

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org) - [www.codexalimentarius.org](http://www.codexalimentarius.org)

**REP17/NE**

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
40<sup>th</sup> Session  
Geneva, Switzerland, 17 - 22 July 2017**

**REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF  
THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST  
FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy  
15 -19 May 2017**

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## SUMMARY AND STATUS OF WORK

Responsible Party	Purpose	Text/Topic	Code	Step	Para
Members CCEXEC73 CAC40	Comments / Adoption	Proposed draft Regional Standard for Doogh	N21-2011	5/8	65, App.III
CCFA49 CCFL44	Endorsement	Relevant sections of the proposed draft Regional Standard for Doogh			
Members CCEXEC73 CAC40 EWG (Lebanon) CCNE10	Comments / Adoption	Proposed draft Regional Standard for Mixed Zaatar	N13-2013	5	85, App.IV
		Sections on composition, food additives and sampling to be further developed for finalization by CCNE10			
CAC40	Appointment	The Islamic Republic of Iran be re-appointed as Coordinator for Near East			91
FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat Coordinator CCNE10	Information / Action	Food fraud (food authenticity/food integrity) is among the critical and emerging needs of the region, but should be addressed holistically through the entire Codex system (e.g. through the forthcoming Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025)			10
FAO/WHO Members	Information / Action	Contaminants and national food control system infrastructure are the main issues of concern to the region			14
		The online platform for information sharing on food safety control systems should be further reviewed and developed in particular as to its availability in Arabic language			22
Codex Secretariat Members	Information / Action	The survey on the use of Codex standards should be further developed in terms of functionalities of the survey and the issues to be covered in the next survey (new items and also to expand on others addressed in the current survey such as labelling vis-à-vis food fraud). Countries of the region experience difficulties in adapting Codex standards to their national needs, access to Codex standards in Arabic language could facilitate this exercise as well as alignment of regulations of Codex members to Codex standards.			35
Codex Secretariat Coordinator Members	Information / Action	Discussion on Codex work relevant to the region should continue as a means to identify cross-cutting issues for the region and to seek regional support on such issues			44
Coordinator Monitoring Group CCNE10	Information / Action	Follow-up and report on the status of implementation of the activities of the Strategic Plan for CCNE 2016-2019			49
EWG (Lebanon) Members CCNE10	Information / Action	The discussion paper on ready-to-eat pre-packaged salads should be further developed to determine how best to deal with this issue within the Codex framework and to make a decision at CCNE10			90
Members CCNE10	Information / Action	Proposals for the development of standards for halal products; processed cheese (subject to the outcome of the discussion in CCMMP/CAC) and maamoul would be considered by CCNE10			97, 99, 100

### LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCEXEC	Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
CCFICS	Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems
CCFL	Codex Committee on Food Labelling
CCGP	Codex Committee on General Principles
CCMAS	Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling
CCNE	FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East
CCP	Codex Contact Point
CCPFV	Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables
CCSCH	Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs
COP	Code of practice
CTF	Codex Trust Fund
EWG	Electronic Working Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GSFA	General Standard for Food Additives
GSLPF	General Standard for Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods
GSCTFF	General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed
ISIRI	Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of the Islamic Republic of Iran
ML	Maximum Level
MRL	Maximum Residue Limit
NCCs	National Codex Committee
RCCs	Regional Coordinating Committees
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMIIC	Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary (WTO Agreement)
TBT	Technical Barrier to Trade (WTO Agreement)
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

## INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE) held its ninth session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 15 to 19 May 2017 in cooperation with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Session was chaired by Dr Mohammad Hossein Shojaee Aliabadi, Senior Scientific Advisor of the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of the Islamic Republic of Iran (ISIRI). The session was attended by 13 Member countries, six Observer countries, one Observer Member organisation (European Union), four observer organisations and one special Observer country (Palestine). The list of participants is given in Appendix I.

### OPENING<sup>1</sup>

2. Mrs Nayyerh Piroozbakht, President of ISIRI, opened the meeting. She noted that, in the light of global population growth and the efforts of the international community to increase life expectancy, it was ever more important to control the quality of food so as to protect the health and safety of consumers in all countries. Over recent years, environmental pollution had become a cause for great concern among humankind. It was incumbent on Codex member countries to pioneer the production and distribution of eco-friendly organic products, reduce the use of pesticides and preservatives, and improve food-processing techniques.
3. Dr Renata Clarke, Head, Food Safety and Quality Unit, FAO; Dr Soren Madsen, Technical Officer, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office; Mrs Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission; Ms Annamaria Bruno, Senior Food Standards Officer, Codex Secretariat, also addressed the meeting.

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)<sup>2</sup>

4. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the session with addition of the following matters under Agenda Item 12 "Other Business" subject to the availability of time:
  - general requirements for halal products;
  - development of a regional standard for processed cheese;
  - development of a regional standard for maamoul;
  - communication with Palestine.

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON FOOD AUTHENTICITY/FOOD INTEGRITY (Agenda Item 2)<sup>3</sup>

5. The Representative of WHO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, introduced the item and explained that the new practice of inviting a leading scholar to deliver a keynote address had been instituted across all six FAO/WHO RCCs as part of the revitalisation process; such addresses sought to stimulate open debate on a topic of particular relevance to and importance in the region, and to help build high-level political awareness of the importance of Codex issues and the support necessary for Codex work.
6. The Chair introduced the topic "Food Authenticity/Food Integrity" as well as the keynote speaker, Dr Christopher Elliott of Queens University, Belfast, United Kingdom.
7. Dr Elliott addressed the Committee, recalling the unique potential of Codex to contribute to the crosscutting problem of food authenticity, integrity and fraud. He recalled his experiences working with the Government of the United Kingdom to review systems following a high-profile food integrity crisis, which resulted in recommendations for the establishment of a National Food Crime Prevention Framework. His presentation focused on the pervasive and multifaceted nature of the forms and impacts of food fraud, stressing how it affected everyone everywhere.
8. No country was immune to food fraud, which could manifest in many ways. A very wide range of food ingredients, commodities and processed foods were vulnerable to fraud. However, the more complex the supply chain, the greater the number of points of vulnerability to fraud within it. There was a need to develop mechanisms to share information locally, nationally and internationally on food fraud for analysis by key stakeholders. There was also a strong need for harmonisation of definitions around food fraud and food integrity to allow strong legislation to be developed and implemented. Detecting food fraud analytically was highly complex and required a wide range of techniques.

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<sup>1</sup> CRD01 (Speeches given at the Opening Ceremony)

<sup>2</sup> CX/NE 17/09/01 (REV)

<sup>3</sup> CX/NE 17/09/02

The need for portable, low-cost screening techniques followed by more complex confirmatory analysis was clear. However, testing alone was not enough; robust traceability systems and fit-for-purpose food-fraud audits were also essential requirements to build a system that would not only detect fraud but prevent it from occurring. With so many food ingredients, commodities and processed foods available in the global marketplace, a risk-based approach was needed to determine priorities, which may vary from country to country, and as a function of events, such as the occurrence of crop failures.

9. Following the presentation, the Committee participated in an interactive discussion facilitated by the Codex Secretariat, and agreed on the following recommendations:
  - a) Strengthen national food control systems:
    - i. Strong national food control systems were at the heart of detecting and addressing food fraud. Examples from national systems were given.
    - ii. Robust traceability systems were important for detecting fraudulent foods throughout the food chain, including both domestic and international trade. The testing of bloc-chain technology developed in the finance sector was under way to determine its applicability in this regard.
    - iii. A strong legislative framework with deterrent penalties was essential.
    - iv. National strategic plans to identify and address food fraud with audits and traceability were a useful tool.
    - v. All countries should have the capacity to test at the first tier then send samples to reference laboratories/centres of excellence for further confirmation since testing for food fraud could be expensive. This could be an appropriate activity to coordinate at the regional level.
    - vi. Identification of fraud in processed foods was complex and its early detection in supply chains essential.
    - vii. Better coordination with enforcement authorities could contribute to countering fraud through strengthened border checks and import controls, including for storage and shipping.
  - b) Take a risk-based approach:
    - i. Identify (including through foresight/forecasting and mass-balance checks) and prioritise commodities that were most vulnerable to food fraud.
    - ii. Assess specific food-safety risks caused by fraudulent activities in these commodities, for example in terms of levels of pesticide residues and/or the use of non-permitted pesticides.
    - iii. Assess specific food-quality risks caused by fraudulent activities in these commodities, in particular the impact on nutrition of vulnerable, high-risk groups such as infants and children.
  - c) Share information:
    - i. Share information on food fraud.
    - ii. Use existing information-exchange systems and explore further how these might be used to share information on food fraud.
  - d) Raise awareness and consider ethical and legislative dimensions:
    - i. Food fraud and integrity could be approached from an ethical point of view, working with producers, regulators and consumers to build motivation for a cross-sectoral, comprehensive approach to tackle these issues.
    - ii. Develop an international instrument on the illicit trafficking in food products could be considered.
10. The Committee agreed that the need to address food fraud and food authenticity/food integrity was among the critical and emerging needs of the region but should be addressed holistically through the entire Codex system. There was therefore a need to explore how this issue could be taken into account in the new Codex strategic plan.
11. Work was under way in CCFICS to address food authenticity/food integrity. Authenticity/integrity/fraud issues could also be addressed through labelling (CCFL), analytical methods of analysis (CCMAS) and the possible amendment of the Code of Ethics (CCGP).

**FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SITUATION IN COUNTRIES OF THE REGION (Agenda Item 3.1)<sup>4</sup>****PRIORITISATION OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THEM (Agenda Item 3.2)<sup>5</sup>**

12. The Representative of FAO recalled that the survey on critical and emerging issues in the Near East Region was part of the revitalisation initiative, and highlighted that all five other RCCs had already completed similar exercises. It was a vehicle for identifying issues demanding an immediate response (critical) and ones that may require attention in the future (emerging), and thereby ensuring that the Committee's agenda focused on what mattered to its members. Recognising the degree of overlap between critical and emerging issues identified, the Representative highlighted the three most frequently cited issues as food contamination, weak national food control systems and climate change. The Representative of WHO noted the low response rate to the questionnaire and invited the Committee to discuss the priorities identified in the survey. The Chair also invited the Committee to discuss the relevance of the issues identified and to consider any follow-up action that may be needed.

