

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 Telex: 625825-625853 FAO I Email codex@fao.org Facsimile: +39 06 5705.4593

**Agenda Item 14**

**CX/FH 99/14**  
**August 1999**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME** **CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE**

**Thirty-second Session**

**Washington, D.C., USA, November 29 – December 4, 1999**  
**(Prepared by the Secretariat)**

## **PRIORITIES FOR THE REVISION OF CODES OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Thirtieth (1997) Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) noted the recommendations of the Commission concerning the need to review and revise Codex standards and related texts, including Codes of Hygienic Practice<sup>1</sup>. The Committee recognized the urgent need to revise the Codes and established an *ad hoc* Working Group chaired by Australia. The representatives from Canada, Georgia, India, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States participated in the working group meetings to discuss priorities. The *ad hoc* group recommended that the Codes be grouped on the basis of the likelihood of common hygiene requirements. The *ad hoc* group also prioritized the Codes for revision on the basis of impacts on food safety and trade. The Committee agreed to circulate these conclusions to governments and CL 1997/45 –FH, Annex A, was issued to solicit comments on the *ad hoc* group recommendations.

In response to CL 1997/45-FH, comments were received from Canada, South Africa, the United States of America, and Consumers International, see Annex B. Because of time constraints the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Committee did not have time to consider the comments and decided to revisit the subject at its 32<sup>nd</sup> Session.<sup>2</sup>

To facilitate the Committee's deliberations, the United States Codex Secretariat had prepared a summary table also in Annex B. It shows the categories and priorities as recommended by the *ad hoc* working group and priorities suggested by the United States. It also references comments of Canada and Consumers International to the relevant codes by footnotes.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The *ad hoc* group recommended that the Committee evaluate the need for each of the existing codes. It also recommended that any revisions of the codes should be undertaken on rational groupings rather on individual codes, with a view to consolidating those codes with common hygiene requirements.

---

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 95/37, paragraph 9.

<sup>2</sup> AINORM 99/13A, paragraph 111.

The Committee is also invited to consider the possibility of combining existing similar texts, where appropriate, or recommending the withdrawal of older texts that have been superseded or covered by the Revised International Code of Practice General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev.3 (1997)). For example, consideration could be given to a single text covering all canned, bottled or aseptically packaged and processed foods.

Based upon the above considerations, the recommendations of the *ad hoc* working group and government comments received the Committee is invited to consider the following priorities for the review of Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice. This listing of priorities is based on the potential impact on food safety and trade, and on the length of time since the last review of a Code.

### **Priority 1**

Canned Fruits and Vegetables  
Poultry Processing

### **Priority 2**

Fresh Meat  
Processed Meat and Poultry Products  
Mechanically Separated Meat and Poultry Meat  
Egg Products

### **Priority 3**

Dried Fruits  
Dehydrated Fruits and Vegetables  
Desiccated Coconut

### **Priority 4**

Low-Acid an Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods<sup>4</sup>  
Aseptically Processed and Packaged Low-Acid Foods<sup>4</sup>  
Quick Frozen Foods  
Tree Nuts  
Groundnuts  
Spices and Aromatic Plants  
Pre-cooked and Cooked Foods in Mass Catering  
Frog Legs  
Dried Milks  
Natural Mineral Waters

---

<sup>4</sup> Recent revisions to this Code reduce priority for revision

## Annex A

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel.: 52251 Telex: 625852-625853 FAO I Cables: Foodagri Rome Facsimile: +39(6) 5705.4593

**CX4/20.2**

**CL 1997/45-FH**

**TO:** - Codex Contact Points  
- Interested International Organizations

**FROM:** - Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission,  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON THE PRIORITIES FOR THE REVISION OF CODES OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE**

Governments and interested international organizations are invited to submit comments or information on the above subject matter in writing **to: Ms. Rhonda S. Bond**, U.S. Codex Contact Point, Food Safety and Inspection Service, US Department of Agriculture, Room 311, West End Court, Washington D.C. 20250-3700, U.S.A. Fax: +1(202)254.2530 or Email: [uscodex@aol.com](mailto:uscodex@aol.com) with a copy to: Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, by Fax. +39(6)5705.4593 or E-mail: [Codex@fao.org](mailto:Codex@fao.org) **before 1 April 1998.**

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Codex Committee on Food Hygiene at its Thirtieth Session<sup>3</sup> noted the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission<sup>4</sup> concerning the urgent need to revise the CAC Recommended Codes of Hygienic Practice. The Committee discussed priorities based on likelihood of common hygiene requirements, and the basis of potential impact on food safety and trade. The Committee decided to circulate the conclusions of an *ad hoc* working group report<sup>5</sup> for governments comment and discussion at the next session of the Committee.

