

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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

Agenda Item 7

CX/FFV 22/22/8
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Twenty-second Session

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK (REPLIES TO CL 2021/79-FFV)

1. This document compiles the four proposals for new work received in response to CL 2021/79-FFV:
 - (i) Development of a standard for Castilla lulo, submitted by Colombia (Appendix I);
 - (ii) Amendment to the *Standard For Bananas* (CXS 205-1997), submitted by Brazil (Appendix II);
 - (iii) Review of existing standards, submitted by the the European Union (Appendix III); and
 - (iv) Development of a standard for fresh curry leaves, submitted by India (Appendix IV).
2. CCFFV22 is requested to consider these new work proposals for the future work of the Committee.

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARD FOR CASTILLA LULO

(Submitted by Colombia)

BACKGROUND

Castilla lulo¹ (*Solanum quitoense* Lam.), is a fruit of the *Solanaceae* family, is a globose berry, with a yellow-orange skin when ripe, covered with trichomes (lint). Internally, it is divided into four compartments in which is the juicy bittersweet pulp of greenish-yellowish color, and with numerous small seeds.



Source:

Corporación Colombiana de Investigación Agropecuaria - AGROSAVIA

Source:

<https://agronegocios.uniandes.edu.co/2011/10/10/investigacion-del-lulo-en-narino/>

Castilla lulo is native to the Andean region in South America, where Colombia is located and its cultivation has spread to Central America and Mexico. This fruit has characteristics that make it very particular, besides being an exotic fruit with a very pleasant aroma and flavor, it has a number of nutritional characteristics that make it very desirable (see table below):

| Compound | Content |
|---------------|---------|
| Water | 87,0% |
| Protein | 0,74% |
| Fat | 0,17% |
| Ash | 0,95% |
| Carbohydrates | 8,0% |
| Fiber | 2,6% |
| Calcium | 34,2 mg |
| Iron | 1,19 mg |
| Phosphorus | 13,5 mg |
| Vitamin C | 29,4 mg |

Nutritional content of the Castilla lulo per 100 g of edible product.

Source: Corporación Colombiana de Investigación Agropecuaria – AGROSAVIA, 2002

¹ Also known as naranjilla in some countries.

Castilla lulo, also known in other countries as naranjilla, is usually consumed as juice, but can be incorporated in desserts and other foods where it provides its particular flavor and aroma.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE CODEX STANDARD FOR CASTILLA LULO

1. The purpose and the scope of the Standard

The purpose of the standard is to establish in an international coverage document the quality and safety requirements that characterize Castilla lulo, taking into account the particular characteristics of this fruit and the guidelines established by Codex for human consumption products. The scope of the standard applies to fruits of Castilla lulo (*Solanum quitoense* Lam), of the *Solanaceae* family, which are marketed fresh after being conditioned and packaged for further human consumption.

2. Relevance and timeliness

Given the international trend of consuming natural products with the least degree of transformation or processing, fruits are a very important source of this type of products, as evidenced by the diversity of new fruits that are integrated into trade between countries. This increased demand for products marketed in fresh state brings health benefits for consumers and benefits for the countries that produce them because the recognition of a fruit through an international standard, positions it in the world, which increases its demand and thus improves the living conditions of those who cultivate it because for the income they receive as a result of its marketing.

The standard will make it possible to unify criteria for the quality and safety requirements for Castilla lulo, which is in line with the principles of the Codex Alimentarius; In addition, it will promote fair trade of the fruit between countries because the standard will be the reference document for producers and customers, which will facilitate trade in lulo.

3. Main aspects to be covered

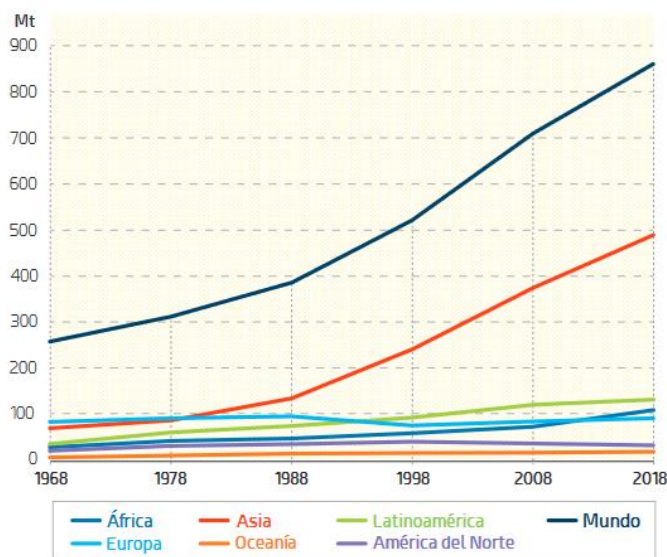
The aspects to be considered in the elaboration of the standard for Castilla lulo are essentially the following:

- Define the minimum quality requirements that Castilla lulo shall meet, in order to establish its suitability for consumption.
- Classify the Castilla lulo in categories, according to the type and magnitude of the defects in the fruit.
- Define the size and weight ranges in which the Castilla lulo is found as selection criteria for marketing purposes.
- Establish the tolerances in terms of quality and size that can be admitted for fruits contained in a package.
- Include the provisions that shall taken into account in relation to the homogeneity of the packaged product and the characteristics of the packaging used.
- Specify the information shall be included in the marking and labeling of the package, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Codex Alimentarius, for the benefit of the fruit consumer.
- Include the guidelines established by the Codex Alimentarius regarding contaminants affecting fruit, microbiological requirements and other hygiene provisions associated with the food handling.

4. Assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

4.1 Volume of trade between countries

International fruit production has shown an increase, which can be visualized as follows:



Fruit production between 1968 and 2018, world total and by region in million of tons (Mt) (Source: FAOSTAT (2020)).

Worldwide fruit supply has steadily increased between 1968 and 2017. As in Asia, production increased by approximately 750% in volume terms over that period, driven especially by increased production in China, while in Africa, production quadrupled from 45 to 180 million tons per year. Fruit production in Central and South America increased by 317% over the last 50 years. While production increased by 117% in Europe and 174% in North America.

By country, world production showed the following indicators in 2018, with China being the largest fruit producer and Colombia in fourteenth place.

| Fruit production by country (2018) | Millions of tons |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| China | 244 |
| India | 99 |
| Brazil | 40 |
| Mexico | 33 |
| United States of America | 26 |
| Turkey | 24 |
| Indonesia | 20 |
| Spain | 19 |
| Iran (Islamic Republic of) | 19 |
| Italy | 18 |
| Philippines | 17 |
| Egypt | 15 |
| Nigeria | 12 |
| Colombia | 12 |

Source: FAOSTAT (2020)

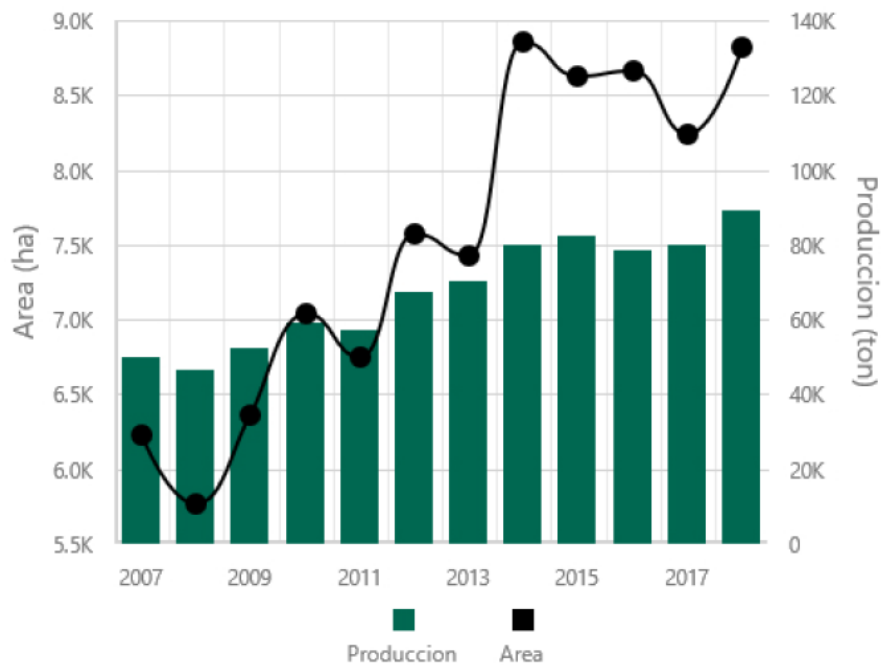
In the case of Colombia, these figures are the result of government policies aimed at promoting the production, consumption and export of fruits, including the following: *la Diplomacia sanitaria, Coseche y venda a la fija, Colombia Exporta Agro, Estrategia 360 y Pactos por el Crecimiento Económico*, etc.

In the particular case of Castilla lulo, in recent years there has been a significant increase in the volume and area of production in Colombia because the product has been known in other countries and technical support has been provided to cultivators to improve production standards.

In addition, due to the rise of fruits grown in Colombia, many of which have a Codex standard associated with them, Castilla lulo has also been gradually gaining market share and recognition, which would have a greater impulse with the international standard.

The following graphs show the historical performance of Castilla lulo through the variation in production and cultivated area. Subsequently, the yield achieved over time is shown, which is the result of the improvements introduced in the crops and the support given to the producers of Castilla lulo as indicated above.

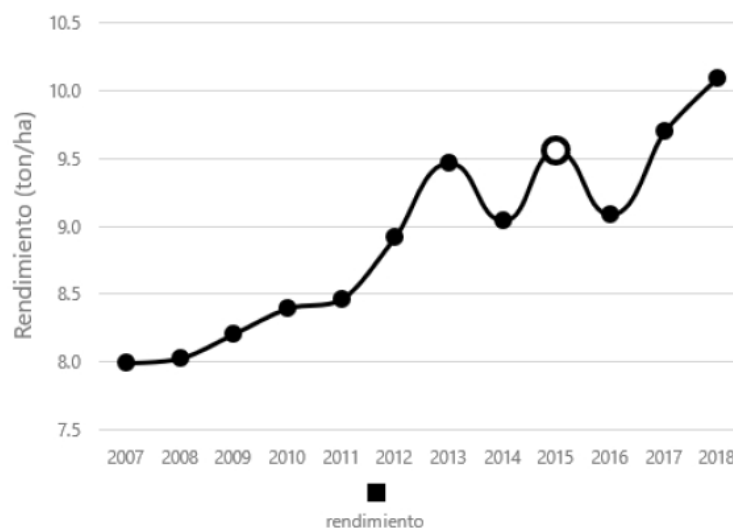
Production volume of Castilla lulo and production area per year



Source: Red de información y comunicación del sector Agropecuario Colombiano - Agronet.

