

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CODEX COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES

49th Session

Beijing, P.R. China, 24 - 29 April 2017

Remarks of the FAO Representative and the Secretary of Codex

Opening Speech of FAO Representative in China and DPR Korea (Dr Vincent Martin)

Your Excellency Mr. Yu Xinrong, Deputy Secretary of CPC Leading Group and Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Honourable Mr Qiao Xiongwu, Chairman of Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR), Mr. Tom Heilandt, Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, It is a great honour and privilege to welcome you all to Beijing and to this 49th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residue (CCPR) on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). First of all, I would like to thank the Government of the People's Republic of China, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture for its unwavering commitment to successfully hosting these Committee's sessions. I also wish to thank the CCPR Secretariat for all the efforts, time and hard work enabled us to be here today.

This is the 11th meeting organized by China from the 38th - 49th sessions. Over the past 11 years, the Committee attained remarkable achievements by developing more than 2000 Codex standards, and a series of new principles and guidelines. I believe that these outputs have significantly contributed to FAO and WHO member states' socio-economic development efforts, particularly with regard to the improvement of global food security and food safety and the enhancement of agricultural and food marketing and trade. I am also pleased to note that China has made significant contribution progress in establishing pesticide residue standards through hosting this Committee.

The UN Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Agenda - a set of 17 aspirational objectives with 169 targets expected to guide actions of governments, international agencies, civil society and other institutions over the next 15 years. While all 17 SDGs are equally important, two of the goals, one on "ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture", and the other on "ensuring a healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages global citizenry", are of particular significance to the work of this Committee. FAO's strategic framework is broadly aligned with these goals. It is clear that FAO's goal of eradicating hunger cannot be achieved without having enough food and safe food in the hands of consumers.

The CCPR is one of the most important Codex Committees in the development of Codex Maximum/Minimum Residue Limits (MRLs). The Codex MRLs play an important role in enhancing international food safety thereby significantly contributing to the protection of consumer health, and the facilitation of export and import of food and agricultural commodities, thus contributing positively to agricultural development. As on date around 4850 maximum residue limits have been established by the Committee covering around 200 pesticides. FAO and WHO have made unremitting efforts in support of the CCPR, especially in providing scientific advice and guidance through such FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPPR). The two Organizations will continue to provide the support necessary for this Committee to fulfil the goal of improving public health and ensuring consumer protection, whilst also facilitating trade and agricultural development.

The Committee's mandate and work are also in alignment with one of the priorities of FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) in China for 2016-2020, which is about promoting one-health approach for sustainable agricultural trade and improved public health, aiming to manage and reduce the impact of animal and plant diseases and other public health threats, thus improving Codex, enhancing trade flows, and improving human health and nutrition. One of the issues that the OH approach would well address is that of pesticide residues for both improved public health and trade facilitation and we are proposing to work on the same, not only in China but also in other countries of the region. Taking this opportunity, I would like to share with you some information on the cooperation between FAO and the Government of China.

Codex and standard setting are an important part of FAO's mandate. Food safety is also integral to FAO's global goal of eradicating hunger and malnutrition, since people cannot be food secure, if their food is not safe. FAO along with other partners is committed to working with you towards safer food for the people we serve. Over the past four decades, FAO has provided continuous support to China's rural reform and agricultural development. Till now, FAO has implemented over 400 field intervention projects in China, benefiting over 20 provinces, cities and autonomous regions. These projects covered the areas of food security and nutrition, poverty reduction, fisheries, forestry, climate change, sustainable natural resource management, livestock and animal health, crisis emergency plan design, relief and reconstruction, South-South Cooperation, etc. Food safety guidelines, principles, norms and standards have always been a key element in all these projects and programmes. I would specifically like to mention that in 2015, FAO in collaboration with the Institute of Quality Standards and Testing Technology for Agro-products (IQSTAP) of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) had organised a Regional workshop on development of Pesticide Residue Monitoring Programme (PRMP) in Asian countries in China where 8 countries had participated and gained significant insights into this area. Based on countries' needs highlighted during the workshop, we are considering further support to countries in this important area of developing and implementing risk-based pesticide residue monitoring programmes. Our work on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), organic agriculture, reduced and regulated use of veterinary drugs in animal husbandry, are all in support of this. We believe there can be no food security without safe food.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to the Government of China for hosting this important noble event. I wish you all a fruitful meeting. Thank you very much.

