusions and recommendations were made in order to ensure the flow of commodities in national, regional and international trade without hindrance. Such an effort would ensure consumer food safety by way of minimizing the health hazards to both man and animals, fair returns for agricultural produce, increase foreign exchange earnings and reduce economic losses.

Conclusions

The Workshop discussed the various aspects of food contaminants with special reference to prevention and control and reached the following conclusions:

1. The various environmental contaminants such as moulds, mycotoxins, pesticide residues, residues of veterinary drugs, heavy metals, animal filth, adulterants as well as naturally occurring toxins inherently present in foods are important both from human and animal health angles as well as regional and international trade angles.
2. Prioritization of efforts with regard to selection of contaminants, commodities for carrying out further work have to be made in each country depending on its importance to the national economy and health effects on humans and animals. For example, for countries exporting cocoa beans and coffee, contaminants like animal filth and moulds may be more important while for exporting groundnut extractions, aflatoxins are important.
3. Certain countries in Africa have successfully implemented initiated prevention and control strategies on contaminants. The best example is that of aflatoxins. The prevention programmes successfully implemented include segregation of groundnuts to ensure availability of aflatoxin-free groundnuts for export in Malawi, detoxification of groundnut extractions by ammonia processing on an industrial scale again for export in Senegal and Sudan, regulations on maximum rates of inclusion of aflatoxin contaminated groundnut cake in feeds of farm animals in Zimbabwe, education and extension network by way of information dissemination in Tanzania, identification of groundnut cultivars with useful levels of resistance to fungal invasion and colonization in countries like Burkina-Faso, Egypt, the Gambia, Malawi, Senegal and Uganda and identification of appropriate produce handling practices in Nigeria and Malawi.
4. Very few countries in Africa have enacted tolerance limits for environmental contaminants. There is a need to introduce such limits for contaminants not only in human foods but also animal feeds. The legislations have to be developed in such a way that international harmonization is achieved.

5. Coordinated efforts on monitoring of environmental contaminants are minimal in countries of the region and initiation of such efforts would result in identifying high risk commodities, high risk areas, high risk seasons and high risk contaminants.
6. Initiation of preventive and control programmes on contaminants would result in ensuring safe food, minimizing risk to man and animals, minimizing economic losses and increasing benefits from international trade.
7. National capabilities for inspection, sampling and analysing environmental contaminants needs to be strengthened.
8. Education and extension facilities in the region have to be established and strengthened with appropriate networking of activities for information dissemination.
9. There is a need for manufacturers to develop mechanical electronic sorters suitable for countries of Africa to segregate the mouldy, shrivelled, damaged kernels of groundnut.
10. There is urgent need to install small scale plants in countries of the region to detoxify aflatoxin contaminated groundnut cake.

Recommendations

1. Food control infrastructure needs to be established in countries lacking such a system and strengthened, expanded and coordination between various agencies within the country ensured, in countries where already such a system is existing in order to effectively implement food contamination programmes. The FAO could play a pivotal and catalytic role in the functioning of such a system by way of providing technical back-up. Since considerable investment efforts and external assistance are needed, efforts by international organizations such as FAO/WHO/UNEP/UNDP as well as bi-lateral agencies would be necessary.
2. Recognizing the pioneering efforts made in certain countries in initiating successful prevention and control programmes on aflatoxins such as the:
 - i) Segregation approach in Malawi;
 - ii) Detoxification efforts in Senegal;
 - iii) Regulatory effect aspects for animal feeds in Zimbabwe;
 - iv) Education and extension services in Tanzania;
 - v) Varietal differences approach in several countries of Africa such as Burkina-Faso and others; and
 - vi) Produce handling practice in Nigeria;

an African Network on transfer of these successful technologies practiced in each country to other countries of the region in the form of TCDC is recommended. Such a network could concentrate on initiating training programmes, organizing operational research projects, building up of documentation/information dissemination systems. To begin with, case studies on each of these success stories could be prepared by the respective centres of excellence in each country and a strategy drawn for their wider implementation. The assistance of the agencies in addition to FAO such as

*SADCC/AGC/IDRC for segregation approach, UNIDO for industrial scale/detoxification, UNEP/UNEP/COM for education/extension services especially in produce handling practices, *CGIAR for agronomic approach of exploiting varietal differences in groundnuts and maize could be useful. They would also serve as a model for other developing countries of Asia and Latin America.

