CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION E

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

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Agenda Item 3 **CX/CF 15/9/3**
February 2015

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS

9th Session
New Delhi, India, 16 – 20 March 2015

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO (INCLUDING JECFA)

1. This document provides information on FAO and WHO activities in the area of provision of scientific advice to Codex and Member countries, as well as other activities which are of interest to CCCF.

Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)

2. Since the last session of the CCCF, two JECFA meetings (ie JECFA 78th and 79th) have been convened. These meeting addressed veterinary drug residues (JECFA 78th), and food additives and flavoring agents (JECFA 79th). The reports and detailed monographs from these meetings are available at the relevant FAO and WHO sites:

FAO: www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/scientific-advice/jecfa/en/

WHO: www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/jecfa/en/

3. The 80th meeting of JECFA will be held on 16 - 25 June 2015 in Rome, Italy. Besides several food additives the meeting will also evaluate the following contaminants: non-dioxin-like PCBs and pyrrolizidine alkaloids..

Requests for scientific advice

4. Both organizations continue to jointly prioritise the requests for scientific advice taking into consideration the criteria proposed by Codex as well as the requests for advice from Member Countries and the availability of resources. A list of all pending requests for scientific advice by JECFA will be posted on the respective FAO and WHO websites.

5. In scheduling the JECFA meetings and developing the agenda, the Joint Secretaries have to take into account the priorities requested by CCFA, CCCF, and CCRVDF, and due to the increasing requests for scientific advice by JECFA not all requests can be addressed in the subsequent meeting. In prioritizing the work the JECFA Secretariat takes into account existing criteria, on-going Codex work and available resources.

6. To facilitate provision of extra-budgetary resources for scientific advice activities FAO and WHO established the Global Initiative for Food-related Scientific Advice (GIFSA). For additional information and advice on the procedure for making a contribution, contact Ms Dominique Di Biase, Policy Assistance and Resources Mobilization Division(Dominique.DiBiase@fao.org; Tel: + 39 06 57055391) at FAO; and Dr Angelika Tritscher, Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses, WHO (jecfa@who.int); Tel: + 41 22 7913569).

GEMS/Food programme

7. FAO and WHO encourage Member States to submit analytical data intended to be used by Codex Committees and working groups through the GEMS/Food contaminant database (https://extranet.who.int/gemsfood/).

8. GEMS/Food contaminant database is a web-based platform to allow the submission of data on food contamination from different countries and institutions. As one of the major user of occurrence data for chemicals in food, a restricted access can be provided upon request to CCCF working group leaders to extract data submitted. A guidance document is available for CCCF on how to extract and how to analyze the data in a consistent way.

9. Also a dashboard enables other users to select a particular contaminant from the GEMS/Food contaminants database and view the average levels of detection by commodity, the total number of samples and the percentage of commodities that make up the total. User may also filter the results by food name, food origin and WHO Region. Data displayed on this dashboard are mean-lower bound for individual results. These are is available at
https://extranet.who.int/sree/Reports?op=vs&path=/WHO_HQ_Reports/G7/PROD/EXT/GEMS_contaminants

Global Food Consumption Database

10. FAO and WHO have commenced new work to collate available sex and age disaggregated food consumption data collected at individual level to make this information readily accessible, and easily referenced and cross linked to other existing global databases e.g. FAOSTAT, GEMS Cluster Diets. A database of summary statistics has been developed (CIFOCOss: FAO/WHO Chronic Individual Food Consumption Data summary statistics) and a comprehensive database collating micro data is under development The Database will serve three main end uses: 1) assess dietary exposure to chemicals and biological agents; 2) assess nutrient intake to inform agriculture and nutrition policies and programmes; 3) assess the environmental impact of food consumption patterns.

11. In the context of Codex work, improved exposure data at country level, will be useful to a range of Codex Committees (CCCF, CCFFP, CCFA among others), in setting MLs and developing related codes of practice. Clearly, this database will have additional clear benefits to developing national nutrition and food safety policy and decisions.

