JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

40th Session
Geneva, Switzerland, 17 - 22 July 2017

REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF
THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
15 -19 May 2017
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INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE) held its ninth session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 15 to 19 May 2017 in cooperation with the Government of the Islamic Republic Iran. The Session was chaired by Dr Mohammad Hossein Shojaee Aliabadi, Senior Scientific Advisor of the Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of the Islamic Republic of Iran (ISIRI). The session was attended by 13 Member countries, six Observer countries, one Observer Member organisation (European Union), four observer organisations and one special Observer country (Palestine). The list of participants is given in Appendix I.

OPENING¹

2. Mrs Nayyerh Piroozbakht, President of ISIRI, opened the meeting. She noted that, in the light of global population growth and the efforts of the international community to increase life expectancy, it was ever more important to control the quality of food so as to protect the health and safety of consumers in all countries. Over recent years, environmental pollution had become a cause for great concern among humankind. It was incumbent on Codex member countries to pioneer the production and distribution of eco-friendly organic products, reduce the use of pesticides and preservatives, and improve food-processing techniques.

3. Dr Renata Clarke, Head, Food Safety and Quality Unit, FAO; Dr Soren Madsen, Technical Officer, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office; Mrs Awilo Ochieng Pernet, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission; Ms Annamaria Bruno, Senior Food Standards Officer, Codex Secretariat, also addressed the meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)²

4. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the session with addition of the following matters under Agenda Item 12 “Other Business” subject to the availability of time:
   - general requirements for halal products;
   - development of a regional standard for processed cheese;
   - development of a regional standard for maamoul;
   - communication with Palestine.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON FOOD AUTHENTICITY/FOOD INTEGRITY (Agenda Item 2)³

5. The Representative of WHO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, introduced the item and explained that the new practice of inviting a leading scholar to deliver a keynote address had been instituted across all six FAO/WHO RCCs as part of the revitalisation process; such addresses sought to stimulate open debate on a topic of particular relevance to and importance in the region, and to help build high-level political awareness of the importance of Codex issues and the support necessary for Codex work.

6. The Chair introduced the topic “Food Authenticity/Food Integrity” as well as the keynote speaker, Dr Christopher Elliott of Queens University, Belfast, United Kingdom.

7. Dr Elliott addressed the Committee, recalling the unique potential of Codex to contribute to the crosscutting problem of food authenticity, integrity and fraud. He recalled his experiences working with the Government of the United Kingdom to review systems following a high-profile food integrity crisis, which resulted in recommendations for the establishment of a National Food Crime Prevention Framework. His presentation focused on the pervasive and multifaceted nature of the forms and impacts of food fraud, stressing how it affected everyone everywhere.

8. No country was immune to food fraud, which could manifest in many ways. A very wide range of food ingredients, commodities and processed foods were vulnerable to fraud. However, the more complex the supply chain, the greater the number of points of vulnerability to fraud within it. There was a need to develop mechanisms to share information locally, nationally and internationally on food fraud for analysis by key stakeholders. There was also a strong need for harmonisation of definitions around food fraud and food integrity to allow strong legislation to be developed and implemented. Detecting food fraud analytically was highly complex and required a wide range of techniques.

¹ CRD01 (Speeches given at the Opening Ceremony)
² CX/NE 17/09/01(REV)
³ CX/NE 17/09/02

Codex standards and related texts mentioned in this report can be found on the Codex website under “Standards”. Other relevant Codex texts mentioned in this report can be found under “Procedures and Strategies”.
The need for portable, low-cost screening techniques followed by more complex confirmatory analysis was clear. However, testing alone was not enough; robust traceability systems and fit-for-purpose food-fraud audits were also essential requirements to build a system that would not only detect fraud but prevent it from occurring. With so many food ingredients, commodities and processed foods available in the global marketplace, a risk-based approach was needed to determine priorities, which may vary from country to country, and as a function of events, such as the occurrence of crop failures.

9. Following the presentation, the Committee participated in an interactive discussion facilitated by the Codex Secretariat, and agreed on the following recommendations:

a) Strengthen national food control systems:
   i. Strong national food control systems were at the heart of detecting and addressing food fraud. Examples from national systems were given.
   ii. Robust traceability systems were important for detecting fraudulent foods throughout the food chain, including both domestic and international trade. The testing of block-chain technology developed in the finance sector was under way to determine its applicability in this regard.
   iii. A strong legislative framework with deterrent penalties was essential.
   iv. National strategic plans to identify and address food fraud with audits and traceability were a useful tool.
   v. All countries should have the capacity to test at the first tier then send samples to reference laboratories/centres of excellence for further confirmation since testing for food fraud could be expensive. This could be an appropriate activity to coordinate at the regional level.
   vi. Identification of fraud in processed foods was complex and its early detection in supply chains essential.
   vii. Better coordination with enforcement authorities could contribute to countering fraud through strengthened border checks and import controls, including for storage and shipping.

b) Take a risk-based approach:
   i. Identify (including through foresight/forecasting and mass-balance checks) and prioritise commodities that were most vulnerable to food fraud.
   ii. Assess specific food-safety risks caused by fraudulent activities in these commodities, for example in terms of levels of pesticide residues and/or the use of non-permitted pesticides.
   iii. Assess specific food-quality risks caused by fraudulent activities in these commodities, in particular the impact on nutrition of vulnerable, high-risk groups such as infants and children.

c) Share information:
   i. Share information on food fraud.
   ii. Use existing information-exchange systems and explore further how these might be used to share information on food fraud.

d) Raise awareness and consider ethical and legislative dimensions:
   i. Food fraud and integrity could be approached from an ethical point of view, working with producers, regulators and consumers to build motivation for a cross-sectoral, comprehensive approach to tackle these issues.
   ii. Develop an international instrument on the illicit trafficking in food products could be considered.

10. The Committee agreed that the need to address food fraud and food authenticity/food integrity was among the critical and emerging needs of the region but should be addressed holistically through the entire Codex system. There was therefore a need to explore how this issue could be taken into account in the new Codex strategic plan.

11. Work was under way in CCFICS to address food authenticity/food integrity. Authenticity/integrity/fraud issues could also be addressed through labelling (CCFL), analytical methods of analysis (CCMAS) and the possible amendment of the Code of Ethics (CCGP).
FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SITUATION IN COUNTRIES OF THE REGION (Agenda Item 3.1)\(^4\)

PRIORITISATION OF THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ADDRESS THEM (Agenda Item 3.2)\(^5\)

12. The Representative of FAO recalled that the survey on critical and emerging issues in the Near East Region was part of the revitalisation initiative, and highlighted that all five other RCCs had already completed similar exercises. It was a vehicle for identifying issues demanding an immediate response (critical) and ones that may require attention in the future (emerging), and thereby ensuring that the Committee’s agenda focused on what mattered to its members. Recognising the degree of overlap between critical and emerging issues identified, the Representative highlighted the three most frequently cited issues as food contamination, weak national food control systems and climate change. The Representative of WHO noted the low response rate to the questionnaire and invited the Committee to discuss the priorities identified in the survey. The Chair also invited the Committee to discuss the relevance of the issues identified and to consider any follow-up action that may be needed.

