INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) held its 17th Session, in Panama City, Panama, from 15 to 19 April 2024, at the kind invitation of the Governments of Panama and Netherlands (Kingdom of the). Dr Sally Hoffer, Manager Safe and Sustainable Food, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Plant Agro Chains and Food Quality, Netherlands (Kingdom of the) chaired the session which was attended by XX Member countries, one Member organization and XX Observer organizations. The list of participants is contained in Appendix I.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. His Excellency Laurentino Cortizo Cohen, President of the Republic of Panama, opened the session and extended his warmest welcome to all participants. His Excellency underlined the importance of ensuring food safety and quality in international trade, and the key role played by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) in this regard. His Excellency highlighted the enabling role played by science and technology in detecting food contaminants for the protection of public health.

3. His Excellency Sander Cohen, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Panama, also addressed the Committee, highlighting the fundamental role of food standards for both countries in relation to their roles as key logistical hubs for food trade.

4. The following representatives also addressed the Committee:

    - Dr. Sally Hoffer, Chairperson of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food;
    - Mr. Raj Rajasekar, Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
    - H. Sra. Ana Rivière Cinnamond, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Representative in Panama; and
    - Dr. Vittorio Fattori, FAO Representative.

Division of Competence[1]

5. CCCF noted the division of competence between the European Union and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II of the Procedure of the CAC.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)[2]

6. CCCF adopted the Provisional Agenda as the Agenda for the Session.

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 2)[3]

7. CCCF noted that most items were for information purposes and that the reply from the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) on ethylene oxide had been considered in the pre-session working group on the priority list and would be considered further under Agenda item 20.

<u>MLs for total aflatoxins in various cereal products</u>

8. The CCCF Chairperson clarified that a review of the MLs depended on the availability of data and that it was initially necessary to determine whether there were enough data to proceed. The Chairperson further noted that CCCF17 could request JECFA to issue a call for data for the MLs on total aflatoxins agreed at CCCF15, and prepare an overview to facilitate a decision on a possible review of the MLs at CCCF18. The Chairperson concluded her intervention by explaining that if not enough data were available for a review of the MLs, the same process would be repeated after two years.

<u>Circular letters</u>

9. CCCF was informed of CL 2024/24-CAC requesting information on a proposal for the investigation and development of recycling guidance in Codex which was of particular relevance for the work of CCCF. The Codex Secretariat also informed CCCF17 that although the deadline for the CL on the Strategic Plan 2026-2031 had passed, Members still had a chance to contribute to the new Strategic Plan by engaging with their Regional Coordinators.

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1 CRD01

2 CX/CF 24/17/1

3 CX/CF 24/17/2

10. In relation to CL 2024/20-CAC, two members suggested that a joint CCCF / CCFA working group could take on the work on the recycling guidance, as both committees had the relevant experts to lead such work. In response to this intervention, the Codex Secretariat invited Members and Observers to submit any relevant information and proposals in reply to the CL as these comments would be further considered by CAC47.

Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS42)

11. CCCF considered the request from CCMAS42 on sampling plans in the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995), specifically to provide numeric performance criteria for aflatoxin methods utilizing the sum of components concept for all relevant commodities to replace the existing numeric criteria, and to evaluate all sampling plans in CXS 193-1995, to determine if the plans were still in line the revised *General Guidelines on Sampling* (CXG 50-2004).

12. Brazil volunteered to review the numeric performance criteria for aflatoxins in CXS 193-1995 with the objective of submitting proposals for consideration by the next session of the Committee (CCCF18) and CCCF noted that the review of all sampling plans in CXS 193-1995 in light of the revised *General Guidelines on Sampling* could be considered under Agenda item 18.

Conclusion

13. CCCF noted the information presented and agreed to:

(i) encourage Members and Observers to actively contribute to the discussions in CCEXEC and CAC (e.g. sharing experience on application of the draft guidance on Statements of Principle and providing inputs on the development of Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 through their Regional Coordinators who will participate in the discussions in CCEXEC);

(ii) note the encouragement to submit discussion papers or new work proposals on New Food Sources and Production Systems using existing mechanisms and to submit comments in reply to CL 2024/20-CAC;

(iii) request Brazil, to develop Numeric Performance Criteria for methods for Total Aflatoxins utilizing the sum of components concept; and

(iv) request JECFA to issue a call for data to support review of the MLs for total aflatoxins in various cereal products, and prepare an overview to facilitate a decision on a possible review of the MLs at CCCF18.

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO INCLUDING JECFA (Agenda Item 3)[4]

14. The FAO JECFA Secretariat introduced the item and provided an update regarding the FAO activities of relevance to CCCF, including the following:

- JECFA had scheduled its next meeting dedicated to contaminants (i.e. JECFA101) for October 2025 and JECFA101 would be focusing on the evaluation of dioxins and arsenic. JECFA had published the call for data and the deadline for data submission would be 1 December 2024.
- FAO and WHO, in considering that new evidence has become available regarding the risks and benefits of fish consumption since the last FAO/WHO assessment in 2010, convened an expert consultation in October 2023 to review the new evidence and to update the conclusions and recommendations of the 2010 report[5] as needed. The consultation drew a number of conclusions on the health benefits and risks associated with fish consumption. The Summary Report has been made available on the FAO[6] and WHO[7] websites, and the full report would be published in the coming months.
- FAO was finalizing a report that analysed the current and emerging evidence around the various challenges and opportunities to manage food safety in the context of a circular economy. While circular economy initiatives offered considerable promise in improving sustainability and increasing performance, these benefits needed to be considered vis-a-vis with the possible food safety risks arising from contaminants that could be (re) introduced, persist and accumulate in circular systems. Therefore, protecting food safety was key to the success of transitioning the current linear agrifood systems to be more sustainable and resilient through circular economy. In the report, food safety implications were explored across four themes – water reuse, food loss and waste, packaging waste, and integrated farming systems. The report was currently being finalized and should be ready

4 CX/CF 24/17/3

5 Report of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on the Risks and Benefits of Fish Consumption. Rome, 25-29 January 2010

6 Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risks and Benefits of Fish Consumption - Summary and Conclusions. Rome, Italy, 9-13 October 2023

7 jecfa-summary-risks-and-benefits-of-fish-consumption.pdf (who.int)

in the coming months.

- FAO had started a project to provide scientific advice in collaboration with WHO on chemical water safety (including emerging contaminants), which could serve as the basis for possible future Codex work. It was noted that the use of good quality water at different stages of the agrifood system – from irrigation, animal farming, aquaculture, cleaning, food processing up to drinking water – was crucial for food safety. This in turn affected public health and had implications for trade in food commodities. Concurrently, the growing evidence of various chemical substances and their mixtures in water was a major cause for concern, especially with no harmonized standards for chemical parameters. Intensified use of some compounds, as may be the case for agrochemicals, and synthetic fluorine compounds, could threaten human health through contamination of food commodities.
- FAO published a report "*Food safety implications from the use of environmental inhibitors in agrifood*" which provided an in-depth analysis on the food safety implications from the use of environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems. The challenge of feeding an increasing global population while responding to the climate crisis required developing practices and technologies that enhanced the sustainability of food production. Environmental inhibitors were one of the approaches used to minimize the harmful effects of agrifood systems on the environment. Not only could they reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane from ruminants or limit the loss of nitrogen from cultivated fields and pastures, but they could also improve the efficiency of livestock and crop production. However, an inadvertent presence of environmental inhibitors' residues in food commodities could raise health concerns as well as disrupt trade if standards or appropriate measures were not established. The possible food safety issues associated with these substances could be challenging to assess and manage due to the lack of internationally harmonized regulatory approaches, an agreed definition for environmental inhibitors and insufficient food safety information for some compounds. Considering the interest that this topic had been generating, also at Codex level, a webinar on this subject has been scheduled for 9 May at 14.30 -15.30 CET.
- FAO continued to collaborate with the World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Doctors without Borders to develop a roadmap to manage the specific risks faced by food aid agencies in ensuring safe and nutritious foods for humanitarian aid, taking into account food security, sustainability, and nutrition. FAO provided risk assessment advice to these agencies on 3-monochloropropane 1,2-diol, glycidol, and their fatty acid esters in lipid-based nutrient supplements and ready to use therapeutic food. The report was being finalized and should be published soon.

15. The WHO JECFA Secretariat, reporting on the activities of WHO, informed CCCF that WHO had devised a novel, transparent, and systematic approach for establishing TEF (Toxic Equivalency Factor) values. The scientific paper detailing the methodology was now accessible and provided a comprehensive description of the entire process, encompassing data collection to the final determination of the new values. The upcoming JECFA 2025 meeting would utilize the newly determined TEF values to re-evaluate dietary exposure.

16. The WHO JECFA Secretariat also mentioned that the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) expanded its worldwide reach by sponsoring new countries bringing the total to 59. The CTF released three videos demonstrating the accomplishments of advanced initiatives in Azerbaijan, Honduras, and collaboration between Bhutan, India, and Nepal. The CTF has been building a repository for CTF2 project deliverables.

