



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS

### Fifth Session

Virtual, 20 - 29 April 2021

### Discussion Paper on Grouping

Prepared by the United States

#### Background & Introduction:

At CCSCH2 (2015), an electronic working group (EWG) led by India reported that 116 named spices and culinary herbs (SCH) had been identified and placed them into eight different groups based on the plant part they are derived from. The report also indicated that it would be difficult for the CCSCH to elaborate individual quality standards for each of the 116 spices and culinary herbs. Therefore, the need for grouping was proposed, using the format of other Codex group standards, e.g., the *Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CXS 247-2005). The Committee agreed with the EWG report that group standards will maximize standardized text and allow the Committee to focus on the quality profile of a particular group.

The eight broad groups of SCH, agreed to at CCSCH3 (2017), are:

1. Dried fruits and berries
2. Dried roots, rhizomes, and bulbs
3. Dried seeds
4. Dried floral parts
5. Dried bark
6. Dried leaves
7. Herbs
8. Miscellaneous

At the conclusion of the CCSCH3 (2017) in-session Working Group on Work Priorities, in which group standards were discussed, the United States offered to prepare a discussion paper for developing a group standard using one of the plant part groups (dried fruits and berries), for discussion at the next session. At CCSCH4 (2019), the discussion paper was presented and discussed at the in-session Working Group on Priorities and Group Standards. CCSCH4 (2019) deliberated on the discussion paper and agreed that the United States should continue developing the group standard for further discussion at the CCSCH5, taking into consideration the CCSCH4 discussions.

To expedite the Committee's transition to the group approach and to test the group standard method, the United States submitted a proposal for the development of group standard for spices derived from dried fruits and berries based on the discussion paper that was presented and discussed at CCSCH4 (2019). The proposed group standard format is comprised of two sections: one section contains text common to all CCSCH standards (General Requirements), and the second section is an Annex with two tables. One table prescribes chemical parameters (authenticity of taste/flavor) and the second table covers physical characteristics/tolerances for defects (safety and quality).

In preparing the group standard proposal, drafters were constrained by the lack of production and trade data in accordance with the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities- Subsection on Criteria Applicable to Commodities<sup>1</sup>. This constraint is also expected to affect development of proposals for the other seven SCH group standards.

Dried spices and culinary herbs are different from other agricultural commodities like fruit and vegetables in that they traded internationally in smaller volumes but have high monetary value. Therefore international

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<sup>1</sup> FAO and WHO. 2019. Codex Alimentarius Commission – Procedural Manual twenty-seventh edition. Rome. 254 pp

production and trade data are not readily available for many named SCH. Data for most of the 116 named SCH are combined under the "Other Spices" heading within the Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database (FAOSTAT) and the Harmonized Tariff System (HTS). The lack of specific data made it difficult to prepare a proposal that includes all the named spices within the dried fruit and berries group. Certain dried fruits and berries named in the group lack the required data and did not meet the Codex criteria for the establishment of work priorities applicable to commodities.

Countries producing and trading certain spices derived from dried fruits and berries that are not included in the U.S. project proposal due to the lack of significant trade data (see table below), are requested to provide the data for those spices, for inclusion in the group standard. Even with missing trade and production data, CCSCCH should proceed with developing the group standard for spices derived from dried fruits and berries for those that meet the criteria for the establishment of work priorities applicable to commodities.

The status of the dried fruits and berries group is within the following table:

	Common Name	Trade Name/s	Scientific name	Status
1	Allspice	Allspice	<i>Pimenta dioica</i> (L) Merr.	Group proposal by USA
2	Ambrette	Ambrette	<i>Abelmoschus moschatus</i> Medik.	No data
3	Cambodge/Gamboge	Camboge/Cambodge	<i>Garcinia cambogia</i> Desr.	No data
4	Cardamom	Bengal cardamom Cardamom (Large)/ Black cardamom	<i>Amomum aromaticum</i> Roxb.	No data
		Cambodian cardamom	<i>Amomum krervanh</i> Pierre ex Gagnep.	No data
		Cameroon cardamom	<i>Aframomum hanburyi</i> K.Schum.	No data
		Cardamom (Small)	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> Maton	Proposal by India
		Korarima cardamom	<i>Aframomum koranima</i>	No data
		Madagascar cardamom	<i>Aframomum angustifolium</i> K.Schum.	No data
		Round cardamom/Chester cardamom/Siamese cardamom/ Indonesian cardamom	<i>Amomum kepulaga</i> Sprague & Burkill	No data
		Sri Lankan Cardamom	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> var.major (Sm.) Thwaites	No data
		Tsao-ko Cardamom	<i>Amomum tsao-ko</i> Crevost & Lemarié	No data
5	Chilli	Chilli	<i>Capsicum annuum</i> L.	Individual Std at Step 3.
		Paprika	<i>Capsicum frutescens</i> L.	Group proposal by USA
6	Cumin, Black (Black Caraway)	Cumin, Black (Black Caraway)	<i>Nigella sativa</i> L.	Group proposal by USA
7	Grains of Paradise	Grains of Paradise	<i>Aframomum melegueta</i> K. Schum.	No data
8	Juniper berry	Juniper berry	<i>Juniperus communis</i> L.	Group proposal by