**Discussion**

13. There was consensus that the two key issues most important to the member countries of the region were food contamination and weak national food control system infrastructure. One delegation raised the additional issue of food additives permitted in food for children, while two further delegations advised the Codex Secretariat that they would submit further comments in due course to make the outcome of the exercise more comprehensive and valuable. The Special Observer of Palestine mentioned that the functioning of its food control system faced major problems including the absence of control across borders and unique border-control problems.

**Conclusion**

14. The Committee noted that :
- i. contaminants and national food control system infrastructure were the main issues of concern to the region; and
  - ii. two member countries would submit further information for consideration under this item.

**Online platform for information sharing on food safety control systems**

15. The Representative of FAO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, introduced item and explained that the primary use and purpose of the platform was to facilitate information exchange among member countries on food-control and food-safety issues, replacing a previous circular letter on the same topic. Country information collected could also be used by FAO and WHO when implementing capacity-development activities and identifying needs. The Representative highlighted that the platform's success depended on member countries actively uploading and updating the information on the platform.
16. The Representative drew the attention of the Committee to two areas of information in the platform: (i) food law and regulations, which countries would subsequently check and update as necessary; and (ii) part F, which included a series of questions to which the information provided in response would be handled confidentially.
17. The Representative encouraged countries to upload their information to enhance the usefulness and sustainability of the platform.
18. Members were asked to provide comments and feedback on the prototype platform, in particular: (i) whether the platform was useful and fit for purpose; (ii) ease of sharing information; (iii) suitability of existing questions and on the need to include additional questions; and (iv) suggestions for other improvements.

**Discussion**

19. Several members requested clarification of the purpose of gathering information on laboratories and with whom it would be shared in order to help them determine what information would be relevant to provide. The Representative of FAO reiterated that the purpose of the exercise was to build a knowledge bank for use by the Committee members themselves and the range of stakeholders within their countries that may be interested in such information, from private-sector operators to other international partners; there was also a regional cooperation dimension whereby a member would be able to access information about where in neighbouring countries certain laboratory capacities could be accessed. Such information-sharing would also assist FAO, WHO and other United Nations partners in targeting and planning capacity-building efforts.

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<sup>4</sup> CX/NE 17/09/03; CX/NE 17/09/03-Add.1

<sup>5</sup> CX/NE 17/09/04

20. Noting that the new platform was not accessible in Arabic, members reiterated the need to make FAO/WHO tools and information, especially under newly developed initiatives, available in the Arabic language in order to facilitate the fuller and broader participation of members from the Near East Region. The Representative of FAO clarified that inputs were not translated, thereby underscoring that members' responses would be available to the broader Codex community only in the original language of submission. Taking into account that translation would be given strong consideration, the Representative of FAO noted that there were limited resources to invest in Arabic translation.
21. Members further requested FAO to improve the functionality of the platform (e.g. printable forms) to facilitate coordinated inputs across the relevant stakeholders in the respective countries. The Representative of FAO agreed to seek in further developing the platform to improve its functionalities for printing and sharing its contents, including blank and completed online submission forms, so as to facilitate participation by enabling the sharing of information with all relevant stakeholders within countries.

### **Conclusion**

22. The Committee noted that FAO and WHO would take into account all the comments made in the review and further development of the platform, in particular with regard to translation into Arabic.

### **USE OF CODEX STANDARDS IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 4)<sup>6</sup>**

23. The Codex Secretariat recalled that this item was on the agenda of all six RCCs and that an online electronic survey via SurveyMonkey, developed jointly with FAO and WHO, had been used to enhance the collection of data from countries on their use of Codex standards, allowing for easier data analysis and representation.
24. The Secretariat explained that the survey had focused on standards that were widely known and representative for their respective categories, i.e. (i) numerical standards (MRLs for pesticides in food and feed, MLs for food additives, MLs for contaminants in food and feed); (ii) general subject standards for labelling of pre-packaged foods (GSLPF) and general principles of food hygiene.
25. The Secretariat further informed the Committee that the response rate, at over 80 percent, was the highest ever to questions on this matter.

### **Discussion**

26. The Codex Secretariat presented the analysis of the survey results and invited the Committee members to note the outcome of the analysis and provide feedback on specific aspects of the survey.

#### *Format and approach*

27. Members underscored the need for a tool that allowed for the printing of information to be uploaded. The current tool did not allow for the questionnaire to be disseminated to all national stakeholders, which was essential for a coordinated, complete reply to the survey.

#### *Use of results*

28. Members expressed the view that, while potentially useful to members, the current information was incomplete and should not be made available for public use. The information could be kept for internal use by the Codex Secretariat.

#### *Scope of next survey*

29. Members expressed the need to address the additional issues of: (i) the use of labelling to address issues such as food fraud; and (ii) National Codex Committee (NCCs).

### **General issues**

30. Members explained that difficulties arose in adapting Codex standards to their national needs and that having access to Codex standards in the Arabic language was important in this exercise. Members highlighted further difficulties with numeric standards, e.g. MRLs for pesticides. Members noted that there were instances where national or regional standards deviated from Codex standards due to the different requirements of the countries to which they exported.
31. The Codex Secretariat explained that deviation from Codex standards was possible in those instances where countries, in developing their own standards, took into account their national/regional consumption patterns and exposures.

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<sup>6</sup> CX/NE 17/09/05



32. The Secretariat also clarified that, under the WTO/SPS Agreement, countries were permitted to deviate from Codex standards where justified. The Secretariat further clarified that such national/regional data, where available, should be provided to FAO/WHO scientific bodies, which would allow for more-inclusive Codex standards.
33. The Representative of FAO explained that uptake and use of Codex standards at the national level required the building of strong food-control systems, which could be achieved through the technical assistance of FAO and/or WHO and other partners working in the region.
34. The Representative of WHO recalled that five members of the region eligible for the CTF2 with support available to strengthen national Codex structures. Support to some physical participation could be included in applications but should be clearly linked to other activities aimed at strengthening a country's full and effective engagement in the development of Codex standards. Results were anticipated in areas such as the uptake of Codex standards at national level.

### **Conclusion**

35. The Committee:
  - (i) expressed its support for the continuation of the exercise; and
  - (ii) noted that the comments and suggestions made would be taken into account during the next round of the survey.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 5)<sup>7</sup>**

36. The Committee noted that the matters were referred for information only and the views of RCCs on the forthcoming Codex Strategic Plan (2020–2025), currently under development, would be requested during the next round of RCC meetings.

### **CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 6)<sup>8</sup>**

37. Recalling that this was a standing item on the agenda of all six RCCs, the Chair presented an analysis of the responses received to a questionnaire that had requested that Committee members raise for consideration at the present session aspects of Codex work relevant to the region. The suggestions received had been divided into three categories: (i) general issues relevant to the work of CCNE (work of general committees); (ii) specific issues relevant to CCNE (work of commodity committees); and (iii) issues related to the active participation of countries in Codex committees.
38. Noting that the list was not in any order of priority, he invited the Committee to discuss the topics identified.

### **Discussion**

#### *i) General issues relevant to the work of CCNE*

39. Members acknowledged the importance of enhancing Codex work on: (i) the reduction of mycotoxins, especially in cereals; (ii) MRLs for pesticides; and (ii) nutrient reference values. The Chair highlighted the importance of carefully developing positions and preparing strategies for explaining positions to the broader Codex membership in the context of forthcoming discussions.

#### *(ii) Specific issues relevant to CCNE*

40. Members underlined the importance of the work of CCPFV for the region, highlighting the need to start work on dried fruits, such as dates and derived products.

#### *(iii) Issues related to the active participation of countries in Codex committees*

41. The Committee noted the importance facilitating broad participation, involving more countries in the work of Codex by focusing on best practices and data sharing. The Committee also noted the relevance for the region of having an online platform for sharing data. It was further noted that intersessional training workshops or side events would facilitate the work of the Committee.
42. The Codex Secretariat explained that the forthcoming launch of the regional Codex websites would provide an online chat forum functionality, which would allow for the exchange of information among members of the region in preparation for Codex meetings and any other related activities.

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<sup>7</sup> CX/NE 17/09/06

<sup>8</sup> CX/NE 17/09/07

43. The Representative of FAO shared information on the approaches taken to Codex work in other regions, underscoring the importance of holding informal meetings immediately prior to Codex committee sessions to discuss national positions and forge consensus.

### **Conclusion**

44. The Committee took note of the matters raised in response to the questionnaire and agreed on their relevance to the region.

### **MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN (Agenda Item 7)<sup>9</sup>**

#### **Strategic Plan for CCNE 2014-2019 – Status of Implementation**

45. The Chair introduced the item and underscored how communication among members and observers was important for achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan.
46. The Codex Secretariat invited the Committee to consider whether it was necessary to retain the Regional Strategic Plan in the light of the fact that members of the region could contribute to the preparation of the forthcoming Codex strategic plan (2020–2025) so as to ensure that it took into account the needs of the region. The Committee had various options, including to simplify the strategic plan so as to facilitate its implementation, or to keep a set of core activities from the current plan as part of an internal action plan, similar to approaches taken in other RCCs.

### **Discussion**

47. Members reiterated the importance of having a dedicated strategic plan for the region and considered whether it could be simplified. However, due to the lack of a midterm review and information on the status of the implementation of the current strategic plan, it was difficult to assess progress against it and therefore difficult to identify which activities to retain in a simplified plan.
48. The Committee considered how to facilitate the monitoring of the strategic plan and agreed to establish a monitoring group to assist the Coordinator in the implementation of the activities of the Plan.

### **Conclusion**

49. The Committee agreed to:
- i. retain the plan, but with revised timelines (Appendix II); and
  - ii. establish a monitoring group coordinated by the Islamic Republic of Iran with assistance from Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.
50. Any additional countries would be welcome to join the monitoring group. Relevant contact persons were identified for each of the countries: Egypt (Mrs Rania Ahmed Ali Omara); Lebanon (Mrs Mariam Eid); Sudan (Mrs Ula Makkawi Abdelrhman); Tunisia (Mrs Narjes Maslah El Hammar, Mr Issam Krid and Mr Hamdi Mejri). Further officers from the identified countries who would provide support to the work could be recognised later upon submission within two weeks following present session to the Coordinator.
51. Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates would submit the name(s) of the contact person(s) to the Coordinator within two weeks following the session in consultation with their capitals and competent authorities. The identified persons would work in collaboration with the relevant CCPs of the countries.
52. The terms of reference of the monitoring group were agreed as follows:
- to monitor the activities and indicators identified in the CCNE Strategic Plan;
  - to prepare a progress report on the implementation of the activities of the CCNE Strategic Plan for consideration at CCNE10 (2019); and
  - to advise the Coordinator on the implementation of the activities in the CCNE Strategic Plan.