17. The WHO JECFA Secretariat further informed that WHO commissioned preliminary work on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which included a comprehensive review of the health effects of PFAS. Additionally, a thorough evaluation would be conducted to propose the relevant methodology for assessing the potential risks to human health from dietary exposure to PFAS, considering both individual and combined compounds. The approach should utilize the knowledge gained from the development of the methodology used to produce the new WHO TEF values for dioxin and dioxin-like compounds. This preliminary work would serve as the foundation for the JECFA evaluation of PFAS anticipated in 2027.

Conclusion

18. CCCF thanked the FAO and WHO, and noted the information provided.

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Agenda Item 4)[8]

19. The Representative from the IAEA provided an update, noting that 2024 would be the 60th anniversary of the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, and highlighting activities in the past year. He also thanked all those that had provided comments in response to CL 2023/17-CF and indicated that the informative

[8] CX/CF 24/17/4

document on natural radionuclides in food, feed and water would be updated for CCCF18 in line with these comments. The document would also reflect revised information to be published by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effect of Atomic Radiation later in the year.

Conclusion

20. CCCF expressed its appreciation to the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre and noted the information provided by the IAEA representative.

MAXIMUM LEVELS FOR LEAD IN CERTAIN FOOD CATEGORIES (at Step 4) (Agenda Item 5)[9]

21. Brazil, as Chair of the Electronic Working Group (EWG), introduced the item and provided background to the work, a summary of key points of discussion in the EWG and the VWG, and presented the recommendations for consideration by CCCF. The EWG Chair, referring to CRD02, highlighted the proposals for Maximum Levels (MLs) for lead in dried spices and in dried and fresh culinary herbs.

22. CCCF considered the proposals for MLs as follows:

Spices, dried flowers

23. The Chairperson noted general support to discontinue work on the ML for spices, dried flowers.

Conclusion

24. CCCF agreed to discontinue work on an ML for spices, dried flowers.

Spices, dried aril

25. CCCF noted the general support for an ML of 0.9 mg/kg for spices, dried aril and for the following reasons:

26. India stressed that more time/research was needed to collect data to contribute to the establishment of a more geographically representative ML. Brazil, as Chair of the VWG, explained that a new call for data was not expected to provide more geographically representative data as a call for data had already been issued three times, noting at the same time that, if new information would become available in the future, CCCF could revisit the ML.

27. The proposed categories for the MLs were considered appropriate even though India raised the concern that these were developed by CCSCH for internal use only, that for some categories only data were available for limited products and that MLs could better be set on individual spices.

28. CCCF further noted that, even though mace was the only aril spice, specifying MLs only for spices for which data was available might restrict the use of the proposed categories, and that the information on spices included in the data analysis could better be taken in the 'notes for CCCF' column in the Working document for information and used in discussions related to contaminants and toxins in the GSCTFF (CF18 INF/1) rather than as a note to the ML in the GSCTFF.

Conclusion

29. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 0.9 mg/kg for spices for Spices, dried aril, removing the note on mace and to include it in the information document.

Spices, dried seeds, excluding celery seeds

30. CCCF discussed the proposal for 0.9 mg/kg for spices, dried seeds, excluding dried celery seeds, and noted the following comments:

- a higher ML of 3.0 mg/kg for the spices categories dried bark, dried flower parts, dried fruits and berries, including Szechuan pepper and star anise, dried rhizomes, bulbs and roots, and also dried seeds was more appropriate as the dried weight consumption of spice was low otherwise to advance the ML to Step 5 only to allow further discussion on how to implement this ML on mixed spices.
- the rejection rate should not be too far from 5% and that the rejection rate at an ML of 0.9 mg/kg could be therefore supported.
- to specify "ML does not apply to celery seeds" in the notes/remarks in the GSCTFF and not in the commodity/product name.
- India reiterated that more time/research was needed to collect more geographically representative data, including from developing countries.

[9] CX/CF 24/17/5; CX/CF 24/17/5-Add.1

- The EWG and the VWG had not proposed ML(s) for mixture of spices, as the GSCTFF did not establish limits for multi-ingredient products and it was possible to obtain MLs considering the percentage of specific ingredients in the mixture. In addition, the contamination profiles differed between spice mixtures dependent on the ingredients. CCCF noted that the issue of mixtures was not limited to spices, discussed a proposal in CRD37 to include a note in the GSCTFF on the application of individual ML of ingredients to the whole mixture based on their relative proportions in the product and noted the following views:
    - For ingredients without Codex MLs, MLs may be considered as 0 when applying the ML to the mixture;
    - In case the proportions of the ingredient are unknown an alternative approach could be to apply the most conservative/lowest ML to the whole mixture.
    - A note was not necessary as information on calculation of maximum concentration in multi-ingredient foods was already included in Annex I of the GSCTFF.
    - A request was made for an analysis of the available data for spice mixtures in order to determine the concentration range of lead in these products. In response to this request, the JECFA secretariat clarified that such an analysis was possible, but that no information was available on the composition of the spice mixtures which could limit the interpretation.

31. CCCF noted that the Codex Secretariat could issue a Circular Letter (CL) requesting comments on the necessity and content of further guidance for multi-ingredient products.

32. CCCF agreed to request the JECFA secretariat to issue a call for data on lead in spice mixtures and to present an analysis for discussion at CCCF18.

Conclusion

33. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 0.9 mg/kg for spices, dried seeds, excluding dried celery seeds, and to request the Codex Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter requesting comments on the necessity and content of further guidance for multi-ingredient products.

Spices, dried celery seeds

34. CCCF noted the general agreement on the proposal for establishing an ML of 1.5 mg/kg for spices, dried celery seeds, while EU made a proposal for an ML of 0.9 mg/kg as this would be more appropriate based on ALARA and the relevant data.

35. India reiterated that more time/research was needed to collect data to contribute to the establishment of a more geographical representative ML, and that such data should also include relevant information from least developed countries.

Conclusion

36. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 1.5 mg/kg for spices, dried celery seeds.

Spices, dried rhizomes and roots

37. CCCF considered the ML proposal of 1.5 mg/kg for spices, dried rhizomes and roots and noted the following comments:

    - the proposed ML at 1.5 mg/kg presented a rejection rate at 4.8%, which was too close to 5%, and therefore an ML of 2.0 mg/kg was proposed with the rejection rate at 2.8%. Galangal should be excluded from the group should the proposal of 1.5 mg/kg be approved, as galangal contained a higher concentration of lead, and the number of samples did not provide sufficient information to establish a separate ML for it.
    - the ML 1.5 mg/kg was too low considering the occurrence data of dried ginger as the root had a much higher rejection rate than 5%, and 2.0 mg/kg would be more appropriate.
    - The European Union, supported by Indonesia and Egypt, explained that considering the ALARA principle, and with a view of protecting consumer health, an ML of 2.0 mg/kg could not be established.
    - India considered that, based on the data discussed during the EWG and VWG, the proposed MLs were based on one spice only, i.e. ginger and were therefore not representative of the entire group. India further reiterated that more time/research was needed to collect data to contribute to the establishment of a more geographical representative ML.
    - Garlic should be removed from the notes or remarks since it was decided to exclude bulbs from the category.

Conclusion

38. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 2.0 mg/kg for spices, dried rhizomes and roots, including galangal and to remove garlic from the notes/remarks column.

Spices, dried bark

39. CCCF considered the proposal of 3.0 mg/kg for spices, dried bark and noted the following comments:

- the ML of 3.0 mg/kg was a compromise solution agreed upon by the VWG as this had a sample rejection rate of 2.7%, which was considered more appropriate than ghe rejection rate of 4.2% at the level of 2.5 mg/kg.
- an ML of 2.0 mg/kg would be feasible and more appropriate as cinnamon was present in many products destined to children, particularly in pre-packaged foods and in home-made meals, and that children were especially vulnerable to the negative effects of lead.
- EU proposed that an ML of 2.5mg/kg was more suitable for dried bark, also considering a rejection rate of 4.2%.
- A Member noted they had new data available on cinnamon and requested this data to be analysed and not to forward the ML for adoption. The Member further noted that the intake for bark, was only 0.4g per day when highly consumed.
- Brazil, as Chair of the VWG, proposed to establish an ML of 2.5mg/kg a Step 5 and to further consider new data in the following year should such data be made available.
- Members supporting the proposal of the VWG Chair, further requested that any new data that could be reflective of economic adulteration needed to be excluded and that such task would fall on the EWG rather than on GEMS/FOOD and that the EWG could, for example, remove the outliers at the top of the data set as they could increase the high percentage samples. USA offered help in sorting out the data.

Conclusion

40. CCCF agreed to establish a draft ML of 2.5 mg/kg for spices, dried bark, and to request the JECFA Secretariat to issue a call for data with a note that data which could be related to reflective of fraudulent practices should not be submitted and that the EWG would consider the newly collected data in their review.

