



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2 (c)

CX/EXEC 14/69/4

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
Sixty-ninth Session
WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland
8-11 July 2014

CRITICAL REVIEW FOR THE ELABORATION OF CODEX STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS
PROPOSALS FOR THE ELABORATION OF NEW STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS

BACKGROUND

1. A list of proposals to elaborate new standards and related texts is contained in **Table 1**, including the reference of the project document in the relevant report. Projects document which were not included in the report and were finalised after the session of the relevant Committee are attached to the present document as **Annexes**.
2. The Executive Committee is invited to make recommendation to the Commission as to whether or not to undertake new work in the light of the *Strategic Plan 2014-2019* and the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities and for the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies*.

TABLE 1: PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK

Codex Body	Text	Reference and project document
CCRVDF	Priority List of Veterinary Drugs for Evaluation or Re-evaluation by JECFA	REP14/RVDF para. 130, Appendix X
CCNFSDU	Potential NRV for Potassium in Relation to the Risk of NCD	REP 14/NFSDU paras 120-121, Appendix III
CCFH	Guidelines for the Control of Nontyphoidal <i>Salmonella</i> spp. in Beef and Pork Meat	REP14/FH para. 107, Appendix VI
CCFH	Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Foodborne Parasites	REP14/FH para. 111, Appendix VII
CCSCH	Standard for Black, White and Green Pepper	REP14/SCH para. 62, Appendix II
CCSCH	Standard for Cumin	REP14/SCH para. 65, Appendix III
CCSCH	Standard for Oregano	REP14/SCH para. 68, Appendix IV
CCSCH	Standard for Thyme	REP14/SCH para. 72 (see Annex 1 of this document)
CCFFV	Standard for Ware Potato	REP14/FFV para. 53, Appendix V
CCFFV	Standard for Garlic	REP14/FFV para. 56, Appendix VI
CCFFV	Standard for Aubergines	REP14/FFV para. 56, Appendix VII
CCFFV	Standard for Kiwifruit	REP14/FFV para. 56, Appendix VIII
CCCF	Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Arsenic Contamination in Rice	REP14/CF para. 95, Appendix VIII
CCCF	Revision of the <i>Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals</i> (CAC/RCP 51-2003)	REP14/CF para. 99, Appendix IX
CCCF	Maximum Level for Total Aflatoxins in Ready-to-eat Peanuts and Associated Sampling Plan	REP14/CF para. 119, Appendix X
CCCF	Maximum Levels for Cadmium in Chocolate and Cocoa-derived Products	REP14/CF para. 142, Appendix XI
CCPR	Priority List for the Establishment of Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticide	REP14/PR Paras 185-186, Appendix XV
Denmark	Standard for Whey Permeate Powder	see Annex 2 of this document

PROJECT DOCUMENT

PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON CODEX STANDARD FOR THYME

1. The Purpose and Scope of the Standard

The scope of the work is to establish a worldwide standard for dehydrated or dried, crushed or ground Thyme - *Thymus vulgaris* of the *Lamiaceae* family - to be offered for industrial food production and for direct consumption, including for catering purposes or for repacking, as required. Thyme is the general name for many of the herb varieties of the *Thymus* species, all of which are native to Europe and Asia.

The objective is to develop a world-wide quality standard based on basic characteristics like moisture, total ash content, acid insoluble ash, volatile oil content, extraneous matter etc. for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in food trade.

2. Relevance and Timeliness

The need to have an international standard for thyme stems from the fact the crop is grown in developing countries in fragmented areas by marginal farmers. Thyme is grown in many areas of the world. It is globally traded and is not limited to any particular region. Therefore, it is necessary to establish standard covering quality characteristic of thyme.