### **PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DOUGH (Agenda Item 8)<sup>10</sup>**

53. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as chair of the EWG on dough, introduced the item, recalling, as explained at CCNE08, that dough was an ancient traditional drink based on fermented milk that did not fit into the definition of fermented milk/drinks based on fermented milk in the *Standard for Fermented Milks* (CODEX STAN 243-2003). The delegation also emphasised that dough was not the same product as ayran (another fermented milk product widely produced in the region).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> CX/NE 17/09/08

<sup>10</sup> CL 2017/08-NE; CX/NE 17/09/09

<sup>11</sup> REP15/NE, paras 36 - 38

54. The delegation further informed the Committee that a revised proposed draft had been prepared taking into account comments received in reply to CL 2017/08-NE. The main changes had been made to the description, composition and food additives sections. The latter was aligned with CODEX STAN 243.
55. The Committee considered the revised proposed draft prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran, agreed on amendments to the text and made additional changes and comments.

## **Discussion**

### **Starter cultures**

56. The Committee noted comments regarding the identification of specific starter cultures other than those stipulated but agreed to retain the provisions unchanged since modification was not practical.

### **Section 2 - Description**

57. The Committee amended the description for better understanding and for consistency with sections 3 (composition) and 4 (food additives).

### **Section 3 - Composition**

58. The Committee agreed to change the minimum level of “sum of microorganisms constituting the starter culture as defined in Section 2” to one more appropriate for dough.

### **Section 4 - Food additives**

59. The Committee noted that the format and content of this section had been aligned with CODEX STAN 243 as far as possible for dough. Noting that the list of food additives for sweeteners and colours was incomplete, the Committee aligned these functional classes with CODEX STAN 243, made corrections to the level for phosphates and clarified that only lactic acid was permitted as an acidity regulator.

### **Section 6 - Hygiene**

60. The Committee considered whether to retain the maximum counts for microorganisms in this section, noting that the current limits did not comply with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria related to Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997). One delegation expressed the view that such limits were needed to assist countries of the region since CAC/GL 21 did not include microbiological criteria. The Codex Secretariat explained that microbiological criteria should comprise not only limits, but also sampling plans and methods of analysis, among other provisions, and that, in general, in Codex, microbiological criteria were left to national/regional authorities to develop based on CAC/GL 21.
61. The Committee therefore agreed to delete the limits for microorganisms from this section.

### **Section 7 - Packaging and storage**

62. The Committee noted that not all dough required refrigeration (e.g. ultra-heat-treated dough) and agreed to revise the section to refer to appropriate conditions to account for all types of dough-storage practices.

### **Section 8 - Labelling**

63. The Committee noted that the condition for “non-fat” was not in accordance with *Guidelines for use of nutrition and health claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997), which contained a condition for “fat-free”, and agreed to delete the condition for “non-fat” and to refer only to CAC/GL 23 in the Section 8.2 Declaration of Fat Content.

### **Section 9 - Methods of analysis and sampling**

64. The Committee noted that the methods of analysis for fermented milks in CODEX STAN 234-1999 also applied to dough and therefore no methods were being put forward for endorsement by CCMAS.

## **Conclusion**

65. The Committee agreed to:
- i. forward the proposed draft regional standard to CAC40 for adoption at Step 5/8 (with the omission of Steps 6 and 7) (Appendix III); and
  - ii. send the sections on food additives and labelling to the relevant committees for endorsement.

## **PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MIXED ZAATAR (Agenda Item 9)<sup>12</sup>**

66. Lebanon, as lead country, introduced the item, noting that the development of the proposed draft standard had taken into account all the characteristics and requirements of zaatar produced and traded in the region.

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<sup>12</sup> CL 2017/09-NE; CX/NE 17/09/10 (not issued)

67. The Committee considered the proposed draft prepared by Lebanon, agreed on the text and made additional changes and comments.

## **Discussion**

### **Section 2 - Description**

68. The Committee noted the need to clarify the description of the product taking into account the Standard for Thyme developed by the Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) and the different plant species constituting mixed zaatar. Some delegations pointed out that their zaatar contained thin-leaf rather than broadleaf thyme and that reference to the latter could consequently limit their market access.
69. To clarify and make the Standard more inclusive, the Committee agreed not to refer to thyme and to better define raw zaatar and raw broadleaf zaatar.

### **Section 3.2 - Quality factors**

#### ***Taste and colour***

70. The Committee noted the request to define taste and colour. The Codex Secretariat clarified that the current language was consistent with the approach taken with corresponding sections in commodity standards as it was difficult and not practical to specify such organoleptic characteristics.
71. The Committee therefore agreed to retain this section unchanged.

### **Section 3.3 - Composition**

#### ***Malic acid/citric acid***

72. The Committee noted: a possible inconsistency between the maximum limit (ML) specified for citric acid in Section 4 and the proportion of malic acid/citric acid in Section 3; and a discrepancy between the level of citric acid specified in Section 4 and that proposed at CCNE08 (2 percent to 4 percent) and that such an increase could lead to fraudulent practices. Citric acid was naturally present in thyme and sumac and the addition of citric acid could be used to replace sumac in mixed zaatar.
73. The Committee agreed to consider this issue further in finalizing the draft standard.

#### ***Salt content***

74. The Committee noted concerns with the salt content specified for zaatar which was contrary to the request to reduce salt content in food products in accordance with the WHO *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*. Lebanon explained that salt was integral to the product and reducing the salt level would require the complete reformulation of the recipe. While it was important to reduce salt intake to reduce the risk of noncommunicable diseases, this could be achieved through consumer education on healthy diets and the avoidance of certain high-salt-content foods.

### **Section 4 - Food additives**

75. The Committee aligned this section with the format for food additives provided in the Format for Commodity Standards in the Procedural Manual and corrected the expression of the ML for citric acid in accordance with the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CODEX STAN 192-1995), i.e. from percentage to units equivalent to mg/kg. The Committee noted that clarification was needed on why only citric acid and not any other acidity regulators specified in GSFA could be allowed.
76. The Committee noted that there were no provisions for food additives for “premium” mixed zaatar and “extra” mixed zaatar.
77. The Committee agreed that the matters above would be considered further considered in finalizing the draft standard.

### **Section 5 - Contaminants**

78. The Committee agreed to align the provisions for contaminants with the standardised text provided in the Format for Commodity Standards in the Procedural Manual, i.e. general reference to the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

### **Section 7 - Labelling**

79. The Committee noted that, since “country of origin” and “food additive” labelling were sufficiently covered by the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985), there was no need to address these aspects under this section.
80. The Committee agreed to delete the provisions for country of origin and food additives.

**Section 8 - Methods of analysis and sampling**

81. The Committee agreed to delete methods for contaminants in line with its earlier decision (paragraph 65).
82. The Committee noted that sampling plans should be developed for the provisions in the draft standard. The Codex Secretariat clarified that CCMAS38 had agreed to develop a template to assist committees to develop sampling plans. This template would be ready by the next session of CCMAS and forwarded to all committees for use in developing sampling plans.
83. In response to a question on the necessity of including methods of analysis and sampling, the Codex Secretariat clarified that commodity standards had a section on methods of analysis and sampling, in line with the Format for Commodity Standards (Procedural Manual), and that committees were responsible for identifying methods to measure compliance with provisions in standards. These identified methods were particularly useful in the settlement of disputes and did not preclude the routine use of other methods by countries.
84. The Committee agreed to the methods proposed and to work on developing sampling plans once the CCMAS template had been finalised.

**Conclusion**

85. The Committee agreed to:
  - i. forward the proposed draft regional standard to CAC40 for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix IV); and
  - ii. establish an EWG, chaired by Lebanon, working in English and Arabic, to work further on the sections on composition and food additives, in order to clarify the questions raised in sections 3.3 (composition), 4 (food additives) and 8 (sampling) pending CCMAS advice on templates, and finalise the standard by the next session.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON READY-TO-EAT PREPACKAGED SALADS (Agenda tem 10)<sup>13</sup>**

86. Recalling the CCNE08 request that it present a discussion paper on ready-to-eat salads, Palestine introduced the item, summarised the key points in the discussion paper — product description, volume of production and trade, food safety risks, and quality aspects — and recommended the development of a general regional standard for chilled pre-packaged RTE salads.

**Discussion**

87. While there was broad support for the proposal, the Committee noted that consideration should be given to a code of practice (COP) since the key issues identified in the discussion paper related to processing and handling. In general, commodity standards applied more to quality aspects of the end-product, and developing such a standard would be difficult in the light of the wide range of products identified in the paper.
88. To determine the way forward, a further discussion paper was necessary to explore which option, COP or general standard, would be more feasible.
89. The Codex Secretariat clarified that it would be important to determine whether the issues identified in the paper could be addressed through existing Codex texts or whether there was a need to develop more a more specific Codex text for the products identified in the paper.

**Conclusion**

90. The Committee agreed to establish an EWG, chaired by Lebanon, working in English and Arabic, to:
  - i. prepare a discussion paper based on the points raised in paragraphs 88 and 89; and
  - ii. include, if appropriate, a project document for new work, as laid down in the Procedural Manual, together with an outline of the proposed Codex text.

**NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 11)<sup>14</sup>**

91. The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to CAC40 that the Islamic Republic of Iran be reappointed for a second term as Coordinator for the Near East Region. The Islamic Republic of Iran thanked the Committee for its support and accepted the nomination.

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<sup>13</sup> CX/NE 17/09/11

<sup>14</sup> CX/NE 17/09/12

**OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 12)<sup>15</sup>****Relations between FAO and WHO policies, strategies and guidelines and Codex work**

92. The Representative of WHO introduced the document, presented for information only: FAO and WHO had presented an analysis paper on this matter at CCEXEC71, in June 2016, which CAC39 had decided would be discussed at CCEXEC73, in June 2017, to allow countries ample time to appraise the paper. The Representative recalled that the work of Codex as a joint programme of FAO and WHO should complement the policies, strategies and guidelines adopted by the governing bodies of each parent organisation. While linking up Codex work with WHO policies and strategies could take significant time, as in the case of the *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*, but she commended the relatively swift coordinated actions undertaken in relation to the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.

