Codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 4 **CX/FH 99/4**

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

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DRAFT CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR THE TRANSPORT OF FOODSTUFFS IN BULK AND SEMI-PACKED FOODSTUFFS at Step 7[1]

Secretariat's note: *Subsequent to decisions taken by the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (28 June – 3 July 1999), the CL 1999/13 – GEN submitted the draft text to Member Governments and Interested International Organizations at Step 6 of the Procedure for comments. The comments received in response to the above CL 1999/13- GEN will be published in the document No. CX/FH 99/4-Add.1. This text includes the Background Information and text on use of Heating Fluids as adopted by the 23rd Session of the Commission in the Revised Recommended Code of Practice for the Storage and Transport of Edible Oils and Fats in Bulk (ALINORM 99/17, Appendix V, ALINORM 99/37, para. 165).*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 21st Session of the Commission approved the elaboration of the proposed Code of Practice for all Foodstuffs Transported in Bulk.

The 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) had discussed a proposed draft code. It directed a drafting group, chaired by Netherlands, to make the following changes to the proposed code: amend the title of the document, modify the scope of the document to exclude live animals and include semi-packed foods, modify the format of the proposed code to reflect the format of the General Principles of Food Hygiene, establish a link with the existing code for the transport of oils and fats by including a reference to the code, and delete generic HACCP plans from the document. The Committee agreed that the Proposed Draft Code should be redrafted by the Netherlands and circulated for comments at Step 3.[2]

The 30th Session noted that significant improvement had been made by the drafting group. It also noted that a number of editorial and other comments still needed to be considered and incorporated in the document. These comments addressed the consistency of the definition for "semi-packed food" between different Codex texts, and the need to further consider the decision tree in the Table. The Committee noted the proposal of the drafting group to record two previous cargoes. The

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[1] Previously published as ALINORM 99/13A, Appendix IV. Comments were requested by the CL 1999/13-GEN, July, 1999.

[2] ALINORM 97/13A, paragraphs 40-49.

Delegation of India indicated that it would be difficult to apply strict requirements at the farm level in developing countries. The Committee felt that additional time was needed to further improve the document and that government comments should be requested, particularly concerning the Scope of the Code[3].

The 31st Session of the Committee agreed to include a section on bulk transport of food in the primary production areas and amended the text in paragraphs 2.2, 3.2, and 4.3. It could not reach consensus on the period for record keeping on prior cargoes or the use of dedicated Food Transport Units. These parts remained in square brackets. It advanced the amended proposed draft code at Step 5 and it was adopted by the 23rd Session of the Commission.

The Committee is invited to consider and to finalize the text and also to harmonize the texts on use of thermal heating fluids adopted by this Committee and the text from the *Revised Recommended Code of Practice for the Storage and Transport of Edible Oils and Fats in Bulk*[4]*:*

["Although hot water and steam are the preferred means of heating, other substances may be used on the basis of safety and risk evaluation and inspection procedures. Upon request by the competent authority, evidence may be required to demonstrate that the heating media employed have been properly evaluated and safely used."].

DRAFT CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR THE TRANSPORT OF FOODSTUFFS IN BULK AND SEMI-PACKED FOODSTUFFS At Step 6 of the Procedure[5]

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INTRODUCTION

Foodstuffs may become contaminated or reach their destination in an unsuitable condition for consumption unless control measures are taken during transport. Such condition may occur even where adequate hygiene measures have been taken earlier in the food chain. Adequate

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3 ALINORM 99/13, paras. 28-30.
4 ALINORM 99/17, Appendix V.
5 Previously published as ALINORM 99/13A, Appendix IV.

transportation systems should be in place which will ensure that foodstuffs remain safe and suitable for consumption upon delivery and assist countries to assure continued trade.

Good communication between shipper/manufacturer, transporter and receiver of foodstuffs is essential. They share responsibility for food safety on this part of the food chain. Food manufacturers or receivers are responsible for communicating to transporters specific food safety control procedures required during transportation.

This document is formatted in accordance with the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev.3, 1997), which must be consulted in the use of this Code. Those sections of this Code that require specific food safety requirements beyond those contained in the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev.3, 1997), due to specific transportation characteristics, are noted and the specific requirements are detailed.

This code does not supersede the existing proposal for the Codex Draft Revised Code of Practice for the Transport of Edible Fats and Oils in Bulk.

1 OBJECTIVES

The code of hygienic practice for the transport of bulk and semi-packed foodstuffs:

- identifies additional requirements of food hygiene applicable to the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev 3 (1997)) applicable to the condition of the food transportation unit and the loading, transport, in-transit storage and unloading of bulk and semi-packed foodstuffs to ensure that food remains safe and suitable for human consumption.
- indicates how to implement these controls, and
- provides ways to verify that these controls have been applied.

2 SCOPE, USE AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 SCOPE

This code of practice covers the condition of the food transportation unit, loading, transport, in-transit storage and unloading of bulk, semi-packed foodstuffs and fresh produce. The code's provisions are to be applied in addition to all applicable provisions of the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 3, 1997) including Section 8 which specifically addresses transportation.

2.2 DEFINITIONS

***Foodstuff*:** Means primary- intermediary- as well as finished products (including food additives) intended [or suitable] for human consumption.

***Food transportation unit**:* Includes food transport vehicles or contact receptacles (such as containers, boxes, bins, bulk tanks) in vehicles, aircraft, railcars, trailers and ships and any other transport receptacles in which food is transported.