3. Main aspects to be covered

The standard entails aspects related to the properties of Thyme incorporating quality parameters. To supply high quality products, the objective of the standard is to:

- Establish the minimum quality requirements for Thyme in its dehydrated or dried, crushed or ground form including quality parameters such as physical appearance, uniformity of the product and other extraneous matter etc.
- If appropriate, define classes of Thyme in accordance to its characteristics/quality and establish quality tolerances.
- Include provisions to be considered related to the grading and packaging of product and the packaging used.
- Include provisions for the labelling and marking of the product in accordance with the general standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods.
- Establish tolerances regarding quality and size permitted in packaged Thyme.
- Include provisions for hygiene with reference to the recommended international Code of Practice for hygiene and general principles of food hygiene, contaminants, pesticides residues and methods of analysis.

4. Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

4.1 General criterion

The elaboration of the standard for the forms of Thyme would be to the benefit of many countries in general and more particular in the case of developing countries that emerge as producer and exporter so that their competency could be raised. Arriving at levels of standardisation based on the properties of different varieties to meet industrial and consumer needs with exactness and credibility.

Criteria applicable to commodities

(a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries:

Thyme is produced in most European countries, such as France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria, Poland and Germany. It is also produced in South and North Africa, the United States, Canada and Australia. Some of the Asian countries like India, Thailand and Singapore are also producers. Main importers are countries in Europe and North America.

International trade in thyme mainly takes place in whole leaf form. The characteristics of dried/dehydrated thyme - small light leaves, tightly packed – does not lend to large numerical volumes recorded in trade.

Available trade statistics indicate an increasing trend in the global trade of thyme. For example, imports of thyme (whole leaf) from other parts of the world into the European Union rose from 2.9 MEUR in 2007 to 4.4 MEUR in

2012 the main exporter being Turkey with exports of 620.000 EUR in 2012. Exports from the EU to other parts of the world rose from 3.8 MEUR in 2007 to 5.1 MEUR in 2012 the main destination being the United States with exports of 2.4 MEUR in 2012.

(b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade:

Thyme is traded based on importing parties' requirements. It would be preferable that the trade in Thyme is carried under international criteria based on Codex Standard. The new work would provide internationally recognized specific standards in order to enhance international trade and to accommodate the importer's requirements.

International Standard (ISO 6754:1996) prescribes quality requirements for Dried Thyme. American Spice Trade Association (ASTA) has prescribed cleanliness specifications for Thyme. European Spice Association (ESA) has prescribed Quality Minima for Thyme. But an international standard is required since buying entities insist different standards while effecting purchases which is detrimental to the interest of the marginal farmers and developing nations.

Due to lack of international standard for thyme, international trade has been widely affected. Importers prefer to import based on internationally accepted standard. Therefore, new work would provide international recognized specific standard in order to enhance international trade.

As a result, by eliminating the variable (sometimes conflicting) sets of rules and regulations, trade barriers will be reduced and each member country would gain a comprehensive framework for the minimum acceptable standard for Thyme internationally.

(c) International or regional market potential:

Thyme is one of the most important European culinary herbs. Because the leaves are leathery and contain little water, they dry without excessive loss of flavour and are most often used in this form. Traditionally hot air dried, freeze dried thyme are traded in the market.

(d) Amenability of commodity to standardization:

The characteristics of Thyme, from its cultivation to harvest, fruit characteristics, cultivar varieties, composition, quality and packaging all lend to adequate parameters for the standardization of the product. There are existing standards in different countries as well as ISO which indicates amenability to standardization though harmonization.

(e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.

There is no general commodity standard covering thyme. The new work will facilitate trade by establishing an international agreed quality standard.

(f) Number of commodities which would need separate standards including whether raw, semi-processed or processed.

The standard will be for one commodity: dehydrated or dried, crushed or cracked Thyme.

(g) Work already undertaken by other international organization in this field.

International organizations like the European Spice Association, American Spice Trade Association and ISO have dealt with the standards for Thyme. Many conventions including that of the World Spice Congress and the World Spice Organisation have addressed the issue of harmonization of grades and specifications for herbs. Thyme is an herb produced in developing and developed countries. Moreover, significant concerns were raised in the International Organization of Spice Trade Associations (IOSTA), World Spice Congress and World Spice Organization meetings to standardise the quality parameters.