Since 2016, there has been a steady increase in the production of Castilla lulo, exceeding the value achieved in 2015, when the highest peak of production had been reached in recent history. On the other hand, the production area as of 2017 increases, equaling the area cultivated in 2014 and exceeding the area cultivated in 2015 which, as indicated, the greatest production had been achieved in that year.

Performance of Castilla lulo per hectare per year

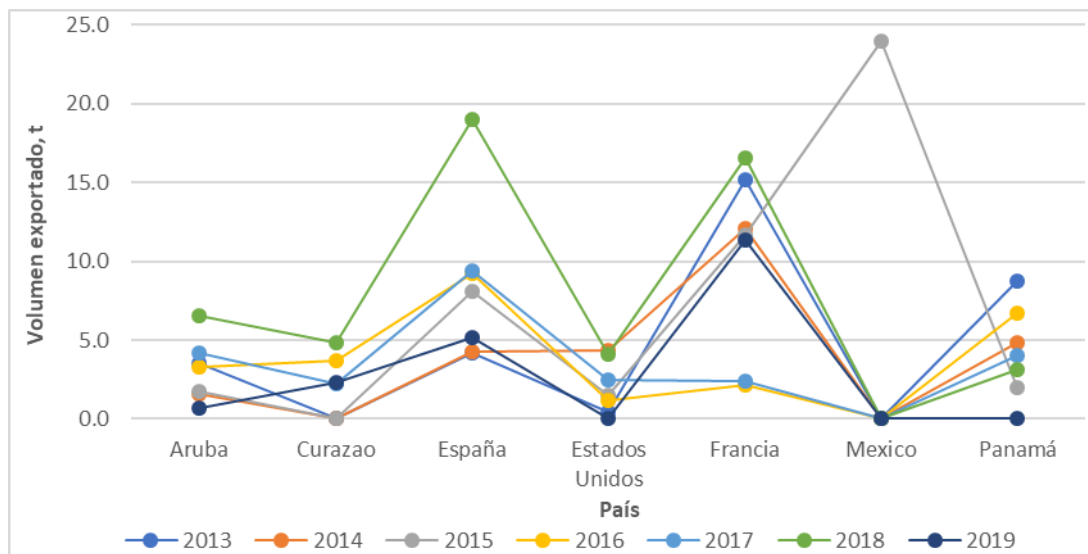


Source: Red de información y comunicación del sector Agropecuario Colombiano - Agronet.

Regarding the performance in the production of Castilla lulo, since 2016 there has been a steady growth resulting from the use of better quality seeds, optimization of crop densities, implementation of good agricultural practices, which include the proper management of products for agricultural use, as well as the timely monitoring and control of pests and diseases, among other aspects.

Main importing countries of lulo (Tons)

Due to the recent participation of lulo in international trade, the graph shows variations in the demand of the product by countries, which is to be expected due to the short time that the product has been on the market compared to other fruits, although in some of these countries a trend of increasing imports can be observed over the years.



Source: Procolombia.

In addition to the above destinations, Castilla lulo has also been exported in smaller quantities to Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Kuwait, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, Portugal, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom.

4.2 International market potential

Colombia has a great diversity of topographic and climatic conditions, which allow harvests of a wide variety of fruits throughout the year. This is one of the reasons why it is the main exporter of exotic fruits in the Americas; on the other hand, Colombian exports of these products have had an annual compound growth of 7% in the last 5 years. Colombian fruits have an excellent quality in organoleptic terms with one of the best colors, flavors, aromas and soluble solids content, when compared to products from other countries in the subtropical region.

Overview of fruit exports

Compared to previous years, there has been a significant increase in fruit exports, which can be seen in the following graph, which shows how the market behavior of these products has been in 2019 compared to 2018:



Source: Procolombia.

Due to this trend, which has been maintained in 2020, it is expected that the Colombian fruit market is promising, which will allow to increase trade in products that are in greater demand and enter the market for other fruits that, due to their novelty, shall gradually be made known in a greater number of countries, as has been the case of Castilla lulo, which has already made significant inroads into several markets when a few years ago it was little known.

According to figures from Colombia's National Department of Statistics (DANE), between January and April 2021 exports of exotic fruits amounted US\$37.8 million, 27.5% more than in the same period of the previous year.

Among the destinations that bought the most exotic fruits were the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France, Brazil and Hong Kong. In addition, Europe increased its purchases by 29.7% to US\$32.1 million, representing 84.9% of total exports of these fruits.

This trend in recent years shows a promising horizon for increasing the export volume of Colombian fruits, including Castilla lulo.

4.3 Consumer protection

The Castilla lulo standard will establish important aspects for consumer protection from a commercial and safety point of view. The document includes information on the minimum quality that the fruit shall meet in order to be consumed, describes the defects that may be allowed, the information that shall be included on the marking of the packages as guidance for those who buy the product, and mention provisions established by Codex regarding contaminants and hygiene practices that shall be applied in the packaging and marketing of Castilla lulo.

