

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
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Organization

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TO: - Codex Contact Points
- Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretariat,
Codex Alimentarius Commission
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON PACKING MEDIA FOR PICKLED VEGETABLES

DEADLINE: 31 July 2014

COMMENTS: To:

Secretariat,
Codex Alimentarius Commission,
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme,
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153
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BACKGROUND

Pickled fruits and vegetables - Packing media for pickled vegetables

1. The 25th Session of the Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (October 2010) noted that provisions for packing media for pickled fruits were in conformity with the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Fruits (CAC/GL 51-2003). However, in view of the discontinuation of work on the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Vegetables due to the inclusion of specific provisions for packing media in the Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables (CODEX STAN 297-2009), the CCPFV agreed to request comments on whether specific provisions for packing media for pickled vegetables should be developed for the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables (CODEX STAN 260-2007) or whether provisions for packing media as they stand in section 3.1.3 of the Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables could apply¹.
2. The 26th CCPFV (October 2012) noted that comments submitted generally (in reply to CL 2010/52-PFV) supported packing media provisions for canned vegetables as applicable for pickled vegetables. However, in view of time constraints, it was not possible to discuss these proposals in order to make a recommendation for adoption by the Commission as a consequential amendment to the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables.
3. In view of this, the Committee agreed to seek comments on packing media for pickled vegetables based on the provisions for packing media for canned vegetables and comments submitted in reply to CL 2010/52-PFV for consideration by the 27th CCPFV.²
4. Proposals based on the abovementioned comments and considerations by the Codex Secretariat are presented in Annexes I and II and explained below.

¹ REP11/PFV, para 122.

² REP12/PFV, paras 129-132.

Annex I – Alignment of the provisions for packing media for pickled vegetables with the provisions for packing media for canned vegetables

5. As a result of the discontinuation of the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Vegetables, the CCPFV may decide that provisions for packing media for canned vegetables are applicable to pickled vegetables. Consequently, provisions for packing media in section 3.1.3 of the Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables can be included in section 3.1.2 of the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables. In addition, labeling provisions should also be adjusted following the provisions in section 8.2.3 of the Standard for Certain Vegetables which will also be consistent with provisions in section 2.1 (d) of the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables (see Annex I).

6. It should however be noted that the canned vegetables covered by the Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables are those primarily packaged in packing media made of water and salt (brine) to which other ingredients could be added as indicated in section 3.1.3.2 of this Standard. The Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables indicates in section 2.1(d) that they could be packed with packing medium that could be e.g. brine, oil or acidic media such as vinegar. This fact is reflected in Annex I, however the Committee should determine whether other permitted ingredients suitable to brine (canned vegetables) are also applicable when using other packing media such as oil or vinegar (pickled fruits and vegetables).

7. A comment presented at the 26th CCPFV raised the issue of addition of food additive sweeteners looking at similar condiments available on the market. In this regard, it is noted that the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables contains provisions for certain sweeteners in section 4.9 (food additives) where these products are usually listed or referred to the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA). The Codex Secretariat notes that if food additive sweeteners are added to the product as part of the composition of the packing media, they can still be listed in the section on food additives for consistency with the approach taken in Codex commodity standards where additives are not listed as ingredients but have a special section devoted to them. The Committee is invited to consider this matter.

Annex II – Alignment of the provisions of packing media for pickled vegetables with the provisions for packing media for canned vegetables including the inclusion of other permitted ingredients as part of the packing media formulation

8. Another comment submitted to the 26th CCPFV referred to the combination of provisions for other permitted ingredients (section 3.1.3, Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables) and provisions for packing media for canned vegetables (section 3.1.3, Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables). Following this proposal, the reference to the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Fruits could be removed as regular or concentrated fruit juices, foodstuff with sweetening properties such as sugars (including syrups) and honey are already listed in both the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables and the Guidelines. For consistency with the Guidelines, nectars should also be included in the other permitted ingredients or packing media composition of the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables.

9. The Codex Secretariat notes that if all or some of the products listed as other ingredients in section 3.1.3 of the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables are added as part of the packing media formulation there may be merit in reorganizing sections 3.1.2 (packing media) and 3.1.3 (other permitted ingredients) in this Standard as shown in Annex II. Whether the addition of sugars, syrups, honey, juices and/or nectars is listed as other permitted ingredients or as part of the packing media composition, there is still a need to reference the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Fruits if not under the section 3 (other composition and quality factors), then under the labelling section (section 8) to define the type of syrup as the Guidelines provide information relevant to essential composition and also labelling.

10. Other standards that carry packing media provisions like canned stone fruits, canned citrus fruits, canned pears and canned pineapples still differentiate between packing media and other permitted ingredients as in these products other ingredients may be added separately following the characteristics proper to their elaboration. In these standards however, the reference to sugars, honey, syrups, fruit juices and/or nectars are not listed as other permitted ingredients since they are part of the packing media formulation contained in the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Fruits. This approach has been taken in the alternative proposal in Annex II.

11. For canned vegetables, such as certain canned vegetables or preserved tomatoes, as there are no general guidelines for packing media, provisions for other permitted ingredients and packing media are indicated separately and this may follow the characteristics proper to the elaboration of these products where not all the ingredients that could be added may become part of the formulation of the packing media. The Standard for Canned Bamboo Shoots (CODEX STAN 241-2007) however indicates that ingredients in addition to bamboo shoots are normally part of the packing media formulation and therefore the other permitted ingredients refer to the packing media as may be the case for pickled vegetables and reflected in the alternative proposal in Annex II.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

12. Codex members and interested international organizations wishing to comment on packing media provisions for pickled vegetables are invited to consider the proposals put forward in Annexes I and II in light of the information, comments and consideration made in the paragraphs above including any other proposals that may assist the Committee in the resolution of this matter so that the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables could be corrected in view of the discontinuation of work on the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Vegetables.