Bulk: Means unpacked foodstuff in direct contact with the contact surface of the food transportation unit and the atmosphere (for example, powdered, granulated or liquid form e.g. oil, potato flakes).

***Semi-packed foodstuff**:* Semi-packed foodstuff is a food which might come in direct contact with the food transportation unit or the atmosphere (e.g. vegetables and food in crates and bags).

3 PRIMARY PRODUCTION

The provisions of the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1- 1969, Rev.3, 1997) shall be applied.

However in the case of fresh produced and seasonal crops it should be noted that these could contaminate the food transportation unit more than other foodstuff, due to treatment of the land prior to planting, use of raw sewage, animal manure, harvesting practice, processing conditions and unit operations such as peeling, cutting and slicing. Measures to overcome this problem should be directed to the foodstuff and/or the food transportation unit. Special caution should be exercised for fresh produce requiring no or little processing before consumption, which should not be transported in food transportation units used to transport manure, fertilizers, pesticides or produces which have been in contact with these.

4 ESTABLISHMENT: DESIGN AND FACILITIES

The design of the food transportation unit should be such as to avoid cross contamination due to simultaneous or consecutive transport. Important aspect are cleanability and appropriate coatings.

Construction and design of the food transportation unit should facilitate inspection, cleaning, disinfection and when appropriate enable temperature control.

Use of means for cooling or heating should by design and construction be such as to avoid contamination. Those Thermal Heating Fluids can be used which are agreed upon between sellers and buyers and are acceptable to the authorities of the receiving country, based on risk assessment.

Inner surface materials suitable for direct food contact should be used. These should be non-toxic, inert, or at least compatible with the transported foodstuff, and which do not transfer substances to the foodstuff or adversely affect the foodstuff. Stainless steel or surface coated with food-grade epoxy resins are most suitable. The interior design should eliminate areas that are difficult to access and clean.

The appropriate design of the food transportation unit should assist in preventing access of insects, vermin, etc, contamination from the environment, and when necessary insulation against loss or gain of heat, adequate cooling or heating capacity, and facilitation of locking or sealing.

There should be appropriate facilities conveniently available for cleaning and, where appropriate, disinfecting of the food transportation unit.

Auxiliary equipment should be (where appropriate) subjected to the above stated requirements.

To maintain sanitary conditions, facilities should be provided for the storage of pipes, hoses and other equipment used in the transfer of foodstuffs.

5 CONTROL OF OPERATIONS

5.1 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL HAZARDS

It may be useful to refer to the listed questions (see Table 1) to identify and manage hazards during transport of bulk and semi-packed foodstuffs. Reference is made also to the HACCP approach.

Table 1

Are you dealing with a foodstuff "ready for direct consumption"?
Are the conditions of the food transportation unit likely to introduce or support the increase of a hazard?

Is it likely, that a hazard is introduced or increased during loading?
Is it likely, that a hazard may increase during transport or storage in the food transportation unit?
Is it likely, that a hazard is introduced or increased during unloading?

5.1.1 Records of prior cargoes and prior cleaning

The transporter should maintain records, readily available at the food transportation unit or as prescribed by the official agency having jurisdiction, of the three most recent prior cargoes and cleaning method employed of the food transportation unit including volumes transported and make this information, on request, available to the food shipper, official control authorities and/or receiver/food manufacturers, for evaluation of potential hazards.

A complete record of previous cargoes should be kept over a period of [six] month.

5.2 SOURCES OF HAZARDS

The possibility of a hazard should be considered from the following sources, cited as examples:

5.2.1 Hazards related to the food transportation unit

Unsuitability of the construction material and coating, lack of sealing/locking device, residues of previous cargoes, residues from cleaning and sanitizing materials. Where appropriate consideration should be given to food transportation unit's dedicated to single commodity use.

5.2.2 Hazards related to loading and unloading

Increase/decrease of temperature of the food. Undesirable introduction of microbes, dust, moisture, or other physical contamination.

5.2.3 Hazards related to transport

Leakage of heating/cooling fluid. Break down of temperature control.

5.3 COMMUNICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF CONTROLS DURING TRANSPORT

Suitable controls can be formulated by shippers or receivers to ensure food safety during transport in particular cases (see questions in Table 1). Such controls should be communicated in writing. Documentation is an important tool for validation and for verification that the principles have been adhered to. This documentation may include food transportation unit number, registration of previous loads, temperature/time recordings and cleaning certificates. Such documentation should be available to the official agencies having jurisdiction. It should be noted that some food transportation unit's are intended for single use only.

5.4. DEDICATED TRANSPORT

[Bulk foodstuffs in liquid, granulated or powder form must be transported in receptacles and/or containers/tankers reserved for the transport of foodstuffs.]

In some cases it may be justified, after a proper assessment of the risks, to require transport dedicated to the foodstuff, however this does not exempt from taking the appropriate precautionary measures.

6 ESTABLISHMENT: MAINTENANCE AND SANITATION

Food transportation unit's, accessories, and connections should be cleaned, disinfected (where appropriate) and maintained to avoid or at least reduce the risk of contamination. It should be noted that depending on the commodity relevant, different cleaning procedures are applicable, which should be recorded. Rinsing and drying, where appropriate, should follow disinfection.

7 ESTABLISHMENT: PERSONNEL HYGIENE

The General Principles ofd Food Hygiene should apply to all personnel in contact with the food.

8 TRAINING

It is important that personnel responsible for the transport are well aware of the nature of the foods that are being handled/transported and the possible extra precautionary measures that may be required. Personnel should be trained on food transportation unit inspection procedures for food safety.