4.4 Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field

No standardization work on this fruit is being carried out by other international organizations.

5. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

The proposed work is within the Codex 2020-2025 strategic framework, supporting Codex's vision of developing quality and safety standards to protect people.

The development of the international standard about Castilla lulo is directly related to the following Codex goals:

Goal 2. The proposed standard about Castilla lulo presented here was developed based on a research work supported by science through which the characterization of lulo was carried out through a statistically representative sampling of the areas of greatest production, also taking into account information on the fruit grown in other countries so that the proposal covers the fruit grown not only in Colombia.

Goal 3. An international standard about Castilla lulo will provide a reference document for commercial transactions with other countries based on it, which will generate more equitable practices in the market for the product.

Goal 4. There is a National Codex Alimentarius Committee that promotes the participation of the different stakeholders in the study of draft standards and ensures that deadlines are met for responding to Codex requests and ensuring ongoing participation in issues of interest to Colombia.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and existing Codex documents

The proposed standard about Castilla lulo is within the mandate of the Codex Committee for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV), therefore in line with the provisions of other standards developed by this committee. The proposal refers to documents developed by other committees for labeling, contaminants and hygiene practices applicable to fresh fruits. This does not duplicate the work done by Codex committees, but rather, by cross-referencing the work done, identifies standards and other documents that complement the proposed standard and allow it to be applied.

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

The draft Codex standard about Castilla lulo has been prepared with the participation of a group of experts working at the national level in Colombia on the characterization of tropical fruits. As a result, the need for additional expert advisers to those indicated above is not foreseen.

8. Identification of the need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

The need for technical contributions from other organizations is not foreseen.

9. Proposed time schedule

Development of the standard would be expected to take three sessions of CCFFV or less, depending upon relevant inputs and agreement from Members.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR CASTILLA LULO

1. SCOPE

The purpose of the Standard is to define the quality requirements for Castilla lulo² after preparation and packaging. When applied at stages following packaging, products may show in relation to the requirements of the Standard:

- a slight lack of freshness and turgidity;
- slight deterioration due to their development and their tendency to perish.

The holder/seller of products may not display such products or offer them for sale or deliver or market them in any manner other than in conformity with this Standard. The holder/seller will be responsible for compliance with this Standard.

2. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard defines the requirements for Castilla lulo (*Solanum quitoense* Lam.), of the *Solanaceae* family, to be supplied fresh to the consumer, after preparation and packaging. Lulo destined for industrial processing are excluded.

3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

3.1 Minimum requirements

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the lulo of Castilla must be:

- whole;
- have the characteristic spherical shape of the lulo;
- have a fresh appearance and firm consistency;
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- practically free of pests³ and damage caused by them;
- free of abnormal external moisture, excluding condensation following removal from cold storage;
- free from mechanical damage;
- free of foreign smell and taste;
- clean and free of visible foreign matter;
- free of trichomes (lint).

3.1.1 Minimum maturity requirements

The maturity of the Castilla lulo is visually assessed by the change in external color and can be confirmed by determining the total soluble solids.

Castilla lulo shall have reached an appropriate degree of maturity in accordance with the specific criteria to the variety that allows the adequate development of its organoleptic characteristics.

3.2 Classification

Castilla lulo is classified into three categories defined below:

² Also known as naranjilla, Naranjilla de Quito, Gele Terong (Netherlands), Morelle de Quito (France), Orangen von Quito (Germany)

³ The provisions concerning pests and damage caused by them apply without prejudice to plant protection regulations applied by governments in accordance with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

3.2.1 "Extra" class

Castilla lulo in this class should be of superior quality and characteristics of the variety. They should be free of defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

3.2.2 Class I

Castilla lulo in this class should be of good quality and characteristic of the variety. The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- Healed scratches caused by mites.
- Sunburn.
- Burns (magnifying glass effect).
- Shading, caused by contact between fruits on the plant.

These defects together shall not exceed 10% of the total area of the fruit. In addition, slight deformations of the fruit such as flattening are allowed.

The defects must not, in any case, affect the flesh of the fruit.

3.2.3 Class II

This class includes lulo de Castilla which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes, but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in 3.1. The following defects, however, may be allowed provided the lulo retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

Fruits with superficial cracks of the epidermis in the area near the calyx and not exceeding 5 % of the total area are allowed.

Admitted:

- Healed scratches caused by mites.
- Sunburn.
- Burns (magnifying glass effect).
- Shading, caused by contact between fruits on the plant.

These defects should not cover the surface of the fruit by more than 15%. Deformities of the fruit such as flattening are also allowed.

The defects must not, in any case, affect the flesh of the fruit.

4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Castilla lulo may be classified by count, by diameter or by weight or in accordance with other existing trading practices. Where this is the case, the package should be suitably labeled.

(A) When classified by count, size is determined by the number of fruit in each package.

(B) For fruit sized (classified) by diameter

| Size Code | Diameter range (mm) |
|--|------------------------|
| A | > 77 |
| B | 70 - 77 |
| C | 60 - 70 |
| D | < 60 |
| *The minimum diameter for Castilla lulo is 50 mm | |

(C) For fruit sized (classified) by weight

| Size Code | Weight range (g) |
|-----------|------------------|
| A | > 190 |
| B | 145 - 190 |
| C | 100 - 145 |
| D | < 100 |

*The minimum weight for Castilla lulo is 83 g

5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

5.1 Quality tolerances

Quality and size tolerances will be allowed on each lot for product not meeting the requirements of the class indicated. Product not meeting the conformity assessment may be re-classified (sized) and brought into conformity in accordance with the relevant provisions in the Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems (CXG 47-2003).