**Discussion**

13. There was consensus that the two key issues most important to the member countries of the region were food contamination and weak national food control system infrastructure. One delegation raised the additional issue of food additives permitted in food for children, while two further delegations advised the Codex Secretariat that they would submit further comments in due course to make the outcome of the exercise more comprehensive and valuable. The Special Observer of Palestine mentioned that the functioning of its food control system faced major problems including the absence of control across borders and unique border-control problems.

**Conclusion**

14. The Committee noted that:

i. contaminants and national food control system infrastructure were the main issues of concern to the region; and
ii. two member countries would submit further information for consideration under this item.

**Online platform for information sharing on food safety control systems**

15. The Representative of FAO, on behalf of FAO and WHO, introduced item and explained that the primary use and purpose of the platform was to facilitate information exchange among member countries on food-control and food-safety issues, replacing a previous circular letter on the same topic. Country information collected could also be used by FAO and WHO when implementing capacity-development activities and identifying needs. The Representative highlighted that the platform’s success depended on member countries actively uploading and updating the information on the platform.

16. The Representative drew the attention of the Committee to two areas of information in the platform: (i) food law and regulations, which countries would subsequently check and update as necessary; and (ii) part F, which included a series of questions to which the information provided in response would be handled confidentially.

17. The Representative encouraged countries to upload their information to enhance the usefulness and sustainability of the platform.

18. Members were asked to provide comments and feedback on the prototype platform, in particular: (i) whether the platform was useful and fit for purpose; (ii) ease of sharing information; (iii) suitability of existing questions and on the need to include additional questions; and (iv) suggestions for other improvements.

**Discussion**

19. Several members requested clarification of the purpose of gathering information on laboratories and with whom it would be shared in order to help them determine what information would be relevant to provide. The Representative of FAO reiterated that the purpose of the exercise was to build a knowledge bank for use by the Committee members themselves and the range of stakeholders within their countries that may be interested in such information, from private-sector operators to other international partners; there was also a regional cooperation dimension whereby a member would be able to access information about where in neighbouring countries certain laboratory capacities could be accessed. Such information-sharing would also assist FAO, WHO and other United Nations partners in targeting and planning capacity-building efforts.

\(^4\) CX/NE 17/09/03; CX/NE 17/09/03-Add.1

\(^5\) CX/NE 17/09/04
20. Noting that the new platform was not accessible in Arabic, members reiterated the need to make FAO/WHO tools and information, especially under newly developed initiatives, available in the Arabic language in order to facilitate the fuller and broader participation of members from the Near East Region. The Representative of FAO clarified that inputs were not translated, thereby underscoring that members’ responses would be available to the broader Codex community only in the original language of submission. Taking into account that translation would be given strong consideration, the Representative of FAO noted that there were limited resources to invest in Arabic translation.

21. Members further requested FAO to improve the functionality of the platform (e.g. printable forms) to facilitate coordinated inputs across the relevant stakeholders in the respective countries. The Representative of FAO agreed to seek in further developing the platform to improve its functionalities for printing and sharing its contents, including blank and completed online submission forms, so as to facilitate participation by enabling the sharing of information with all relevant stakeholders within countries.

**Conclusion**

22. The Committee noted that FAO and WHO would take into account all the comments made in the review and further development of the platform, in particular with regard to translation into Arabic.

**USE OF CODEX STANDARDS IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 4)**

23. The Codex Secretariat recalled that this item was on the agenda of all six RCCs and that an online electronic survey via SurveyMonkey, developed jointly with FAO and WHO, had been used to enhance the collection of data from countries on their use of Codex standards, allowing for easier data analysis and representation.

24. The Secretariat explained that the survey had focused on standards that were widely known and representative for their respective categories, i.e. (i) numerical standards (MRLs for pesticides in food and feed, MLs for food additives, MLs for contaminants in food and feed); (ii) general subject standards for labelling of pre-packaged foods (GSLPF) and general principles of food hygiene.

25. The Secretariat further informed the Committee that the response rate, at over 80 percent, was the highest ever to questions on this matter.

**Discussion**

26. The Codex Secretariat presented the analysis of the survey results and invited the Committee members to note the outcome of the analysis and provide feedback on specific aspects of the survey.

*Format and approach*

27. Members underscored the need for a tool that allowed for the printing of information to be uploaded. The current tool did not allow for the questionnaire to be disseminated to all national stakeholders, which was essential for a coordinated, complete reply to the survey.

*Use of results*

28. Members expressed the view that, while potentially useful to members, the current information was incomplete and should not be made available for public use. The information could be kept for internal use by the Codex Secretariat.

*Scope of next survey*

29. Members expressed the need to address the additional issues of: (i) the use of labelling to address issues such as food fraud; and (ii) National Codex Committee (NCCs).

*General issues*

30. Members explained that difficulties arose in adapting Codex standards to their national needs and that having access to Codex standards in the Arabic language was important in this exercise. Members highlighted further difficulties with numeric standards, e.g. MRLs for pesticides. Members noted that there were instances where national or regional standards deviated from Codex standards due to the different requirements of the countries to which they exported.

31. The Codex Secretariat explained that deviation from Codex standards was possible in those instances where countries, in developing their own standards, took into account their national/regional consumption patterns and exposures.

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6 CX/NE 17/09/05
32. The Secretariat also clarified that, under the WTO/SPS Agreement, countries were permitted to deviate from Codex standards where justified. The Secretariat further clarified that such national/regional data, where available, should be provided to FAO/WHO scientific bodies, which would allow for more-inclusive Codex standards.

33. The Representative of FAO explained that uptake and use of Codex standards at the national level required the building of strong food-control systems, which could be achieved through the technical assistance of FAO and/or WHO and other partners working in the region.

34. The Representative of WHO recalled that five members of the region eligible for the CTF2 with support available to strengthen national Codex structures. Support to some physical participation could be included in applications but should be clearly linked to other activities aimed at strengthening a country’s full and effective engagement in the development of Codex standards. Results were anticipated in areas such as the uptake of Codex standards at national level.

Conclusion

35. The Committee:
   (i) expressed its support for the continuation of the exercise; and
   (ii) noted that the comments and suggestions made would be taken into account during the next round of the survey.

MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 5)7

36. The Committee noted that the matters were referred for information only and the views of RCCs on the forthcoming Codex Strategic Plan (2020–2025), currently under development, would be requested during the next round of RCC meetings.

CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 6)8

37. Recalling that this was a standing item on the agenda of all six RCCs, the Chair presented an analysis of the responses received to a questionnaire that had requested that Committee members raise for consideration at the present session aspects of Codex work relevant to the region. The suggestions received had been divided into three categories: (i) general issues relevant to the work of CCNE (work of general committees); (ii) specific issues relevant to CCNE (work of commodity committees); and (iii) issues related to the active participation of countries in Codex committees.

38. Noting that the list was not in any order of priority, he invited the Committee to discuss the topics identified.

Discussion

i) General issues relevant to the work of CCNE

39. Members acknowledged the importance of enhancing Codex work on: (i) the reduction of mycotoxins, especially in cereals; (ii) MRLs for pesticides; and (ii) nutrient reference values. The Chair highlighted the importance of carefully developing positions and preparing strategies for explaining positions to the broader Codex membership in the context of forthcoming discussions.

(ii) Specific issues relevant to CCNE

40. Members underlined the importance of the work of CCPFV for the region, highlighting the need to start work on dried fruits, such as dates and derived products.

(iii) Issues related to the active participation of countries in Codex committees

41. The Committee noted the importance facilitating broad participation, involving more countries in the work of Codex by focusing on best practices and data sharing. The Committee also noted the relevance for the region of an online platform for sharing data. It was further noted that intersessional training workshops or side events would facilitate the work of the Committee.

42. The Codex Secretariat explained that the forthcoming launch of the regional Codex websites would provide an online chat forum functionality, which would allow for the exchange of information among members of the region in preparation for Codex meetings and any other related activities.

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7 CX/NE 17/09/06
8 CX/NE 17/09/07
43. The Representative of FAO shared information on the approaches taken to Codex work in other regions, underscoring the importance of holding informal meetings immediately prior to Codex committee sessions to discuss national positions and forge consensus.

**Conclusion**

44. The Committee took note of the matters raised in response to the questionnaire and agreed on their relevance to the region.

**MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN (Agenda Item 7)**

**Strategic Plan for CCNE 2014-2019 – Status of Implementation**

45. The Chair introduced the item and underscored how communication among members and observers was important for achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan.

46. The Codex Secretariat invited the Committee to consider whether it was necessary to retain the Regional Strategic Plan in the light of the fact that members of the region could contribute to the preparation of the forthcoming Codex strategic plan (2020–2025) so as to ensure that it took into account the needs of the region. The Committee had various options, including to simplify the strategic plan so as to facilitate its implementation, or to keep a set of core activities from the current plan as part of an internal action plan, similar to approaches taken in other RCCs.

**Discussion**

47. Members reiterated the importance of having a dedicated strategic plan for the region and considered whether it could be simplified. However, due to the lack of a midterm review and information on the status of the implementation of the current strategic plan, it was difficult to assess progress against it and therefore difficult to identify which activities to retain in a simplified plan.

48. The Committee considered how to facilitate the monitoring of the strategic plan and agreed to establish a monitoring group to assist the Coordinator in the implementation of the activities of the Plan.

**Conclusion**

49. The Committee agreed to:

i. retain the plan, but with revised timelines (Appendix II); and
ii. establish a monitoring group coordinated by the Islamic Republic of Iran with assistance from Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates.

50. Any additional countries would be welcome to join the monitoring group. Relevant contact persons were identified for each of the countries: Egypt (Mrs Rania Ahmed Ali Omara); Lebanon (Mrs Mariam Eid); Sudan (Mrs Ula Makkawi Abdelrhman); Tunisia (Mrs Narjes Maslah El Hammar, Mr Issam Krid and Mr Hamdi Mejri). Further officers from the identified countries who would provide support to the work could be recognised later upon submission within two weeks following present session to the Coordinator.

51. Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates would submit the name(s) of the contact person(s) to the Coordinator within two weeks following the session in consultation with their capitals and competent authorities. The identified persons would work in collaboration with the relevant CCPs of the countries.

52. The terms of reference of the monitoring group were agreed as follows:

- to monitor the activities and indicators identified in the CCNE Strategic Plan;
- to prepare a progress report on the implementation of the activities of the CCNE Strategic Plan for consideration at CCNE10 (2019); and
- to advise the Coordinator on the implementation of the activities in the CCNE Strategic Plan.

**PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR DOOGH (Agenda Item 8)**

53. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as chair of the EWG on doogh, introduced the item, recalling, as explained at CCNE08, that doogh was an ancient traditional drink based on fermented milk that did not fit into the definition of fermented milk/drinks based on fermented milk in the *Standard for Fermented Milks* (CODEX STAN 243-2003). The delegation also emphasised that doogh was not the same product as ayran (another fermented milk product widely produced in the region).11
54. The delegation further informed the Committee that a revised proposed draft had been prepared taking into account comments received in reply to CL 2017/08-NE. The main changes had been made to the description, composition and food additives sections. The latter was aligned with CODEX STAN 243.

55. The Committee considered the revised proposed draft prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran, agreed on amendments to the text and made additional changes and comments.

Discussion
Starter cultures
56. The Committee noted comments regarding the identification of specific starter cultures other than those stipulated but agreed to retain the provisions unchanged since modification was not practical.

Section 2 - Description
57. The Committee amended the description for better understanding and for consistency with sections 3 (composition) and 4 (food additives).

Section 3 - Composition
58. The Committee agreed to change the minimum level of “sum of microorganisms constituting the starter culture as defined in Section 2” to one more appropriate for doogh.

Section 4 - Food additives
59. The Committee noted that the format and content of this section had been aligned with CODEX STAN 243 as far as possible for doogh. Noting that the list of food additives for sweeteners and colours was incomplete, the Committee aligned these functional classes with CODEX STAN 243, made corrections to the level for phosphates and clarified that only lactic acid was permitted as an acidity regulator.

Section 6 - Hygiene
60. The Committee considered whether to retain the maximum counts for microorganisms in this section, noting that the current limits did not comply with the Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria related to Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997). One delegation expressed the view that such limits were needed to assist countries of the region since CAC/GL 21 did not include microbiological criteria. The Codex Secretariat explained that microbiological criteria should comprise not only limits, but also sampling plans and methods of analysis, among other provisions, and that, in general, in Codex, microbiological criteria were left to national/regional authorities to develop based on CAC/GL 21.

61. The Committee therefore agreed to delete the limits for microorganisms from this section.

Section 7 - Packaging and storage
62. The Committee noted that not all doogh required refrigeration (e.g. ultra-heat-treated doogh) and agreed to revise the section to refer to appropriate conditions to account for all types of doogh-storage practices.