5. Relevance to the Codex strategic objectives

The proposal is in line with the Strategic Vision Statement of the **Strategic Plan 2014 - 2019**, in particular, **Objective 1.1, 1.3, 2.3 and 3.1** and aims at setting up internationally accepted minimum quality requirements of Thyme for human consumption. It also contributes to fair practices in trade wherein the farmers will be able to assess their produce with reference to the quality standards thereby empowering them to realize more monetary values. The reference made to Codex food safety standards in the World Trade Organizations' SPS Agreement means that Codex has far reaching implications for resolving trade disputes.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex document

This proposal is for a new global standard and has no relation to any other existing Codex text on this item, except that this standard will make reference to relevant standards and related texts developed by general subject committees.

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

There is no need foreseen for expert scientific advice. Published research documents by international bodies will be referred in the process of preparing the standard, if found necessary.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

The technical inputs from ISO, American Spice Trade Association, European Spice Association and World Spice Organization shall be welcomed as they have already done work related to the subject. Also ISO standards can be used as a step process to frame the Codex standards for Thyme.

9. Proposed Time Schedule

The following tentative timeline is proposed:

DATE	ADVANCE AND PROCEDURES
1 st CCSCH	Consideration of new work by the 1 st CCSCH
July 2014	Critical review of new work proposals by CCEXEC; approval of new work proposal by CAC
2 nd CCSCH	Consideration at Step 3 by the 2 nd CCSCH
July 2016	Adoption at Step 5 by CAC
3 rd CCSCH	Consideration at Step 6 by the 3 rd CCSCH
July 2017	Adoption at Step 8 by CAC

PROJECT DOCUMENT:
CODEX STANDARD FOR WHEY PERMEATE POWDER

Prepared by Denmark

1. The Purpose and Scope of the Standard

The Standard will address the identity and the compositional quality and safety of powdered whey permeate intended as ingredients in food.

2. Its Relevance and Timeliness

Whey permeate powder is a milk product obtained by drying whey permeate. Whey permeate is obtained by removing milk proteins from whey resulting from the manufacture of cheese, and is characterized by its content of lactose, organic salts and minerals.

However, as whey permeate powder is relatively new to the food market, there is no clear definition and designation (labelling) established, which can eventually lead to unfair trading practices and misleading of consumers (e.g. as regards how these food ingredients are referenced in the list of ingredients).

Another obstacle to fair trade in whey permeate powder relates to the fact that similar products for years have been used as ingredients in animal feed, which has led to reluctance in some markets in recognizing food grade whey permeate powders as an appropriate ingredient in food. This has resulted in import restrictions in some countries. The same history of use is also responsible for reluctance in accepting whey permeate powders in food aid products.

Due to the above restrictions, it is necessary to establish a Codex standard covering the identity, composition, labelling and quality that will apply as a reference in trade.

In addition, a Codex standard for whey permeate powder will ensure food grade quality and assist in protecting consumers' health.

3. The Main Aspects to be Covered

The standard will be a commodity standard following the format of other Codex milk product standards developed by the CCMMP. This involves the establishment of a product definition, essential composition and quality factors, food additives, and labelling. Food safety will be addressed through references to relevant Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice.

4. An Assessment against the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities

General criterion

The standard aims at ensuring fair trade practices through the establishment of product identity, composition and designations and at providing consumer protection through inclusion of references to the appropriate Codex standards for food safety and labelling.

Criteria applicable to commodities

a) Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries

Whey permeate powder is produced in several geographical regions as follows:

Production 2012 (in tonnes) of whey permeate powder			
	As food	As feed	Totalling
Europe	89,000	61,000	150,000
North America	35,000	310,000	345,000
Latin America	} 29,500 }	} 40,500 }	} 70,000
Southwest Pacific			
Global production	147,000	418,000	565,000

The predominant use of whey permeate powder is still as animal feed, but this is changing. Today, more than 50% of the European produced whey permeate powder is used as food. In North America, the share of the production used as food is currently approx. 10%.

b) Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade

No national standards are currently available. Consequently, great diversity in composition and quality among whey permeate powders exist.