ANNEX I**PROPOSAL TO ALIGN THE PACKING MEDIA FOR PICKLED VEGETABLES
WITH THE PROVISIONS FOR PACKING MEDIA FOR CANNED VEGETABLES****CODEX STANDARD FOR PICKLED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (CODEX STAN 260-2007)****2.1 PRODUCT DEFINITION**

Pickled fruits and vegetables is the product:

(d) packed with or without a suitable liquid packing medium (e.g., oil, brine or acidic media such as vinegar) as specified in Section 3.1.2, with ingredients appropriate to the type and variety of pickled product, to ensure an equilibrium pH of less than 4.6.

3 ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS**3.1 COMPOSITION****3.1.1 Basic Ingredients**

Fruits and vegetables and liquid packing medium when appropriate, as defined in Sections 2.1(a), 2.1(d) and 3.1.2, in combination with one or more of the other permitted ingredients listed in Section 3.1.3.

3.1.2 Packing Media

3.1.2.1 For pickled fruits, in accordance with the Guidelines on Packing Media for Canned Fruits (CAC/GL 51-2003).

3.1.2.2 For pickled vegetables, in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) Basic Ingredients

Water, and if necessary salt or oil or acidic media such as vinegar.

(b) Other Permitted Ingredients

Packing media for pickled vegetables may contain ingredients subject to labelling requirements of Section 8 and may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) foodstuff with sweetening properties such as sugars (including syrups) as defined in the Standard for Sugars (CODEX STAN 212-1999), honey as defined in the Standard for Honey (CODEX STAN 12-1981) or juices and/or nectars as defined in the General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (CODEX STAN 247-2005);
- (2) aromatics plants, spices or extracts thereof, seasoning (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for spices or culinary herbs);
- (3) vinegar;
- (4) oil (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for vegetable oils);
- (5) tomato puree (in accordance with the Standard for Processed Tomato Concentrates CODEX STAN 57-1981).
- (6) other ingredients as appropriate

3.1.3 Other Permitted Ingredients

- (1) cereal grains (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for cereals);
- (2) dried fruits (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for dried fruits);
- (3) malt extract;
- (4) nuts (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for dry produce);
- (5) pulses (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for pulses);
- (6) sauce (e.g., fish sauce);
- (7) soy sauce;
- (8) other ingredients as appropriate.

8. LABELLING

8.2.3 The name of the product shall include the indication of the packing medium as set out in Section 2.1 (d).

ANNEX II

PROPOSAL TO ALIGN THE PACKING MEDIA FOR PICKLED VEGETABLES WITH THE PROVISIONS FOR PACKING MEDIA FOR CANNED VEGETABLES AND TO MERGE THE PROVISIONS OF OTHER PERMITTED INGREDIENTS WITH THE PROVISIONS FOR PACKING MEDIA CODEX STANDARD FOR PICKLED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (CODEX STAN 260-2007)

2.1 PRODUCT DEFINITION

Pickled fruits and vegetables is the product:

(d) packed with or without a suitable liquid packing medium (e.g., oil, brine or acidic media such as vinegar) as specified in Section 3.1.2, with ingredients appropriate to the type and variety of pickled product, to ensure an equilibrium pH of less than 4.6.

3 ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 COMPOSITION

3.1.1 Basic Ingredients

Fruits and vegetables and liquid packing medium when appropriate, as defined in Sections 2.1(a), 2.1(d) and 3.1.2, [*in combination with one or more of the other permitted ingredients listed in Section 3.1.3*].

3.1.2 Packing Media

3.1.2.1 For pickled fruits, in accordance with the Guidelines on Packing Media for Canned Fruits (CAC/GL 51-2003).

3.1.2.2 For pickled vegetables, in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) **Basic Ingredients**

Water, and if necessary salt or oil or acidic media such as vinegar.

(b) **Other Permitted Ingredients**

Packing media for pickled vegetables may contain ingredients subject to labelling requirements of Section 8 and may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) foodstuff with sweetening properties such as sugars (including syrups) as defined in the Standard for Sugars (CODEX STAN 212-1999), honey as defined in the Standard for Honey (CODEX STAN 12-1981) or juices and/or nectars as defined in the General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (CODEX STAN 247-2005) and;
- (2) aromatics plants, spices or extracts thereof, seasoning (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for spices or culinary herbs);
- (3) vinegar;
- (4) oil (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for vegetable oils);
- (5) tomato puree (in accordance with the Standard for Processed Tomato Concentrates CODEX STAN 57-1981);
- (6) *cereal grains* (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for cereals);
- (7) *dried fruits* (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for dried fruits);
- (8) *malt extract*;
- (9) *nuts* (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for dry produce);
- (10) *pulses* (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for pulses);
- (11) *sauce* (e.g., *fish sauce*);
- (12) *soy sauce*;
- (13) other ingredients as appropriate.

[3.1.3 Other Permitted Ingredients

This section is left in case the products (of some of them) identified as "other permitted ingredients" in section 3.1.3 of the Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables, which are now included under the packing media composition (in Italics), could be incorporated again under this section if they are usually added separately from the packing media formulation.]

8. LABELLING

8.2.3 The name of the product shall include the indication of the packing medium as set out in Section 2.1(d).