Spices, dried floral parts

41. While there was general agreement on the proposal for establishing an ML of 2.5 mg/kg for spices, dried floral parts, the European Union noted that considering the ALARA approach and based on the relevant available data for saffron and capers, an ML of 1.0 mg/kg was considered more appropriate. The European Union further noted that according to its data concentration of lead in cloves appeared to be below 0.5 mg/kg so the few samples with concentrations above 2mg/kg could be considered to be outliers. Egypt and Türkiye noted that their data were in line with the ones presented by the European Union and that they would therefore support an ML of 1.0 mg/kg.

42. India proposed to exclude saffron from this category as there were only 15 datapoints available and noted that more time/research was needed to collect data to contribute to the establishment of a more geographically representative ML.

Conclusion

43. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 1.5 mg/kg for spices, dried floral parts.

Spices, dried fruit and berries, excluding dried Sichuan pepper, star anise, paprika and sumac

44. CCCF noted the general support for an ML of 0.6 mg/kg.

45. India noted that more time/research was needed to collect data to contribute to the establishment of a more geographical representative ML.

Conclusion

46. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 0.6 mg/kg for spices, dried fruit and berries, excluding dried Sichuan pepper, star anise, dried paprika and sumac.

Spices, dried paprika and sumac

47. CCCF noted that there was general agreement for the establishment of an ML of 0.8 mg/kg for dried paprika and sumac.

Conclusion

48. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 0.8 mg/kg for spices, dried paprika and sumac.

Spices, dried Sichuan pepper and star anise

49. The European Union noted that based on data available in the EU, a lower ML of 0.8 mg/kg for star anise could be established. The European Union further noted that while they could not agree to an ML of 3.0 mg/kg for star anise, however, they could support an ML of 3.0 mg/kg for dried Sichuan pepper.

50. A Member noted that more data was necessary to establish an ML for Sichuan pepper and Star anise and requested to hold the ML at Step 4 until such data would be made available.

Conclusion

51. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 3.0 mg/kg for spices, dried Sichuan pepper and star anise.

Fresh and dried culinary herbs

52. The Chairperson of CCCF reminded the Committee that CCCF15 agreed that if an agreement for the establishment of MLs on fresh and dried culinary herbs was not reached at CCCF17, work on this category would be discontinued.

Culinary herbs, dried

53. While there was general agreement on the proposal for an ML of 2.5 mg/kg for culinary herbs, dried, the European Union noted that based on the data available in the EFSA database, composed by over 1500 samples for dry culinary herbs, a lower ML of 1.5 mg/kg could be established for dried culinary herbs.

54. Brazil, as Chair of the VWG, noted that this data was not present in the GEMS/FOOD and that the current ML was based on the available data and that if this data should be considered, it could be proposed to adopt the ML at Step 5 in order to allow for data submission. A request could be made to the JECFA secretariat to issue a call for data.

55. A Member proposed to use the term “moisture content” in place of “humidity” in the note to the ML.

Conclusion

56. CCCF agreed to establish an ML of 2.5 mg/kg for dried culinary herbs, to change “humidity” with “moisture content” in the note to the ML, and to request the JECFA Secretariat to issue a call for data for lead in dried culinary herbs and that the EWG should consider new available data in their review.

Fresh culinary herbs

57. CCCF considered the recommendation to discontinue establishment of an ML for fresh culinary herbs.

58. In response to a request for clarification, CCCF noted that the ML for fresh culinary herbs could be derived from the ML for the dried culinary herbs, taking into account the average water content of the fresh and the dry herbs.

59. It was stressed that the note “MLs for fresh culinary herbs can be derived considering the moisture content of the fresh and dry herb” should be deleted based on the decision of CCCF14 to not support the use of concentration factors to derive an ML for fresh culinary herbs.

60. A Member proposed to defer discontinuation of work until the ML for culinary herbs, dried was adopted as the decision on an ML for fresh culinary herbs was contingent on having an ML for dried culinary herbs and it was not sure that there would be an ML for this category would be established.

61. The Codex Secretariat explained that advancing the ML for dried culinary herbs to Step 5 was an indication that an ML for this category of culinary herbs would be established by CCCF.

Conclusion

62. CCCF agreed to discontinue work on lead in fresh culinary herbs, in light of continuation of the development of an ML for dried culinary herbs, and to consider whether or not the note on the use of moisture content to the ML for fresh culinary herbs is warranted.

General Conclusion

63. CCCF agreed to:

    a) forward to CAC47 the following (Appendix II):

        (i) An ML of 0.9 mg/kg for spices, dried aril for adoption at Step 5/8, noting the reservation of India for the reasons explained in paragraph XX;

(ii) An ML of 0.9 mg/kg for dried seeds, excluding celery seeds for adoption at Step 5/8, noting the reservations of India for the reasons explained in paragraph XX;

(iii) An ML of 1.5 mg/kg for dried celery seeds for adoption at Step 5/8, noting the reservations of the European Union and India for the reasons explained in paragraphs XX and XX;

(iv) An ML of 2.0 mg/kg for dried rhizomes and roots for adoption at Step 5/8 noting the reservations of the European Union, Indonesia, Egypt, and India for the reasons explained in paragraphs XX and XX;

(v) An ML of 2.5 mg/kg for dried bark for adoption at Step 5;

(vi) An ML of 1.5 mg/kg for dried floral parts for adoption at Step 5/8, noting the reservations of the European Union, Egypt, Türkiye, and India for the reasons explained in paragraphs XX and XX;

(vii) An ML of 0.6 mg/kg for spices, dried fruit and berries, excluding Sichuan pepper, star anise, paprika and sumac for adoption at Step 5/8, noting the reservation of India for the reasons explained in paragraph XX;

(viii) An ML of 0.8 mg/kg for spices, dried paprika and sumac for adoption at Step 5/8;

(ix) An ML of 3.0 mg/kg for Sichuan pepper and Star anise for adoption at Step 5/8, noting the reservations of the European Union for the reasons explained in paragraph XX; and

(x) An ML of 2.5 mg/kg for dried culinary herbs for adoption at Step 5.

b) Discontinue work on the MLs for dried spice, flowers and for fresh culinary herbs and to inform CAC47 accordingly;

c) Establish an EWG chaired by Brazil, working in English only, to work on MLs for lead in dried bark and dried culinary herbs, to consider the relevance of the note on moisture content to the ML for fresh culinary herbs, for consideration by CCCF18;

d) Request JECFA to issue a call for data for lead in spices, dried bark, including a note not to submit data that could be related to from fraudulent activities and for dried culinary herbs and to perform an analysis of the available data for spice mixtures for consideration by CCCF18; and

e) Request the Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter requesting comments on application of MLs to multi-ingredient products.

SAMPLING PLANS FOR METHYLMERCURY IN FISH (AT STEP 4) (Agenda Item 6)[10]

64. New Zealand, as Chair of the EWG and VWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-chair, Canada, introduced the item, provided background to the work and decisions of previous sessions of the Committee (i.e. to not include monetary value, to continue work to confirm the sampling plans practicality). She explained that information on national sampling plans for methylmercury or other contaminants in fish and data on methylmercury distribution in fish had been requested to inform the work of the EWG.

65. Referring to CRD03, she explained the key decisions of the VWG and indicated that there was agreement on the changes made but that the definition for decision rule had been added on request of the VWG and would need further consideration by CCCF17. She proposed that CCCF17 consider advancing the sampling plan to Step 5/8 noting that:

- the changes made to the sampling plan addressed all written comments submitted and discussions in the EWG and VWG;
- MLs for methylmercury in fish should be accompanied by sampling plans;
- Tissue distribution data on methylmercury was submitted only for tuna, and for shark, alfonsino, marlin, orange roughy and pink cusk eel, this was not likely to become availablein the near future; and
- Practicality of the sampling plan will only be confirmed only once the sampling was in place.

Discussion

66. CCCF17 considered the sampling plan as presented in CRD03 and in addition to editorial corrections, agreed to the definition for the decision rule.

[10] CL 2024/3-CF; CX/CF 24/17/6; CX/CF 24/17/6-Add.1 (Comments of Brazil, Canada, Egypt, European Union, Iraq, Japan, Peru, Suriname, USA and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

67. Noting that all issues had been addressed, CCCF considered the sampling plan ready for advancement in the Step process.

68. One delegation proposed to advance the sampling plan to Step 5 only in order to continue work on the distribution of methyl mercury in fish. The chair of the WG clarified that currently there were no data on this except for tuna and that no new data would become available in the near future, and therefore the sampling plan should be advanced for final adoption.

69. Further points of clarification were requested as follows:

    - whether representative sample referred to the size of a sample, the frequency of the sample or the sample that is mixed before analysis. It was clarified that representative sample referred to taking the correct amount of sample from each size or weight class/category weight from appropriate lots or sublots.
    - whether the sampling plan should be for tuna only in view of the data used. It was clarified that the sampling plan was drafted on the basis of available national sampling plans or national guidances from the seafood industry for methyl mercury in fish in general and was therefore applicable to all fish.

