

C O D E X A L I M E N T A R I U S

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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STANDARD FOR CANNED CRAB MEAT

CXS 90-1981

Adopted in 1981. Revised in 1995. Amended in 2011, 2013, 2016, 2018.

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to canned crab meat. It does not apply to specialty products where crab meat constitutes less than 50% m/m of the contents.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Product Definition

Canned crab meat is prepared singly or in combination from the leg, claw, body and shoulder meat from which the shell has been removed, of any of the edible species of the sub-order *Brachyura* of the order Decapoda and all species of the family *Lithodidae*.

2.2 Process Definition

Canned crab meat is packed in hermetically sealed containers and shall have received a processing treatment sufficient to ensure commercial sterility.

2.3 Presentation

Any presentation of the product shall be permitted provided that it:

- (i) meets all requirements of this standard; and
- (ii) is adequately described on the label to avoid confusing or misleading the consumer.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Crab Meat

Canned crab meat shall be prepared from sound crab of the species designated in 2.1 which are alive immediately prior to the commencement of processing and of a quality suitable for human consumption.

3.2 Other Ingredients

The packing medium and all other ingredients used shall be of food grade quality and conform to all applicable Codex standards.

3.3 Final Product

Products shall meet the requirements of this Standard when lots examined in accordance with Section 9 comply with provisions set out in Section 8. Products shall be examined by the methods given in Section 7.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Acidity regulators and sequestrants used in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 of the [General Standard for Food Additives \(CXS 192-1995\)](#) in food category 09.4 (Fully preserved, including canned or fermented fish and fish products, including mollusks, crustaceans, and echinoderms) and only certain Table 3 acidity regulators and flavour enhancers as indicated in Table 3 of the [General Standard for Food Additives \(CXS 192-1995\)](#) are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard.

5. HYGIENE

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 \(CXC 1-1969\)](#), the [Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products \(CXC 52-2003\)](#), the [Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods \(CXC 23-1979\)](#) and other relevant Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the [Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods \(CXG 21-1997\)](#).

6. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the [General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods \(CXS 1-1985\)](#) the following specific provisions apply:

6.1 Name of the Food

The name of the product shall be "crab" or "crabmeat".

In addition, the label shall include other descriptive terms that will avoid misleading or confusing the consumer.

7. SAMPLING, EXAMINATION AND ANALYSES

7.1 Sampling

- (i) Sampling of lots for examination of the final product as prescribed in Section 3.3 shall be in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5.
- (ii) Sampling of lots for examination of net weight and drained weight where appropriate shall be carried out in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan established by the CAC.

7.2 Sensory and Physical Examination

Samples taken for sensory and physical examination shall be assessed by persons trained in such examination and in accordance with Annex A and the [Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories \(CXG 31 - 1999\)](#).

7.3 Determination of Net Weight

Net weight of all sample units shall be determined by the following procedures:

- (i) Weigh the unopened container.
- (ii) Open the container and remove the contents.
- (iii) Weigh the empty container, including the end and any wrapping material, after removing excess liquid and adhering meat.
- (iv) Subtract the weight of the empty container and any wrapping material from the weight of the unopened container. The resultant figure is the net content.

7.4 Determination of Drained Weight

The drained weight of all sample units shall be determined by the following procedures:

- (i) Maintain the container at a temperature between 20°C and 30°C for a minimum of 12 hours prior to examination.
- (ii) Open the container and distribute the contents on a pre-weighed circular sieve having a wire mesh with square openings of 2.8 mm x 2.8 mm.
- (iii) Remove all wrapping material and incline the sieve at an angle of approximately 17-20° and allow the meat to drain two minutes, measured from the time the product is poured onto the sieve.
- (iv) Weigh the sieve containing the drained crab meat.
- (v) Determine the weight of drained crab meat by subtracting the mass of the sieve from the mass of the sieve with drained product.

8. DEFINITION OF DEFECTIVES

A sample unit will be considered defective when it exhibits any of the properties defined below.

8.1 Foreign Matter

The presence in the sample unit of any matter, which has not been derived from crab meat, does not pose a threat to human health, and is readily recognized without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing practices and sanitation practices.

8.2 Odour/Flavour

A sample unit affected by persistent and distinct objectionable odours or flavours indicative of decomposition or rancidity.

8.3 Texture

- (i) Excessively mushy flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation; or
- (ii) Excessively tough flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation.

8.4 Discolouration

A sample unit affected by distinct discolourations indicative of decomposition or rancidity or by blue, brown, black discolourations exceeding 5% by weight of the drained contents, or black sulphide staining of the meat exceeding 5% by weight of the drained contents.

8.5 OBJECTIONABLE MATTER

A sample unit affected by struvite crystals – any struvite crystal greater than 5 mm in length.

9. LOT ACCEPTANCE

A lot shall be considered as meeting the requirements of this standard when:

- (i) the total number of defectives as classified according to Section 8 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5;
- (ii) the total number of sample units not meeting the form of presentation defined in Section 2.3 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5;
- (iii) the average net weight and the average drained weight where appropriate of all sample units examined is not less than the declared weight, and provided there is no unreasonable shortage in any individual container;
- (iv) the Food Additives, Hygiene and Labelling requirements of Sections 4, 5 and 6 are met.

SENSORY AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

1. Complete external can examination for the presence of container integrity defects or can ends which may be distorted outwards.
2. Open can and complete weight determination according to defined procedures in Sections 7.3 and 7.4.
3. Examine product for discolouration, foreign and objectionable matter.
4. Assess odour, flavour and texture in accordance with the [*Guidelines for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish in Laboratories \(CXG 31-1999\)*](#).