**General requirements for halal products**

93. Egypt proposed the development of a standard for halal products in view of its importance to the region and Islamic countries.
94. Members acknowledged the importance of halal products not only to the region but also to Islamic countries elsewhere, and noted that halal issues had been discussed throughout Codex over several years. A number of delegations expressed the opinion that halal could be more appropriately addressed through platforms other than Codex, such as the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC). The Committee also had to take the limited resources in Codex into account in carefully considering the proposal.
95. The Codex Secretariat drew the attention of the Committee to the recent discussions in CCFL43<sup>16</sup> leading to agreement that, while CCFL was not in a position to discuss all aspects of this issue, its ongoing discussions in relation to consumer preferences would include halal.
96. Egypt clarified that the work proposal was not related to labelling but for a specific standard for halal products that would include the clarification and harmonisation of terminology and definitions to facilitate understanding.
97. The Committee noted that it was not in a position to take a decision at this session and agreed to request Egypt to prepare a discussion paper elaborating on the proposal for a standard for halal products, for consideration at the next session, taking into account the halal standards issued by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation/SMIIC.

**Processed cheese**

98. Egypt requested that the Committee consider a regional standard for processed cheese, in view of the difficulties to agree on such a standard at the international level, in particular with regard to the minimum cheese content.
99. The Committee recalled that the issue of processed cheese remained under consideration in the Commission and agreed it more appropriate to await the outcome of those discussions before deciding whether to proceed with additional work. The Committee also encouraged Egypt and other member countries to participate in the discussions in the Commission. With a view to facilitating the sharing of information and preparation of coordinated inputs to the discussion in CAC40, the Islamic Republic of Iran as Coordinator would arrange a meeting with all members of CCNE immediately prior to CAC40.

**Development of a regional standard for maamoul**

100. The Committee noted the proposal of Saudi Arabia on the development of a regional standard for maamoul and agreed to request the delegation to prepare a discussion paper for consideration at CCNE10. The discussion paper should clearly identify the product, the key issues to be addressed and the trade volume of these products within the region. The paper should be accompanied by a project document, as laid down in the Procedural Manual, and, if possible, an outline of the proposed regional standard.

**Communication with Palestine**

101. The Committee noted the request of Palestine for better access and inputs to Codex documents so as to enhance its participation in Codex. The Codex Secretariat welcomed the interest of Palestine in Codex work and clarified that discussions were under way with Palestine to work out a mechanism for enhanced communication.

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<sup>15</sup> CX/NE 17/09/13; Proposal by Saudi Arabia (CRD02)

<sup>16</sup> REP16/FL, paras 56 - 63

**Other matters**

102. It was noteworthy that the participation of a number of delegations was facilitated through the UNIDO/FAO collaborative project on food safety in the Arab region funded by Sweden through the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

**DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 13)**

103. The Committee was informed that its 10th session would be held in approximately two years' time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to members following the appointment of the Coordinator by CAC40.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS – LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS – LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES****CHAIRPERSON**

Dr Mohammad Hossein Shojaee Aliabadi  
 Senior Scientific Adviser Institute of Standards & Industrial Research of IRAN &  
 Director and Laboratory Manager Faroogh Life Sciences Research Laboratory  
 Faroogh Life Sciences Research Laboratory  
 No: 96; Parcham Street Tohid Square  
 Teheran  
 Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
 Tel: +0989121591766  
 Email: [farooqlab@gmail.com](mailto:farooqlab@gmail.com)

**ASSISTANT TO THE CHAIR**

Mrs Leila Zinatbakhsh  
 Secretary, N.C.C. of IRAN, Head of Codex standards cooperation group  
 Codex Secretariat of Iran  
 Institute of Standards & Industrial Research of IRAN (ISIRI)  
 P.O.BOX 14155-6139  
 Tehran  
 Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
 Tel: 00982188654059  
 Email: [codex\\_office@inso.gov.ir](mailto:codex_office@inso.gov.ir)

**EGYPT - ÉGYPTE - EGIPTO**

Dr Reda Abdelgalil  
 Food Safety and Regulatory Manager  
 Chamber of Food Industries, Federation of Egyptian  
 Industries  
 1195 Cornish Elnil St.  
 Cairo  
 Egypt  
 Tel: +201006505752  
 Email: [Redaabdelgalil@gmail.com](mailto:Redaabdelgalil@gmail.com)

Eng Rania Ahmed Ali Omara  
 Specialist at the Egyptian Organization for  
 Standardization and Quality  
 Email: [eosrania@gmail.com](mailto:eosrania@gmail.com)

Dr Nermeen El Fadeel  
 Scientific and Regulatory Affairs Manager, Egypt  
 Region  
 Coca- Cola Company  
 1 Amin Elrahany St., Nasr City  
 Cairo  
 Egypt  
 Tel: 00222722187  
 Email: [nermeenkhalifa@outlook.com](mailto:nermeenkhalifa@outlook.com)

Eng Mohamed Naser  
 Food Standards Specialist  
 Egyptian Organization for Standardization and  
 Quality (EOS)  
 16 Tadreeb el Modarbeen St, Al Ameriya  
 Cairo  
 Egypt  
 Tel: +201281337667  
 Email: [atch\\_toto3@yahoo.com](mailto:atch_toto3@yahoo.com)

Mr Mohamed Shamekh  
 Head of Legislation and Standards Department  
 Legislation and Standards Department  
 Bel Egypt Expansion for cheese Production S.A.E  
 Cairo  
 Egypt  
 Tel: +201202132999  
 Email: [mshamekh@groupe-bel.com](mailto:mshamekh@groupe-bel.com)

**IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) -  
 IRAN (RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D') -  
 IRÁN (REPÚBLICA ISLÁMICA DEL)**

Mrs Nayereh Sadat Pirouzbakht  
 President  
 Institute of Standards & Industrial Research of Iran  
 (ISIRI)  
 P.O.BOX 14155-6139  
 Tehran  
 Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
 Tel: 982188879473-4  
 Email: [codex\\_office@inso.gov.ir](mailto:codex_office@inso.gov.ir)

Mr Shahin Ghorashizadeh  
 Charge d'affaires  
 Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic  
 of Iran to FAO  
 Email: [secretary1@iranrepfao.org](mailto:secretary1@iranrepfao.org)

Mr Mahan Hirbod  
 Member of CCNE in Iran  
 Institute of Standard & Industrial Research of Iran  
 Tehran  
 Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
 Email: [codex\\_office@inso.gov.ir](mailto:codex_office@inso.gov.ir)



Ms Keyvandokht Pirmohammadi  
ISIRI head of Int'l Relations Office  
Institute of Standards  
Teheran  
Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
Email: [keyvandokht1@yahoo.com](mailto:keyvandokht1@yahoo.com)

Dr Saeed Saadat  
Director General  
Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Food  
Safety Office  
Iran (Islamic Republic of)  
Email: [s.saadat@areo.ir](mailto:s.saadat@areo.ir)

#### **IRAQ**

Ms Kauther Al Nadawi  
Alternate Permanent Representative of Iraq to UN  
Agencies in Rome  
Office of the Permanent Representation of the  
Republic of Iraq to the UN Agencies in Rome  
Via della Camilluccia 355  
Rome  
Italy  
Email: [iraq.permrep@gmail.com](mailto:iraq.permrep@gmail.com)

#### **KUWAIT - KOWEÏT**

Mr Yousef Jhail  
Permanent Representative of Kuwait to FAO  
Email: [mc8975@mclink.it](mailto:mc8975@mclink.it)

Ms Manar Sabah Al Sabah  
Alternate Permanent Representative of Kuwait to  
FAO  
Email: [mc8975@mclink.it](mailto:mc8975@mclink.it)

Mr Salah Al Bazzaz  
Technical Adviser to the Permanent Representation  
of Kuwait  
Email: [mc8975@mclink.it](mailto:mc8975@mclink.it)

#### **LEBANON - LIBAN - LÍBANO**

Mrs Lena Dargham  
Director General  
The Lebanese Standards Institution- LIBNOR  
Sin El-Fil, City Rama Street, LIBNOR bldg  
Beirut  
Lebanon  
Tel: +9611485927  
Email: [libnor@libnor.org](mailto:libnor@libnor.org)

Ms Mariam Eid  
Head  
Agro Industries Department  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Bir Hassan Jneh  
Beirut  
Lebanon  
Tel: +9613567542 / +9611824100  
Email: [meid@agriculture.gov.lb](mailto:meid@agriculture.gov.lb)

#### **LIBYA - LIBYE - LIBIA**

Dr Mahmud El Tellisi  
Food & Agriculture Organization Libyan  
representative in Rome  
Via Nomentana 13  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06/32609854  
Email: [mtellisi@hotmail.com](mailto:mtellisi@hotmail.com)

#### **OMAN - OMÁN**

Ms Fadia Al Jamal  
Oman's Liaison Officer with the International  
Organizations in Rome  
Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman  
Via della Camilluccia 625 - 00135 Roma  
Email: [aljamalfadia@gmail.com](mailto:aljamalfadia@gmail.com)

#### **QATAR**

Dr Akeel Hatoor  
Alternate Representative  
Permanent Representation of the State of Qatar to  
FAO  
Embassy of the State of Qatar  
Rome  
Italy  
Email: [akeelena26@gmail.com](mailto:akeelena26@gmail.com)

#### **SAUDI ARABIA - ARABIE SAOUDITE - ARABIA SAUDITA**

Mr Khalil Alswelem  
Senior Microbiologist  
Executive Dept. For Technical Regulations and  
Standards  
Saudi Food and Drug Authority  
Saudi Arabia North Ring Road - Al Nafal Unit (1)  
Riyadh  
Saudi Arabia  
Tel: +966112038222  
Email: [CODEX.CP@sFDA.gov.sa](mailto:CODEX.CP@sFDA.gov.sa)

Mr Mohammed Alkhamis  
Senior Food Specialist  
Executive Dept. of Technical Regulations and  
Standards  
Saudi Food and Drug Authority  
North Ring Road - Al Nafal Unit (1)  
Riyadh  
Saudi Arabia  
Tel: 00966112038222  
Email: [codex.cp@sFDA.gov.sa](mailto:codex.cp@sFDA.gov.sa)

#### **SUDAN - SOUDAN - SUDÁN**

Mrs Ula Makkawi Abdelrhman  
Senior Quality Control Officer  
Quality Control&Export Development Administration  
Federal Ministry of Agriculture &Forestry  
Aljammaa Street Khartoum/ Sudan P.O.BOX 285  
Khartoum  
Sudan  
Tel: +249918075475  
Email: [ulaabdelaziz@gmail.com](mailto:ulaabdelaziz@gmail.com)