Section 8 - Labelling
63. The Committee noted that the condition for “non-fat” was not in accordance with Guidelines for use of nutrition and health claims (CAC/GL 23-1997), which contained a condition for “fat-free”, and agreed to delete the condition for “non-fat” and to refer only to CAC/GL 23 in the Section 8.2 Declaration of Fat Content.

Section 9 - Methods of analysis and sampling
64. The Committee noted that the methods of analysis for fermented milks in CODEX STAN 234-1999 also applied to doogh and therefore no methods were being put forward for endorsement by CCMAS.

Conclusion
65. The Committee agreed to:
   i. forward the proposed draft regional standard to CAC40 for adoption at Step 5/8 (with the omission of Steps 6 and 7) (Appendix III); and
   ii. send the sections on food additives and labelling to the relevant committees for endorsement.

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MIXED ZAATAR (Agenda Item 9)\(^\text{12}\)

66. Lebanon, as lead country, introduced the item, noting that the development of the proposed draft standard had taken into account all the characteristics and requirements of zaatar produced and traded in the region.

\(^{12}\) CL 2017/09-NE; CX/NE 17/09/10 (not issued)
67. The Committee considered the proposed draft prepared by Lebanon, agreed on the text and made additional changes and comments.

Discussion

Section 2 - Description

68. The Committee noted the need to clarify the description of the product taking into account the Standard for Thyme developed by the Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) and the different plant species constituting mixed zaatar. Some delegations pointed out that their zaatar contained thin-leaf rather than broadleaf thyme and that reference to the latter could consequently limit their market access.

69. To clarify and make the Standard more inclusive, the Committee agreed not to refer to thyme and to better define raw zaatar and raw broadleaf zaatar.

Section 3.2 - Quality factors

Taste and colour

70. The Committee noted the request to define taste and colour. The Codex Secretariat clarified that the current language was consistent with the approach taken with corresponding sections in commodity standards as it was difficult and not practical to specify such organoleptic characteristics.

71. The Committee therefore agreed to retain this section unchanged.

Section 3.3 - Composition

Malic acid/citric acid

72. The Committee noted: a possible inconsistency between the maximum limit (ML) specified for citric acid in Section 4 and the proportion of malic acid/citric acid in Section 3; and a discrepancy between the level of citric acid specified in Section 4 and that proposed at CCNE08 (2 percent to 4 percent) and that such an increase could lead to fraudulent practices. Citric acid was naturally present in thyme and sumac and the addition of citric acid could be used to replace sumac in mixed zaatar.

73. The Committee agreed to consider this issue further in finalizing the draft standard.

Salt content

74. The Committee noted concerns with the salt content specified for zaatar which was contrary to the request to reduce salt content in food products in accordance with the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Lebanon explained that salt was integral to the product and reducing the salt level would require the complete reformulation of the recipe. While it was important to reduce salt intake to reduce the risk of noncommunicable diseases, this could be achieved through consumer education on healthy diets and the avoidance of certain high-salt-content foods.

Section 4 - Food additives

75. The Committee aligned this section with the format for food additives provided in the Format for Commodity Standards in the Procedural Manual and corrected the expression of the ML for citric acid in accordance with the General Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192-1995), i.e. from percentage to units equivalent to mg/kg. The Committee noted that clarification was needed on why only citric acid and not any other acidity regulators specified in GSFA could be allowed.

76. The Committee noted that there were no provisions for food additives for “premium” mixed zaatar and “extra” mixed zaatar.

77. The Committee agreed that the matters above would be considered further considered in finalizing the draft standard.

Section 5 - Contaminants

78. The Committee agreed to align the provisions for contaminants with the standardised text provided in the Format for Commodity Standards in the Procedural Manual, i.e. general reference to the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

Section 7 - Labelling

79. The Committee noted that, since “country of origin” and “food additive” labelling were sufficiently covered by the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985), there was no need to address these aspects under this section.

80. The Committee agreed to delete the provisions for country of origin and food additives.
Section 8 - Methods of analysis and sampling

81. The Committee agreed to delete methods for contaminants in line with its earlier decision (paragraph 65).

82. The Committee noted that sampling plans should be developed for the provisions in the draft standard. The Codex Secretariat clarified that CCMAS38 had agreed to develop a template to assist committees to develop sampling plans. This template would be ready by the next session of CCMAS and forwarded to all committees for use in developing sampling plans.

83. In response to a question on the necessity of including methods of analysis and sampling, the Codex Secretariat clarified that commodity standards had a section on methods of analysis and sampling, in line with the Format for Commodity Standards (Procedural Manual), and that committees were responsible for identifying methods to measure compliance with provisions in standards. These identified methods were particularly useful in the settlement of disputes and did not preclude the routine use of other methods by countries.

84. The Committee agreed to the methods proposed and to work on developing sampling plans once the CCMAS template had been finalised.

Conclusion

85. The Committee agreed to:
   i. forward the proposed draft regional standard to CAC40 for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix IV); and
   ii. establish an EWG, chaired by Lebanon, working in English and Arabic, to work further on the sections on composition and food additives, in order to clarify the questions raised in sections 3.3 (composition), 4 (food additives) and 8 (sampling) pending CCMAS advice on templates, and finalise the standard by the next session.

DISCUSSION PAPER ON READY-TO-EAT PREPACKAGED SALADS (Agenda Item 10) 13

86. Recalling the CCNE08 request that it present a discussion paper on ready-to-eat salads, Palestine introduced the item, summarised the key points in the discussion paper — product description, volume of production and trade, food safety risks, and quality aspects — and recommended the development of a general regional standard for chilled pre-packaged RTE salads.

Discussion

87. While there was broad support for the proposal, the Committee noted that consideration should be given to a code of practice (COP) since the key issues identified in the discussion paper related to processing and handling. In general, commodity standards applied more to quality aspects of the end-product, and developing such a standard would be difficult in the light of the wide range of products identified in the paper.

88. To determine the way forward, a further discussion paper was necessary to explore which option, COP or general standard, would be more feasible.

89. The Codex Secretariat clarified that it would be important to determine whether the issues identified in the paper could be addressed through existing Codex texts or whether there was a need to develop more a more specific Codex text for the products identified in the paper.

Conclusion

90. The Committee agreed to establish an EWG, chaired by Lebanon, working in English and Arabic, to:
   i. prepare a discussion paper based on the points raised in paragraphs 88 and 89; and
   ii. include, if appropriate, a project document for new work, as laid down in the Procedural Manual, together with an outline of the proposed Codex text.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 11) 14

91. The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to CAC40 that the Islamic Republic of Iran be reappointed for a second term as Coordinator for the Near East Region. The Islamic Republic of Iran thanked the Committee for its support and accepted the nomination.

