

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR SCH STANDARDS

1. Background

1.1 The Second Session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH²¹) noted that development a glossary of terms would allow defining the terms used in the standards for spices and culinary herbs; and that these would facilitate the development of standards for spices and culinary herbs.

1.2 CCSCH³² agreed to maintain this document as an internal reference tool to be used as required when drafting standards and noted that in no way should the document contravene the Procedural Manual especially regarding existing Codex definitions such as food additives and contaminants.

2. Introduction

2.1 Codex standards are developed to facilitate international trade and food safety; therefore their provisions must have universal understanding and acceptance. Hence, a Glossary of Terms for CCSCCH Standards comprise words and/or phrases and their meanings/interpretations drawn from sources including existing Codex standards, international SCH trade standards/terms and government regulations. Some words and/or phrases may have different meanings beyond the literal one, the meanings proposed here are intended exclusively for CSH trade.

2.2 The proposed glossary is not finite and can be amended. Also, the meanings can be further tailored to reflect the characteristics of specific SCH commodity being standardized.

Glossary of Terms

Word	Definition
Blemished	A unit affected by surface or internal discoloration, pathological injury, insect injury, or by other means to the extent that the appearance is affected.
Cracked	A coarse or rough grind size typically associated with minimal crush grinding of a whole spice resulting in larger, grainy, discernable fragments.
Chemical Characteristics	The measurable chemical composition of a product at a desired stage- that impact color and/or flavor.
Consumer Ready Packaging	Any packaging material appropriately labeled with the product name and designed to meet labeling legislation in the country of sale. Such labeling may include package size, nutrition facts, point-of-sale coding, expiration or use by dates, etc.
Contamination	Intentional or unintentional addition of Extraneous material, foreign material, (e.g. dirt, hair, excreta, mold etc.) to a product rendering it unfit for the original intended purpose.

¹ REP16/SCH paragraph 55-56

² REP17/ACH Paragraph 70

Word	Definition
– Animal Contamination	Contamination of products by animals usually results from either gnawing or defilement by excreta, urine and hair/feathers/fur. Whole rodent pellets, bird droppings, and other pieces of animal dung are typically found.
– Extraneous Material Contamination	Contamination by objectionable valueless parts of the raw plant material and other foreign plant material may contaminate the product and require special attention for removal. This general category is intended to include all other miscellaneous objectionable matter not reported in the other specific categories
– Foreign Matter contamination	Contamination by objectionable foreign matter such as sticks, stones, burlap bagging, or cigarette butts may enter the product at various points during its production, transit, and storage because of improper preparation or handling. This general category is intended to include all other miscellaneous objectionable matter not indicated in the other specific categories
Culinary Herbs	Culinary herbs are distinguished from vegetables in that, like spices, they are used in small amounts and provide flavor rather than substance to food. They maybe annual, biennial, or perennial plants.
Economic Adulteration	Intentional failure to remove inedible materials from the finished product, the intentional addition or substitution of cheaper food or ingredient to a product, the omission or removal of any valuable constituent such as essential oils, the concealing an inferiority, or the addition of a substance to increase bulk or weight.
Essential Composition	Quantitative and qualitative physical or chemical composition attributes or markers (i.e. basil essential oil in dried basil) that render the product identifiable as a standard spice and/or or culinary herb product.
Extraneous [Vegetable] Matter	Vegetative matter associated with the plant from which the product originates-but is not accepted as part of the final product. Or, The presences of plant parts that are not the required such as stems or seeds in a leaf product. These are harmless vegetative matter, with limits on the amount acceptable in the final product.
Food Additives	Any substance that may safely be added to the spice or culinary herb under conditions of a good manufacturing practice. The amount used does not exceed the amount reasonably required to accomplish its intended physical, nutritive, or technical effect in food. Any substance intended for use in or on food is of appropriate food grade and is prepared and handled as a food ingredient.
Foreign Matter	Any visible objectionable foreign detectable matter or material not usually associated with the natural components of the spice plant; such as sticks, stones, burlap bagging, metal etc.
Foreign smell and/or taste	Any aroma or flavor that is not characteristic of the product in its natural or treated form.
Further Processing	Activities necessary to transform spices and herbs from raw agricultural commodities into finished, ready-to-eat product for direct consumption by individuals or use by commercial enterprises including catering purposes or in formulated food products. These steps may include: Cleaning, sorting, sifting, grinding, grading, packaging into consumer ready packaging and/or, bulk containers which are intended for repacking into consumer size containers.
Harvest	The act or process of gathering agricultural crops
Industrial Processing	The application of physical or chemical processes that substantially modifies or transforms a product from its original state into other products such as the extraction of essential oils or other usable component from the spice. It excludes the blending of spices.