Mrs Samia Gaafar Mohamed Bitik  
 Director of Quality Control  
 Administration Quality Control  
 Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry  
 Aljamaa Street P.O. Box 285  
 Khartoum  
 Sudan  
 Tel: +249912246197  
 Email: [samiabitik@yahoo.com](mailto:samiabitik@yahoo.com)

#### **TUNISIA - TUNISIE - TÚNEZ**

Mr Nouredine Agrebi  
 Directeur Général des industries alimentaires  
 Ministère de l'industrie et du commerce  
 rue 8011, imm. Nozha, Montplaisir  
 Tunis  
 Tunisia  
 Email: [agrebi.nouredine@gmail.com](mailto:agrebi.nouredine@gmail.com)

Mrs Narjes Maslah El Hammar  
 Directrice Général  
 Ministère de l'industrie et du commerce  
 Centre Technique de l'agro-alimentaire  
 12, rue de l'usine – Charguia2  
 Tunisia  
 Tel: +216 71940358  
 Email: [dg@ctaa.com.tn](mailto:dg@ctaa.com.tn)

Mr Hamdi Mejri  
 Directeur  
 Contrôle sanitaire des produits ANCSEP  
 Agence Nationale de Contrôle Sanitaire et  
 environnemental des produits  
 Ministère de la santé  
 2 Rue Ibn Nadim, Montplaisir  
 Tunisia  
 Email: [mejry@yahoo.fr](mailto:mejry@yahoo.fr)

#### **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - ÉMIRATS ARABES UNIS - EMIRATOS ARABES UNIDOS**

Mr H.E. Saqer Alraisi  
 Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the  
 United Arab Emirates to the UN Agencies in Rome  
 Via della Camilluccia 492  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Tel: +39 06 36306100  
 Email: [Secretary.roma@mofaic.gov.ae](mailto:Secretary.roma@mofaic.gov.ae)

Mr Iyad Hafez  
 Media Office / Embassy of the United Arab  
 Emirates in Rome  
 Via della Camilluccia 492  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Tel: +39 3927243066  
 Email: [Secretary.roma@mofaic.gov.ae](mailto:Secretary.roma@mofaic.gov.ae)

#### **YEMEN - YÉMEN**

Mr Abdullah Na'ami Al-na'ami  
 II Secretary  
 Permanent representative of Yemen to the Food  
 and Agricultural Organization  
 Embassy of the Republic of Yemen Via Antonio  
 Bosio, 10 – 00161  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Email: [alnaami2050@yahoo.com](mailto:alnaami2050@yahoo.com)

Mr Ahmed Mohamed Shammer  
 Alternate Permanent Representative  
 Embassy of the Republic of Yemen  
 Via Antonio Bosio, 10 – 00161  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Email: [ahmedshammer8879@gmail.com](mailto:ahmedshammer8879@gmail.com)

#### **OBSERVER COUNTRIES - PAYS OBSERVATEURS - PAÍSES OBSERVADORES**

#### **BRAZIL - BRÉSIL - BRASIL**

Dr Guilherme Antonio Costa Junior  
 Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food  
 Esplanada dos ministerios Bl.D  
 Ed. Sede 3 andar-Sala 300  
 Brasilia  
 Brazil  
 Email: [guilherme.costa@agricultura.gov.br](mailto:guilherme.costa@agricultura.gov.br)

#### **BURUNDI**

Mr Jean Bosco Ndiruvugbo  
 Permanent Representation of Burundi to FAO  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Email: [ambabu.roma@yahoo.fr](mailto:ambabu.roma@yahoo.fr)

#### **EUROPEAN UNION - UNION EUROPÉENNE - UNIÓN EUROPEA**

Ms Maria Giaprakis  
 Assistant - EU Codex Contact Point  
 DG Sante D 2  
 European Commission  
 Rue Froissart 101  
 Brussels  
 Belgium  
 Tel: +32 229-95442  
 Email: [maria.giaprakis@ec.europa.eu](mailto:maria.giaprakis@ec.europa.eu)

Ms Barbara Moretti  
 Administrator  
 Dg Sante  
 European Commission  
 Rue Froissart 101  
 Brussels  
 Belgium  
 Email: [barbara.moretti@ec.europa.eu](mailto:barbara.moretti@ec.europa.eu)

**ITALY - ITALIE - ITALIA**

Mr Ciro Impagnatiello  
 Department of the European Union and  
 International Policies and of the Rural Development  
 Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forestry Policies  
 Via XX Settembre, 20  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Tel: 0646654058  
 Email: [c.impagnatiello@politicheagricole.it](mailto:c.impagnatiello@politicheagricole.it)

Mr Giulio Cardini  
 Agronomist  
 Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forestry Policies  
 Via XX Settembre, 20  
 Rome  
 Italy  
 Email: [g.cardini@politicheagricole.it](mailto:g.cardini@politicheagricole.it)

**MOROCCO - MAROC - MARRUECOS**

Mrs Ilham Chakib  
 Chef de Service de la Réglementation de produits  
 alimentaires et intrants  
 Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des produits  
 Alimentaires  
 Rabat  
 Morocco  
 Tel: +212649506655  
 Email: [ilham.chakib@gmail.com](mailto:ilham.chakib@gmail.com)

Mrs Latifa Bacha  
 Chef de service de contrôle et de la protection des  
 végétaux  
 Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des produits  
 Alimentaires  
 Sidi Kacem  
 Morocco  
 Tel: 0673997956  
 Email: [bacha.latifa@yahoo.fr](mailto:bacha.latifa@yahoo.fr)

**NETHERLANDS - PAYS-BAS - PAÍSES BAJOS**

Dr Martijn Weijtens  
 CCEURO coordinator  
 Plant Agri Chains and Food Quality Department  
 Ministry of Economic Affairs  
 P.O. Box 20401  
 The Hague  
 Netherlands  
 Tel: +31 70 3798950  
 Email: [info@codexalimentarius.nl](mailto:info@codexalimentarius.nl)

Dr Marie-Ange Delen  
 Coordinator Codex Alimentarius Netherlands  
 Ministry of Economic Affairs  
 PO Box 20401  
 The Hague  
 Netherlands  
 Tel: +31 6 4615 2167  
 Email: [m.a.delen@minez.nl](mailto:m.a.delen@minez.nl)

**SWITZERLAND - SUISSE - SUIZA**

Mrs Awilo Ochieng Pernet  
 Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission  
 Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO  
 International Affairs  
 Bern  
 Switzerland  
 Tel: + 41 58 462 00 41  
 Email: [awilo.ochieng@blv.admin.ch](mailto:awilo.ochieng@blv.admin.ch)

**SPECIAL OBSERVERS  
 OBSERVATEURS SPECIAUX -  
 OBSERVADORES ESPECIALES****PALESTINE**

Mr Saleem Jayyousi  
 Chairman, Technical Regulations Committee  
 Palestine Standards Institution  
 Palestine  
 Tel: +970 598 955 817  
 Email: [sjayyousi@psi.pna.ps](mailto:sjayyousi@psi.pna.ps)

Mr Adib Alqaimari  
 Chairman, Food Working group  
 Palestine Standards Institution  
 Palestine  
 Tel: +970 599 030 129  
 Email: [adeebalq@psi.pna.ps](mailto:adeebalq@psi.pna.ps)

Ms Suha Sawalha  
 Head of Food Safety Division  
 Ministry of Health  
 Palestine  
 Tel: +970 599 874 933  
 Email: [suha.arar@gmail.com](mailto:suha.arar@gmail.com)

**NON GOVERNAMENTAL ORGANIZATION -  
 ORGANISATION NO GOVERNAMENTAL -  
 ORGANIZACIÓN NO GUBERNAMENTAL****INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF BEVERAGES  
 ASSOCIATIONS (ICBA)**

Mr Mustafa Bater  
 MENA SRA Director  
 The Coca-Cola Company  
 Office Park Building block B 4th floor Knowledge  
 village  
 Dubai  
 United Arab Emirates  
 Tel: +971566441877  
 Email: [mbater@coca-cola.com](mailto:mbater@coca-cola.com)

**SAFE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE FOOD  
 EVERYWHERE (SSAFE)**

Dr Yves Rey  
 Executive Director IFAAO  
 IFAAO  
 Email: [yvesrey@ifaa.org](mailto:yvesrey@ifaa.org)

**HEALTH FOR ANIMALS (HEALTHFORANIMALS)**

Mr Olivier Espeisse  
HealthforAnimals  
Government Affairs EU and Africa Elanco France  
SAS 24, bd Vital Bouhot, 92521  
Neuilly Sur Seine Cedex  
Paris  
France  
Tel: +33 06 89 97 25 85  
Email: [espeisse\\_olivier@elanco.com](mailto:espeisse_olivier@elanco.com)

**UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO)**

Dr Samuel Godefroy  
Senior Food Regulatory Advisor  
SAFE initiative  
UNIDO  
2425 rue de l'agriculture,  
Pavillon Comtois, Room 1309  
Québec  
Canada  
Tel: +1-(418)478-4747  
Email: [S.GODEFROY@unido.org](mailto:S.GODEFROY@unido.org)

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Prof Christopher Elliott  
Pro Vice Chancellor  
Queen's University  
Faculty of Medicine, Health & Life Sciences Belfast  
2017, University Road, Belfast BT7 1NN  
Northern Ireland  
Email: [chris.elliott@qub.ac.uk](mailto:chris.elliott@qub.ac.uk)

**FAO**

Dr Renata Clarke  
Head, Food Safety and Quality Unit  
Department of Agriculture and Protection  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06 5705 2010  
Email: [renata.clarke@fao.org](mailto:renata.clarke@fao.org)

Mr Dirk Schulz  
Food Safety Assessment Officer  
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Viale delle terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06 57052842  
Email: [dirk.schulz@fao.org](mailto:dirk.schulz@fao.org)

**WHO**

Mr Soren Madsen  
Technical Officer  
Food Safety  
World Health Organization  
P.O. Box 926967  
Ammam  
Jordan  
Email: [madsens@who.int](mailto:madsens@who.int)

Mrs Catherine Mulholland  
Administrator Codex Trust Fund  
Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses (FOS)  
World Health Organization (WHO)  
20, avenue Appia  
Geneva 27  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 22 7913080  
Email: [mulhollandc@who.int](mailto:mulhollandc@who.int)

**CODEX SECRETARIAT**

Ms Gracia Brisco  
Food Standards Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: 39 06 570 52700  
Email: [gracia.brisco@fao.org](mailto:gracia.brisco@fao.org)

Ms Verna Carolissen-Mackay  
Food Standards Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06 5705 5629  
Email: [verna.carolissen@fao.org](mailto:verna.carolissen@fao.org)

Mr David Massey  
Special Advisor  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Via delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 0657053465  
Email: [David.Massey@fao.org](mailto:David.Massey@fao.org)

Mr Giuseppe Di Chiera  
Consultant  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Viale delle Terme di cAracalla  
Roma  
Italy  
Tel: 06 5705 52533  
Email: [giuseppe.dichiera@fao.org](mailto:giuseppe.dichiera@fao.org)

Mr Mirko Montuori  
Communication and Information Consultant  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: 0657053806  
Email: [mirko.montuori@fao.org](mailto:mirko.montuori@fao.org)

Mr Roberto Sciotti  
Record & Information Management Officer &  
Webmaster  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN  
Rome  
Italy  
Tel: +39 06 570 56141  
Email: [Roberto.Sciotti@fao.org](mailto:Roberto.Sciotti@fao.org)

**APPENDIX II****STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CCNE 2016-2019****STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

This Strategic Plan identifies 4 strategic objectives for the region for the period 2016-2019. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed at each Session of CCNE to determine the progress and identify gaps.