13 CX/NE 17/09/11
14 CX/NE 17/09/12
OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 12)\textsuperscript{15}

Relations between FAO and WHO policies, strategies and guidelines and Codex work

92. The Representative of WHO introduced the document, presented for information only; FAO and WHO had presented an analysis paper on this matter at CCEXEC71, in June 2016, which CAC39 had decided would be discussed at CCEXEC73, in June 2017, to allow countries ample time to appraise the paper. The Representative recalled that the work of Codex as a joint programme of FAO and WHO should complement the policies, strategies and guidelines adopted by the governing bodies of each parent organisation. While linking up Codex work with WHO policies and strategies could take significant time, as in the case of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, but she commended the relatively swift coordinated actions undertaken in relation to the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.

General requirements for halal products

93. Egypt proposed the development of a standard for halal products in view of its importance to the region and Islamic countries.

94. Members acknowledged the importance of halal products not only to the region but also to Islamic countries elsewhere, and noted that halal issues had been discussed throughout Codex over several years. A number of delegations expressed the opinion that halal could be more appropriately addressed through platforms other than Codex, such as the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC). The Committee also had to take the limited resources in Codex into account in carefully considering the proposal.

95. The Codex Secretariat drew the attention of the Committee to the recent discussions in CCFL43\textsuperscript{16} leading to agreement that, while CCFL was not in a position to discuss all aspects of this issue, its ongoing discussions in relation to consumer preferences would include halal.

96. Egypt clarified that the work proposal was not related to labelling but for a specific standard for halal products that would include the clarification and harmonisation of terminology and definitions to facilitate understanding.

97. The Committee noted that it was not in a position to take a decision at this session and agreed to request Egypt to prepare a discussion paper elaborating on the proposal for a standard for halal products, for consideration at the next session, taking into account the halal standards issued by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation/SMIIC.

Processed cheese

98. Egypt requested that the Committee consider a regional standard for processed cheese, in view of the difficulties to agree on such a standard at the international level, in particular with regard to the minimum cheese content.

99. The Committee recalled that the issue of processed cheese remained under consideration in the Commission and agreed it more appropriate to await the outcome of those discussions before deciding whether to proceed with additional work. The Committee also encouraged Egypt and other member countries to participate in the discussions in the Commission. With a view to facilitating the sharing of information and preparation of coordinated inputs to the discussion in CAC40, the Islamic Republic of Iran as Coordinator would arrange a meeting with all members of CCNE immediately prior to CAC40.

Development of a regional standard for maamoul

100. The Committee noted the proposal of Saudi Arabia on the development of a regional standard for maamoul and agreed to request the delegation to prepare a discussion paper for consideration at CCNE10. The discussion paper should clearly identify the product, the key issues to be addressed and the trade volume of these products within the region. The paper should be accompanied by a project document, as laid down in the Procedural Manual, and, if possible, an outline of the proposed regional standard.

Communication with Palestine

101. The Committee noted the request of Palestine for better access and inputs to Codex documents so as to enhance its participation in Codex. The Codex Secretariat welcomed the interest of Palestine in Codex work and clarified that discussions were under way with Palestine to work out a mechanism for enhanced communication.

\textsuperscript{15} CX/NE 17/09/13; Proposal by Saudi Arabia (CRD02)
\textsuperscript{16} REP16/FL, paras 56 - 63
Other matters

102. It was noteworthy that the participation of a number of delegations was facilitated through the UNIDO/FAO collaborative project on food safety in the Arab region funded by Sweden through the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 13)

103. The Committee was informed that its 10th session would be held in approximately two years’ time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to members following the appointment of the Coordinator by CAC40.
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## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This Strategic Plan identifies 4 strategic objectives for the region for the period 2016-2019. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed at each Session of CCNE to determine the progress and identify gaps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Proposed Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Enhance the participation of countries of the region in Codex activities</td>
<td>A. Identify Codex committees, task forces and working groups that are of particular interest to the region</td>
<td>- Conduct periodic surveys via questionnaire about Codex committees priorities for countries of the region and schedule priorities according to the common interests among countries of the region</td>
<td>End of 2017</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- List of priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. Encourage stakeholders’ engagement in Codex activities</td>
<td>- Explore different means, including the use of CTF2 to ensure continued effective participation of countries of the region in priority Codex committees and related Codex activities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Countries of the region in collaboration with the Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. Share information on specific topics, scientific data and research areas of interest to the region</td>
<td>- Establish and activate a website for CCNE - Exchange of scientific information and experiences</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Codex Secretariat Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strengthen regional communication, experience sharing and coordination among CCNE Member countries in Codex activities</td>
<td>A. Exchange views and information on all matters related to Codex</td>
<td>- Conduct a survey via a questionnaire about the meeting’s agenda to identify the points of interest for the region and to include observations from countries on their specific points</td>
<td>Two months prior to the meeting</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- Number of replies to the questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Proposed Activities</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Define a common position of the region on Codex issues</td>
<td>- Establish an updated list of names and contacts of countries of the region (Heads of delegations) participating in Codex meetings from countries of the region.</td>
<td>One month before the defined session</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- Updated list of Heads of delegations distributed among countries of the region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Coordinate the participation in Codex events and enhance regional communication through different tools</td>
<td>- Follow-up, where possible, the availability of Codex documents in a timely manner especially in Arabic language</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Coordinator and member countries</td>
<td>- Documents downloaded on the Codex website in Arabic and on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Set the SOP's for Codex documents follow-up</td>
<td>- Exchange of written notes among countries of the region on draft standards and Codex issues and ensure that these observations are well defended during Codex meetings even in the absence of the country concerned</td>
<td>1 month prior to the meeting</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- WG reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ensure that the agenda of CCNE sessions include all Codex matters which are of interest to the region</td>
<td>Every session</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>- Codex meetings documents with the region comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CCNE session</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>- Compiled CCNE report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Objectives

