

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 2

CRD6

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES

Forty-ninth Session

Macao SAR, China, 20-24 March 2017

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES

CAC39 request to CCFA to examine the use of gold (INS 175) and silver (INS 174)

Prepared by the Codex Secretariat

BACKGROUND

Request of CAC39

1. During CAC39 discussion on the adoption of food additives provisions of the GSFA related to the alignment of the provisions of the *Standard for Chocolate and Chocolate Products* (CODEX STAN 87-1981) with the GSFA, one delegation noted that the provisions for gold (INS 175) and silver (INS 174), which were originally included in the *Standard*, had not been included in the GSFA.

2. CAC39 noted that the 21st meeting of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee of Food Additives (JECFA) had come to the conclusion that the use of gold would not represent a hazard due to its small amount likely to be ingested and that JECFA had not been able to complete the evaluation of silver due to insufficient data.

21st JECFA meeting (1977)

Gold

"In view of the rare use of gold as a colorant and the lack of knowledge of the exact nature of the gold used on or in foods, no specification was prepared. No data were available on the toxicity of elemental gold. In view of the very small amounts likely to be ingested by an individual, the Committee did not consider that the use of gold would present a hazard. No monograph was prepared."

Silver

"In view of the rare use of this metal and in the absence of knowledge of the exact nature of silver used on or in foods, specifications were not prepared. The data available suggest that this substance might accumulate in certain tissues following long-term exposure. There were, however, insufficient data to evaluate this point fully, nor were any adequate long-term studies available. Thus no evaluation could be made. A monograph was prepared."

3. CAC39 requested CCFA to examine the use of gold (INS 175) and silver (INS 174).¹

Discussion in CCFA48

4. The inclusion of the provisions for gold and silver as colours used for surface decoration in the GSFA was first considered at CCFA48 in the framework of the discussion of the alignment of the food additive provisions of the *Standard for Chocolate and Chocolate Products* with the GSFA (see Table below).

Table 1 - Provisions for gold and silver originally included in CODEX STAN 87-1981

3.8	Colours (for decorations purpose only)		
175	Gold	GMP	Products described under 2.1 (Chocolate types (composition)) and 2.2 (Chocolate types (forms))
174	Silver	GMP	

¹ REP16/CAC paras 55-57

5. CCFA48 agreed not to include the two provisions in the GSFA as they did not comply with the criteria for inclusion of substances in the GSFA, i.e. (i) only food additives that have been assigned an Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) or determined, on the basis of other criteria, to be safe by JECFA will be considered for inclusion in the GSFA; and (ii) food additives used in accordance with the GSFA should be of appropriate food grade quality and should at all times conform with the applicable Specifications of Identity and Purity recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission or, in the absence of such specifications, with appropriate specifications developed by responsible national or international bodies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. In order to consider the inclusion of gold and silver in the GSFA, it is necessary to have a JECFA safety evaluation. Therefore, it is recommended to include gold and silver in the priority list for JECFA for safety assessment and establishment of specifications, with the understanding that these two substances would be removed from the Priority List if there is no firm commitment to provide the necessary data to JECFA by CCFA50.