70. CCCF noted an observation that it was important to gain experience on using the sampling plan and that in future CCCF could come back with a revision / amendment if needed.

Conclusion

71. CCCF agreed to:

    (i) forward the sampling plan (Appendix III) to CAC47 for adoption at Step 5/8; and

    (ii) send the sampling plan to CCMAS43 for endorsement.

DEFINITION FOR READY-TO-EAT PEANUTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MAXIMUM LEVEL FOR TOTAL AFLATOXINS IN THIS PRODUCT (Agenda Item 7)[11]

72. India, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item, recalled the decision of CCCF16 to work over 2 years to first develop a definition for ready to eat (RTE) peanuts, followed by data compilation and analysis for the development of the ML for this category of peanuts. She summarized the discussion in the EWG and explained that the definition proposed by the EWG included wide variants of peanuts considered to be ready to eat. The proposed definition had been shared with the GEMS/FOOD administrator who had concluded based on his analysis that it would not be possible to compare AFT concentrations between RTE peanuts and peanuts intended for further processing (FFP).

73. The EWG chair recommended that CCCF consider the proposed definition and to request a call for occurrence data in RTE peanuts after ensuring the implementation of the CoP in line with the definitions from producers and importing countries.

Discussion

74. The WHO representative informed CCCF that the data from GEMS/FOOD supports the work of ML setting in CCCF. He presented the interactions between the GEMS/FOOD administrator and the EWG since 2022, as well as the findings from the available data analysis. The analysis demonstrated the difficulties in discriminating between RTE peanuts and FFP peanuts. More than 80% of the supplied data could not be categorized (Unknown). This emphasized the importance of a high quality description of sampled peanuts. The GEMS/FOOD administrator suggested adopting the Codex definition for RTE treenuts in CXS 193-1995. Its application in classifying samples as RTE/non-RTE will be substantially facilitated in the future by stating whether raw nuts are intended for eating with or without further processing.

75. On the issue of examples in Codex definitions, the Codex Secretariat explained that definitions need to be clear, concise and easy to use and that examples were not normally included in definitions used by CCCF or Codex in general.

76. Concerns were expressed on the aspect of “labelled as RTE” as RTE products are usually readily identifiable and in the case of raw peanuts (shelled or in-shell) these are rarely labelled and only identifiable as RTE at the retail level. This requirement should therefore be removed from the definition. It was noted by a delegation that such a requirement should be retained in the definition and to restrict this requirement to raw peanuts as other RTE peanuts were easily identifiable.

[11] CL 2024/4-CF; CX/CF 24/17/7

77. In relation to the examples, delegations expressed the view that the examples could be removed from the definition, as they were more relevant for data submission and could therefore be a guide in calls for data. Furthermore, concerns were expressed on the inclusion of peanut butter as an example of RTE peanuts since peanut butter was not considered a RTE peanut, but a product derived from peanuts which could contain other ingredients.

78. A delegation noted that the definition by itself would not solve the problem of sorting the data submitted to GEMS/FOOD as the definition would not provide clarity on how data should be submitted and that there was still a lack of clarity in the GEMS/FOOD database especially with regard to raw peanuts, whether thse were RTE or FFP peanuts.

79. The CCCF Chair noted the issue was not so much about the definition, but rather about the guidance that is given on how data is submitted especially in relation to raw peanuts and these could better be considered as two separate issues.

80. The CCCF Chair therefore proposed that the existing definition for RTE treenuts in CXS 193-1995 is used for peanuts. She noted that the issues of data sorting would then have to be addressed. There was the current data set as well as a proposal to have a new call for data. For the new call for data, the call would include guidance that for raw peanuts (shelled or in-shell) it has to be specified whether raw peanuts were FFP or RTE and the call should be clear in which GEMS Food dataset this information should be recorded so to ensure consistency in the reporting and that the call would request data from 2014 onwards.

81. For the current data set, is the CCCF Chair proposed to request the GEMS/FOOD administrator to go back to submitters of the data to clarify whether the products sampled and currently identified as unknown were RTE or for further processing. This would be down to a tight schedule to have the data available by September 2024. If clarification on certain the data cannot be provided in this timeframe, these will not be used for the establishment of the ML, in addition, peanut butter would not be considered RTE peanuts. An additional proposal was made to compare the data before and after 2018. It was clarified by the EWG chair that the analysis will be done for AFT and not the individual aflatoxin components.

Conclusion

82. CCCF agreed to:

(i) apply the existing definition for RTE treenuts in GSCTFF to RTE peanuts;

(ii) establish an EWG chaired by India and co-chaired by USA, working in English, to develop the ML for AFT in RTE peanuts and the associated sampling plan for comments and consideration by CCCF18;

a. to include in the data analysis the elements as described in para XX;

b. the EWG should work closely with the WG on data analysis, should take into account the points raised in REP22/CF15, paras 170 – 177, and to have two rounds of comments.

(iii) request JECFA Secretariat to issue a call for data, with a guidance to specify the raw peanuts as RTE or FFP; and

(iv) request the GEMS/FOOD administrator to clarify with the submitters whether the data currently identified as unknown were RTE or for further processing.

SAMPLING PLANS FOR TOTAL AFLATOXINS AND OCHRATOXIN A IN CERTAIN SPICES (AT STEP 4) (Agenda Item 8)[12]

83. India, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and provided background to the work, a summary of key points of discussion in the EWG and recommendations for consideration by CCCF.

84. India, referring to CRD30rev, highlighted points for discussion:

- Definition for large and small particle sizes;
- Number of Incremental samples for spices with for large particle size (Table 1) and number of incremental samples to be taken depending on the weight of the lot and number of subdivisions of the aggregate sample (Table 2);
- Definition for decision rule; and
- Numeric performance criteria for methods of analysis.

85. The EWG Chair proposed that CCCF provide guidance on the outstanding issues to assist the EWG to continue developing the sampling plan for consideration and finalization by CCCF18.

[12] CL 2024/5-CF; CX/CF 24/17/8

Discussion

General issues

86. CCCF noted that the sampling plan was for total aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in nutmeg, dried chilli and paprika, the spices for which MLs had been established.

Definition for particle sizes (large, small and powdered)

87. CCCF had an exchange on the proposals in CRD30rev and noted the following comments/questions:

- Concerns were expressed on the classification of small particle size and it was questioned whether there was a need for definitions for small particle sizes as the corresponding standards for the spices in question developed by CCSCH already defined the styles of spices, e.g. small can be crushed, cracked, broken and flakes.
- How to define powdered form of spices. It was clarified that it was normally based on sieve size and that consideration could be given to using the ISO definition for this form of spices.

Conclusion

88. CCCF agreed:

- with definition for spices with large particle sizes as whole nutmeg, dried chilli and paprika,
- to define small particle sizes as crushed, cracked, broken and flakes in accordance with the definitions in standards developed by CCSCH, and
- to define powdered spices as spices obtained by grinding.

Incremental sample sizes – Table 1

89. CCCF noted the general support for the incremental sample size of 10 kg. An observer organization, supported by a member country, expressed the view that the heterogeneity of aflatoxin (and ochratoxin A) contamination in batches of large particle size spices is similar to the heterogeneity of aflatoxin contamination in peanuts and treenuts. The proposed decision rule is in line with the decision rule for RTE treenuts provided for in the Codex sampling plans for aflatoxin contamination in RTE treenut and treenuts for further processing in CXS 193. In these sampling plans the incremental sample is 20 kg divided into two 10 kg samples. However, in view of the high value of spices, 10 kg sample size could be considered.

90. CCCF agreed to an incremental sample size of 10kg and in view of this decision, subsequent relevant texts and Table 2 were amended accordingly.

Decision Rule

91. CCCF agreed to align the definition for decision rule with the definition agreed for the sampling plan for methylmercury in fish (Agenda item 6) and to request the EWG to consider the best place for the decision rule, i.e. under each section of the sampling plan where applicable or to have a general statement that it applies to all forms of spices.

Outstanding issues

92. CCCF noted that the following issues required consideration in order to finalize the sampling plan:

- Development of numeric performance criteria and that the proposal presented in CRD34 would be the basis for further consideration; and
- possible amendment of the sampling method for powdered spices. The EU, referring to their written comment (CRD08 Rev) noted that the current proposal was based on the EU sampling plan and results from recent research on the applicability of the sampling plans for powdered spices indicated that the current sampling plan did not guarantee obtaining a sample that is representative for the sampled lot.

93. CCCF noted the offer of the EU to provide the outcomes of the aforementioned research to the EWG to assist the EWG to consider to what extent the sampling method for powdered spices in the sampling plan could be amended. In the meanwhile, based on the preliminary information provided, CCCF agreed to include in square brackets alternate proposals for incremental sample size and aggregate sample weights for powdered spices (section c of the sampling plan) for further consideration by the EWG.