**3. Promote use of Codex standards and the development and/or review of Codex standards and related texts taking into account regional situations and needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Proposed Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Identify specific food products and areas of interest to the region that require standards and related texts to be developed and/or reviewed</td>
<td>- Conduct a survey among countries of the region in order to highlight the draft standards of interest to the region that could be presented as Codex work</td>
<td>2 months before CCNE meetings</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- CAC and CCNE reports mention the accepted standards proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Promote the use of standards in regulations to facilitate trade within the region</td>
<td>- Provide CCEXEC subsequent to CCNE sessions with a summary of the problems and challenges experienced by countries in the adoption of Codex standards as well as the proposed solutions</td>
<td>After every CCNE session</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- Reports of CCEXEC and CCNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Increase awareness on the importance of Codex amongst relevant stakeholders (e.g. government, industry, consumers, academia, professional bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)).</td>
<td>- Organise workshops on the importance of the adoption of Codex standards</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>- Numbers of workshops conducted and - Number of participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4. Build capacity of countries of the region in relation to risk assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Proposed Activities</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Identify and prioritise the common regional risks</td>
<td>- Conduct periodic surveys about the problems faced by countries of the region on the issue of food safety, scientific advice and research needs</td>
<td>2 months before the next session</td>
<td>Coordinator, Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees</td>
<td>- Responses and proposals from members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Identify the needs for scientific research</td>
<td>- Organise meetings on the side-lines of the Codex meeting to discuss food safety and quality issues in the region</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- Number of meetings and number of participants - Reports from Member countries on capacity building from food safety organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Proposed Activities</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Implement pilot programmes to assess these risks and to communicate the results</td>
<td>- Explore ways to conduct risk assessment in areas of importance to the region</td>
<td>End of 2019</td>
<td>Coordinator and countries of the region</td>
<td>- Number of risk assessments performed at regional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Enhance the involvement of experts from the region in the FAO/WHO scientific committees</td>
<td>Establish an updated database of experts from the region and provide this list to FAO and WHO</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
<td>- Number of experts included in the database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Strengthen capacities of Codex Contact Points and/or National Codex Committees</strong></td>
<td>A. Supply National Codex Committees and Codex Contact Points with the required references, trainings and tools so they can perform their roles properly</td>
<td>- Update list of Codex Contact Points in the countries of the region</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>Coordinator/ Codex Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Promote regional networking among Codex Contact Points/delegates to improve communication and share experiences on Codex and related issues</td>
<td>- Conduct a survey on the structure of Codex in countries within the region</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>Coordinator and Codex Contact Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Develop operating procedures for the work of the Coordinator with countries of the region in order to facilitate communication</td>
<td>End of 2019</td>
<td>Coordinator and countries of the region in consultation with the Codex Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Explore ways and means for organising workshops for National Contact Points, National Codex Committees and the regional Coordinator in regards to the affairs of the Codex Alimentarius and the tasks assigned to them</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Coordinator in consultation with the Codex Secretariat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. SCOPE

This Standard applies to doogh for direct consumption or for further processing, in conformity with the definitions in Section 2 of this Standard. This Standard should be read in conjunction with the Standard for Fermented Milks (CODEX STAN 243-2003).

2. DESCRIPTION

Doogh is a “drink based on fermented milk” as defined in Section 2.4 of the Standard for Fermented Milks, obtained by mixing yoghurt as defined in Sections 2.1 and 3.3 of the same Standard, with potable water and optionally food grade salt or mixing milk with potable water and sodium chloride prior to heat treatment and fermentation to give an end product with similar physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics as the product defined under provisions of this Standard. When doogh is produced by mixing milk with potable water, edible salt may be added before or after fermentation.

The milk used for production of doogh may have been manufactured from products obtained from milk as specified in Section 2.1 of the Standard for Fermented Milks, with or without the compositional modification as limited by the provision in Section 3.3.

In the production of doogh, other non-dairy ingredients than potable water as well as various dairy ingredients/dairy products are used according to Sections 3 and 4.

The typical starter microorganisms used in production of doogh are traditional yogurt bacteria: Streptococcus thermophilus and Lactobacillus delbrueckii ssp. bulgaricus. Other microorganisms than those constituting the specific starter cultures may be added. If the product is heat treated after fermentation, the requirement for viable microorganisms does not apply. Heat treatment after fermentation does not apply for “probiotic” doogh (doogh containing probiotic microorganisms).

Doogh without adding flavourings/flavour is so-called “plain doogh”. Doogh with flavours in the form of essences or extracts (such as menthol, ziziphore or wild thyme, pennyroyal and cucumber) or with different natural flavourings such as aromatic herbs, spices and condiments is known as “flavoured doogh”. “Carbonated/Uncarbonated” and “Heat treated/Un-heat treated” dooghs represent those contain/does not contain carbon dioxide and those with heat treatment/without heat treatment after fermentation, respectively. Doogh may be produced and displayed as powder (dried doogh) for special applications and demands.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1. RAW MATERIALS

- Yoghurt (in mixing yoghurt with potable water) or milk (in mixing milk with potable water). Yoghurt should conform to the Standard for Fermented Milks.
- Potable water for dilution of yoghurt or milk, and/or for the use in reconstitution or recombination (if milk is prepared by reconstitution or recombination).

3.2. PERMITTED INGREDIENTS

3.2.1 Starter culture of harmless microorganisms including typical doogh starters, as described in Section 2 of this Standard.

3.2.2 Other harmless and suitable microorganisms (bacteria, yeast) as starter- or non-starter microorganisms, including probiotics; for the functions of acidification, aroma production, fermenting carbonation, texture improvement, health promotion, and improving other functional aspects of product.

3.2.3 Sodium chloride, in accordance with the Standard for Food Grade Salt (CODEX STAN 150-1985).

3.2.4 Natural flavouring ingredients such as fine particles of aromatic vegetables and herbs, and spices, as specified in Section 2.3 of the Standard for Fermented Milks.

3.2.5 Nutraceutical ingredients such as dietary fibres.

3.2.6 Dairy ingredients or dairy products obtained from milk such as milk proteins, milk powders, milk fat (butter fat or cream), buttermilk and whey products”. For milk powders this will be the Standard for Milk Powders and Cream Powder (CODEX STAN 207-1999), milk fat this will be the Standard for Milkfat Products (CODEX STAN products 280-1973) and cream as is defined in Section 2.1 of the Standard for Cream and Prepared Creams (CODEX STAN 288-1976).
3.2.7 Partial or full replacement of milk fat or milk protein with other sources of non-dairy fat or non-dairy protein shall not be allowed.

3.3. **COMPOSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heat treated doogh</th>
<th>Un-heat treated doogh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plain</td>
<td>Flavoured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acidity Regulators</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbonating agents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colours</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emulsifiers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavour enhancers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging gases</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservatives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stabilizers</td>
<td>X (a)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeteners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickeners</td>
<td>X (a)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = The use of additives belonging to the class is technologically justified. In the case of flavoured products, the additives are technologically justified in the dairy portion.
- = – The use of additives belonging to the class is not technologically justified.

(a) Use is restricted to reconstitution and recombination and if permitted by national legislation in the country of sale to the final consumer.

The microbiological criteria in the product are valid up to the “date of minimum durability” under the storage conditions specified in the labelling.

4. **FOOD ADDITIVES**

4.1 Only those additives classes indicated in the Table below may be used for the product categories specified. Within each additive class, and where permitted according to the Table, only those individual additives listed may be used and only within the limits specified.

In accordance with Section 4.1 of the Preamble to the General Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192-1995), additional additives may be present in the flavoured doogh as a result of carry-over from non-dairy ingredients.