5.1.1 "Extra" Class

Five percent, by number or weight of fruits of Castilla lulo not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class I or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

5.1.2 Class I

Ten percent, by number or weight of fruits of Castilla lulo not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

5.1.3 Class II

Ten percent, by number or weight of fruits of Castilla lulo satisfying neither the requirements of the class, nor the minimum requirements, with the exception of produce affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption.

5.2 Size tolerances

For all classes or presentations, 10% by number or weight of fruits of Castilla lulo corresponding to the size immediately below or above the size indicated on the package.

6. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

6.1 Uniformity

The contents of each package shall be uniform and contain only Castilla lulo of the same origin, quality and size. The visible part of the contents of the package shall be representative of the entire contents.

6.2 Packaging

Castilla lulo shall be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly. The materials used inside the package shall be of food grade quality, clean, and of quality such as to avoid any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly paper or stamps, with commercial indications is permitted, provided they are printed or labelled with non-toxic ink or glue.

Stickers individually affixed to the produce shall be such that, when removed, they neither leave visible traces of glue nor lead to skin defects.

Castilla lulo shall be packed in each container in compliance with the *Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CXC 44-1995).

6.2.1 Description of containers

The containers shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preservation of the fruits of Castilla lulo.

Packages shall be free of any foreign matter and smell.

7. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING OR LABELLING

7.1 Consumer packages

In addition to the requirements of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1- 1985), the following specific provisions apply:

7.1.1 *Name of produce*

Each package shall be labelled with the name of the produce.

7.1.2 *Origin of produce*

Country of origin⁴ and, optionally, the name of the place, district or region of production.

7.2 Non-retail containers

Each package shall bear the following particulars in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked and visible from the outside.

7.2.1 *Identification*

Name and address of the exporter, packer and/or dispatcher. Identification code (optional)⁵.

7.2.2 *Name of produce*

7.2.3 *Origin of produce*

Country of origin and, optionally, name of the place, district or region of production.

7.2.4 *Commercial specifications*

- Class;
- Size (in case the product is classified by size), expressed by
 - by the minimum and maximum weight of the fruit; or
 - by minimum and maximum diameter; or
 - by the number of fruits and net fruits weight; or
 - by size (code) and method used.

7.2.5 *Official Inspection Mark (optional)*

8. CONTAMINANTS

8.1 The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with those maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

8.2 The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995).

9. HYGIENE

9.1 It is recommended that the produce 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), *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CXC 53-2003) and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

9.2 The product should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods* (CXG 21-1997).

⁴ The full or commonly used name should be indicated.

⁵ The national legislation of some countries requires an explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference to the "packer and/or dispatcher" (or the equivalent abbreviations) has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.

PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT TO THE STANDARD FOR BANANAS (CXS 205-1997)**(Submitted by Brazil)****1. Purposes and the scope of the Standard**

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to align the Scope of the Standard to correctly reflect the list of varieties covered by its Annex, providing better guidance to member countries and the banana industry.

Section 1 – Definition of Produce, has a single reference to Group AAA, bringing confusion whilst other groups are covered by the Standard despite their listing in the Annex (Groups AA, AB and AAB and Group AAA).

The proposed amendment encompasses a deletion of such single reference to group AAA inserted in the text of Section 1 - Definition of Produce, taking into consideration that Group AAA as well as the Other Groups (AA, AB and AAB) are listed in the Annex.

The removal of the single reference to Group AAA in Section 1 – Definition of Produce is intended to enlarge clarification of the covered varieties for better adoption of the Standard and transparency in the trade of bananas.

2. Relevance and timeliness

Currently the OECD Scheme on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables is developing the OECD Brochure on Bananas, covering the *Standard for Bananas* (CXS 205-1997).

According to the OECD's website – “The OECD brochures facilitate the consistent interpretation of the international standards for fruit and vegetables by means of photos and explanatory notes. They are intended as tools for Inspection Authorities and professional bodies responsible for the application of standards or interested in trade in these products.”⁶

At the meeting of the working group (WG) enabled to elaborate the OECD Brochure for Bananas (December 1st, 2021) it was discussed alternative ways to motivate the Codex Committee of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables to evaluate the need to amend the Codex Standard for Bananas as it was not clear to some members of the WG if the Scope covered one or more Groups of bananas.

It was debated that although the text in Section 1 – Definition of Produce, specify a single Group (AAA) it also refers to the Annex for the varieties covered by the Standard. Nonetheless, during the elaboration of the OECD Brochure for Bananas, this double reference enabled some discussions whilst the other Groups in the Annex were not covered by Standard.

In that sense, Brazil expressed its willingness to bring this situation to the attention of the Committee of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables as it would be important to evaluate whilst current standard may be reviewed not to excessively specify a single Group of bananas, taking into consideration that the reference to the Annex suffices and that the single reference to Group AAA at the current text may neither provide essential product definitions nor contribute to transparency in trade, bringing prejudice to the other Groups listed.

