

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
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Agenda Items 20

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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

15th Session

Virtual

9-13 and 24 May 2022

#### REPORT OF THE IN-SESSION WORKING GROUP ON PRIORITY LIST OF CONTAMINANTS FOR EVALUATION BY JECFA

(Prepared by the Chair of the WG on Priorities, United States of America)

#### I. Introduction

The in-session working group (WG) was held on 3 and 5 May 2022 and chaired by Dr. Lauren Posnick Robin (United States). Dr. Eileen Abt (United States) served as Rapporteur. Dr. Markus Lipp (FAO/JECFA Secretariat) and Dr. Kim Petersen (WHO/JECFA Secretariat) assisted the Chair.

Dr. Robin provided background on the discussions at CCCF14 and a summary of comments received in reply to CL 2021/88-CF, addressed other matters, and presented recommendations for CCCF15, including changes to the priority list.

#### II. Current Priority List

The current priority list (REP21/CF) reviewed at the meeting included: 1) dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs 2) arsenic (inorganic and organic), 3) scopoletin, and 4) trichothecenes (T2 and HT2).

Based on responses to a Circular Letter request (CL 2021/88-CF) and discussion during the WG, the WG reviewed status updates on contaminants and natural toxins on the current priority list.

The following updates were made to items currently in the priority list (Appendix 1): additional data and information was included for dioxin and dioxin-like PCBs and arsenic; a comment was included for scopoletin that the standard for noni juice and data availability would be discussed at CCNASWP16 in 2023; and trichothecenes (T2 and HT2) were removed from the list as the JECFA assessment is now completed, with the summary published in April 2022.

#### III. New Proposals for Priority List

No new proposals were added to the priority list. The WG recommended that Kenya's request for establishment of MRLs for sodium metabisulfite (sodium pyrosulfite) in meat/poultry products be referred to CCFA. The WG also recommended that Uganda's proposal for inclusion of maximum limits for cadmium in processed root vegetable juice be considered as a proposal for new work, rather than for JECFA evaluation. At the in-session WG, the EU proposed adding phomopsins to the priority list given the known toxicity of phomopsins to animals and their possible occurrence in lupin, a protein source that is increasingly used as a human food. No other countries/regions reported available data on phomopsins. The JECFA Secretariat noted that given the paucity of occurrence and toxicity information, addition to the priority list might not be warranted at this time. The EU agreed to provide information on phomopsins in response to the Circular Letter request that will be issued for the JECFA priority list for CCCF16.

#### Other matters

The JECFA Secretariats noted that there will be a WHO expert consultation to reevaluate toxic equivalency factors (TEFs) for dioxin and dioxin-like PCBs in October 2022.

#### IV. Recommendation to the Committee

The 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCCF should consider including the contaminants identified in the table below on the priority list of contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants proposed for evaluation by JECFA.

**Annex 1****PRIORITY LIST OF CONTAMINANTS FOR EVALUATION BY JECFA (REP21/CF)**

<b>Contaminants</b>	<b>Background and question(s) to be answered</b>	<b>Data availability (when, what)</b>	<b>Proposed by</b>
Dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs	Full evaluation (toxicological assessment and exposure assessment) to update 2001 JECFA assessment and incorporate data on developmental effects from in utero exposures.	<p><u>EFSA</u>: Assessment available September 2018</p> <p><u>WHO</u>: Finalizing review of TEF values in preparation for expert consultation in October 2022.</p> <p><u>Brazil</u>: Occurrence data on milk, raw eggs, fish, and fat (poultry and mammals)</p> <p><u>Canada</u>: Occurrence data on foods of animal origin</p>	Canada
Arsenic (inorganic and organic)	<p><u>Inorganic</u>: 2011 JECFA evaluation based on cancer effects. This evaluation would focus on non-cancer effects (neurodevelopmental, immunological and cardiovascular) and could inform future risk management needs.</p> <p><u>NOTE</u>: Needs to be put in context to cancer risk assessment.</p> <p><u>Organic</u>: (exploratory)</p>	<p><u>Australia/New Zealand</u>: Total diet study; inorganic arsenic occurrence data in rice</p> <p><u>Brazil</u>: Occurrence data on total arsenic in rice, poultry, pork, fish, and cattle meat, inorganic arsenic occurrence data in rice</p> <p><u>Canada</u>: Occurrence data on inorganic and total arsenic in a variety of commercial foods.</p> <p><u>Chile</u>: Occurrence data on inorganic and total arsenic in algae, crustaceans, gastropods, bivalve molluscs and small fish.</p> <p><u>EU</u>: Inorganic arsenic occurrence data</p> <p><u>India</u>: Occurrence data in rice</p> <p><u>Japan and China</u>: Occurrence data on rice and rice products</p> <p><u>Turkey</u>: Occurrence data in rice</p> <p><u>USA</u>: Occurrence data on rice cereals, and rice and non-rice products; 2016 risk assessment; 2016 draft action level for inorganic arsenic in rice cereal.</p> <p><u>USA</u>: Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurodevelopmental studies of inorganic arsenic impacts on rat behavior (2019, 2022)</li> <li>• Toxicokinetic studies on metabolism and disposition of inorganic and organic arsenic and metabolites in mice (various life stages) (2018-20)</li> </ul>	USA

Contaminants	Background and question(s) to be answered	Data availability (when, what)	Proposed by
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental toxicity test in <i>C. elegans</i> on inorganic arsenic (2018) and ongoing study on organic arsenic.</li> <li>• Non-governmental report, Effects of Inorganic Arsenic in Infant Rice Cereal on Children's Neurodevelopment (2017)</li> </ul>	
Scopoletin	Full evaluation (toxicological assessment and exposure assessment) in fermented noni juice	<p>CCNASWP still working on standard for noni juice and data availability, to be discussed at CCCNASWP16 (2023). CCNASWP15 agreed<sup>1</sup> to request CCCF to retain scopoletin on the priority list and to call upon Codex members to generate and submit data to support the conduct of the safety evaluation by JECFA. CCNASWP15 also requested FAO and WHO to organize a new call for data for the safety evaluation of scopoletin. FAO reminded that a full dataset including exposure and toxicity is required.</p> <p>A consultant was hired by the Codex Secretariat to undertake a toxicological review of scopoletin as presented in the Annex<sup>2</sup> to CX/CF 21/14/2-Add.1.</p>	CCNASWP

(1) REP20/NASWP, paras. 74, 83, Appendix II

(2) <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/detail/pt/?meeting=CCCF&session=14>