

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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TO: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretary, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: Preparation of the 23rd Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (10-13 September 2002, Bratislava, Slovak Republic)

DEADLINE: 5 August 2002

COMMENTS: To: Secretary
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A. FOOD LEGISLATION AND FOOD CONTROL MATTERS

Coordinating Committees regularly consider issues relating to harmonization of food legislation, especially in the perspective of economic integration; food control systems; export/import matters; and relevant training activities, in order to promote exchange of information and cooperation within the Region. The structure and organization of food control systems at the national level is also subject to changes and member countries can compare their experience in this area. An updated survey of food legislation and food control services in the region will be considered at the next session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe.

Member countries are therefore invited to provide the following updated information:

Official Agencies

Updated Structure and organization of the official services responsible for food legislation and food control, including import/export matters relating to food safety and quality. Activities of Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees.

Food Legislation

Updating and regional harmonization of food safety and quality regulations, including the use of Codex standards, Codes and related texts.

Cooperation activities

Cooperation with other countries on food legislation and food control matters (bilateral, subregional or regional), including training of inspection and laboratory personnel.

B. CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

The 23rd Session of the Commission considered consumers' involvement in Codex work and asked the Committee on General Principles to review a checklist of measurable objectives to assess consumer participation in Codex work at the national and international levels. The Commission also proposed that Regional Coordinating Committees continue to exchange experiences on the means of developing consumer input into National Codex Committees and Contact Points (ALINORM 99/37, para. 43).

The 15th Session of the Committee on General Principles considered the recommendations of the Commission and endorsed with some amendments the proposed draft Guidance on Measurable Objectives to Assess Consumer Participation in Codex. The Committee called upon the Secretariat to begin the development of a set of baseline data as soon as possible. It was recommended that a report should be made to the Commission every two years (ALINORM 01/33, paras. 109-110).

This question was considered by the 49th (Extraordinary) Session of the Executive Committee. Although the Executive Committee agreed to the development of a baseline data on consumer participation as recommended by the Committee on General Principles, it was concerned that further mandatory reports at each Commission session would compromise the ability of the Commission to address its main work, namely the consideration of standards and related texts. It recommended that the Secretariat make this information available periodically to the Commission on the basis of the Checklist of Measurable Objectives to Assess Consumer Participation in Codex (ALINORM 03/3, para. 36). The Checklist of Measurable Objectives is as follows:

1. the number or percentage of member countries that have established a National Codex Contact Point
2. the number or percentage of member countries that have established a National Codex Committee
3. the number or percentage of member countries which hold public consultations when developing national positions for Codex meetings
4. the number or percentage of member countries that have identified independent consumer NGOs and invited them to participate in Codex meetings or in submitting written comments
5. the number or percentage of member countries where independent consumer NGOs have participated in developing national positions for Codex meetings.
6. the number of consumer NGOs that participate in the Codex process at the national level.

The last session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe agreed that consumer participation at the international level in Codex Committees was essential for the Codex Alimentarius in view of its objective to protect consumers' health and in order to ensure consumer confidence in the decision process. The Committee recognized the importance to reflect consumer concerns on health and other factors and it agreed that this point should be discussed at its next session as such (ALINORM 01/19, para. 90). This question will be discussed under **Agenda item 7 - Consumer Participation in Codex Work and Related Matters**.

Governments are invited to provide information and comments in the light of the "measurable objectives" listed above, and generally about consumer participation in the elaboration of national legislation and/or the preparation of Codex meetings and related matters.

Governments and international organizations wishing to submit information and comments on points A. and B. above should do so in writing to the above addresses, preferably by e-mail, **before 5 August 2002**.