Opening Speech of Codex Secretary (Dr Tom Heilandt)

Dear Mr Vice-Minister, Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

This is an exciting moment for me. Not only because I am in one of my favourite cities and countries but I am for the first time opening a Codex meeting in China in my function as Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and I am attending the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues for the first time.

First, I would like to thank our host country – China - for the excellent preparation of this meeting and for their continued support to the CCPR, CCFA and Codex in general. I also note that China will inform the participants on their New Pesticide Management Regulation and I am looking forward to learning more about this. One of the great things about Codex is the opportunity it offers to learn from each other.

Without the generous contribution of our host governments like China, Codex could not exist the way it does today. In addition to FAO and WHO they provide roughly half of our budget. I say this every time I speak somewhere and people might get bored with it but I keep repeating it because there is always somebody who didn't know it.

You may ask why this is the first time I am attending this important committee after 12 years in Codex. Codex has many committees and in my first years, I was assigned to "less" technical committees - food labeling - import export inspection and certification and general principles. Since becoming Secretary I try to experience all committees at least once.

In addition to wanting to know what is happening in different committees I also receive many questions about pesticides and the work of CCPR. Talking about a Codex committee one has not attended is possible but a bit like talking about a movie one hasn't seen.

It is possible because of the excellent reports that my colleagues prepare and what they tell me but it is still not the same. For Codex meetings – being there is the key - as one participant put it once clearly – because a Codex meeting is much more than a negotiation forum for standards but also a networking place.

It is important and one of my hopes that one day in a near future all those who wish to participate in Codex can do so because they will get the necessary means. FAO and WHO capacity building, the Codex trust fund and other national or regional initiatives are a step in this direction. More funds are needed however especially for the Codex trust fund to work as it was imagined.

I want to spend a moment on the reason why I get many questions about pesticides and where. It is mainly in the WTO SPS committee. As you know, in the SPS agreement, Codex, IPPC and OIE, are the three sisters, the three standard setting organizations mentioned in the agreement.

We, Codex, set the benchmarks for food safety in international trade in food.

I can truthfully say that the CCPR is one of our most efficient committees with MRLs usually getting processed in the step procedure within a year. On the other hand, all of us know the issues related to the capacity of JMPR – the provider of our scientific advice. These issues may be as old as my time in Codex but they are unresolved and the pressure is getting bigger. The more important Codex is and the more people rely on it, the more we need to find ways of providing the service expected from us.

When there is no Codex MRL for a pesticide, this creates problems in trade. Rejections of food may be made at the level of detection and safe food may be rejected and wasted. This question is discussed in several fora - At this session there will be a side event with more information about recent initiatives on how to improve the capacity of JMPR. The Codex Secretariat welcomes all initiatives that go in the direction of allowing Codex to become faster and more complete.

One thing we do not have to complain about in Codex is lack of work. Complex supply chains create complex problems – food fraud – food authenticity – food waste – new pests in different areas because of climate change, new contaminants, antimicrobial resistance all these are issues that can affect food safety and availability and the confidence of the consumer.

At the last Commission, we agreed to install a process of continuous review and one of the topics mentioned in the discussions that led to this was the need for cross-committee cooperation, how to deal with the work of adjourned committees etc.

There may well be the need in the future for closer work relations of the Committee on Food Labelling and the one on Nutrition, for example, or the Committee on Pesticide Residues and the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods. Some compounds are discussed in both. Joint initiatives could be useful to open new ways for creative solutions for joint issues.

Codex has done an excellent job over more than 50 years in protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. This is as important now as it was then and the discussions in this Committee are central to our mandate.

I look forward to the discussions this week – I hope that we can all find solutions in consensus and learn from each other in addition to enjoying the great spring weather here in Beijing.