

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 2

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

Thirty-second Session

Washington, DC, November 29 – December 4, 1999

PRIORITY ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE RISK ASSESSMENT OF MICROBIOLOGICAL HAZARDS IN FOODS

Following countries, Denmark, New Zealand and the United States of America submitted comments in response to the CL 1999/17, Request for Comments on Priority Issues To Be Considered In Relation to The Risk Assessment Of Microbiological Hazards In Foods.

DENMARK

The Danish government hereby forward priority issues at international level, which require risk assessment.

- At present, Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli 0157, might be regarded as the most important foodborne pathogens requiring risk assessment. The commodity/microorganism combination is: Salmonella in eggs, poultry, pork, Campylobacter in poultry, beef, pork, water and E. coli 0157 in beef.

In Denmark all major food animals and food of animal origin are monitored continuously for Salmonella. The resulting collection of 10-20,000 Salmonella isolates per year is serotyped and isolates of S. Typhimurium and S. Enteritidis are phage typed. Prevalence of Campylobacter in broilers, pigs and cattle are measured in a continuous surveillance programme. In 1999 also prevalence of E. Coli 0157 in cattle both in the herds and at slaughterhouses are measured. Different products from retail outlets are examined routinely for Salmonella and Campylobacter by the Food and Environmental laboratories and all data are collected in a data-base at Division of Microbiological Safety, Institute of Food Safety and Toxicology Danish Veterinary and Food Administration.

- Most of the above mentioned data will be published in annual report on Zoonosis by The Danish Zoonosis Centre and The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration. Reprints can be ordered from Danish Zoonosis Centre, Danish Veterinary Laboratory, Bülowsvej 27, DK 1790, Copenhagen V.

At the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, risk assessment of E. coli 0157 in beef, and risk assessment of Campylobacter in broilers are at present being carried out. Furthermore at the Danish zoonosis centre and at the Danish Bacon and Meat council risk assessment of Salmonella in pork is being performed in a project under the 4. EU frame work programme for research and technological developments.

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Government would like to make the following comments:

- New Zealand would like to suggest risk assessment of generic hazards in soft cheeses as a priority area of work for a meeting of experts on microbiological food safety risk assessment.
- Problems currently exist in the international trade of soft cheeses made from unpasteurised milk, but risk estimates for these products compared with soft cheeses made from pasteurised milk are unavailable.
- The MAF Food Assurance Authority is currently finalising a proposal to carry out microbiological assessment in this area, and it is estimated that preliminary modelling data could be submitted to FAO/WHO in January 2001.
- Our contact person is: Dr. Steve Hathaway, MAF Food Assurance Authority, PO Box 646, Gisborne, New Zealand.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States' identification of priority issues is based on input from U.S. government agencies and non-governmental interested parties, and is supported by background information developed through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (ref: *Food-Related Illness and Death in the United States, Emerging Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 5, No. 5, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). The limited time to respond to this CL does not permit the identification of existing databases or dates on which data can be submitted.

The United States considers commodity/organism risk assessment issues to fall into four risk categories, having the following order of priority.

1. Raw products consumed raw.
2. Ready-to-eat processed foods consumed without re-heating.
3. Raw agricultural commodities consumed without an adequate kill step and/or raw agricultural products contaminated through cross-contamination.
4. Contaminated raw agricultural products in which the kill step is adequate but where a microbial hazard (e.g., microbial spores, toxins) may still remain.

For the purposes of this response, only categories 1-3 above are considered.

The following commodity/microorganism priorities are presented for consideration within each category.

Raw products consumed raw

- ◆ Raw molluscan shellfish/viruses
- ◆ Raw molluscan shellfish/vibrios
- ◆ Raw fish/helminth parasites
- ◆ Fresh produce/protozoan parasites (especially *Cyclospora cayetanensis*)
- ◆ Fresh produce(including seeds, sprouts)/enteric bacteria (esp. salmonella (non-typhoidal), shigella, *E. coli* O157)

Ready-to-eat processed foods consumed without re-heating

- ◆ Processed meats/*Listeria monocytogenes*

- ◆ Soft cheeses/*Listeria monocytogenes*

Raw agricultural commodities consumed without an adequate kill step and/or raw agricultural products contaminated through cross-contamination

- ◆ Poultry, meat/salmonella (non-typhoidal)
- ◆ Pork/lamb/toxoplasma (especially *Toxoplasma gondii*)
- ◆ Egg (including liquid egg products)/salmonella (non-typhoidal)
- ◆ Poultry/*Campylobacter jejuni*

The United States recognizes that the initial work of the Meetings of Experts will necessitate the availability of adequate data and consensus on priorities. The United States also recognizes that the first effort of the Meetings of Experts will be one in which processes and procedures are being developed. To initiate the work of the Meetings of Experts, while permitting experience to be gained, the United States suggests that perhaps a good starting point for the Meeting of Experts will be in evaluating risk assessments carried out on *Campylobacter jejuni* in poultry. Other candidates could include: *E.coli* O157H7 in ground beef; *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* in raw shellfish; and *Salmonella enteritidis* in poultry.