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codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 5

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Fifty-seventh Session, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, 6-9 December 2005

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS OF CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Matters Referred by the Committees and the Task Forces

Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology

1. The Fifth Session of the Codex *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology took place from 19 to 23 September 2005 and, subject to the approval by the 29th Session of the Commission, decided to initiate the following new work¹:

- a guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA animals;
- an annex to the Codex Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants (CAC/GL 45-2003) regarding food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants modified for nutritional or health benefits.

2. The Task Force decided to establish the following two Working Groups²:

- a physical Working Group to prepare a Proposed Draft Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Animals, co-chaired by Australia and Japan;
- an electronic working group led by Canada to formulate a Proposed Draft Annex (scoping document) to the Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants: Food Safety Assessment of Food Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants Modified for Nutritional or Health Benefits.

¹ ALINORM 06/39/34 paras 19, 23, 32 and 36

² ALINORM 06/39/34 paras 25 and 37

3. In deciding on the establishment of the working group, the Task Force noted that drafting work would start before the formal approval of new work could be given by the Commission at Step 1, earliest in July 2006. The Task Force therefore agreed to draw the attention of the Executive Committee to the need for a degree of flexibility in the efforts not to delay the standards development by the Codex subsidiary bodies, especially ad hoc Task Forces operating within limited timeframes³.

4. The Executive Committee is invited to note the information provided in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, with the understanding that the Critical Review on the proposals for new work will be conducted by the 58th Session of the Executive Committee.

5. The Executive Committee may wish to provide views and guidance, as appropriate, on the situation illustrated in paragraph 3 above, where actions pertaining to the preparation of a draft standard (Step 2 of the Elaboration Procedure) may precede the Critical Review and the decision to elaborate a new standard or revise an existing standard (Step 1). The Elaboration Procedure state: “[a] decision to elaborate a World-wide Codex Standard may also be taken by subsidiary bodies of the Commission in accordance with the above mentioned outcome, subject to subsequent approval by the Commission at the earliest opportunity”⁴.

³ ALINORM 06/39/34 para. 26

⁴ Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts, Part 3. Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codes Standards and Related Texts, Procedural Manual 15th Edition.