Objectives	Outcomes	Proposed Activities	Time	Responsible	Indicators
<b>1. Enhance the participation of countries of the region in Codex activities</b>	A. Identify Codex committees, task forces and working groups that are of particular interest to the region	- Conduct periodic surveys via questionnaire about Codex committees priorities for countries of the region and schedule priorities according to the common interests among countries of the region	End of 2017	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- List of priorities
	B. Encourage stakeholders' engagement in Codex activities	- Explore different means, including the use of CTF2 to ensure continued effective participation of countries of the region in priority Codex committees and related Codex activities	Ongoing	Countries of the region in collaboration with the Coordinator	- Reports of participation - Documents submitted to meetings - Number of participating countries in Codex activities
	C. Share information on specific topics, scientific data and research areas of interest to the region	- Establish and activate a website for CCNE  - Exchange of scientific information and experiences	September 2017	Codex Secretariat  Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- An active and operational CCNE website
<b>2. Strengthen regional communication, experience sharing and coordination among CCNE Member countries in Codex activities</b>	A. Exchange views and information on all matters related to Codex	- Conduct a survey via a questionnaire about the meeting's agenda to identify the points of interest for the region and to include observations from countries on their specific points	Two months prior to the meeting	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- Number of replies to the questionnaire

Objectives	Outcomes	Proposed Activities	Time	Responsible	Indicators
	B. Define a common position of the region on Codex issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish an updated list of names and contacts of countries of the region (Heads of delegations) participating in Codex meetings from countries of the region.</li> </ul>	One month before the defined session	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updated list of Heads of delegations distributed among countries of the region</li> </ul>
	C. Coordinate the participation in Codex events and enhance regional communication through different tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow-up, where possible, the availability of Codex documents in a timely manner especially in Arabic language</li> <li>- Organise electronic groups when necessary to discuss specific topics of common interest for countries of the region</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Coordinator and member countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Documents downloaded on the Codex website in Arabic and on time</li> </ul>
	D. Set the SOP's for Codex documents follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exchange of written notes among countries of the region on draft standards and Codex issues and ensure that these observations are well defended during Codex meetings even in the absence of the country concerned</li> <li>- Ensure that the agenda of CCNE sessions include all Codex matters which are of interest to the region</li> </ul>	1 month prior to the meeting  Every session  CCNE session	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points  Coordinator  Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WG reports</li> <li>- Codex meetings documents with the region comments</li> <li>- Compiled CCNE report</li> </ul>

Objectives	Outcomes	Proposed Activities	Time	Responsible	Indicators
<b>3. Promote use of Codex standards and the development and/or review of Codex standards and related texts taking into account regional situations and needs</b>	A. Identify specific food products and areas of interest to the region that require standards and related texts to be developed and/or reviewed	- Conduct a survey among countries of the region in order to highlight the draft standards of interest to the region that could be presented as Codex work	2 months before CCNE meetings	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- CAC and CCNE reports mention the accepted standards proposal
	B. Promote the use of standards in regulations to facilitate trade within the region	- Provide CCEXEC subsequent to CCNE sessions with a summary of the problems and /challenges experienced by countries in the adoption of Codex standards as well as the proposed solutions	After every CCNE session	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- Reports of CCEXEC and CCNE
	C. Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders (e.g. government, industry, consumers, academia, professional bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)).	- Organise workshops on the importance of the adoption of Codex standards	Ongoing	Coordinator	- Numbers of workshops conducted and - Number of participants
<b>4. Build capacity of countries of the region in relation to risk assessment</b>	A. Identify and prioritise the common regional risks	- Conduct periodic surveys about the problems faced by countries of the region on the issue of food safety, scientific advice and research needs	2 months before the next session	Coordinator, Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees	- Responses and proposals from members
	B. Identify the needs for scientific research	- Organise meetings on the side-lines of the Codex meeting to discuss food safety and quality issues in the region	Ongoing	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- Number of meetings and number of participants - Reports from Member countries on capacity building from food safety organisations



Objectives	Outcomes	Proposed Activities	Time	Responsible	Indicators
	C. Implement pilot programmes to assess these risks and to communicate the results	- Explore ways to conduct risk assessment in areas of importance to the region	End of 2019	Coordinator and countries of the region	- Number of risk assessments performed at regional level
	D. Enhance the involvement of experts from the region in the FAO/WHO scientific committees	Establish an updated database of experts from the region and provide this list to FAO and WHO	Ongoing	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- Number of experts included in the database
<b>5. Strengthen capacities of Codex Contact Points and/or National Codex Committees</b>	A. Supply National Codex Committees and Codex Contact Points with the required references, trainings and tools so they can perform their roles properly	- Update list of Codex Contact Points in the countries of the region	June 2017	Coordinator/ Codex Secretariat	- Updated lists
	B. Promote regional networking among Codex Contact Points/delegates to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues	- Conduct a survey on the structure of Codex in countries within the region	April 2019	Coordinator and Codex Contact Points	- Lists; and data available
		- Develop operating procedures for the work of the Coordinator with countries of the region in order to facilitate communication	End of 2019	Coordinator and countries of the region in consultation with the Codex Secretariat	- Operating procedures written
		- Explore ways and means for organising workshops for National Contact Points, National Codex Committees and the regional Coordinator in regards to the affairs of the Codex Alimentarius and the tasks assigned to them	Ongoing	Coordinator in consultation with the Codex Secretariat	- Number of workshops and number of participants

**APPENDIX III****PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DOOGH****(At Step 5/8)****1. SCOPE**

This Standard applies to doogh for direct consumption or for further processing, in conformity with the definitions in Section 2 of this Standard. This Standard should be read in conjunction with the *Standard for Fermented Milks* (CODEX STAN 243-2003).

**2. DESCRIPTION**

Doogh is a “drink based on fermented milk” as defined in Section 2.4 of the *Standard for Fermented Milks*, obtained by mixing yoghurt as defined in Sections 2.1 and 3.3 of the same Standard, with potable water and optionally food grade salt or mixing milk with potable water and sodium chloride prior to heat treatment and fermentation to give an end product with similar physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics as the product defined under provisions of this Standard. When doogh is produced by mixing milk with potable water, edible salt may be added before or after fermentation.

The milk used for production of doogh may have been manufactured from products obtained from milk as specified in Section 2.1 of the *Standard for Fermented Milks*, with or without the compositional modification as limited by the provision in Section 3.3.

In the production of doogh, other non-dairy ingredients than potable water as well as various dairy ingredients/dairy products are used according to Sections 3 and 4.

The typical starter microorganisms used in production of doogh are traditional yogurt bacteria: *Streptococcus thermophilus* and *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* ssp. *bulgaricus*. Other microorganisms than those constituting the specific starter cultures may be added. If the product is heat treated after fermentation, the requirement for viable microorganisms does not apply. Heat treatment after fermentation does not apply for “probiotic” doogh (doogh containing probiotic microorganisms).

Doogh without adding flavourings/flavour is so-called “plain doogh”. Doogh with flavours in the form of essences or extracts (such as menthol, ziziphore or wild thyme, pennyroyal and cucumber) or with different natural flavourings such as aromatic herbs, spices and condiments is known as “flavoured doogh”. “Carbonated/Uncarbonated” and “Heat treated/Un-heat treated” dooghs represent those contain/does not contain carbon dioxide and those with heat treatment/without heat treatment after fermentation, respectively. Doogh may be produced and displayed as powder (dried doogh) for special applications and demands.

**3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS****3.1. RAW MATERIALS**

- Yoghurt (in mixing yoghurt with potable water) or milk (in mixing milk with potable water). Yoghurt should conform to the *Standard for Fermented Milks*.
- Potable water for dilution of yoghurt or milk, and/or for the use in reconstitution or recombination (if milk is prepared by reconstitution or recombination).

**3.2. PERMITTED INGREDIENTS**

- 3.2.1** Starter culture of harmless microorganisms including typical doogh starters, as described in Section 2 of this Standard.
- 3.2.2** Other harmless and suitable microorganisms (bacteria, yeast) as starter- or non-starter microorganisms, including probiotics; for the functions of acidification, aroma production, fermenting carbonation, texture improvement, health promotion, and improving other functional aspects of product.
- 3.2.3** Sodium chloride, in accordance with the *Standard for Food Grade Salt* (CODEX STAN 150-1985).
- 3.2.4** Natural flavouring ingredients such as fine particles of aromatic vegetables and herbs, and spices, as specified in Section 2.3 of the *Standard for Fermented Milks*.
- 3.2.5** Nutraceutical ingredients such as dietary fibres.
- 3.2.6** Dairy ingredients or dairy products obtained from milk such as milk proteins, milk powders, milk fat (butter fat or cream), buttermilk and whey products”. For milk powders this will be the *Standard for Milk Powders and Cream Powder* (CODEX STAN 207-1999), milk fat this will be the *Standard for Milkfat Products* (CODEX STAN products 280-1973) and cream as is defined in Section 2.1 of the *Standard for Cream and Prepared Creams* (CODEX STAN 288-1976).

**3.2.7** Partial or full replacement of milk fat or milk protein with other sources of non-dairy fat or non-dairy protein shall not be allowed.