3. Currently, no regulation regarding acceptance of aflatoxin detoxified groundnut extractions is available. There is an imperative and urgent need to formulate a model legislation in this regard governed on the general principle that such a model is not harmful to human/animal life based on existing scientific evidences. Formulation of such a regulation would enhance the prospects of many countries of the region earning increased foreign exchange by way of exporting aflatoxin detoxified oilseed extractions. The Codex Alimentarius Commission should be urged to take quick action in this matter.
4. There is an urgent need to introduce legislations on contaminants in many countries of the region on a realistic basis.
5. Harmonization of regulations on tolerance limits, methods of analysis and sampling should be aimed at the international level and the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa is requested to initiate action at the earliest to establish such guidelines.
6. Monitoring of environmental contaminants on the GEMS/Food model with uniform sampling methodologies exclusively for countries in the continent with appropriate analytical quality assurance programme be initiated by countries in the region.
7. Regional training programme on inspection, analysis and sampling for food contaminants in commodities circulated both in domestic and international trade need to be initiated.
8. Studies on economic cost due to lost export earnings and obtaining up-to-date information on detention as well as offering of lower prices for the commodities by importing countries with their causes need to be initiated in order to generate appropriate political commitments in the countries of the region for programmes on contaminants.
9. Use of simple, reliable, rapid, economic, sensitive methods of detecting contaminants which have been collaboratively studied be encouraged for the countries of the region.
10. In order to hasten the implementation of these programmes in a coordinated manner, an African network on food contaminants for collection, storage and dissemination of information on occurrence, health and economic implications, prevention and control of food and feed contaminations among the countries of the region is essential.

*
SADCC = South African Development Coordination Conference
AGC = African Groundnut Council
IDRC = International Development Research Centre
CGIAR = Consultative Group of International Agriculture Research

11. Special attention should be given to detection of adulterants and contaminants in items like gums moving in international trade in view of their importance to national economies of certain exporting countries of the Region.
12. In view of the new uniform European Common Market likely to be formalized in 1993, special efforts are needed in improving the quality of foods/feeds exported from the countries of the Region which calls for urgent attention.

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Appendix V

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE DRAFT CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE
FOR THE PREPARATION AND SALE OF STREET FOODS

The Working Group was comprised of:

Dr. M. Fahmi Saddik, Chairman	(Egypt)
Mr. G.L.S. Gomez	(Gambia)
Dr. M. Kamel Kellou	(Algeria)
Mr. F.A. Shirima	(Tanzania)
Mr. A.O. Akinyede	(Nigeria)
Joint FAO/WHO Secretariat	

Terms of Reference

The Working Group was provided with the draft codes of hygienic practice for the preparation and sale of street foods elaborated by the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia (CC/ASIA) and also that of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CC/LAC). It was required to examine the two codes and recommend "core codes" for the Region of Africa.

The Working Group examined the two drafts as elaborated by the CC/ASIA and the CC/LAC and found them to be very comprehensive with great similarities between them and recommended that both should be submitted to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene for the production of an omnibus code of hygienic practice.

The Working Group however, recognizing special socio-cultural practices in the Region of Africa, recommended the following additions to the codes as proposed by CC/ASIA:

1. Section 2, 19th line insert: "canteen" after "stall" and delete (warung).
2. Section 4. Requirements for the Place or Area of Preparation:
Although it has been stated that the place of preparation of food shall be kept permanently clean and free from any source of contamination, the Working Group felt that emphasis should be placed on the role pets (dogs, cats and farm animals like goats and sheep) reared in the home, play in spreading zoonotic diseases if allowed in the food preparation area. Therefore the Working Group recommended the inclusion of the statement "pets (dogs, cats and farm animals like goats and sheep) reared in the home should be prohibited from gaining access into food preparation areas and storage compartments.
3. Section 4, 6th paragraph under sanitary facilities: the phrase "must first be cooked thoroughly before use" to be replaced by "must be prepared with potable water".
4. Section 5. Requirements for Preliminary Preparation, sub-section Hygienic Practices, 1st line: Insert "especially after visit to the toilet" between "water" and "before".
5. Section 6. Requirements for Final Preparation, sub-section Hygienic Practice: The Working Group recommended the addition of the following: "no smoking in food preparation areas and whilst serving food".
"no spitting in food preparation areas"
"fingernails should be kept short"

"operators should be properly clothed to avoid perspiration dropping into food or onto cooking utensils".

6. Section 7. Requirements for Marketing (first paragraph): The Working Group felt that under the conditions for preparation and transportation of street foods it was not feasible for containers to be hermetically sealed. It was therefore proposed to delete "hermetically sealed and" from the first sentence. The sentence should now read: "if food is transported to the place of sale, it should be in clean, protected containers so that ... food."

The Code, when developed, should be made available to local governments or any authorities in the various countries that monitor the activities of street food vendors/informal food distribution sector for implementation. Moreover, the Working Group, recognizing that various countries already had in place Public Health laws/ordinances with which to monitor or control street vending of food and other public nuisances, therefore recommended that these ordinances be revised and updated to meet the challenges that now confront this important informal food distribution sector.