3. The main aspects to be covered:

The amendment work aims to correct the single reference to Group AAA of bananas in Section 1 – Definition of Produce, proposing the deletion of this reference as all Groups are listed in the Annex of the Standard.

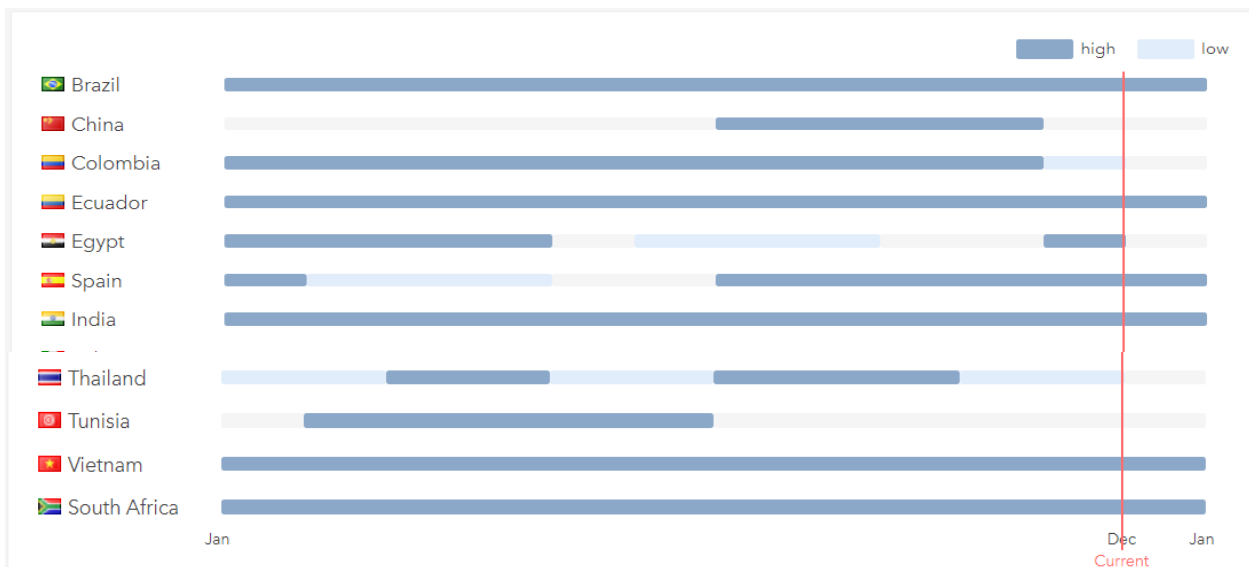
During the 6th Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (Mexico City, Mexico, 29 January – 2 February 1996), the Committee reasserted its earlier decision that the **definition should not include specific groups or varieties**, as all varieties of *Musa* spp. intended for fresh consumption were covered by the scope, and agreed upon that **a list of varieties would be appended to the Standard** (ALINORM 97/35 - Paragraph 13).

In addition, taking into account the recommendation of the Commission to move to more inclusive standards where possible, the amendment work would bring clarity to the Standard, enabling clear correlation between the Standard and all the Groups, Subgroups and Cultivars of Bananas as listed in its Annex.

⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/agriculture/fruit-vegetables/publications/brochures/>

4. An assessment against the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*

Banana is produced at commercial scale in 130 countries⁷ of the world (FAOSTat, 2018), making it available year-round due to different geographical locations and conditions of the producing areas (Figure 1).



(Source: <<https://www.tridge.com/intelligences/banana>>*edited)

Figure 1: Season of banana at main producing countries.

Data from the Rabobank, 2018⁸ and FAOSTat, 2018 displays that banana is the fruit with the highest exported volumes in the World (20.64 M ton) if compared to the top 10 fruit types by global production volume. Main producing countries are India, China, Indonesia, Brazil, Ecuador, the Philippines, Angola and Guatemala.

Therefore, the proposal for the amendment of the Standard for Bananas is consistent with the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* of the Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual, in particular the criterion:

- i. Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries; and
- ii. International and regional market potential.

5. Relevance to the Codex Strategic Objectives

The proposed amendment meets the criteria outlined in Goals 1 and 3 of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, which are:

Goal 1.2: Timely Codex response to emerging issues and the needs of members. Addressing this current issue as aforementioned stated in a timely manner enables Codex to respond effectively and expeditiously through the promotion of sound regulatory framework worldwide for foods entering international trade.

Goal 3.2: Support initiatives to enable the understanding and implementation/application of Codex standards. Increased use of Codex Standards is achieved by making the standard functional and user-friendly, provided it has a clear and direct scope. Effective response of the Codex Alimentarius, such as the proposed amendment, enables internationally harmonized efforts to provide inclusive documents (e.g., OECD Brochures) without dubious interpretation.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents as well as other Ongoing Work

This proposal is related to the existing Codex Standard for Bananas.

7. Identification of Requirement for Availability of Expert Scientific Advice

⁷ Countries exporting 10 metric tonnes and higher, 2016

⁸ <https://research.rabobank.com/publication-service/download/publication/token/hnJbkkCMFh3C9xnbMP5n>

Given that the expected changes are punctual and related to consistency improvement, no scientific advice is intended as necessary.

8. Identification of need for technical input to the Standard from external bodies

None.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of work

It is expected that the development of this standard would be conducted in one CCFFV session, the most, depending on the agreement reached by the Committee.

