

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 9

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS

Fifth Session

Virtual, 20 - 29 April 2021

Report of the In-session Working Group on Priorities, Standard Layout, and Group Standards

(Prepared by the United States of America)

The in session working group was chaired by the United States and co-chaired by India.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the working group: Under Agenda Item 9.1 of CCSC5 23/04/2021

Terms of Reference (TOR) for the CCSC5 In-Session Working Group:

1. Review the proposals for new work:

- Reply to CL 2017/67-SCH, July 2017: (Work outstanding from CCSC4) Dried and dehydrated turmeric submitted by India
- Small cardamom: jointly submitted by India and the Islamic Republic of Iran
- Proposed group standard for spices derived from dried fruits and berries submitted by the United States.

2. Review the draft CCSC5 General Standard Template for Spices and Culinary Herbs, based on Agenda item 2, Matters Referred by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies - Matters for Action. (CX/SCH 21/5/2):

- The 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL45)
 - 8.3 Country of Origin/Country of Harvest
 - 8.5 Inspection Mark
- The 51st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA51).
 - Food Additives.

Review the Proposals for New Work

The working group chair reminded the meeting that CCSC4 (2019) considered a proposal for turmeric from India and two proposals for small cardamom, from India and the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, because of the committee's current workload, the Committee (CCSC4) declined to submit new work proposals to CAC for approval. Meanwhile, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran, were advised to combine their small cardamom proposals, and India was requested to revise their turmeric proposal for submission to CCSC5. The United States developed a proposal for a group standard for spices derived from dried fruits and berries that includes allspice, juniper berry, star anise, and vanilla for submission at CCSC5.

The delegates were reminded that the proposals were posted early on the Codex website giving all delegations ample opportunities to read draft proposals and prepare comments ahead of time due to working group time constraints. The new proposals were summarized and discussed in the in-session working group.

Recommendation

1. The in-session working group reviewed the draft proposals and found them in compliance with Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities- Criteria Applicable to Commodities as set out in the Codex Procedural Manual and recommended that the CCSC5 submit them to the CAC for approval as new work. There were no objections expressed by the delegates.
2. The chair recommended that the proposal for small cardamom be combined with the proposal for the group standard for spices derived from dried fruits and berries because small cardamom is one of the named spices in the listing for dried fruits and berries.

3. The chair recommended that the delegations that submitted the proposals discuss the issues in advance of CCSC5 submission of proposals for new work to the CAC44 for approval. Members who submitted proposals were asked to undertake a final review of their proposals, including referencing the latest CAC strategic plan.

The chair informed the delegates that when compared by volume of other agricultural products (i.e. fruits and vegetables) internationally traded, the volume of dried SCH are much lower, however, SCH are have higher monetary value per weight of measure than other commodities. Production trade and value data for some spices in dried fruits and berries group are not readily available due to the practice of placing these spices together without individual production and trade data. Most of these spices in the dried fruits and berries group fall under the general spice heading including those used by FAOSTAT and the Harmonized Tariff System (HTS). This lack of data directly impacts the preparation of proposals for the development of SCH for both individual and grouping standards. Therefore, it is vital for producing and exporting countries to share product specific data to facilitate the ongoing development of SCH Standards.

2. Review the draft CCSC General Standard Template for Spices and Culinary Herbs - Matters for Action from the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL45).

The WG was informed that the CCSC5 is already implementing the advice from CCFL45 on Section 8, the labelling provisions of the standard layout in the draft standards that are being discussed at this session. These labelling provisions include the indication of the country of origin as mandatory, while the country of harvest is optional, and Section 8.5 Inspection Mark will be deleted. In addition, the advice from the 51st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA51) concerning Section 4. Food Additives of the standard layout was also implemented.

The group standard format was discussed, and many delegates expressed their support. A demonstration on the addition of more SCH from the same group to a completed group standard was made to the satisfaction of members. It was also indicated that the group standards may not facilitate the SCH having very complicated Chemical and physical characteristics such as Black, White and Green Peppers (CXS 326-2017). When such cases are encountered an individual standard would be best.

Some delegations expressed the need to simplify the Physical Characteristics section in SCH standards (group and individual), by combining some of the named defects in the table under the name "Foreign Matter". It was agreed that this would be explored along with other points raised concerning the standard layout during its review.

Recommendation

The chair recommended that it would be best for the standard layout to be revised by a working group of delegations completing the task through several round of discussions prior to the CCSC6.