12. Development of this database will borrow heavily from the process that has led to the development of the EU comprehensive database within the European Food Safety Authority but with an emphasis on data from low and middle income countries. (http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/datexfoodcdb/datexfooddb.htm).

Total Diet Study as a tool to assess food chemical contamination

13. The regional Total Diet Study (TDS) to assess food chemical contamination in sub- Saharan Africa, supported by STDF and involving 4 countries i.e. Benin, Cameroon, Mali and Nigeria, started in May 2014. The project implementation will be technically back-stopped by FAO and WHO. The regional kick off meeting convened in October in collaboration with the regional coordinator of the project, the Centre Pasteur Cameroon. National stakeholder meetings should be organized before the end of the year to agree on the priorities for chemicals and foods to be sampled and analysed. Other activities planned include training for national technicians involved in the collection, preparation, transportation and storage of samples, acquisition of food sampling and preparation tools; and preparation of food consumption data.

14. A National Workshop on Total Diet Studies held in June 17-19, 2014 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The aim of this workshop is to share experience and knowledge in order to provide technical assistance to the Indonesian Ministry of Health in the preparation for the first national TDS.

15. A project preparation grant was allocated by the STDF (Standard for Trade and Development Facility) to design a regional Total Diet Study in Latin America and Caribbean.

Handbook on Risk Communication in food safety

16. FAO/WHO have finalized an handbook on Risk Communication in food safety which provides guidance on the good risk communication principles and practices and includes hands-on training materials (case-studies) for developing effective risk communication capacity across national agencies sharing responsibility in food safety. The handbook was pre-tested during regional training workshop in Budapest in June 2014 and will soon be available on line.

FAO/AU-IBAR Regional Workshop on Enhancing Early Warning Capabilities in Food Safety

FAO, in collaboration with AU-IBAR held a regional training workshop in Kenya in October 2014 on developing and enhancing Early Warning Capabilities in Food Safety. The workshop is part of ongoing FAO efforts to support enhancement of national food control systems in Africa. The objective was to assist the countries in development of national and regional strategies to improve early warning (EW) capabilities in food safety. A new FAO Handbook/training package, used to guide the process, includes: an overview of early warning system concept; importance of understanding own agri-food production and food control systems at all levels; significance of surveillance, including data sharing and integration across the food chain, as the cornerstone of effective EW system, and consequently broader food control systems; opportunities for using Food Safety Intelligence, including Foresight, to anticipate on-going and future food safety priority issues, and enable effective and timely prevention and control; a new tool for mapping and understanding food chain surveillance systems; and structured guidance for strategic development of early warning system in food safety. The workshop also provided a panel discussion on the importance of rapid alert networks at regional and national levels, and their linkages to global networks, e.g. INFOSAN.

FAO Mycotoxin Sampling Tool

The FAO Mycotoxin Sampling Tool (http://www.fstools.org/mycotoxins/) on which we reported last year, has been further expanded by adding two new mycotoxin/commodity combinations (ie OTA in oats and OTA in wheat) for a total of 26 combinations for which the tool can provide guidance on the design of the sampling plan. The tool has successfully been used in the FAO regional training workshop on "Design and Evaluation of Mycotoxin Sampling Protocols" Manila, Philippines 11-12 September 2014.

The tool continues to receive extremely positive feedback by users and FAO encourages CCCF members to use it and to send their feedback.

International Symposium on Food Safety and Quality: Applications of Nuclear and Related Techniques,

17. An International Symposium on Food Safety and Quality: Applications of Nuclear and Related Techniques, Vienna, Austria, 10-13 November 2014 has been organized by the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, with focus on the use and application of techniques including food irradiation to treat food directly, as well as other nuclear and related technologies for tracing food products in order to verify their provenance, or to detect and control contaminants. Further information on the symposium can be found at: http://www-pub.iaea.org/iaeameetings/46092/Food-Safety-and-Quality