Conclusion

94. CCCF agreed to:

(i) forward the sampling plan to CAC47 for adoption at Step 5 (Appendix IV);

(ii) re-establish the EWG, chaired by India, working in English to consider the outstanding issues with the aim of finalising the sampling plan at CCCF18. The revised sampling plan would be circulated for comments and consideration by CCCF18; and

(iii) request CCEXEC86 to extend the timeline for completion of work to 2025.

CODE OF PRACTICE/GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF CIGUATERA POISONING (AT STEP 4) (Agenda Item 9)[13]

95. The United States of America, Chair of the EWG and PWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-Chairs France, Panama, and Spain, introduced the item and provided a background to the discussions in the EWG and PWG. Referring to CRD29, she explained the key changes made at the PWG and explained that based on comments submitted after the PWG definitions had been included, and the term "prevalence" replaced by "incidence". She noted that the PWG had not identified any outstanding issues to be addressed and proposed that CCCF consider advancing the COP to Step 5/8.

Discussion

96. CCCF noted the general support to advance the CoP to Step 5/8 and in addition to some editorial corrections, noted the following comments/clarifications:

- Clarification on the meaning of sub-chronic exposure. It was explained that this was a standard term used in risk assessment indicating an intermediate exposure duration between acute (less than a day) and chronic (long-term / lifetime) exposure.
- To a question on whether the list of species in Annex I were examples of banned fish mentioned in para. 21 of the COP, it was explained that the list of species in Annex I were those species that were known or associated with CTX based on the FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Ciguatera Poisoning.
- Concerns were expressed on the value of the approaches in para.21, in particular, the approach to ban fish species and that not all measures should be included as some were not practical and implementation of the COP containing these measures could lead to trade problems. It was clarified that para.21 did not mean that the international community agreed with the approaches but that it was merely an inventory of approaches used for the management of ciguatera poisoning.

Annex 2

97. The Codex Secretariat proposed to remove Annex 2 from the COP and to publish it as an information document on the Codex website. She clarified that it was not appropriate to publish references to national / regional authorities in a Codex text. Acknowledging the importance and usefulness of the information, publication as an information document would still make the information available to the user; and would allow easier update of the information without having to go through the Codex step process. With the migration to a new Codex website, there will be a function to indicate to users of Codex texts any associated documents such as information documents and year of publication, thereby facilitating use of such information documents.

98. CCCF agreed with the proposal to remove Annex 2 from the COP and to publish the information in Annex 2 as an information document on the Codex website and as a consequence agreed to amend paras 16 and 39 by removing reference to the annex.

Conclusion

99. CCCF agreed to:

(i) forward the code of practice for the prevention and reduction of ciguatera poisoning (Appendix V) to CAC47 for adoption at Step 5/8; and

(ii) request the Codex Secretariat to publish the information on resources (examples of monitoring programmes and training and guidance resources) as an information document (Appendix VI).

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13 CL 2024/6-CF; CX/CF 24/17/9; CX/CF 24/17/9-Add.1 (Comments of Australia, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, European Union, Iraq, Japan, New Zealand, Panama, Philippines, USA and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

PYRROLIZIDINE ALKALOIDS (Agenda item 10)[14]

100. The European Union, as chair of the EWG, introduced the item and provided a summary of the key points of discussion and recommendations.

101. The EWG Chair stated that there was large agreement on initiating new work to update of the *Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed* (CXC 74-2014), and that different views were expressed in the EWG on the need for a separate code of practice for the prevention and reduction of the presence of pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs) in honey, and on the need for a guidance document for sampling analytical minimum requirements for occurrence data to be submitted to the GEMS/Food database.

Discussion

102. In response to a request for clarification on whether the recommendation implied the establishment of different EWGs, the Chair of the EWG clarified that it was subject to the decision of CCCF on e.g. having a separate code of practice (CoP) for honey, in which case the work would be taken into consideration by a separate EWG, as it would become a different CoP.

103. As for the need for a separate CoP for honey, the EWG Chair further clarified that the measures for weed control as mentioned in CXC 74-2014 might not be all appropriate for the prevention and reduction of presence of PAs in honey due to the limited foraging range of bees. Th EWG Chair further stated that processing of honey might have a higher influence on the presence of PAs than for other foods affected by contamination with PAs. However, in his view, practices for prevention and reduction of PAs in honey could also be addressed through an annex to the existing CoP.

104. In response to a question regarding the aim of the guidance document, the EWG Chair explained that the aim was to draft a supporting document to be used for a call for data, which would provide information on sampling and analytical performance criteria for gathering data. Data collection could help to evaluate the effect of implementation of the CoP, could give further indication of which foods to monitor but would also be needed in case of future establishment of MLs, however for these purposes there were different requirements for data collection. The purpose of a call for data would need to be clearly defined, noting that such a call for data would be issued post CCCF18.

105. A Member sought clarification on the measures that needed to be added to the CoP beside those already included in the text. The EWG Chair clarified that while the weed control measures contained in CXC 74-2014 would be widely applicable, it could benefit from the inclusion of specific measures for the commodities identified by JECFA as of concern for public health, i.e. herbal infusions, tea, food supplements and spices.

Conclusion

106. CCCF agreed:

(i) to further develop the discussion paper on the revision of the *Code of Practice to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed* (CXC 74-2014) which would address also practices for honey to be included in the revised CoP; provide a proposal for the revised CoP as well as a project document;

(ii) to develop a guidance document on sampling and minimum analytical requirements for the collection of data to be submitted to the GEMS/Food contaminants database; and

(iii) to establish an EWG chaired by Türkiye, co-chaired by the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, working in English, to develop the discussion paper.

TROPANE ALKALOIDS (Agenda item 11)[15]

107. China, as Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-chair Saudi Arabia, presented the item and highlighted that the purpose of the discussion paper was to introduce background information on the toxicology, analysis, data, health risk and management related to the presence of tropane alkaloids (TAs) in food to determine follow-up actions for the Committee. The EWG chair explained that there were risk management measures in place that focused on either limiting the noxious seeds in grains, or on MLs or intervention levels for TAs in food.

108. The EWG Chair provided a summary of the discussion at the EWG highlighting that there was general support in EWG to initiate work on a CoP, noting that a CoP including all steps of agricultural practices and processing would be more useful for decreasing TAs in food than establishing MLs at this time. The EWG also recommended to consider issuing a call for data and to request JECFA to do a full risk assessment to determine the necessity for developing MLs in the future.

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14 CX/CF 24/17/10

15 CX/CF 24/17/11

Discussion

109. CCCF noted the general support for the development of a CoP to prevent and reduce the presence of tropane alkaloids in food. The following points were also noted:

- The current discussion paper was on TAs in food, but a revised discussion paper should also look into management of TAs in feed as there is evidence of the transfer of TAs into milk that can be relevant for public health.
- More occurrence data on TAs data related to the harvested crops in the post-harvest and preprocessing stages, could contribute to a better understanding of mitigation and application of GAP;
- A call for data would therefore be helpful and appropriate, but it was premature to request a full JECFA evaluation; and
- It was important, in a call for data or in the submission of data, to mention the stage at which the sample had been taken as, for example, cleaning sorting processes could remove seeds containing TAs.

110. In response to the request for a call for data for tropane alkaloids and food and feed, the FAO JECFA Secretariat confirmed their availability to prepare such a call.

Conclusion

111. CCCF agreed to:

(i) re-establish the EWG chaired by China and co-chaired by Saudi Arabia, working in English, to prepare a revised discussion paper including proposal for a new code of practice and project document for consideration by CCCF18; and

(ii) request the JECFA Secretariat to issue a call for data on tropane alkaloid contamination in food and feed, with guidance to indicate the stage of sampling.

ACRYLAMIDE IN FOODS (Agenda item 12)[16]

112. India, as Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-chair Saudi Arabia, introduced the item, presenting a summary of the discussion paper which included an analysis on the formation in foods of acrylamide, toxicology and epidemiology information, analytical methods, and relevant data. The Chair further presented the recommendation of the EWG, which included revising the *Code of Practice for the Reduction of Acrylamide in Foods* (CXC 67-2009) and consider issuing a call for data.

Discussion

113. CCCF noted the general support for the revision of CXC 67-2009 but that further work was needed to highlight what was needed in the CoP, and to assess the availability of additional or new available mitigation measures which could be included in a revised discussion paper for consideration by CCCF18.

114. CCCF considered that it was premature for a call for occurrence and other data and that this could be considered in future, but that a CL to gather information on mitigation measures/practices would be more appropriate to support the EWG to develop the discussion paper and proposal for a revised CoP.

Conclusion

115. CCCF agreed to:

(i) re-establish an Electronic Working Group, chaired by India and co-chaired by Saudi Arabia, working in English, to develop a discussion paper with a proposal for a draft revised Code of Practice and a project document; and

(ii) to issue a circular letter to collect information on new risk management measures for the reduction of acrylamide.

