

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CCFFP FOR CONDUCTING NEW WORK ON HISTAMINE BY NORMAL PROCEDURE UNDER THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE RATHER THAN BY CORRESPONDENCE UNDER THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

At its 34th session the CCFFP agreed to continue working by correspondence only as the amount of outstanding work did not warrant physical sessions of CCFFP. New work on development of guidance and sampling plans for histamine is the only pending issue identified by the CCFFP. For reference see REP 16/FFP paras 72, 73, 80a and 81.

Initially I would like to underline Norway's commitment and engagement in Codex work on Fish and Fishery Products and that we will continue our strong engagement also in the future to host the Fish Committee if issues are brought forward for the agenda by the Commission.

However at this point, when there is no need for future sessions, and remaining work is suggested to be concluded by correspondence, I would suggest continuing the remaining issue under the umbrella of an existing committee holding physical sessions, namely the Hygiene Committee (CCFH). This would facilitate progress on the remaining issue by normal working procedures and priorities. In this way Codex would facilitate effective, efficient, transparent and consensus based standard development in line with Codex strategic goals.

Relevant challenges when a committee do not meet at physical sessions:

1. To bring this work forward in the step procedure based on consensus will be a challenge. Judging from the complexity of this issue we foresee a need for one or two working groups. As also expressed by the committee, this kind of work should be conducted in physical meetings in the interest of effectiveness and efficiency, and we also foresee concerns being raised in regards to the lack of procedures for working by correspondence.
2. Experience gained from working only by correspondence in other Codex committees does indicate that such procedures should not be our approach when more efficient working methods are at hand.
3. The lack of Codex procedures to make decisions when work is undertaken only by correspondence. This issue is already pointed out by other members and presented in CRD2 at CCGP and is foreseen to be discussed at CCEXEC (agenda item 11). I would recommend working by current procedures within existing committees and not initiate nor wait for decisions on possible work on the procedures in the PM for this particular issue and situation.
4. The work will be resource demanding on the already heavy workload in the Codex Secretariat when handled outside an active committee and it is against Codex strategic goals to plan for work to be done in a way that could be foreseen as being neither efficient nor cost effective.
5. It is neither justified convening a committee nor the best use of resources, when a committee has finalized its main work, keeping a committee going for a matter that can be solved in another ongoing active committee.

Conclusion

Based on the above, I would like to invite CCEXEC to consider to

1. Recommend the CAC to submit the *Work on guidance for histamine control in the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (CAC/RCP 52 – 2003) and sampling plans for histamine in standards for fish and fishery products* to the Hygiene Committee (CCFH) and recommend its high priority.