It is proposed that:

1. the revision of the codes should be undertaken on rational groupings rather than individual codes, with a view to consolidating those codes with common hygiene requirements;
2. a high priority be accorded to the revision of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Groundnuts (Peanuts);
3. CCFH initiate the revision of those codes developed by the Committee on Meat Hygiene and other commodity committees;
4. revision of the Standard for Natural Mineral Waters be considered after the development of the Packaged (Bottled) Drinking Water Standard - to see if common hygiene requirements can be formulated;

<sup>3</sup> ALINORM 99/13, para. 7 and para. 106.

<sup>4</sup> ALINORM 97/37, para. 99.

<sup>5</sup> CRD22; an *ad hoc* Working Group, comprising representatives from Australia, Canada, Georgia, India, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, met on 20 October 1997 to prioritize the revision of the Codes of Hygienic Practice listed in Table 1.

5. revision of the code for dried milk be considered after development of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products to see if common hygienic requirement can be formulated; and
6. these proposals be referred to the Executive Committee under Step 1 of the Procedure.

The proposed priority ratings for the revisions of Codes of Hygienic Practice is shown in Table.

**TABLE 1**  
**PARTIAL LIST OF CODEX CODES OF PRACTICE**  
(see notes below)

<b>Canned Fruit and Vegetable Products</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 2-1969</b>
<b>Dried Fruits</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 3-1969</b>
<b>Desiccated Coconut</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 4-1971</b>
<b>Dehydrated Fruits and Vegetables including fungi</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 5-1971</b>
<b>Tree Nuts</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 6-1972</b>
<b>Quick Frozen Foods</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 9-1983</b>
<b>Fresh Meat</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 11-1993 (Rev. 1)</b>
<b>Processed Meat and Poultry Products</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 13-1985 (Rev. 1)</b>
<b>Poultry Processing</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 14-1976</b>
<b>Egg Products</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 15-1978</b>
<b>Groundnuts</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 22-1979</b>
<b>Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 23-1993 (Rev. 1)</b>
<b>Frog Legs</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 30-1983</b>
<b>Dried Milk</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 31-1983</b>
<b>Mechanically Separated Meat and Poultry Meat</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 32-1983</b>
<b>Natural Mineral Waters</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 33-1985</b>
<b>Pre-Cooked and Cooked Foods in Mass Catering</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 39-1993</b>
<b>Aseptically Processed and Packaged Low-Acid Foods</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 40-1993</b>
<b>Spices and Dried Aromatic Plants</b>	<b>CAC/RCP 42-1995</b>

**Notes:**

- 1) Codes of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products are under revision by the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products.
- 2) The Code of Hygienic Code of Practice for Foods for Children is under the responsibility of the Committee on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses.
- 3) Codes relating to meat hygiene are under responsibility of the Committee on Meat Hygiene.

**TABLE 2**  
**PROPOSED PRIORITY RATINGS FOR THE REVISION**  
**OF THE CODEX CODES OF PRACTICE**  
 (see Keys and Notes below)

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Food Safety</i>	<i>Trade</i>	<i>Priority</i>
<b>Category 1 (Processed and Quick Frozen Foods)</b>		A	A	<b>1</b>
Canned Fruit & Vegetables	CAC/RCP 2-1969			
Low-Acid & Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods	CAC/RCP 23-1993 (rev.1)			
Aseptically Processed and Packaged Low-Acid Foods	CAC/RCP 40-1993			
Quick Frozen Foods	CAC/RCP 9-1983			
<b>Category 2 (Meat and Meat Products)</b>		A/B	A	<b>2</b>
Fresh Meat	CAC/RCP 11-1993 (rev. 1)			
Processed Meat & Poultry Products	CAC/RCP 13-1985 (rev. 1)			
Poultry Processing	CAC/RCP 14-1976			
Mechanically Separated Meat and Poultry Meat	CAC/RCP 32-1983			
<b>Category 3 (Dried Fruits &amp; Vegetables - including Fungi and Coconut)</b>		B	A	<b>3</b>
Dried Fruits	CAC/RCP 3-1969			
Desiccated Coconut	CAC/RCP 4-1971			
Dehydrated Fruits & Vegetables	CAC/RCP 5-1971			
<b>Category 4 (Nuts)</b>		B	B	<b>4</b>
Tree Nuts	CAC/RCP 6-1972			
Groundnuts	CAC/RCP 22-1979			<b>(a)</b>
<b>Individual Codes</b>				
Spices & Aromatic Plants	CAC/RCP 42-1995	B	A/B	<b>1</b>
Egg Products	CAC/RCP 15-1978	A	C	<b>2</b>
Pre-Cooked & Cooked Foods in Mass Catering	CAC/RCP 39-1993	A	C	<b>3</b>
Frog Legs	CAC/RCP 30-1983	C	C	<b>4</b>
Dried Milks	CAC/RCP 31-1983			<b>(b)</b>
Natural Mineral Waters	CAC/RCP 33-1985			<b>(c)</b>