### 3.3. COMPOSITION

pH	Max: 4.5
lactic acid (%w/w)	Min: 0.3
Milk solid non-fat (MSNF)	Min 3.0
Milk protein <sup>(a)</sup> (%w/w)	Min: 1.08%
Sodium chloride (%w/w)	-
Sum of microorganisms constituting the starter culture defined in Section 2 (cfu/g, total count) <sup>(b)</sup>	Min: 10 <sup>7</sup>
Labelled microorganisms <sup>(c)</sup> (cfu/g, each strain)	Min: 10 <sup>7</sup>

(a) Protein content is "6.38 multiplied by the total Kjeldahl nitrogen determined".

(b) This requirement does not apply to products "heat treated after fermentation".

(c) Applies when claimed microorganisms (as specified in Section 2 of this Standard) are added to the product. Probiotics are of the most important.

The microbiological criteria in the product are valid up to the "date of minimum durability" under the storage conditions specified in the labelling.

## 4. FOOD ADDITIVES

**4.1** Only those additives classes indicated in the Table below may be used for the product categories specified. Within each additive class, and where permitted according to the Table, only those individual additives listed may be used and only within the limits specified.

In accordance with Section 4.1 of the Preamble to the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CODEX STAN 192-1995), additional additives may be present in the flavoured dough as a result of carry-over from non-dairy ingredients.

Additive class	Heat treated dough		Un-heat treated dough	
	Plain	Flavoured	Plain	Flavoured
Acidity Regulators	-	X	X	X
Carbonating agents	X	X	X	X
Colours	-	X	-	X
Emulsifiers	-	X	-	X
Flavour enhancers	-	X	-	X
Packaging gases	-	X	X	X
Preservatives	-	-	-	X
Stabilizers	X <sup>(a)</sup>	X	X	X
Sweeteners	-	X	-	X
Thickeners	X <sup>(a)</sup>	X	X	X

X = The use of additives belonging to the class is technologically justified. In the case of flavoured products, the additives are technologically justified in the dairy portion.

- = - The use of additives belonging to the class is not technologically justified.

(a) Use is restricted to reconstitution and recombination and if permitted by national legislation in the country of sale to the final consumer.

INS No.	Name of Additive	Maximum Level
<b>Acidity regulators</b>		
270	Lactic acid, L-, D- and DL-	GMP
<b>Carbonating agents</b>		
290	Carbon dioxide	GMP
<b>Colours</b>		
100(i)	Curcumin	100 mg/kg
101(i)	Riboflavin, synthetic	300 mg/kg
101(ii)	Riboflavin 5'-phosphate, sodium	
102	Tartrazine	
104	Quinoline yellow	150 mg/kg
110	Sunset yellow FCF	300 mg/kg
120	Carmines	150 mg/kg
122	Azorubine (Carmoisine)	
124	Ponceau 4R (Cochineal red A)	
129	Allura red AC	300 mg/kg
132	Indigotine	100 mg/kg
133	Brilliant blue FCF	150 mg/kg
141(i)	Chlorophylls, copper complexes	500 mg/kg
141(ii)	Chlorophylls, copper complexes, sodium and potassium salts	
143	Fast green FCF	100 mg/kg
150b	Caramel II – sulphite caramel	150 mg/kg
150c	Caramel III – ammonia caramel	2 000 mg/kg
150d	Caramel IV – sulphite ammonia caramel	2 000 mg/kg
151	Brilliant black (Black PN)	150 mg/kg
155	Brown HT	150 mg/kg
160a(i)	Carotene, beta-, synthetic	100 mg/kg
160e	Carotenal, beta-apo-8'-	
160f	Carotenic acid, methyl or ethyl ester, beta-apo-8'-	
160a(iii)	Carotenes, beta-, <i>Blakeslea trispora</i>	
160a(ii)	Carotenes, beta-, vegetable	600 mg/kg
160b(i)	Annatto extract, bixin-based	20 mg/kg as bixin

INS No.	Name of Additive	Maximum Level
160b(ii)	Annatto extract, norbixin-based	20 mg/kg as norbixin
160d	Lycopenes	30 mg/kg as pure lycopene
161b(i)	Lutein from <i>Tagetes erecta</i>	150 mg/kg
161h(i)	Zeaxanthin, synthetic	150 mg/kg
163(ii)	Grape skin extract	100 mg/kg
172(i)	Iron oxide, black	
172(ii)	Iron oxide, red	
172(iii)	Iron oxide, yellow	
<b>Emulsifiers</b>		
432	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monolaurate	3 000 mg/kg
433	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monooleate	
434	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monopalmitate	
435	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monostearate	
436	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan tristearate	
472e	Diacetyltartaric and fatty acid esters of glycerol	10 000 mg/kg
473	Sucrose esters of fatty acids	5 000 mg/kg
474	Sucroglycerides	5 000 mg/kg
475	Polyglycerol esters of fatty acids	2 000 mg/kg
477	Propylene glycol esters of fatty acids	5 000 mg/kg
481(i)	Sodium stearyl lactylate	10 000 mg/kg
482(i)	Calcium stearyl lactylate	10 000 mg/kg
491	Sorbitan monostearate	5 000 mg/kg
492	Sorbitan tristearate	
493	Sorbitan monolaurate	
494	Sorbitan monooleate	
495	Sorbitan monopalmitate	
900a	Polydimethylsiloxane	50 mg/kg
<b>Flavour enhancers</b>		
580	Magnesium gluconate	GMP
620	Glutamic acid, (L+)-	
621	Monosodium L-glutamate	
622	Monopotassium L-glutamate	
623	Calcium di-L-glutamate	
624	Monoammonium L-glutamate	
625	Magnesium di-L-glutamate	

INS No.	Name of Additive	Maximum Level
626	Guanylic acid, 5"-	
627	Disodium 5"-guanylate-	
628	Dipotassium 5"-guanylate-	
629	Calcium 5"-guanylate	
630	Inosinic acid, 5"-	
631	Disodium 5"-inosinate	
632	Dipotassium 5"-inosinate	
633	Calcium 5"-inosinate	
634	Calcium 5"-ribonucleotides-	
635	Disodium 5"-ribonucleotides-	
636	Maltol	
637	Ethyl maltol	
<b>Preservatives</b>		
200	Sorbic acid	1 000 mg/kg as sorbic acid
201	Sodium sorbate	
202	Potassium sorbate	
203	Calcium sorbate	
210	Benzoic acid	300 mg/kg as benzoic acid
211	Sodium benzoate	
212	Potassium benzoate	
213	Calcium benzoate	
234	Nisin	12 mg/kg
<b>Stabilizers and Thickeners</b>		
170(i)	Calcium carbonate	GMP
331(iii)	Trisodium citrate	
338	Phosphoric acid	1 000 mg/kg, singly or in combination, as phosphorus
339(i)	Sodium dihydrogen phosphate	
339(ii)	Disodium hydrogen phosphate	
339(iii)	Trisodium phosphate	
340(i)	Potassium dihydrogen phosphate	
340(ii)	Dipotassium hydrogen phosphate	
340(iii)	Tripotassium phosphate	
341(i)	Monocalcium dihydrogen phosphate	
341(ii)	Calcium hydrogen phosphate	
341(iii)	Tricalcium orthophosphate	

INS No.	Name of Additive	Maximum Level
342(i)	Ammonium dihydrogen phosphate	
342(ii)	Diammonium hydrogen phosphate	
343(i)	Monomagnesium phosphate	
343(ii)	Magnesium hydrogen phosphate	
343(iii)	Trimagnesium phosphate	
450(i)	Disodium diphosphate	
450(ii)	Trisodium diphosphate	
450(iii)	Tetrasodium diphosphate	
450(v)	Tetrapotassium diphosphate	
450(vi)	Dicalcium diphosphate	
450(vii)	Calcium dihydrogen diphosphate	
450(ix)	Magnesium dihydrogen diphosphate	
451(i)	Pentasodium triphosphate	
451(ii)	Pentapotassium triphosphate	
452(i)	Sodium polyphosphate	
452(ii)	Potassium polyphosphate	
452(iii)	Sodium calcium polyphosphate	
452(iv)	Calcium polyphosphate	
452(v)	Ammonium polyphosphate	
542	Bone phosphate	
400	Alginic acid	GMP
401	Sodium alginate	
402	Potassium alginate	
403	Ammonium alginate	
404	Calcium alginate	
405	Propylene glycol alginate	
406	Agar	
407	Carrageenan	
407a	Processed eucheama seaweed (PES)	
410	Carob bean gum	
412	Guar gum	
413	Tragacanth gum	
414	Gum Arabic (Acacia gum)	
415	Xanthan gum	
416	Karaya gum	
417	Tara gum	
418	Gellan gum	
425	Konjac flour	

INS No.	Name of Additive	Maximum Level
440	Pectins	
459	Cyclodextrin, - <i>beta</i>	5 mg/kg
460(i)	Microcrystalline cellulose (Cellulose gel)	GMP
460(ii)	Powdered cellulose	
461	Methyl cellulose	
463	Hydroxypropyl cellulose	
464	Hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose	
465	Methyl ethyl cellulose	
466	Sodium carboxymethyl cellulose (Cellulose gum)	
467	Ethyl hydroxyethyl cellulose	
468	Cross-linked sodium carboxymethyl cellulose (Cross-linked cellulose gum)	
469	Sodium carboxymethyl cellulose, enzymatically hydrolyzed (Cellulose gum, enzymatically hydrolyzed)	
470(i)	Salts of myristic, palmitic and stearic acids with ammonia, calcium, potassium and sodium	
470(ii)	Salts of oleic acid with calcium, potassium and sodium	
471	Mono- and di- glycerides of fatty acids	
472a	Acetic and fatty acid esters of glycerol	
472b	Lactic and fatty acid esters of glycerol	
472c	Citric and fatty acid esters of glycerol	
508	Potassium chloride	
509	Calcium chloride	
511	Magnesium chloride	
1200	Polydextrose	
1400	Dextrins, roasted starch	
1401	Acid treated starch	
1402	Alkaline treated starch	
1403	Bleached starch	
1404	Oxidized starch	
1405	Starches, enzyme treated	
1410	Mono starch phosphate	
1412	Distarch phosphate	
1413	Phosphated distarch phosphate	
1414	Acetylated distarch phosphate	
1420	Starch acetate	
1422	Acetylated distarch adipate	
1440	Hydroxypropyl starch	



INS No.	Name of Additive	Maximum Level
1442	Hydroxypropyl distarch phosphate	
1450	Starch sodium octenyl succinate	
1451	Acetylated oxidized starch	
<b>Sweeteners<sup>(a)</sup></b>		
420	Sorbitol	GMP
421	Mannitol	
950	Acesulfame potassium	350 mg/kg
951	Aspartame	1 000 mg/kg
952	Cyclamates	250 mg/kg
953	Isomalt (Hydrogenated isomaltulose)	GMP
954	Saccharin	100 mg/kg
955	Sucralose (Trichlorogalactosucrose)	400 mg/kg
956	Alitame	100 mg/kg
961	Neotame	100 mg/kg
962	Aspartame-acesulfame salt	350 mg/kg on an acesulfame potassium equivalent basis
964	Polyglycitol syrup	GMP
965	Maltitols	
966	Lactitol	
967	Xylitol	
968	Erythritol	

(a) The use of sweeteners is limited to milk-and milk derivative-based products energy reduced or with no added sugar.