Word	Definition
Infection	A condition due to the growth of an organism in a host, (e.g., rot or decay, visible mold mycelia).
Ingredient	Any substance, including a food additive, used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and present in the final product although possibly in a modified form
Insect Damage	Evidence of insect feeding, frass or insect fragments that detracts from product appearance, overall quality and/or safety.
Insect Defiled	Spices or Culinary Herbs that are partially eaten by insects or contaminated with insect excreta, frass and/or webbing.
Insect Infestation	<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Presence of living and/or dead pest colonies (insects, mites, or others) at any stage of development (adult, nymph, larva, egg, etc.). Excreta, webbing and frass, insect tunnels or evidence of surface feeding, to whole insects in the product.</p> <p>Option 2:</p> <p>The presence of any live or dead life cycle stages of insects in a host product or evidence of their presence (i.e., excreta, cast skins, chewed product residues, urine, webbing and frass, insect tunnels or evidence of surface feeding, to whole insects in the product.); or the establishment of an active breeding population.</p>
Mildew	Superficial growth on an organic matter or living plant by fungi. Or a downy mildew which is a fungus infection that causes yellow-brown spots on the leaves
Moisture Content	The total quantity of water present in a product at various stages of processing determined using standardized analytical methods appropriate to the form of spice.
Mouldy	Evidenced by the presence of mould (mould hyphae and/or spore forming structures) that are visible to the unaided eye. Microscopic examination may be used to confirm the presence of characteristic hyphal filaments and fruiting structures.
Minor Ingredient	The quantity of a spice or culinary herb that becomes a component of food as a result of it's used in the manufacturing or processing and does not exceed the amount reasonably required to accomplish its intended physical, nutritional, or other technical effect in food.
Non-retail container	Any container used for shipping or storage of an agricultural product that is not used in the retail display or sale of the product.
Pest Damage	Refers to the condition of the product which shows the evidence of the pest habitation or feeding, (e.g., tunneling, gnawing, egg cases, etc.).
Physical Characteristics	Measurable physical traits of a product such as color, size (physical or mass), texture (hard, soft, rough and smooth), shape and /or physical functionality within a further processed formulated food.
Post-Harvest	Activities that occurs after harvest, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drying • field holding or farm storage of the harvested crop • cleaning, sorting, grading, packaging • transportation by truck, ship, rail, etc.
Powder	An extremely fine grind size also referred to as flour (ex. Mustard flour) associated with forceful and prolonged grinding where physically discernable spice fragments cannot be detected in the finished product.
Quality Factors	Physical, chemical or functional attributes associated with a defined level of product quality.

Word	Definition
Rancid	A condition where a product has a disagreeable odor or taste of decomposed oils or fat. Some products may display a yellow, dark, or oily appearance, a bitter taste and a stale odor.
Rot	Plant tissue that is visibly decomposed, usually discolored with disagreeable odors and taste. The plant tissue has been invaded and is being digested by microorganisms. Although rot can also be caused by bacteria and yeasts, these organisms are secondary invaders. Molds are the primary organisms of decomposition and the presence of mold hyphae in the tissue is used to confirm rot.
Rubbed	The application of shear force (i.e. between metal plates or stone mill) to minimally crush or roughly separate a whole or fragments into smaller pieces into desired granulation size.
Spice	A dried seed, fruit, root, bark, berry, bud, or vegetable substance primarily used for flavoring or coloring.
Styles/Presentation	The acceptable manner or forms in which the final product is presented in and/or accepted at the point of sale.
Sufficiently developed	The physiological stage of development at which spices and culinary herbs possess the necessary characteristics for its intended use by consumers.
Water Insoluble Inorganic Matter	A contaminant of the finished product that consists of fine grit that originates from the sand, dirt, and stones that contaminate the raw agricultural product at the time of harvest.
Whole	Something that is complete/entire and not lacking parts- However, in the spices, the original intact form of the useable portion of the plant with or without shells, stems or other extraneous matter latter removed if not desired for trade.
Whole or Equivalent Insect	A whole insect, separate head, or body portions with head attached
Worthless	Any condition where the product has been affected by organisms or the environment that it has no food value.