**Keys: Safety and Trade Ratings A (High impact) - C (Low impact); Priority 1 (High) - 4 (Low).**

**Notes:**

(a) Recommended a high priority for Standards for “Nuts” due to the capacity to minimize the diversification of national standards.

(b) Considered that the revision of the Code for Dried Milk is likely to be catered for through the development of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products.

(c) Recommended that the Standard for Natural Mineral Waters be considered after the development of the Packaged (Bottled) Drinking Water Standard - to see if common hygienic requirements can be formulated. The WG suggests that it would be inappropriate to deal with this code in any other fashion.

**Annex B**

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

JOINT OFFICE: Via delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: +39 6 57051 Telex: 625825-625853 FAO I Email [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org) Facsimile: +39 6 5705.4593

**Agenda Item 13****Conference Room Document 2  
(English, French, and Spanish)****JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME****CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE****Thirty-first Session****Orlando, Florida, USA, October 26 - 30, 1998****PRIORITIES FOR THE REVISION OF CODES OF HYGIENIC  
PRACTICE**

By CL 1998/45-FH, Governments and Interested International Organizations were invited to comment on the Priorities for the Revision of Codes of Hygienic Practice

Replies were received from the following countries and international organizations: Canada, South Africa, the United States of America, and Consumers International.

**GENERAL****UNITED STATES**

We believe the priority for review ought to be based on the following criteria:

- Time since last review.
- Potential for product to present a food safety issue.
- Other activities on-going within Codex that may affect the Code.
- The extent to which the product is traded internationally.

-We note the following two points for informational purposes:

- Codex has reactivated the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables for the purpose of reviewing the appropriate commodity codes in this area. It would be beneficial to review the codes of Hygienic Practice that relate to this area as soon as practical.
- There are substantial revisions being implemented and/or proposed to food safety assurance programs for meat and poultry products.

**CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL**

strongly believes that food safety considerations must outweigh trade considerations in setting priorities for Codex

**CANADA**

Supports the conclusions of the ad hoc working group (with one exception as outlined below) and agrees with the priorities for revision of codes.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Wishes to express our support for the contents thereof.

**UNITED STATES**

U.S.A. has reached the following conclusions and recommendations that have been summarized in the following table.

**TABLE**

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>Recommended Priority</b>
<b>Category 1 (Processed and Quick Frozen Foods)</b>		
Canned Fruit and Vegetables	CAC/RCP 2-1969	1
Low-Acid & Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods	CAC/RCP 23-1993	4
Aseptically Processed and Packaged Low-Acid Foods	CAC/RCP 40-1993	4
Quick Frozen Foods	CAC/RCP 9-1983	4*
<b>Category 2 (Meat and Meat Products)</b>		
Fresh Meat	CAC/RCP 11-1993 (rev. 1)	2
Processed Meat & Poultry Products	CAC/RCP 13-1985 (rev.1)	2
Poultry Processing	CAC/RCP 14-1976	1
Mechanically Separated Meat and Poultry Meat	CAC/RCP 32-1983	2
<b>Category 3 (Dried Fruits and Vegetables – including Fungi and Coconut)</b>		
Dried Fruits	CAC/RCP 3-1969	3
Desiccated Coconut	CAC/RCP 4-1971	3
Dehydrated Fruits & Vegetables	CAC/RCP 5-1971	3
<b>Category 4 (Nuts)</b>		
Tree Nuts	CAC/RCP 6-1972	4
Groundnuts	CAC/RCP 22-1979	3
<b>INDIVIDUAL CODES</b>		
Spices & Aromatic Plants	CAC/RCP 42-1995	4
Egg Products	CAC/RCP 15-1978	2
Pre-cooked & Cooked Foods in Mass Catering	CAC/RCP 39-1993	4
Frog Legs	CAC/RCP 30-1983	4
Dried Milks	CAC/RCP 31-1983	4
Natural Mineral Waters	CAC/RCP 33-1985	4

Conclusion 5 from the working group should state that revisions of the code for dried milk be considered as part of the development of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products rather than being considered after the Code is developed.