## 4.2 FLAVOURINGS

The flavourings used in doogh covered by this standard should comply with the *Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings* (CAC/GL 66-2008).

## 5. CONTAMINANTS

**5.1** The milk used in the manufacture of the products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

**5.2** The milk used in the manufacture of the products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides and veterinary drugs established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

## 6. HYGIENE

**6.1** It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products* (CAC/RCP 57-2004) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

**6.2** The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria related to Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997).

## **7. PACKAGING AND STORAGE**

- 7.1** The product shall be packed in containers which preserve the hygienic quality and the other qualities of the food.
- 7.2** Doogh (after fermentation) shall be stored under appropriate conditions e.g. refrigerated.

## **8. LABELLING**

In addition to the provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985) and the *General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms* (CODEX STAN 206-1999), the following specific provisions apply:

### **8.1 NAME OF THE FOOD**

- 8.1.1** The name of the food shall be "Doogh".
- 8.1.2** The descriptions of "Carbonated/Uncarbonated" and/or "Heat treated/Un-heat treated" shall be used in conjunction with the word "Doogh". For carbonated doogh, the terms "Fermenting" or "Injecting" shall be applied before the word "Carbonated" in product designation to represent the source of carbonation.
- 8.1.3** The designation of "Flavoured Doogh" shall be used as the name of product if any flavouring substance is added.
- 8.1.4** When probiotic microorganisms are incorporated in doogh, the word "Probiotic" may be applied somewhere on the label.
- 8.1.5** For doogh powder, the name "Doogh Powder" or "Dried Doogh" shall be inserted in marking.

### **8.2 DECLARATION OF FAT CONTENT**

If the consumer would be misled by the omission, the milk fat content shall be declared in a manner acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either as (i) a percentage of mass or volume, or (ii) in grams per serving as qualified in the label, provided that the number of servings is stated. Any labelling should be in accordance to the *Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997).

### **8.3 LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS**

Information required in Section 8 of this Standard and Sections 4.1 to 4.8 of the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods, and, if necessary, storage instructions, shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

## **9. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING**

For checking the compliance with this Standard, the methods of analysis and sampling for fermented milks as contained in the *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling* (CODEX STAN 234-1999) relevant to the provisions in this standard, shall be used.

**APPENDIX IV****PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MIXED ZAAATAR****(At Step 5)****1. SCOPE**

This Standard determines the requirements and characteristics that shall be present in mixed zaatar intended for direct human consumption and used in many food preparations such as Lebanese mankoushe, etc.

**2. DESCRIPTION****2.1 DEFINITION****2.1.1 Mixed Zaatar**

It is the mix consisting of raw zaatar and broadleaf zaatar, as defined below, and the husk of sumac and sesame seeds, to which other ingredients may be added. The classification of zaatar shall be as shown in Section 2.2.

**2.1.2 Raw Zaatar**

It is the blossoms and/or leaves of the following wild and cultivated plants, which are manually or mechanically crumbled provided they are not powdered.

- *Origanum* sp.
- *Thymbra* sp.
- *Thymus* sp.
- *Satureja* sp.

**2.1.2.1 Raw Broadleaf Zaatar**

Raw zaatar is called raw broadleaf zaatar when it is composed of the blossoms and/or leaves of the wild or cultivated broadleaf zaatar, namely *Origanicum syriacum* (by at least 75%) or constitutes a mix (by 25% maximum) of the blossoms and leaves of the following varieties, which are manually or mechanically crumbled provided they are not powdered.

- *Origanum ehrenbergii*
- *Thymbra spicata*
- *Coridothymus capitatus*
- *Thymus syriacus*
- *Satureia thymbra*

**2.2 CLASSIFICATION**

Mixed zaatar is classified as follows:

**2.2.1 “Premium” Mixed Zaatar**

It shall consist of at least 25% of raw broadleaf zaatar mixed exclusively with: sesame seeds and sumac husk, with the possibility of adding salt by 6% maximum.

**2.2.2 “Extra” Mixed Zaatar**

It shall consist of at least 20% of raw zaatar or raw broadleaf zaatar mixed with: sesame seeds and sumac husk, with the possibility of adding grains, nuts, spices and condiments, as well as salt by 6% maximum.

**2.2.3 “Regular” Mixed Zaatar**

It shall consist of at least 15% of raw broadleaf zaatar or raw zaatar mixed with sesame seeds and sumac husk which should be added by at least 5%, in addition to the following possible ingredients: legumes, aromatic grains and herbs ; spices, condiments (cumin...), pomegranate molasses, vegetable oil, nuts, wheat bran and sesame seed hull, provided they all meet the good manufacturing practices, with the possibility of adding salt by 7% maximum and citric acid by 4% maximum, provided they are indicated on the label.

#### **2.2.4 Forms**

Any form of the product should be permissible provided it meets the related requirements in this standard, and an adequate description of the product is provided on the label to ensure that consumers are not misled or confused.

### **3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS**

#### **3.1 COMPOSITION**

##### **3.1.1 Basic Ingredients**

Raw zaatar shall be as defined in Section 2.1.2 above.

##### **3.1.2 Optional Ingredients**

- Legumes
- Grains
- Volatile herbs
- Spices and condiments (cumin, ...)
- Pomegranate molasses
- Vegetable oil
- Nuts
- Wheat bran

#### **3.2 QUALITY FACTORS**

##### **3.2.1 Taste and Colour**

- Zaatar contained in the product must have special flavour and smell and be free of any extraneous odours and flavours, including rancidity and mouldiness, as well as of any extraneous substances.
- The product must have a normal colour and a consistency that is typical of such kind of products.

##### **3.2.2 Chemical and Physical Characteristics**

###### **3.2.2.1 Requirements and Characteristics**

###### **3.2.2.1.1 General Requirements**

The following characteristics shall be observed in mixed zaatar:

- All the ingredients used in the preparation of the mixed zaatar shall be in conformity with their corresponding Codex Alimentarius standards.
- It shall be free of living insects and spiders, practically free of any visible moldiness, dead insects and parts thereof, contamination by rodents, birds and snails waste (and magnification might be used for detection in some cases, provided the magnifying power is determined if it exceeds 10 folds, which shall be indicated in the test results report).
- The final product shall not be in a powder form in order to ensure its main ingredients are recognizable by microscopic inspection (leaves, blossoms, straws...) or visible to the naked eye, to avoid fraud and concealing of impurities therein, and to ensure that higher levels of volatile oils are maintained. The straws, if any, must not be longer than 10 mm and more than 2 mm in diameter, and must not make more than 5% (mass/mass) of the product.
- Any extraneous substances of non-vegetable origin found in the product, such as pebbles, soil, sand, dust, etc. or of non-food vegetable origin, such as wood, dry leaves, must not make more than 1% (mass/mass) of the product.

###### **3.2.2.1.2 Chemical Requirements**

The following chemical requirements, as stated in table 1, shall be observed in the zaatar and the mixed zaatar:

Table (1): Chemical Requirements

Characteristics	Requirements			
	Premium Mixed Zaatar	Extra Mixed Zaatar	Regular Mixed Zaatar	
moisture % (m/m) maximum	12	12	12	
Total table salt % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum	6	6	7	
Total ash, excluding salt % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum*	7	7	7	
Total ash % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum	14	14	15	
Acid insoluble ash % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum	1	1	1	
Raw fibers % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum	16	15	37	
Volatile oils % (ml/100g based on the dry matter) minimum	0.37	0.13	0.1	
Maximum superoxide number	-	-	10 ml of superoxide oxygen/kg of oil	
Malic acid/citric acid proportion, minimum	10	10	0.14	
Basic Components Volatile Oils	Carvacrol+Thymol	More than 70%	More than 85%	More than 85%
	Cymene, gamma-terpinene and other volatile oils	Less than 30%		

#### 4. FOOD ADDITIVES

##### 4.1 RAW ZAATAR, "PREMIUM" MIXED ZAATAR AND "EXTRA" MIXED ZAATAR

No food additives are permitted.

##### 4.2 "REGULAR" MIXED ZAATAR

Only the following food additive is permitted:

INS No.	Name of Additive	Maximum Level
<b>Acidity Regulators</b>		
330	Citric acid	4 mg/kg

#### 5. CONTAMINANTS

5.1 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

5.2 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

## 6. HYGIENE

- 6.1** It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.
- 6.2** The product should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997).

## 7. LABELLING

The products covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985). Any health claims shall be in conformity with the *Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997) when necessary. In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

### 7.1 NAME OF PRODUCT

#### 7.1.1 Mixed zaatar or mixed thyme

**7.1.2** The classification shall be indicated according to Section 2.2 next to the product name.

**7.1.3** The word “baladi (local)” may appear next to the name if the mixed zaatar is made of varieties of raw zaatar - wild or cultivated - that have the same country of origin.

### 7.2 LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL PACKAGES

Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

## 8. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

### 8.1 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

<u>Provision</u>	<u>Method</u>
Acidity	AOAC 935.57
Added citric acid	The content of the added citric acid shall be determined by testing the following organic acids: Malic acid and citric acid by applying HPLC method and calculating the malic acid/citric acid proportion which must not fall below 10/1 (Malic acid ten times the citric acid). The malic acid is extracted from the sumac husk and by comparing the result to the proportion, the quantity of the added citric acid can be calculated.
Sodium chloride	AOAC Official Method 960.29
Moisture	AOAC 925.10
Total ash	AOAC 923.03
Acid insoluble ash	AOAC 941.12
Raw fibers	AOAC 962.09
Volatile oils	ISO 1984:6571
Water insoluble ash	ISO 929:1980
Superoxide number	AOAC 965.33

### 8.2 SAMPLING PLANS

To be developed