CADMIUM AND LEAD IN QUINOA (Agenda Item 13)[17]

116. The Representative of the WHO introduced the item on behalf of the Joint FAO/WHO JECFA Secretariats and recalled the request from CCCF16. He explained that a call for data had been issued, the data points obtained for lead and cadmium in quinoa through the GEMS/FOOD database, the analysis undertaken and conclusions that an ML of 0.1 or

16 CX/CF 24/17/12

17 CL 2024/28-CF; CX/CF 24/17/13; CX/CF 24/17/13-Add.1 (Comments of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Japan, Panama, Peru, United Arab Emirates and USA)

0.2 mg/kg for cadmium and lead in quinoa would have little impact on dietary exposure to cadmium and lead, respectively. He recommended that CCCF consider the recommendations as proposed in the paper.

117. The CCCF Chair recalled that CAC40 (2017) had requested CCCF to consider MLs for lead and cadmium in quinoa (extension of the existing MLs for lead and quinoa in cereal grains) and proposed that the Committee consider the recommendations proposed by the Joint FAO/WHO JECFA Secretariats.

Discussion

118. CCCF noted the general support for establishing MLs for cadmium and lead in quinoa for the following reasons:

- MLs for cadmium should be set at levels following the ALARA principle because cereal grains as a group was a serious contributor to exposure to cadmium and in their region, the TWI was exceeded for many consumers. If the commodity group (cereal grains) is split into smaller sub-groups, or individual commodities, then these commodities would have limited contribution to the exposure, however, cereals as a category are relevant contributor to the exposure of both cadmium and lead and therefore setting MLs for the entire group of cereals, including quinoa was supported.
- There was sufficient data for the establishment MLs for cadmium and lead in quinoa, however, separate MLs should be established as quinoa was not a cereal, but a pseudo-cereal. MLs of 0.15 mg/kg for cadmium and 0.2 mg/kg for lead were proposed as these MLs would generate the lowest rejection rates worldwide.
- There was sufficient evidence to extend the existing MLs for cereal grains to quinoa, i.e. 0.1 mg/kg for cadmium and 0.2 for lead.
- On the basis of the evidence presented, there was no need to establish MLs for cadmium or lead in quinoa, however, if other members were of the opinion that MLs should be developed, then an ML of 0.15 mg/kg for both cadmium and lead could be supported.

119. Noting the general support for establishing MLs for cadmium and lead separate from the cereal grains, the Chair proposed that CCCF consider an ML of 0.15mg/kg for cadmium and 0.2 mg/kg for lead.

120. CCCF agreed with the proposals and as a consequence of this decision agreed that a consequential amendment to the MLs for cadmium and lead was needed, i.e. to delete quinoa from the notes/remarks column.

Conclusion

121. CCCF agreed to forward:

(i) the ML for cadmium and lead in quinoa (Appendix VII, Part 1).

(ii) the consequential amendment to the ML for cadmium and lead in cereal grains (Appendix xxx, Part B) to CAC47 for adoption.

REVIEW OF THE *CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF AFLATOXIN CONTAMINATION IN PEANUTS* (CXC 55-2004) (Agenda Item 14)[18]

122. Brazil, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item, provided background to the work, a summary of discussions in the EWG and its recommendations. She highlighted that new measures / practices had been identified for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxin contamination in peanuts that support the revision of CXC 55-2004 and that the EWG had prepared a proposal for such revision to support this new work.

Discussion

123. CCCF noted the general support to start new work on the revision of the *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004) and made slight amendments to the project document to indicate that this new work would be to support the implementation of MLs for AFT in peanuts.

124. To a comment on also addressing feed in CXC 55-2004, and merging this work with the revision of *Code of Practice for the Reductio of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feedingstuffs for Milk-producing Animals* (CXC 45-1997) (Agenda item 15).

125. CCCF noted:

- that the scope of CXC 55-2004 was limited to peanuts for human consumption but that the EWG could consider possible extension of the scope to animal feed; and

[18] CX/CF 24/17/14

- that merging of the CoP with the the *Code of Practice for the Reductio of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feedingstuffs for Milk-producing Animals* could be considered under Agenda item 15.

Conclusion

126. CCCF agreed to:

(i) start new work on the revision of *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004);

(ii) forward the project document (Appendix VIII) to CAC47 for approval; and

(iii) establish an EWG, chaired by Brazil and co-chaired by India, working in English, to prepare a proposed revision of the CoP for comments and consideration by CCCF18.

REVIEW OF THE *CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE REDUCTION OF AFLATOXIN B1 IN RAW MATERIALS AND SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDINGSTUFFS FOR MILK-PRODUCING ANIMALS* (*CXC 45-1997)* (Agenda Item 15)[19]

127. Canada, as Chair of the EWG, also speaking on behalf of the co-Chairs Japan and USA, introduced the item, provided background to the work, and summarized key points of discussion and the recommendations to CCCF. The EWG Chair explained that the development of the current discussion paper was a result of the work in the Working group on the Review of Codex Standards for Contaminants (agenda item 18), and that this CoP was identified as a priority for revision.

128. The EWG Chair in particular highlighted some of the new/additional measures identified in the CX 24/17/15 to control AFB1 in raw materials and supplemental feedingstuffs for milk-producing animals and other possible revisions that might be needed for the CoP. She noted that revision of CXC 45-1997 would draw on information from other CoPs relevant to animal feed, i.e. *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals* (CXC 51-2003), Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Tree Nuts (CXC 59-2008) and *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004) and drew the attention to possible overlap with these CoPs and suggested that consideration should be given on how to leverage information from these CoPs. She proposed that the EWG be re-established to further develop the discussion paper and include a proposal for the revision of the COP for consideration by CCCF18.

Discussion

129. CCCF generally agreed that there was sufficient information available for the revision of the CoP, and agreed with the recommendation to further develop the discussion paper. CCCF further noted the following observations:

- Concerns were raised with the use of some chemicals as mitigation measures and its possible impact on the quality of feed;
- Other CoPs of relevance should be taken into account in the revision of the CXC 45-1997. CXC 51-2003 is of the most relevance and should be considered for alignment and that CXC 59-2008 and CXC 55-2004 was of less relevance and could be taken into account the revision of the *Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding* (CXG 54-2004), but of lesser priority for future alignment; and
- The term “animal-derived” should be deleted as the usage of the term animal-derived milk and milk product seems to imply the possibility of using non-animal derived milk and milk products which would contradict the Codex definition for milk contained in the *General Standard for The Use of Dairy Terms* (CXS 206-1999).

130. On the question of alignment or merging of related Codex texts to avoid duplication, inconsistencies and overlap, the Codex Secretariat stressed that while it was important to ensure alignment, this could be considered as separate work in the future and proposed that in the review of CXC 54-2004, issues of inconsistencies with other related texts could be flagged for possible action by the Committee, i.e. proposing consequential amendments.

Conclusion

131. CCCF agreed to:

(i) Re-establish the EWG chaired by Canada and co-chaired by Saudi Arabia working in English to revise the discussion paper, with a proposal for a revised CoP and a project document for new work; and

(ii) To consider in future how the different CoPs could be integrated or merged to avoid overlap, inconsistencies and redundancies.

132. The CCCF Chair in concluding this item, noted the decision to continue the development of the discussion paper in the

[19] CX/CF 24/17/15

EWG in order to have another year of discussion, to allow inclusion of a draft CoP to have a better basis for decision on starting new work. She noted that, as this practice was already applied several times in CCCF, this could be a common working practice for the Committee, i.e. first develop a discussion paper which contains a proposal for a new or revised CoP and the project document. This approach would allow CCCF to determine the feasibility of finalizing the work in a timely manner.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF CADMIUM CONTAMINATION IN FOODS (Agenda item 16)[20]

133. The United States of America introduced the item recalling that development of the discussion paper followed from comments in the working group on the Review of Codex standards for contaminants (item 18) that a code of practice should be considered prior to review or revision of cadmium MLs. She explained that the aim of the discussion paper was to present risk management practices to support the development of a CoP for the prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in foods. She also explained that the previous Codex work on cadmium, most recently the *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Cadmium Contamination in Cocoa Beans (CXC 81-2022)* had served as a basis for the proposed CoP.

134. The United States of America pointed out that based on risk management practices identified from the literature review and information provided by Codex Members, there was sufficient data to support a code of practice. She further noted that while additional information from Members would be needed to further develop the CoP, input was required on whether there was a need for development of annexes that could contain commodity-specific recommendations.