This situation poses a threat to ensuring the true identity of the food ingredient and is likely to result in impediments to regional trade as well as to international trade.

This new work will reduce the risk of such trade impediments by providing the identity of whey permeate powder and creating internationally harmonized conditions for trade in whey permeate powder.

c) International or regional market potential

Whey permeate powder is used as an ingredient in other foods (e.g. dairy products, snacks, beverages, desserts, ice creams, confectionery, etc.), mainly for its sweetening and flavour enhancing ability. Whey permeate powder provides nutritional benefits compared to other sweetening foods, which is due to its natural content of calcium, phosphorous, magnesium and potassium.

Due to these benefits, the market for whey permeate powder, both in tonnage and in applications in a variety of foods, is growing fast with a growth rate of 6-10% p.a. (see the table below). This applies to products intended for food as well as for feed.

Growth of production (in tonnes) of whey permeate powder (food & feed)			
	2009	2011	2012
Europe	103,000	134,000	150,000
North America	280,000	337,000	345,000
Latin America	} 20,000	} 55,000	} 70,000
Southwest Pacific			
Global production	383,000	496,000	565,000

The explanation for this development of growth is the fast growing market for whey protein concentrates (WPC), which increases the amount of whey permeate available for drying into whey permeate powder. Thus, the supply potential of the remaining whey solids to produce whey permeate powder is very high.

It is expected that the standard will contribute positively to further develop the market and trade in whey permeate powder.

d) Amenability of the commodity to standardization

The commodity is amenable to Codex standardization. This is demonstrated by the nature of the parameters intended to be standardized; they include the same well-known type of components as are addressed by Codex standards for other dried milk products (i.e. lactose, protein, milk fat, ash and moisture).

e) Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards

Currently, the Codex Alimentarius does not include any Codex standards covering the identity of whey powder permeate.

Consideration has been given to the inclusion of whey powder permeate into the existing Codex *Standard for whey powder* (STAN 289-1995). However, as whey powder permeate is distinct from whey powder in terms of raw materials used, composition and usage, it is proposed to develop a separate standard for whey powder permeate.

f) Number of commodities which would need separate standards indicating whether raw, semi-processed or processed

The work will cover a single well-defined commodity. Due to its specific characteristics, no other existing Codex commodity standard covers or can be extended to cover whey permeate powder. Consequently, it is necessary to establish a separate standard for whey permeate powder.

g) Work already undertaken by other international organisations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies)

The European Whey Products Association has undertaken preparatory work to obtain agreement on the compositional requirements to whey permeate powder.

5. Relevance to the Codex Strategic Objectives

Establishment of a Codex standard for whey permeate powder is in line with the CODEX strategic objectives as follows:

- It reinforces the Codex Alimentarius as being the preeminent international food standards-setting body to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.
- It meets the specified Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan 2014-2019 to establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues, and in particular, activity 1.2.2 – “Develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade”.

6. Information on the Relation between the Proposal and Other Existing Codex Documents

The standard will be used in conjunction with all existing and relevant Codex standards. It will take into account the provisions of CODEX STAN 206 (*General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms*), the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products* (CAC/RCP 57-2004), the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985), the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CODEX STAN 193-1995) and the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CODEX STAN 192-1995).

7. Identification of any Requirement for and Availability of Expert Scientific Advice

None is required.

8. Identification of any Need for Technical Input to the Standard from External Bodies so that this can be Planned for

None is required.

9. Proposed Time Schedule

Agreement to initiate new work on a standard for whey permeate powder by the CAC	July 2014
Circulation of Proposed Draft Standard for comments at Step 3	August 2014
Consideration by CCMMP	Early 2015
Adoption at step 5 or 5/8 (depending on progress) by the CAC	July 2015
Consideration of the draft Standard at Step 7 by the CCMMP	Early 2016
Adoption of the Standard by the CAC	July 2016