Finally, we do concur with the recommendation that the Dried Milk Code be incorporated into the Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products and that the Natural Water Code be reconsidered after the development of the Code and the Standard for packaged (bottled) drinking water.

**CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL**

We believe that it is inappropriate to place a higher priority on revision of the Codex Code of Practice for spices and aromatic plants, which have a “B,” or medium impact on food safety, than on egg products and pre-cooked and cooked foods in mass catering, both of which have an “A,” or high impact on food safety.



The following table shows the categories and priorities assigned for the revision of each code by the ad hoc working group. The table also shows the U.S. proposed alternative priorities. Comments of Canada and CI are referenced to the relevant codes by footnotes.

### SUMMARY TABLE OF PRIORITIES FOR THE REVISION OF CODEX CODES OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE

(see Keys and Footnotes below)

TITLE	REFERENCE	Recommended Priority			
		<i>Ad hoc Working Group</i>	Canada	USA	Consumers International
<b>Category 1 (Processed and Quick Frozen Foods)</b>					
Canned Fruit and Vegetables	CAC/RCP 2-1969	1		1	
Low-Acid & Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods	CAC/RCP 23-1993	1		4	
Aseptically Processed and Packaged Low-Acid Foods	CAC/RCP 40-1993	1		4	
Quick Frozen Foods	CAC/RCP 9-1983	1		4	
<b>Category 2 (Meat and Meat Products)</b>					
Fresh Meat	CAC/RCP 11-1993 (rev. 1)	2		2	
Processed Meat & Poultry Products	CAC/RCP 13-1985 (rev.1)	2		2	
Poultry Processing	CAC/RCP 14-1976	2		1	
Mechanically Separated Meat and Poultry Meat	CAC/RCP 32-1983	2		2	
<b>Category 3 (Dried Fruits and Vegetables – including Fungi and Coconut)</b>					
Dried Fruits	CAC/RCP 3-1969	3		3	
Desiccated Coconut	CAC/RCP 4-1971	3		3	
Dehydrated Fruits & Vegetables	CAC/RCP 5-1971	3		3	
<b>Category 4 (Nuts)</b>					

Tree Nuts	CAC/RCP 6-1972	4		4	
Groundnuts	CAC/RCP 22-1979	(a)	(d)	3	
<b>INDIVIDUAL CODES</b>					
Spices & Aromatic Plants	CAC/RCP 42-1995	1		4	(e)
Egg Products	CAC/RCP 15-1978	2		2	
Pre-cooked & Cooked Foods in Mass Catering	CAC/RCP 39-1993	3		4	
Frog Legs	CAC/RCP 30-1983	4		4	
Dried Milks	CAC/RCP 31-1983	(b)		4	
Natural Mineral Waters	CAC/RCP 33-1985	(c)		4	

**Keys: Priority 1 (High) - 4 (Low).**

<sup>(a)</sup> Recommended a high priority for Standards for “Nuts” due to the capacity to minimize the diversification of national standards

<sup>(d)</sup> Conclusion 5 from the working group should state that revisions of the code for dried milk be considered as part of the development of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products rather than being considered after the Code is developed

<sup>(e)</sup> Therefore, we believe that it is inappropriate to place a higher priority on revision of the Codex Code of Practice for spices and aromatic plants, which have a “B,” or medium impact on food safety, than on egg products and pre-cooked and cooked foods in mass catering, both of which have an “A,” or high impact on food safety.

<sup>(b)</sup> Considered that the revision of the Code for Dried Milk is likely to be catered for through the development of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products

<sup>(c)</sup> Recommended that the Standard for Natural Mineral waters be considered after the development of the Packaged (Bottled) Drinking water Standard- to see if common hygienic requirements can be formulated. The WG suggests that it would be inappropriate to deal with this code in any other fashion.