

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

Agenda Item

CX/GP 07/24/7

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

**Twenty-fourth Session
Paris, France, 2 - 6 April 2007**

REVIEW OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

Background

The 23rd Session of the Committee on General Principles Committee agreed to forward the proposed amendment to the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius, as discussed at the session, to the 29th Session of the Commission for adoption. (ALINORM 06/29/33, para. 136 and Appendix VIII).

The 29th Session of the Commission considered the proposed amendment and had the following discussion.

The Delegation of Malaysia, supported by several delegations and one Observer, expressed its concern with the deletion of the provisions concerning advisory texts in the General Principles. The Delegation stressed the importance of advisory texts to provide guidance to governments as regards food control and pointed out that the Commission should consider elaborating related texts such as codes of practice when scientific data were insufficient or incomplete to elaborate a standard. The Delegation therefore proposed to retain the provisions on the advisory status of "related texts". Some delegations expressed the view that if no reference was made to advisory texts, it might be understood that Codex texts were mandatory. The Secretariat recalled that the Committee on General Principles had agreed to delete these specific provisions on "advisory texts" taking into account that all Codex standards and related texts were advisory, and to avoid confusion on the status of different types of Codex texts.

In view of the substantial issues raised by several delegations, the Commission agreed to return the proposed amendment to the Committee on General Principles for further consideration, taking into account the comments presented at the present session (ALINORM 06/29/41, paras. 24-25).

Following the decision of the Commission, the Committee is invited to reconsider the Proposed Amendment to the General Principles of Codex Alimentarius, as presented in the Annex.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS¹

Purpose of the Codex Alimentarius

1. The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally adopted food standards and related texts presented in a uniform manner. These food standards and related texts aim at protecting consumers' health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. ~~The Codex Alimentarius also includes provisions of an advisory nature in the form of codes of practice, guidelines and other recommended measures intended to assist in achieving the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius.~~ The publication of the Codex Alimentarius is intended to guide and promote the elaboration and establishment of definitions and requirements for foods to assist in their harmonization and in doing so to facilitate international trade.

Scope of the Codex Alimentarius

2. The Codex Alimentarius includes standards for all the principal foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, for distribution to the consumer. Materials for further processing into foods should be included to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius as defined. The Codex Alimentarius includes provisions in respect of food hygiene, food additives, ~~pesticide~~ residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs, contaminants, labelling and presentation, methods of analysis and sampling, and import and export inspection and certification. ~~It also includes provisions of an advisory nature in the form of codes of practice, guidelines and other recommended measures.~~

Nature of Codex Standards

3. Codex standards and related texts are not a substitute for, or alternative to national legislation. Every country's laws and administrative procedures contain provisions with which it is essential to comply.

43. Codex standards and related texts contain requirements for food aimed at ensuring for the consumer a safe sound, wholesome food product free from adulteration, correctly labelled and presented. A Codex standard for any food or foods should be drawn up in accordance with the Format for Codex Commodity Standards and contain, as appropriate, the sections ~~criteria~~ listed therein.

Revision of Codex Standards

54. The Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies are committed to revision as necessary of Codex standards and related texts to ensure that they are consistent with and reflect current scientific knowledge and other relevant information. When required, a standard or related text shall be revised or removed in accordance with the Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts ~~using the same procedures as followed for the elaboration of a new standard~~. Each member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is responsible for identifying, and presenting to the appropriate committee, any new scientific and other relevant information which may warrant revision of any existing Codex standards or related texts.

¹ ALINORM 06/29/33, Appendix VIII