	Common Name	Trade Name/s	Scientific name	Status
				USA
9	Kokam/kokum	Kokam/Kokum	<i>Garcinia indica</i> (Thouars) Choisy	No data
10	Mango (Dried)	Dried Mango	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	No data
11	Mustard	Mustard, White, or Yellow	<i>Sinapis alba</i> L.	Group proposal by USA
12	Pepper	Brazilian pepper	<i>Schinus terebenthifolius</i> Raddi	No data
		Canelo pepper	<i>Drimys winteri</i>	No data
		Chinese pepper	<i>Zanthoxylum acanthopodium</i> DC.	No data
		Chinese prickly ash pepper/ Sechuang pepper	<i>Zanthoxylum bungei</i>	No data
		Cubebs	<i>Piper cubebe</i>	No data
		Grain of paradise (Guinea grains, Melegueta pepper, Alligator pepper)	<i>Aframomum melegueta</i> (Roscoe) K. Schum.	No data
		Negro pepper / Guinean pepper pods	<i>Xylopia aethiopica</i> A.Rich.	No data
		Pepper (Black, White and Green)*	<i>Piper nigrum</i> L.	Standard completed 2019
		Pepper Long	<i>Piper longum</i> L.	No data
		Pink pepper	<i>Schinus molle</i>	No data
		Sichuan pepper /Japanese pepper	<i>Zanthoxylum piperitum</i> (L.) DC.	No data
		West African / Benin pepper	<i>Piper guineense</i> Schumach. & Thonn.	No data
13	Star Anise	Star Anise	<i>Illicium verum</i> Hook. f.	Group proposal by USA
14	Tamarind	Tamarind fruit	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> L.	No data
15	Vanilla	Pompon vanilla	<i>Vanilla pompona</i> Schiede	Group proposal by USA
		Vanilla/ Mexican Vanilla	<i>Vanilla planifolia</i> Andrews	
		Tahitian Vanilla	<i>Vanilla tahitensis</i> J.W. Moore	

**1.Scope/2.1 Product Definition:** The scope is written in a broad format and includes the name of the plant part from which the spices are derived. Within the scope, a reference is made to Section 2.1/Product Definition where the specific spices covered by the standard are indicated in a table with their trade name, general name, and scientific name. This format allows for the inclusion of additional spices from within the named group using the Codex procedures for elaboration of standards when any of the named spices within the group meets the criteria applicable to the named commodities.

**2.2 Styles:** This section is also written in a broad manner and applies to all the products within the group.

However, if needed, it can be amended to reflect a unique style/form or characteristics of a specific product.

**3.2.4. Classification:** The standard layout makes provisions for quality classes (Extra, Class I, and Class II); however, classification should be done on an individual commodity basis and only if it is accepted globally. Unjustified classification can result in the group standard being too complex and impose unwarranted requirements in trade, particularly in markets where classification is not practiced. Codex standards are considered as minimum requirements for consumer safety and trade; classification should be left to contractual arrangements between trading parties.

**Sections 4 to 9:** These sections reference existing Codex standards to include the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low Moisture Foods*, *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods*, *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed*, *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling*, and the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*. These sections use consistent and standard language for all existing draft spice standards. These criteria can be amended if needed to reflect a unique property, method, or trade practice for a specific spice/herb.

**Annex on Chemical and Physical Characteristics:** Chemical and physical characteristics are broken down into two tables within the Annex, each having the common name of the products listed in the same vertical sequence and columns with the names of different chemical or physical characteristic requirements, thus allowing for quick reference within the standard. The minimum values indicated are based on existing industry trade practices and regulatory requirements from existing national and international standards/regulations.

There are instances where some of the SCH meeting the data criteria have multiple minimum values for chemical and physical characteristics in the different national, regional, or industry standards and/or specifications. In other cases, the chemical or physical defect values are missing. CCSCH needs to consider how to address the lack of values for chemical and physical characteristics in the absence of pre-existing private or public sector standards. CCSCH may also want to consider the inclusion of SCH that do not meet the data requirements in the Codex Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities Subsection on Criteria Applicable to Commodities<sup>2</sup> but have current chemical and physical characteristics used in trade or by national or regional authorities.

In preparation for CCSCH3 (2017), the United States began compiling a master table with the publicly available SCH standards including their chemical and physical characteristics in support of the discussion paper on group standards. The United States will make the information collected available to any delegation upon request. The U.S. Delegation requested at CCSCH3 (2017) and CCSCH4 (2019) for member countries to provide additional information on domestic public and private sector standards, but no responses have yet been received.

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<sup>2</sup> FAO and WHO. 2019. Codex Alimentarius Commission – Procedural Manual twenty-seventh edition. Rome. 254 pp