

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 2

CX/GP 99/2

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES
Fourteenth Session**

Paris, France, 19 – 23 April 1999

**MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX
COMMITTEES (INCLUDING SPECIAL TREATMENT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES)**

A) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Matters arising from the Commission and the 45th Session of the Executive Committee were referred to the last session of the CCGP.

B) MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling – Amendments to the Procedural Manual

Background

The 11th Session of the CCGP (1994) reviewed the sections in the Procedural Manual dealing with Relations between Commodity Committees and General Committees and agreed that the comprehensive statements of Codex policy in section 4. *Instructions to Codex Committees* (selection of methods of analysis, sampling protocols, establishment of microbiological criteria for foods, guidelines on the inclusion of provisions of nutritional quality in standards) belonged more correctly in the Codex Alimentarius itself than in the Procedural Manual. It requested the Committees responsible for the development of these texts to review and rephrase them in a way which would give them general applicability. However, until such time as general statements of policy suitable for inclusion in the Codex Alimentarius were elaborated, the texts should be retained as “*Guidelines for the Inclusion of Specific Provisions in Codex Standards and Related texts*” (ALINORM 95/33, para. 50).

Following these recommendations, the Committees concerned took action to reconsider the statements, reword them and/or convert them into a Codex text. The conclusions of the Committees concerned with the review of these sections were presented to the 12th Session of the CCGP (1996) in document CX/GP 96/8 – Revision of the Procedural Manual.

The Committee on Food Hygiene developed Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods adopted in 1997 as a Codex text, and the relevant section was deleted from the Manual. The CCFH also revised the section relating to the elaboration of Codes of Hygienic Practice which was retained in the Manual as it provides guidance to Codex Committees. The Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses reviewed the Guidelines on the Inclusion of Provisions on Nutritional Quality and agreed to delete them from the Manual as several aspects were covered in other Codex texts. Similarly, the Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants proposed some amendments to the chapter on *Relations between Commodity Committees and General Committees* as regards Food Additives which were endorsed by the 12th CCGP.

The revised chapters, as approved by the Commission, were included in the 10th Edition of the Manual. The section on methods of analysis remained unchanged, as the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling was revising the Principles for the Establishment of Codex Methods of Analysis, sections A) Definition of types of methods and B) General Criteria for the Selection of Methods of Analysis. As regards the *Principles for the Establishment or Selection of Codex Sampling Procedures*, the CCMAS was working on the elaboration of General Guidelines on Sampling, applicable to all foods, which should be ultimately incorporated into the Codex Alimentarius and replace the current section of the Manual. This revision has not yet been completed but the CCMAS is currently considering specific aspects of the relevant chapters as indicated below.

Matters arising from the CCMAS (22nd Session)

The last session of the CCMAS discussed the Criteria for Evaluating Acceptable Methods of Analysis and agreed to proceed with the implementation of the criteria approach including amendments of the relevant sections of the Procedural Manual, and to prepare Guidelines on the Application of the Criteria Approach.

In addition the Committee agreed to seek approval of the Commission to initiate work on the amendments of the sections of the Manual *Principles for the Establishment of Codex Methods of Analysis* (section A) and Definition of Types of Methods and Relations between Commodity Committees and General Committees – Methods of Analysis and Sampling. It also agreed to request comments on the following text for further consideration by the Committee (ALINORM 99/23, paras. 26-28, Appendix II).

PROPOSED DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE PROCEDURAL MANUAL **(At Steps 1/2/3 of the Procedure)**

1. Principles for the Establishment of Codex Methods of Analysis

Addition of a new subsection at the end as follows:

“... ”

(C) General Criteria for the Selection of Methods of Analysis using the Criteria Approach

In the case of Codex Type [II and] III methods, method criteria may be identified and values quantified for incorporation into the appropriate Codex commodity standard. Method criteria which are developed will include the criteria in section (B)(b) above together with other appropriate criteria, e.g., recovery factors.”

2. Relations between Commodity Committees and General Committees - Methods of Analysis and Sampling

Addition of new paragraphs at the end of “Normal Process” section as follows:

“The Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling will assess the actual analytical performance of the method which has been determined in its validation. This will take account of the appropriate precision characteristics obtained in collaborative trials which may have been carried out on the method together with results from other development work carried out during the course of the method development. The set of criteria that are developed will form part of the report of the endorsement by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling and will be inserted in the appropriate Codex Commodity Standard.

In addition, the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling will identify numeric values for the criteria for which it would wish such methods to comply.”

However, the revision proposed by CCMAS does not appear to be new work but rather the follow-up of the request made by the 11th Session of CCGP to all Committees concerned by the revision of these chapters. In addition, the CCGP had recommended to revise the relevant sections in the *Inclusion of Specific Provisions* but also to consider their removal from the Manual and their integration as Codex texts for ultimate inclusion in the Codex Alimentarius.

The Committee may therefore wish to ask clarification from the CCMAS on the status of the revision and which sections it intends to develop as Codex texts or to retain in the Manual. In particular, it may consider whether section B) Criteria should be incorporated into the Codex Alimentarius rather than in the Manual, especially as this approach was followed by other committees. It could also consider whether the Definitions section should remain in the Manual or be incorporated into a Codex text

The Committee is invited to consider the proposals for amendment by CCMAS as the revisions in the Procedural Manual are not usually developed through the Elaboration Procedure, but proposed by individual Committees or CCGP and in any case endorsed by CCGP. As the above text was sent for comments, it will be further considered by the next session of the CCMAS before finalization. However, in order to save time, the CCGP may consider the proposed amendments at this stage and refer back any comments to the CCMAS.

OTHER MATTERS

Special Treatment of Developing Countries

The last session of the CCGP discussed a general paper on this subject and identified specific concerns of developing countries and measures that were being taken to address them, in particular as relates to the distribution of documents and training needs. It was suggested that the issues discussed could be taken into account in the revision of the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods, which was proposed as new work, subject to the approval of the 23rd Session of the Commission. This matter would then be addressed by the 15th Session of the CCGP from a general perspective and in the meantime the Committee may wish to note relevant activities in other Codex Committees in this area.

While discussing the recommendations on Risk Analysis during the last session, the CCGP also considered the question of specific needs of developing countries; the recommendations of the Committee on Food Hygiene concerning microbiological risk assessment may therefore be of interest to the work of CCGP on the general aspects of risk analysis.

The Committee on Food Hygiene finalized the elaboration of the *Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Assessment*. While discussing the Introduction, the Delegation of India, supported by other delegations, stressed the needs of developing countries for training on microbiological risk assessment and for a realistic time frame to implement these Principles and Guidelines. The Delegation also drew the attention of the Committee to the issues raised by India in the CCGP in this respect (ALINORM 99/13A, para. 21 and Appendix II). The Committee agreed to add sentences at the end of this section to address this concern, as follows;

“Since Microbiological Risk Assessment is a developing science, implementation of these guidelines may require a period of time and may also require specialized training in the countries that consider it necessary. This may be particularly the case for developing countries”

Food Safety Objectives

The 7th Session of the CCFICS will be considering a Discussion Paper on Issues Relating to the Judgement of Equivalence, which includes consideration of food safety objectives. However, in view of the short time between the CCFICS and the CCGP, it is not possible to prepare a discussion paper taking into account the discussions held at CCFICS for consideration by CCGP. Additional information on the outcome of the discussion on the judgement of equivalence will be presented orally to the CCGP.