Discussion

135. CCCF noted the general support for the development of a CoP for the prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in foods, and the following points:

- there was enough information to start work on the CoP;
- considering the various factors affecting cadmium levels in seafood, regional or national specific mitigation measures, such as consumer advice or regional standards, may also be considered and appropriate;
- the development of annexes that could contain commodity-specific recommendations would depend on the information provided to the EWG, i.e. whether they were detailed or specific enough to warrant commodity-specific annexes; and
- If commodity specific annexes were developed, foods that contribute significantly to cadmium exposure such as rice, cereals and cereal products, vegetables, fish and seafood should be prioritized.

Conclusion

136. CCCF agreed to:

(i) start new work on a code of practice for the prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in foods,

(ii) forward the project document to CAC47 for approval (Appendix IX); and

(iii) establish an EWG chaired by the United States of America, working in English, to develop a code of practice for the prevention of reduction of cadmium contamination in foods for circulation for comments and consideration by CCCF18; and to determine the need for development of annexes with commodity specific recommendations.

GUIDANCE ON DATA ANALYSIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MAXIMUM LEVELS AND FOR IMPROVED DATA COLLECTION (Agenda Item 17)[21]

137. The European Union, as Chair of the WG, and also on behalf of the co-Chairs Japan, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), and United States of America, introduced the item and summarized the discussion that had taken in place in the WG meeting held prior to the session.

138. The Chair of the WG recalled that CCCF16 agreed on the changes to be proposed on the GEMS/Food database template to improve data collection[22]. Preliminary feedback was provided by the GEMS/Food database administrator. The feedback was preliminary given the late request and the time needed to discuss certain proposed changes with the

20 CX/CF 24/17/16
21 CX/CF 24/17/17
22 REP23/CF16, paragraph 98 (i)

GEMS/Food database template developers.

139. The Chair of the WG also highlighted that the WG discussed and agreed on the feedback to be provided to the GEMS/Food Database administrator based on the preliminary comments on the changes proposed by CCCF16 on the GEMS/Food database template (see CRD07 paragraph 15). No comments were made by the Plenary on the feedback that had been agreed in the WG.

140. Due to time constraints, there was no discussion in the WG on:

- the topics for the sections "Data selection/clean-up" and "statistical data analysis", in particular the matter regarding the merging/combining of certain topics from the section "statistical data analysis" with topics of the section "data selection/clean-up";
- the topics for which further discussion and a check for completeness was needed; and
- confirming the correctness of the integration of the outcome of the discussions at CCCF16 into the sections "Data selection/clean up" and "statistical data-analysis".

141. Further details on these matters have been provided for information in CRD07 Annex II, III and IV respectively.

New work procedure

142. As the work on the Draft Guidance on data analysis for development of maximum levels (MLs) and for improved data collection had not progressed as initially foreseen, due to the inactivity of the Chair of the EWG, another work procedure was presented for discussion at CCCF17.

143. The EWG Chair proposed that as the guidelines on data analysis were being developed for internal CCCF working procedure, this work could be undertaken in a pre-session working group (which could operate in a physical or virtual mode) or an in-session working group (hereafter referred to as "the WG") similar to the format taken to manage work on the Follow-up to the outcomes of JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert consultations, and the Review of Codex standards for contaminants. Consideration would be given to convening virtual working group (VWG) meetings to discuss and advance the work on certain sections of the guidance document. The outcome of the VWGs would be circulated for comments via a circular letter and the comments would be discussed in a pre-session WG (virtual or physical) or an in-session WG. The Codex EWG Platform would also be used to facilitate this work.

144. The EWG Chair further proposed that the chairmanship structure be retained with the European Union as Chair, and Japan, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), and United States of America as Co-Chairs.

Work for the coming year

145. The EWG Chair proposed that the work during the coming year would focus on:

- finalizing the modifications to the GEMS/Food database template and related guidance. It was foreseen to organize one VWG meeting to discuss on data collection and submission and data extraction; and
- the discussion on the structure and the content of the main document with a decision on which of the more complex issues were to be addressed in the future in separate Annex(es) to the main document. It was foreseen to organize one other VWG to discuss this part.

146. Following the discussions at the VWG, it could be considered if one round of comments within the EWG would be appropriate before the main document on these parts would be finalized for circulation as a CL to gather comments.

Discussion

147. One Member recalled that under Agenda item 5, MLs for lead had been established in various spices even when the data was based on a small number of samples collected. The Member requested for a cut-off on the number of samples to be included in the document, to ensure that MLs are propagated to food categories in a scientific manner. The EWG Chair clarified that in the establishment of the lead MLs, the guidance had already been applied appropriately. As there had already been 3 to 4 calls for data related to the elaboration of the MLs for lead, it would be CCCF's responsibility to proceed with an ML to protect public health even if these multiple requests and opportunities had not yielded a high amount of data.

148. CCCF17 agreed with the intention to produce a draft document that would provide practical guidance to the EWG performing data analysis for the development of MLs, for consideration by CCCF18. CCCF17 also agreed that in the future, the more complex issues identified would be addressed in separate annexes that would be developed and discussed post-CCCF18, following completion of the main guidance, together with the issues identified for future discussion (see Appendix II of CX/CF 24/17/17 and CRD07 Annex III).

Conclusion

149. CCCF agreed:

(i) on the feedback to be provided to the GEMS/Food database administrator based on the preliminary comments on the changes proposed by CCCF16 on the GEMS/Food database template as outlined in paragraph 15 of CRD07; and

(ii) on the proposed new work procedure for finalizing the Guidance on data analysis for development of maximum levels (MLs) and for improved data collection as outlined in paragraphs XX to XX.

REVIEW OF CODEX STANDARDS FOR CONTAMINANTS (Agenda item 18)[23]

150. Canada, as Chair of the VWG, introduced the item, summarized the key points of discussion of the VWG held prior to the Session and highlighted the seven recommendations made at the VWG as outlined in paragraphs 23 of CRD04 Rev, including recommendations for the edits to the OHPL, additions and deletions to the Lists A, and B and Member country volunteers to take on new work.

151. He noted that the VWG were of the opinion that qualitative evaluation criteria and the performance indicators provided sufficient information to evaluate the establishment framework and that no quantitative evaluation would need to be developed.

152. The Chair also emphasized that the VWG agreed to maintain the prioritization of existing Codex contaminant standards for review as an annual CCCF agenda item, based on a flexible approach which would not increase the administrative burden, resulting in clear rationales for updating standards. The Chair concluded the intervention by recommending soliciting relevant information every year via CL, presenting consequent recommendations to the pre-session working groups and the plenary as needed, and while noting that this exercise had already resulted in new work being undertaken, encouraged members to take up further new work from the OHPL as it was important that existing standards reflect current science.

Discussion

153. The Codex Secretariat reminded CCCF that under Agenda item 2, the Committee discussed the request from CCMAS42 to evaluate the sampling plans in CXS 193 – 1995, to determine if the plans were still within the revised *General Guidelines on Sampling* (CXG 50-2004).

154. In response to this intervention, the WG Chair noted that such a request did not fit into the existing framework, that more time was needed to reflect on possible options and that further consideration on how to proceed could be requested to Codex Members and Observers via a circular letter.

155. CCCF, recalling that 2024 signaled the end of the trial period established at CCCF14, commended the work of the EWG noting that the review of Codex standard would become a standing item on the agenda of CCCF.

Conclusion

156. CCCF agreed:

(i) with the editorial amendments to Lists A, B and OHPL;

(ii) to maintain the prioritization of existing Codex contaminant standards for review as an annual CCCF agenda item;

(iii) to solicit information annually via a Circular Letter and that Canada would present recommendations to plenary; and

(iv) to hold pre-session WG meetings chaired by Canada as needed.

FOLLOW-UP WORK TO THE OUTCOMES OF JECFA EVALUATIONS AND FAO/WHO EXPERT CONSULTATIONS (Agenda Item 19)[24]

157. The European Union, as Chair of the VWG, introduced the item and summarized the key points of discussions in the VWG held prior to the Session, as contained in CRD05. The VWG Chair presented recommendations on possible follow-up actions to the outcomes of JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert consultations which were on the outcome of the FAO/WHO expert consultation on Risks and Benefits of Fish Consumption and a re-iteration on the follow-up to JECFA

23 REP23/CF16, para. 105; CX/CF 24/17/18

24 REP23/CF16 para. 113; CX/CF 24/17/3

evaluations on ergot alkaloids and T-2, HT-2 toxin and diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS).

158. The EWG Chair highlighted that the FAO/WHO expert consultation on Risks and Benefits of Fish Consumption was held in October 2023 and the summary and conclusions[25] of the consultation have been published. The Committee was informed that the full report would be available prior to CCCF18. In the VWG, the following two recommendations from the summary and conclusions were highlighted for follow-up while awaiting the publication of the full report:

- Collect standardized data on fish contaminants and nutrients; and
- Develop, maintain and improve existing databases on levels and trends over time of specific contaminants, in particular MeHg, dioxins and dl-PCBs, as well as nutrient content, such as selenium and long chain omega-3 fatty acids (LCn3PUFAs), for fish consumed by region.