Annex to Appendix II**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE STANDARD FOR BANANAS (CXS 205-1997)****1. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE**

This Standard applies to commercial varieties of bananas grown from *Musa* spp. (~~AAA~~), of the *Musaceae* family, in the green state, to be supplied fresh to the consumer, after preparation and packaging. Bananas intended for cooking only (plantains) or for industrial processing are excluded. Varieties covered by this Standard are included in the Annex.

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON REVIEW OF EXISTING STANDARDS**(Submitted by the European Union)****Mixed Competence
Member States Vote**

In response to the request for comments, the European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to make the following comments:

Review of existing standards in order to ensure their alignment with the Standard Layout and consider necessary updates

CCFFV adopted a Standard Layout in 2017 that has been very helpful in the standards adopted since then. There are currently 41 standards for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, out of which 36 are not aligned with the current Standard Layout. As a result, traders and inspectors are faced with different requirements and are not able to take full advantage of the benefits achieved with the requirements in the Standard Layout.

The EUMS suggest that all standards drafted or revised prior to 2018 be aligned with the current Standard Layout.

In this context, a working group should check in each case whether the standard is still up-to-date in all its specific requirements and still corresponds to the production and trade conditions. For example, for the standard for papaya (CXS 183-1993), the provisions for the indication of the size in papaya do not correspond to the practice of the trade. Section 6.2.4 currently states:

- Size (size code or average weight in grams);
- Number of units (optional);

However, the industry usually only indicates the number of units and does not use the size code specified in the standard or a weight specification. The EUMS therefore propose to amend section 6.2.4 as follows:

“Size expressed in accordance with any one of the following methods:

- Count,
- Size code and range,
- Size range.”

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARD FOR FRESH CURRY LEAVES**(Submitted by India)****1. Purpose and scope**

The Purpose of the standard is to consider essential quality characteristics of fresh curry leaves to facilitate international trade. The scope of the work is to establish a worldwide standard for fresh curry leaves obtained from varieties (cultivars) of *Murraya koenigii* (L.) Sprengel of *Rutaceae* family, which must be supplied fresh to the consumer after proper cleaning and packaging. It does not apply to other forms of curry leaves such as dehydrated, powdered and dried products.

2. Relevance and timelines

Fresh curry leaves is used in vegetable cooking for its aromatic values. Curry leaves can be easily produced under arid and semi arid. It is a perennial crop. Fresh curry leaves (dark green colour) is harvested for consumption and trade.

Due to non availability of standard for fresh curry leaves and impediments in international trade, it is necessary to establish a standard covering the safety, quality and labelling requirements in order to have a reference that has been internationally agreed by consensus between the main producing and trading countries. The Codex Standard for fresh curry leaves will help to protect consumers' health and to promote fair trade practices in accordance with the different international agreements.

3. Main aspects to be covered

The standard will include characteristics relating to the freshness, leaf size, quality, contaminants and residues of agro chemicals, labelling and packaging. The most relevant items, which may be considered, are related to:

- a) Establish the minimum requirements of fresh curry leaves, which shall be complied with, independently from the quality class.
- b) Define the quality to classify fresh curry leaves in accordance with its characteristics.
- c) Establish the tolerance as regards quality and size that may be permitted in fresh curry leaves contained in a package.
- d) Include the provisions relating to uniformity of the packaged product and the package used.
- e) Include provisions for the labelling and marking in accordance with the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods.
- f) Include provisions for contaminants with reference to the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed.
- g) Include provisions for hygiene and handling with reference to the General Principles of Food Hygiene and other relevant codes of hygiene practice.

4. Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities**General criterion:**

Fresh curry leaves is grown and traded round the year and used in vegetable curry for enhancing aroma. Trading of fresh curry leaves is done according to its quality such as freshness, colour, texture, size and shape of the leaves. Developing an international standard for fresh curry leaves will protect consumers from fraudulent practices while facilitating international trade. India is in process of notification of fresh curry leave standard for the benefit of domestic and international consumers and the major producing/exporting countries.

Criteria applicable to commodity:**(a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries**

The volume of production, consumption and trade of each country for fresh curry leaves is not available. The produce, however, is used in cooking vegetable curries. The main producer and exporting countries are India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, etc. There has been considerable export of fresh curry leaves from India to Middle

Eastern countries and European Community. Curry leaves are exported in fresh form, generally air lifted as assorted vegetable consignment packed in CFB boxes.

The FAOSTAT and any other international organization do not compile production and trade data for fresh curry leaves as it is traded as assorted vegetables. Trade data is not compiled separately for fresh curry leaves by the exporting and importing countries. It is estimated to be 5 million USD trade during the year 2014-15 and 2015-16. Due to restrictions put by the major importing countries the exports of fresh curry leaves has stopped. India has started compiling production and trade data for fresh curry leaves.

(b) Diversification of national legislation and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade

India has developed grading and marking standards for fresh curry leaves and these standards are being notified. The fresh curry leave standard has been developed specifically considering the food safety compliance requirements of importing countries such as Middle East and EU countries.

(c) International or regional market potential

There is a great potential of international trade of fresh curry leaves. However, due to food safety concerns and unavailability of harmonized standards the trade of fresh curry leaves has come to a standstill.

