



## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

## CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS

Twenty-ninth Session

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

9 - 13 February 2026

**Revision to the *Standard for olive oil and olive pomace oil (CXS 33 - 1981)*****Development of a framework for data collection on Section 3.2.3 footnote (c) (decision tree) –  
Follow up on the CAC47 directive**

(Prepared by Codex Secretariat)

**Background**

1. The 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC47)<sup>1</sup>, in 2024 adopted, at Step 5/8, the revised Standard for olive oils and olive pomace oils (CXS 33-1981), with an amendment to Section 3.2.3 4 $\alpha$ -Desmethylsterols composition (% total 4 $\alpha$ -desmethylsterols), footnote (b), to replace “it may be considered” to “it is considered” and noting the reservations of Algeria and the Syrian Arab Republic, for the reasons further elaborated below.
2. CAC47 held extensive discussions regarding the decision tree in footnote (c), as defined under section 3.2.3 4 $\alpha$ -Desmethylsterols composition (% total 4 $\alpha$ -desmethylsterols) of CXS 33-1981. CAC47 noted the proposal from the Syrian Arab Republic, supported by Members and an observer, to adopt the standard at Step 5, to allow for submission of data to validate the decision tree and:
  - highlighted that footnote (c) did not take into account inter-regional variabilities due to factors such as climate change.
  - stressed the importance of olive oil trade to their economies.
  - shared the view that footnote (c) in the revised CXS 33-1981 would automatically restrict a large percentage of authentic olive oil exports from particular Member(s) from international trade, which would negatively impact such Member(s), especially among the farming communities.
  - called for the collection and analysis of scientific data on inter-regional variability to better inform the revision of footnote (c)
3. Considering the concerns above, CAC47 agreed to:
  - i. initiate work, on data collection, on Section 3.2.3 footnote (c) (decision tree), that would allow CCFO to make a decision on its applicability to all authentic olive oils.
  - ii. issue a CL for data collection on the applicability of the decision tree as defined in footnote (c) taking into account the following framework to be implemented by the Codex Secretariat:
    - undertake informal consultations with interested Members/Observers to prepare a draft framework for the data collection.
    - circulate the draft framework for data collection for comments before finalisation.
    - issue a CL for data collection on inter-regional variability and the applicability of the decision tree as defined in footnote (c).
    - submit the data to FAO with a view towards convening an expert working group to analyse the data and their applicability to footnote (c), time and resources permitting.
  - iii. request FAO to convene an expert working group to analyse the data and its applicability to footnote (c).

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<sup>1</sup> [REP24/CAC paragraphs 38-53](#)

### Consultations on framework for the data collection

4. Following the approach outlined in paragraph 3(ii) above, the Codex Secretariat conducted informal discussions with Italy, the Chair of the EWG on data collection related to PPPs and DAGs, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the International Olive Council (IOC) to assess whether there were existing data collection templates that could be used directly or adapted for data collection that would enable further consideration of the issues related to 4 $\alpha$ -desmethylsterols. The outcomes of these consultations indicated that:
  - No ready-made data collection template was available.
  - A custom tool would have to be developed for data collection on this topic.
5. It was further noted that in order to implement the decision of CAC47, a structured approach is necessary, which includes: i) development of a discussion paper or data collection tool; ii) engagement with interested countries/parties (e.g. the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East members); iii) circulation of the draft tool for comments; iv) presentation and adoption of the tool by CCFO; and v) implementation of the tool through data collection.
6. During the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE12)<sup>2</sup> in 2025, the Syrian Arab Republic presented a Conference room document ([NE12/CRD04](#)) and proposed an action plan to collect comprehensive data over two seasons across three ripening stages for various cultivars along with a regional initiative to operationalize the data collection framework, including capacity building and meta-analysis of previous data, to ensure future Codex decisions were based on sound, inclusive scientific evidence.
7. CCNE12
  - i. agreed to support as a priority the revision to the *Standard for olive oils and olive pomace oils* (CXS 33-1981).
  - ii. encouraged Members to actively engage in the relevant discussions, and data generation as necessary.
  - iii. invited Members to provide data to assist in the validation/revision of footnote (c) in Section 3.2.3 of CXS 33-1981 in coordination with the relevant regional scientific bodies, and to inform CCFO29 accordingly

### Recommendation

8. CCFO is requested to:
  - a. note the request from CAC47 and consider how CCFO might address this in the context of its ongoing work on olive oil.
  - b. note the discussions at CCNE12 and the commitment of concerned countries to collect data, recognizing that this may take several years.
  - c. consider if this request could be incorporated into the ongoing data collection exercise for olive oil and olive pomace oil, noting that additional time will be required for the data collection exercise as well as part of the request to a possible FAO expert working group to analyse the meeting

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<sup>2</sup> [REP25/NE](#) paragraphs 61-66 and 70(i-iii)