159. No concrete proposals for follow-up to these recommendations were proposed and discussed in the VWG but it was highlighted that this was related to the ongoing discussions on the Guidance on data analysis for development of maximum levels and for improved data collection (Agenda item 17), in particular the part of the guidance on data collection and submission.

160. At the VWG, it was brought to the attention of Members that while the WG in the previous year agreed to follow-up on the JECFA evaluation on ergot alkaloids and T-2, HT-toxin and diacetoxyscirpenol, no member country volunteered to take up the work at CCCF16. No objection was raised at the WG this year to forward the recommendation, which was agreed at the WG in the previous year with slight updates, for consideration by CCCF17:

- as regards ergot alkaloids, to establish an EWG, working in English, to prepare a discussion paper on ergot alkaloids to look into the need and feasibility of possible follow-up actions for consideration by CCCF18. In this discussion paper, analytical performance characteristics as guidance for generation and submission of data to the GEMS/Food database should be considered in view of issuing a call for data on the presence of ergot alkaloids in food and feed; and
- as regards T-2, HT-2 and diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS), to establish an EWG, working in English, to prepare a discussion paper on T-2, HT-2 and DAS to look into the need and feasibility of possible follow-up actions for consideration by CCCF18. In this discussion paper, analytical performance characteristics as guidance for generation and submission of data to the GEMS/Food database should be considered in view of issuing a call for data on the presence of T-2, HT-2 and diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS) in food and feed.

161. It was also noted that no member country volunteered at the VWG this year to take up the work on preparing a discussion paper on ergot alkaloids and on T-2, HT-2 and diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS).

162. The VWG requested CCCF17 to consider if the WG should be reconvened for CCCF18f no remaining issues would be identified, given that there were no JECFA evaluations on contaminants/toxins scheduled prior to CCCF18. Upon this request, the CCCF Chair proposed to merge this WG with the WG on the Priority list of contaminants for evaluation by JECFA. USA, as chair of this WG, was willing to chair this merged WG.

163. A suggestion was made at the VWG to list all the previous JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert consultations with an indication of the follow-up given by CCCF, i.e. discussion paper and/or Code of Practice and/or establishment of MLs. The VWG Chair updated that a first draft of the inventory has been provided as Annex to the Report of the VWG (CRD05). The VWG Chair added that the preliminary list contained all JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert consultations of relevance for CCCF. Certain contaminants have been evaluated several times and the follow-up had been provided to the last full evaluation of the contaminant by JECFA, even if certain follow-up actions were already undertaken following previous JECFA evaluations or not directly related to the JECFA evaluation. The VWG Chair invited CCCF17 to consider the inventory of previous JECFA evaluations or FAO/WHO expert consultations on which no or no complete follow-up was undertaken.

Discussion

164. Japan, in noting its usefulness, offered to assist in updating the list of all previous JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert consultations and their follow-up, (see para. xx). It was suggested by the VWG chair that it would be useful to separate the recent and older evaluations and to include the list of older evaluations as an annex in the working document for information and use in discussions on contaminants and toxins in the GSCTFF (CF/INF1).

165. The USA noted that while this INF document was not usually discussed at CCCF meetings, it was a helpful resource to learn about the history of Codex standards on contaminants and expressed her appreciation to Japan and the

[25] https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/ad-hoc-joint-fao-who-expert-consultation-on-risks-and-benefits-of-fish-consumption

Netherlands for preparing this document and proposed to have the shorter list of more recent evaluations as part of the report of the outcomes of the working group on the priority list / follow-up to JECFA evaluations.

166. CCCF noted that Japan and the USA would coordinate the separation of the recent and older evaluations to be maintained as separate lists as described in para xx.

Conclusion

167. CCCF agreed to:

(i) address the recommendations "Collect standardized data on fish contaminants" and "Develop, maintain and improve existing databases on levels and trends over time of specific contaminants, in particular MeHg, dioxins and dl-PCBs" in the frame of the ongoing discussions on the Guidance on data analysis for development of maximum levels and for improved data collection, in particular the part of the guidance on data collection and submission (Agenda item 17);

(ii) reconsider the elaboration of a discussion paper on the need and feasibility of possible follow-up actions on ergot alkaloids and trichothecenes T-2, HT-2 and DAS at CCCF18 by integrating these evaluations in the inventory of follow-up to previous JECFA evaluations (paragraph xx);

(iii) merge this WG with the WG on the priority list of contaminants for evaluation by JECFA and that USA would chair this merged WG. The Chair of the WG priority list of contaminants for evaluation by JEFA (United States of America) agreed on this merger; and

(iv) separate the inventory of the follow-up to JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert in recent and older evaluations; that the list of more recent evaluations would be part of the report of the merged WG on the priority list / follow-up to JECFA evaluations and that the list of older evaluations would be included as an Annex to the INF document), which was updated yearly by Japan and the Netherlands.

PRIORITY LIST OF CONTAMINANTS FOR EVALUATION BY JECFA (Agenda item 20)[26]

168. The United States of America (USA), as Chair of the VWG, introduced the item and summarized the key points of discussion in the VWG held prior to the Session. The VWG Chair presented recommendations on amendments to the priority list based on comments in reply to CL 2023/95-CF and those received during the VWG including updates on data availability for Dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs, Arsenic (inorganic and organic), Thallium, and PFAS.

169. In addition, the Chair also recalled that at CCCF16, a proposal for addition of ethylene oxide (EtO) and 2-chloroethanol (2-CE) to the priority list be deferred for consideration until the following year to request input from the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR). The Chair noted that, following the recommendation from CCPR (Agenda item 2), the VWG recommended to add EtO and 2-CE to the priority list. The Chair of the WG concluded that in response to a request from CCC16, a table summarizing matters for action by the JECFA Secretariat had been prepared for inclusion in the report.

170. In response to a question, the FAO Representative clarified that a call for data for EtO and 2-CE would be issued once the Joint FAO/WHO JECFA Secretariat had determined when this evaluation could be carried out by JECFA, taking also into account other work priorities, resources, as well as confirmation of data availability (to be confirmed at CCCF18).

Conclusion

171. CCCF agreed to:

(i) endorse the priority list as amended (Appendix X);

(ii) continue to request comments and/or information on the priority list for consideration by CCCF18; and

(iii) re-convene the in-session WG at CCCF18 chaired by the United States of America.

FORESIGHT ON EMERGING ISSUES IN FOOD AND FEED SAFETY RELEVANT TO CONTAMINANTS (Agenda Item 21)[27]

172. The CCCF Chairperson introduced the item by recalling the side event on foresight held during CCCF17 (2023) and the subsequent decision of the Committee to include an agenda item for exchange of information on Member activities in the field of emerging issues relevant to the work of the Committee.

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26 REP23/CF16, Appendix VII; CX/CF 24/17/19

27 REP23/CF16, paras. 135 and 138; CX/CF 14/17/20; CL 2024/7-CF

Discussion

173. CCCF noted the information provided by Members in reply to CL 2024/7-CF, including:

- The document submitted by New Zealand on Environmental Inhibitors (EIs) which also informed CCCF delegates of their proposal to hold informal workshops on EIs as side events to the forthcoming Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) and the Codex Committee on Residues from Veterinary Drug in Foods (CCRVDF) meetings. New Zealand further mentioned that these workshops would help facilitate recognition and understanding of the importance of environmental inhibitors to advancing global interests around mitigating the impact of climate change, transforming food systems while advancing broader food security and sustainability goals;
- The document submitted by the European Union on their ongoing activities on emerging issues in food and feed safety relevant to contaminants, which included, *inter alia*, information on:
    - the mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOHs) including their subcategories, mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH) and mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH);
    - heavy metals in algae; and
    - quinolizidine alkaloids in lupins and lupin-derived food.

174. The FAO Representative expressed his appreciation for the information provided by Members on emerging issues. In this respect, the Representative reminded CCCF of the results of the FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Seaweed (2021) noting at the same time that plant-based food products and their associated food safety issues, was one of the focus areas of the recently held FAO foresight meeting (2023).

Conclusion

175. CCCF:

(i) thanked the Members for the information submitted;

(ii) agreed to remove foresight as a standing agenda item of the committee and to organize a side event at CCCF18 to have further exchange on this topic; and

(iii) agreed to issue a circular letter to gather more information on emerging issues relevant to the work of the Committee.

176. CCCF also noted that modalities to discuss MOH, MOSH, MOAH, heavy metals in algae and quinolizidine alkaloids in lupins and lupin-derived food would be further discussed under Agenda item 22.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 22)

Review of proposed agenda for CCCF18

177. The Assistant to the Chair did a stock take of all decisions taken at the Session to provide an overview of the agenda for the next Session. CCCF confirmed the decisions taken under the relevant agenda items for inclusion in the agenda for CCCF18.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 23)

178. CCCF was informed that CCCF18 was scheduled from 23-27 June 2025, the final arrangement subject to confirmation by the Host Country and the Codex Secretariats.