

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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Agenda Item 7

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**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS
Nineteenth Session
London, United Kingdom, 21– 25 February 2005**

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE CRITERIA FOR THE REVISIONS OF THE NAMED VEGETABLE
OILS**

- COMPOSITION AND NAMING OF FATTY ACID MODIFIED VEGETABLE OILS -

- Comments to CX/FO 05/19/7 -

CANADA

After careful consideration of the four options outlined in the Discussion Paper on the criteria for the Revisions of the Named Vegetable Oils – Composition and Labelling of Fatty Acid Modified Vegetable Oils, CX/FO 05/19/7, Canada supports further discussion and development of Option 2. This option is most likely to meet the objectives outlined in Alinorm 03/17, paragraph 62, to establish consistent criteria for composition and labelling of modified oils which would not require the Committee to meet each time a proposal for a modified oil was made.

Option 2 considers product innovation and will provide composition and naming guidelines for fatty acid modified oils. Canada also supports the labelling recommendations given in the discussion paper as they provide adequate information to consumers concerning the change to an identified fatty acid from the traditionally named oil both when it is a food and when the oil is an ingredient in another food. Specifically when the oil is a food, the oil common name will be modified by a qualifier “low”, “mid” or “high” (naming the fatty acid) followed by the traditional oil common name. This will be accompanied by a statement of the percentage difference of the fatty acid from the traditional oil and nutrition information will include the fatty acid profile of saturates, polyunsaturates, monounsaturates, and cholesterol. When the oil is an ingredient in a food, the oil common name will indicate the modified level of the particular fatty acid, but no other statements (such as the percent difference) will be required to accompany the common name of the ingredient.

This option appears to be generally consistent with current Codex nutrition claim principles.

Canada notes that consideration needs to be given to the development of consistent fatty acid ranges for the three qualifiers, and would be pleased to participate in any subsequent discussions relevant to this matter.

Denmark

Danish Comments to section III, Recommendations

A.: Denmark agrees with the working group in recommending further discussion and development of the **compositional criteria** of either option 1 or option 2, with our preference on option 2.

With both options there is a great risk of misleading the consumer, and therefore the criteria must be set in such a way that confusion is avoided.

Especially option 1 can give rise to misleading claims. For instance it will be misleading to name an oil “high linoleic grapeseed oil”, as this is not different from traditional or standard grapeseed oil. Another example could be “high oleic olive oil” which will not be different from traditional olive oil.

Option 2 is preferable as it prescribes a comparative difference from the traditional oil. However, we find that the suggested limits of comparison must be further discussed to eliminate confusion and risk of misleading. The suggestion to set the limits as “X % *relative* difference from the top of the range or the lowest value in the range” for all kinds of oils might not be sufficient. This will lead to oils named “high” or “low”, without being a considerable difference from the traditional oil in question. As an example, following the proposed criteria, “high oleic sunflower oil” can contain 59 % oleic acid (50 % more than the top range of the reference standard). This is far below the already agreed standard for “high oleic sunflower oil”, that must contain not less than 75% oleic acid), cf. Codex Stan 210 (amended 2003).

We suggest that in setting the comparative criteria also an *absolute* difference - in g/100 g of the total fatty acid in g/100 g - must be taken into account. And it is necessary to differentiate between different levels of fatty acids. In other words, it is necessary to have different limits depending on, whether the traditional amount of the specific fatty acid is in the lower or in the higher range of total fatty acids.

B.: Labelling

Denmark agrees with the recommended labelling components.

In point d) we will suggest an addition as follow “X% increased in (naming the fatty acid) compared to traditional (name of the oil) oil”. (Addition underlined.) It is important that it is clear for the consumer what the indication is related to. In this case the levels in the specific traditional oil.

Furthermore, we suggest that CCFL should be involved in discussing both issues (composition and labelling) This will ensure consistency with the existing Codex Guidelines for the use of comparative nutrition claims.

United Kingdom

The UK supports Option 1 – *Absolute Criteria*. However, this method of classification would require oils with naturally high levels of certain fatty acids to be labelled according to the designation for an oil with a modified fatty acid, for example olive oil which has a natural high oleic acid content. The UK proposes that the descriptors “low”, “medium” and “high” only be applied where there are alternatives to the traditional oil which have had their fatty acid content modified.