- **Additive class**: Heat treated doogh | Un-heat treated doogh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additive class</th>
<th>Heat treated doogh</th>
<th>Un-heat treated doogh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plain</td>
<td>Flavoured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acidity Regulators</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbonating agents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colours</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emulsifiers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavour enhancers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging gases</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservatives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stabilizers</td>
<td>X (a)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeteners</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickeners</td>
<td>X (a)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Use is restricted to reconstitution and recombination and if permitted by national legislation in the country of sale to the final consumer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INS No.</th>
<th>Name of Additive</th>
<th>Maximum Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acidity regulators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>Lactic acid, L-, D- and DL-</td>
<td>GMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carbonating agents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290</td>
<td>Carbon dioxide</td>
<td>GMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100(i)</td>
<td>Curcumin</td>
<td>100 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101(i)</td>
<td>Riboflavin, synthetic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101(ii)</td>
<td>Riboflavin 5’-phosphate, sodium</td>
<td>300 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Tartrazine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Quinoline yellow</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Sunset yellow FCF</td>
<td>300 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Carmines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Azorubine (Carmoisine)</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>Ponceau 4R (Cochineal red A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Allura red AC</td>
<td>300 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>Indigotine</td>
<td>100 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Brilliant blue FCF</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141(i)</td>
<td>Chlorophylls, copper complexes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141(ii)</td>
<td>Chlorophylls, copper complexes, sodium and potassium salts</td>
<td>500 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Fast green FCF</td>
<td>100 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150b</td>
<td>Caramel II – sulphite caramel</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150c</td>
<td>Caramel III – ammonia caramel</td>
<td>2 000 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150d</td>
<td>Caramel IV – sulphite ammonia caramel</td>
<td>2 000 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>Brilliant black (Black PN)</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>Brown HT</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160a(i)</td>
<td>Carotene, beta-, synthetic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160e</td>
<td>Carotenal, beta-apo-8'-</td>
<td>100 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160f</td>
<td>Carotenic acid, methyl or ethyl ester, beta-apo-8'-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160a(iii)</td>
<td>Carotenes, beta-, Blakeslea trispora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160a(ii)</td>
<td>Carotenes, beta-, vegetable</td>
<td>600 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160b(i)</td>
<td>Annatto extract, bixin-based</td>
<td>20 mg/kg as bixin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS No.</td>
<td>Name of Additive</td>
<td>Maximum Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160b(ii)</td>
<td>Annatto extract, norbixin-based</td>
<td>20 mg/kg as norbixin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160d</td>
<td>Lycopenes</td>
<td>30 mg/kg as pure lycopene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161b(i)</td>
<td>Lutein from Tagetes erecta</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161h(i)</td>
<td>Zeaxanthin, synthetic</td>
<td>150 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163(ii)</td>
<td>Grape skin extract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172(i)</td>
<td>Iron oxide, black</td>
<td>100 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172(ii)</td>
<td>Iron oxide, red</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172(iii)</td>
<td>Iron oxide, yellow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emulsifiers**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>432</td>
<td>Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monolaurate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>433</td>
<td>Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monooleate</td>
<td>3 000 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>434</td>
<td>Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monopalmitate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>435</td>
<td>Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monostearate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>436</td>
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<td>Sucrose esters of fatty acids</td>
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**Flavour enhancers**

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<td>Sodium carboxymethyl cellulose, enzymatically hydrolyzed (Cellulose gum, enzymatically hydrolyzed)</td>
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<td>Salts of myristic, palmitic and stearic acids with ammonia, calcium, potassium and sodium</td>
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<td>Mono- and di- glycerides of fatty acids</td>
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<td>Acetic and fatty acid esters of glycerol</td>
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<td>Lactic and fatty acid esters of glycerol</td>
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<td>950</td>
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<td>Aspartame</td>
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<td>952</td>
<td>Cyclamates</td>
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<td>Isomalt (Hydrogenated isomaltulose)</td>
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<td>Saccharin</td>
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<td>Sucralose (Trichlorogalactosucrose)</td>
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<tr>
<td>956</td>
<td>Alitame</td>
<td>100 mg/kg</td>
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<tr>
<td>961</td>
<td>Neotame</td>
<td>100 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>962</td>
<td>Aspartame-acesulfame salt</td>
<td>350 mg/kg on an acesulfame potassium equivalent basis</td>
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<td>964</td>
<td>Polyglycitol syrup</td>
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<td>Maltitols</td>
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<tr>
<td>968</td>
<td>Erythritol</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

(a) The use of sweeteners is limited to milk-and milk derivative-based products energy reduced or with no added sugar.

4.2 **Flavourings**

The flavourings used in doogh covered by this standard should comply with the *Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings* (CAC/GL 66-2008).

5. **Contaminants**

5.1 The milk used in the manufacture of the products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

5.2 The milk used in the manufacture of the products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides and veterinary drugs established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6. **Hygiene**

6.1 It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products* (CAC/RCP 57-2004) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

6.2 The products 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* (CAC/GL 21-1997).
7. PACKAGING AND STORAGE

7.1 The product shall be packed in containers which preserve the hygienic quality and the other qualities of the food.

7.2 Doogh (after fermentation) shall be stored under appropriate conditions e.g. refrigerated.

8. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985) and the General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms (CODEX STAN 206-1999), the following specific provisions apply:

8.1 NAME OF THE FOOD

8.1.1 The name of the food shall be “Doogh”.

8.1.2 The descriptions of “Carbonated/Uncarbonated” and/or “Heat treated/Un-heat treated” shall be used in conjunction with the word “Doogh”. For carbonated doogh, the terms “Fermenting” or “Injecting” shall be applied before the word “Carbonated” in product designation to represent the source of carbonation.

8.1.3 The designation of “Flavoured Doogh” shall be used as the name of product if any flavouring substance is added.

8.1.4 When probiotic microorganisms are incorporated in doogh, the word “Probiotic” may be applied somewhere on the label.

8.1.5 For doogh powder, the name “Doogh Powder” or “Dried Doogh” shall be inserted in marking.

8.2 DECLARATION OF FAT CONTENT

If the consumer would be misled by the omission, the milk fat content shall be declared in a manner acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either as (i) a percentage of mass or volume, or (ii) in grams per serving as qualified in the label, provided that the number of servings is stated. Any labelling should be in accordance to the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997).

8.3 LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

Information required in Section 8 of this Standard and Sections 4.1 to 4.8 of the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods, and, if necessary, storage instructions, shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

9. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

For checking the compliance with this Standard, the methods of analysis and sampling for fermented milks as contained in the Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CODEX STAN 234-1999) relevant to the provisions in this standard, shall be used.
APPENDIX IV

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MIXED ZAATAR
(At Step 5)

1. SCOPE
This Standard determines the requirements and characteristics that shall be present in mixed zaatar intended for direct human consumption and used in many food preparations such as Lebanese mankoushe, etc.