(d) Amenability of the commodity to standardization

Taking into account that technical information is available and certain degree of harmonization at regional/international levels has already been initiated on certain aspects relevant to consumer's protection and trade facilitation complementary work to come up with an inclusive standard on this worldwide traded produce should be amenable.

(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards

There is no commodity standard covering fresh curry leaves. Therefore, the new work will enhance consumer protection and facilitate trade by establishing an internationally agreed quality standard covering minimum requirements, freshness, colour, shape, uniformity, packaging and other relevant quality requirements.

(f) Number of commodities, which would need separate standards

A single standard for fresh curry leaves will cover all varieties traded worldwide.

(g) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body

None, this new work will consider in formulating the Codex Standard.

5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives

The elaboration of a Codex Standard for fresh curry leaves is in line with the strategic objective to promote the maximum application of Codex Standards by countries in their national legislation and to facilitate international trade by protecting the health of the consumers. This proposal is relevant to Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, Goal 1 (Objective 1.1 & 1.2).

The new work will contribute to state the minimum quality requirements for fresh curry leaves for human consumption, different categories based on quality parameters and size with the purpose of protecting the consumer's health and achieving fair practices in the food trade.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

This is proposed as a new global standard and has no relation to any other existing Codex text on this item, except that the standard will make references to relevant safety standards and related texts developed by general subject committees.

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

There is no need foreseen for expert scientific advice.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies

There is no need of technical input from external bodies.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work

Development of the standard would be expected to take three sessions of CCFFV or less, depending upon relevant inputs and agreement from Members.

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR FRESH CURRY LEAVES

1. SCOPE

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for fresh curry leaves after preparation and packaging. When applied at stages following packaging, products may show in relation to the requirements of the standard:

- a slight lack of freshness and turgidity;
- a slight deterioration due to their development and tendency to perish.

The holder/seller of products may not display such products or offer them for sale, or deliver or market them in any manner other than in conformity with this standard. The holder/seller shall be responsible for observing such conformity.

2. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This Standard applies to commercial varieties of fresh curry leaves obtained from varieties (cultivars) of *Murraya koenigii* (L.) Sprengel of Rutaceae family, which must be supplied fresh to the consumer after proper cleaning and packaging. It does not apply to other forms such as dehydrated, powdered and dried curry leaves.

3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

3.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the fresh curry leaves must be:

- fresh in appearance;
- intact with stem/stalk;
- free of external moisture;
- properly drained, if washed;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste;
- sound; (produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded)
- clean, free of visible foreign matter;
- free from pests⁹ and damage caused by pests;

The development and condition of the fresh curry leaves must be such as to enable them to:

- withstand transport and handling, and
- arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

3.1.1 *Minimum maturity requirements*

The fresh curry leaves must be sufficiently developed without the leaves being woody.

3.2 CLASSIFICATION

Fresh curry leaves may be classified in three classes as defined below. Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated. When unclassified, the provisions for Class II requirements apply.

3.2.1 *“Extra” Class*

Fresh curry leaves must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type. They must be free from defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality and presentation in the package.

⁹ Provisions for pests and damage caused by pests apply without prejudice to the applicable plant protection rules applied by governments in line with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

5% by weight of fresh curry leaves not satisfying the requirements for the grade, but meeting the requirements for Class I grade.

3.2.2 Class I

Fresh curry leaves must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety and/or commercial type. The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- slightly damaged leaves, such as cracks, holes or tears
- slight defects in colouring.

10% by weight of fresh curry leaves not satisfying the requirements for the grade, but meeting the requirements for Class II grade.

3.2.2 Class II

This includes fresh curry leaves that do not qualify for inclusion in higher grades but satisfy the minimum requirements. The following defects may be allowed, provided the fresh curry leaves retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- damaged leaves, such as cracks, bruises, holes or tears
- defects in colouring
- slight lack of freshness
- slight black spots

10% by weight of fresh curry leaves not satisfying the requirements of the grade but meeting the minimum requirements.

4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

There is no sizing requirement for fresh curry leaves. The fresh curry leaves shall be uniform in one package.

5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

5.1 UNIFORMITY

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain fresh curry leaves of the same origin, variety or commercial type, quality, colour and size. The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

5.2 PACKAGING

Fresh curry leaves must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly. The materials used inside the package must be of food grade quality, clean and of food grade of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly of paper or stamps bearing trade specifications is allowed, provided the printing or labeling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Fresh curry leaves may be packed in each container in compliance with the *Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CXC 44-1995).

5.2.1 Description of Containers

The containers shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preserving of the fresh curry leaves. Packages must be free of all foreign matter and smell.

6. PROVISIONS CONCERNING MARKING OR LABELLING

6.1 CONSUMER PACKAGES

In addition to the requirements of the *General Standard for the Labeling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

6.1.1 Name of Produce

If the produce is not visible from the outside, each package shall be labelled as "Fresh Curry Leaves".

6.1.2 Origin of Produce

Country of origin¹⁰ and optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.

6.2 NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail Containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021).

7. FOOD ADDITIVES

No food additives are permitted in fresh curry leaves.

8. CONTAMINANTS

8.1 The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS193-1995).

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

9. HYGIENE

9.1 It is recommended that the produce 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), *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CXC 53-2003), and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

9.2 The produce 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* (CXG 21-1997).

¹⁰ The full or commonly used name should be indicated.