



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2

CX/CF 25/18/2

April 2025

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

Eighteenth Session

23-27 June 2025

Bangkok, Thailand

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (CAC) AND ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CCEXEC)

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

Standards and related texts adopted at Steps 8 and 5/8 of the Procedure, including other adoptions¹

1. The 47th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC47, 2024) agreed with the final adoption of the following standards (maximum levels) and related texts (codes of practice, sampling plan):
 - i. The maximum levels (MLs) for lead in spices at Step 5/8.
 - ii. The MLs for cadmium and lead in quinoa.
 - iii. The Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of ciguatera poisoning in foods, at Step 5/8, and congratulated CCCF on the expeditious work on this text, noting that the work was finalized ahead of schedule and only a year after CAC46 (2023) approved the new work.
 - iv. The revised sampling plan for methylmercury in fish as endorsed by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) (see paragraph 10).

Discontinuation

2. CAC47 discontinued work on MLs for lead in spices (dried flowers) and fresh culinary herbs (Appendix VI).

Extension of the timeline for completion of work

3. CAC47 endorsed the recommendation of CCEXEC86 to extend the timeline for completing the sampling plans for total aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in certain spices (dried chili pepper, nutmeg, and paprika) to 2025.

General matters

The model for future Codex work²

4. The 86th Session of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC86, 2024):
 - i. noted that, as the format of meetings continues to evolve, the document CX/EXEC 24/86/3 (Model for future Codex work) should be retained as a reference document, and periodic updates on the evolution of working mechanisms and identification of any challenges encountered that may require further consideration by CCEXEC, CAC or the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) should be provided through a working document prepared by the Codex Secretariat;
 - ii. noted the importance of working groups in progressing the work of Codex between sessions, and recommended that the Codex Secretariat provide clarity on the use of virtual tools therein, including a clear distinction between virtual working group meetings and webinars, which should then be established and consistently applied;

¹ REP24/CAC47, paras. 63, 68, 69, 70

² REP24/EXEC86, para. 61; REP24/CAC47, para. 238(ii)

- iii. encouraged more Members to take leadership roles in committee working groups to ensure their sustainability and inclusiveness, while recognizing the challenges these Members may face, and further encouraged the Codex Secretariat and experienced working group chairs to proactively seek engagement of other Members and provide guidance and support; and
- iv. reminded Codex committees of the importance of good work management practices and prioritization of work to avoid excessive establishment of Electronic Working Groups (EWGs) and the related burden on all concerned and ensure that agenda items can be adequately discussed within the available plenary session time.

Guidelines for new work proposals³

5. CCEXEC87 (2024) welcomed the Codex Secretariat's plans to develop practical guidelines for Members on the development of new work proposals and proposed that:
 - i. the guidelines should encourage the development of group commodity standards and the drafting of commodity standards to facilitate future enlargement of their scope by adding similar products, and a review of standards that may have been developed by other organizations for commodities for which there is established international trade; and
 - ii. the Codex Secretariat engages with Members through the forthcoming FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to build awareness of the development of these guidelines and the Handbook on EWGs and seek input on issues that Members would wish to see included in these guidelines.
6. CAC47 welcomed the publication of *the Codex EWGs handbook*⁴ and encouraged its use.

Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031⁵

7. CAC47 adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 as contained in Appendix IX of REP24/CAC47. The Commission noted that the Codex Secretariat would present a monitoring framework at CCEXEC88 (2025) for review, and that comments on the revised version of the monitoring framework would then be sought from Members and Observers through a circular letter (CL) to submit a final version to CAC48 (2025) for approval.

Monitoring the use and impact of Codex texts⁶

8. CAC47 recalled the ongoing work on building a mechanism to monitor the use and impact of Codex texts, including an annual survey, case studies, and collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO), and thanked Members for participating in the 2024 Codex survey.
9. The reports of the Codex survey 2023⁷ on the use and impact of Codex texts, and the use and implementation of Codex, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) standards⁸ have been published.

MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES

MATTERS FOR ACTION

CODEx COMMITTEE ON METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING (CCMAS)

Endorsement of the Sampling Plan for Methylmercury in Fish⁹

10. CCMAS43 (2024) endorsed the Sampling Plan with a revised definition of the "Decision Rule," i.e., *the lot is accepted if the test result is less than or equal to the Codex maximum level (ML); otherwise, the lot is rejected* and agreed to integrate the numeric performance criteria for methylmercury and total mercury in the sampling plan into the numeric performance criteria table developed in the fish and fishery product workable package for inclusion in the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999) (see paragraph 1(iv)).

³ REP24/EXEC87, para. 82

⁴ REP24/CAC47, para. 22(ii); <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/aee7614e-d630-4665-a98c-74adcc4d3040>

⁵ REP24/CAC47, para. 216

⁶ REP24/CAC47, para. 209

⁷ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/e57dc773-117b-4a37-aa70-2cdb8b3339c2>

⁸ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/d93faf09-2ecd-4ee5-89e7-d39412baaf7c>

⁹ REP24/MAS43, para. 12, Appendix II

Examples of methods that can meet numeric performance criteria for aflatoxins in certain cereals and cereal-based products, including foods for infants and young children¹⁰

11. CCMAS43 agreed to:
 - i. recommend that CCCF to include EN 17641 as an example method in the numeric performance criteria table contained in the sampling plan for aflatoxins in certain cereals and cereal-based products, including foods for infants and young children in the *General Standard for Contaminants in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995) with the following footnote:

The sampling plan specifies a test portion size of 25.0 g, and EN 17641 uses a test portion size of 5.0 g. No alternative method was found that meets the performance criteria. Therefore, EN 17641 is included as an example method, as it is the best possible method at this time. The smaller test portion size may introduce additional variation in the test result.
 - ii. request CCCF to consider transferring all methods numeric performance criteria in sampling plans in CXS 193 to CXS 234 once the review of the numeric performance criteria exercise in CCCF is completed.
12. CCMAS43 agreed to advise CCCF of the recommendation to include an example method that meets the numeric performance criteria table for determining MLs for aflatoxins in certain cereals and cereal-based products in the related sampling plans in CXS193.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (CCLAC)

Keynote address: "Prevention and reduction of contaminants in food"¹¹

13. Following the discussion of the keynote address, CCLAC23 (2024) recognized the importance of addressing contaminants in food and noted the importance of applying the Codex risk analysis principles on this topic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. CCCF is invited to:
 - (i) note the matters for information referred by CAC, CCEXEC (paragraphs 1 – 9) and other subsidiary bodies (paragraphs 10 and 13);
 - (ii) encourage:
 - (a) more Members to take leadership roles in committee working groups; and
 - (b) Members and Observers to provide input to the monitoring framework for the Codex Strategic Plan 2026 – 2031; and
 - (iii) consider the matters for action arising from CCMAS43 (paragraphs 11 – 12)

¹⁰ REP24/MAS, para. 16

¹¹ REP24/LAC23, para. 19 (ii)