2. DESCRIPTION
2.1 DEFINITION
2.1.1 Mixed Zaatar
It is the mix consisting of raw zaatar and broadleaf zaatar, as defined below, and the husk of sumac and sesame seeds, to which other ingredients may be added. The classification of zaatar shall be as shown in Section 2.2.

2.1.2 Raw Zaatar
It is the blossoms and/or leaves of the following wild and cultivated plants, which are manually or mechanically crumbled provided they are not powdered.

- *Origanum* sp.
- *Thymbra* sp.
- *Thymus* sp.
- *Satureja* sp.

2.1.2.1 Raw Broadleaf Zaatar
Raw zaatar is called raw broadleaf zaatar when it is composed of the blossoms and/or leaves of the wild or cultivated broadleaf zaatar, namely *Origanum syriacum* (by at least 75%) or constitutes a mix (by 25% maximum) of the blossoms and leaves of the following varieties, which are manually or mechanically crumbled provided they are not powdered.

- *Origanum ehrenbergii*
- *Thymbra spicata*
- *Coridothymus capitatus*
- *Thymus syriacus*
- *Satureja thymbra*

2.2 CLASSIFICATION
Mixed zaatar is classified as follows:

2.2.1 “Premium” Mixed Zaatar
It shall consist of at least 25% of raw broadleaf zaatar mixed exclusively with: sesame seeds and sumac husk, with the possibility of adding salt by 6% maximum.

2.2.2 “Extra” Mixed Zaatar
It shall consist of at least 20% of raw zaatar or raw broadleaf zaatar mixed with: sesame seeds and sumac husk, with the possibility of adding grains, nuts, spices and condiments, as well as salt by 6% maximum.

2.2.3 “Regular” Mixed Zaatar
It shall consist of at least 15% of raw broadleaf zaatar or raw zaatar mixed with sesame seeds and sumac husk which should be added by at least 5%, in addition to the following possible ingredients: legumes, aromatic grains and herbs, spices, condiments (cumin...), pomegranate molasses, vegetable oil, nuts, wheat bran and sesame seed hull, provided they all meet the good manufacturing practices, with the possibility of adding salt by 7% maximum and citric acid by 4% maximum, provided they are indicated on the label.
2.2.4 Forms

Any form of the product should be permissible provided it meets the related requirements in this standard, and an adequate description of the product is provided on the label to ensure that consumers are not misled or confused.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 COMPOSITION

3.1.1 Basic Ingredients

Raw zaatar shall be as defined in Section 2.1.2 above.

3.1.2 Optional Ingredients

- Legumes
- Grains
- Volatile herbs
- Spices and condiments (cumin, …)
- Pomegranate molasses
- Vegetable oil
- Nuts
- Wheat bran

3.2 QUALITY FACTORS

3.2.1 Taste and Colour

- Zaatar contained in the product must have special flavour and smell and be free of any extraneous odours and flavours, including rancidity and mouldiness, as well as of any extraneous substances.
- The product must have a normal colour and a consistency that is typical of such kind of products.

3.2.2 Chemical and Physical Characteristics

3.2.2.1 Requirements and Characteristics

3.2.2.1.1 General Requirements

The following characteristics shall be observed in mixed zaatar:

- All the ingredients used in the preparation of the mixed zaatar shall be in conformity with their corresponding Codex Alimentarius standards.
- It shall be free of living insects and spiders, practically free of any visible moldiness, dead insects and parts thereof, contamination by rodents, birds and snails waste (and magnification might be used for detection in some cases, provided the magnifying power is determined if it exceeds 10 folds, which shall be indicated in the test results report).
- The final product shall not be in a powder form in order to ensure its main ingredients are recognizable by microscopic inspection (leaves, blossoms, straws…) or visible to the naked eye, to avoid fraud and concealing of impurities therein, and to ensure that higher levels of volatile oils are maintained. The straws, if any, must not be longer than 10 mm and more than 2 mm in diameter, and must not make more than 5% (mass/mass) of the product.
- Any extraneous substances of non-vegetable origin found in the product, such as pebbles, soil, sand, dust, etc. or of non-food vegetable origin, such as wood, dry leaves, must not make more than 1% (mass/mass) of the product.

3.2.2.1.2 Chemical Requirements

The following chemical requirements, as stated in table 1, shall be observed in the zaatar and the mixed zaatar:
Table (1): Chemical Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Premium Mixed Zaatar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moisture % (m/m) maximum</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total table salt % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ash, excluding salt % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ash % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acid insoluble ash % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw fibers % (m/m based on the dry matter) maximum</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volatile oils % (ml/100g based on the dry matter) minimum</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum superoxide number</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malic acid/citric acid proportion, minimum</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Components</td>
<td>Carvacrol+Thymol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volatile Oils</td>
<td>Cymene, gamma-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>terpinene and other volatile oils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **FOOD ADDITIVES**

4.1 **RAW ZAATAR, “PREMIUM” MIXED ZAATAR AND “EXTRA” MIXED ZAATAR**

No food additives are permitted.

4.2 **“REGULAR” MIXED ZAATAR**

Only the following food additive is permitted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INS No.</th>
<th>Name of Additive</th>
<th>Maximum Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
<td>Citric acid</td>
<td>4 mg/kg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **CONTAMINANTS**

5.1 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

5.2 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
6. HYGIENE

6.1 It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

6.2 The product should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).

7. LABELLING

The products covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985). Any health claims shall be in conformity with the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997) when necessary. In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

7.1 NAME OF PRODUCT

7.1.1 Mixed zaatar or mixed thyme

7.1.2 The classification shall be indicated according to Section 2.2 next to the product name.

7.1.3 The word “baladi (local)” may appear next to the name if the mixed zaatar is made of varieties of raw zaatar - wild or cultivated - that have the same country of origin.

7.2 LABELLING OF NON-RETAIL PACKAGES

Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

8. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

8.1 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acidity</td>
<td>AOAC 935.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added citric acid</td>
<td>The content of the added citric acid shall be determined by testing the following organic acids: Malic acid and citric acid by applying HPLC method and calculating the malic acid/citric acid proportion which must not fall below 10/1 (Malic acid ten times the citric acid). The malic acid is extracted from the sumac husk and by comparing the result to the proportion, the quantity of the added citric acid can be calculated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium chloride</td>
<td>AOAC Official Method 960.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisture</td>
<td>AOAC 925.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ash</td>
<td>AOAC 923.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acid insoluble ash</td>
<td>AOAC 941.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw fibers</td>
<td>AOAC 962.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volatile oils</td>
<td>ISO 1984:6571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water insoluble ash</td>
<td>ISO 929:1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superoxide number</td>
<td>AOAC 965.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2 SAMPLING PLANS

To be developed