

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 9

CX/MAS 07/28/10

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX COMMITTEE ON METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

Twenty-eighth Session

Budapest, Hungary, 5 – 9 March 2007

#### OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK

#### THE ROLE OF CCMAS WITH RESPECT TO METHODS WITHOUT DETAILED PROVISIONS IN CODEX-STANDARDS

*(prepared by The Netherlands)*

#### BACKGROUND

Traditionally CCMAS endorses methods of analysis and sampling to test for compliance with CODEX standards, submitted by other Committees. In addition CCMAS gives support to the development of methods and guidance on general analytical quality.

Recently, in its 25<sup>th</sup> session, CCMAS has been asked by the Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Fruit and Vegetables Juices to endorse methods of analysis for fruit juices without numerical values in the General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (par 89, ALINORM 04/27/23). At this session the committee decided to endorse only temporarily these methods, awaiting numerical values. At its 26<sup>th</sup> session the Committee agreed to ask the advice of the Commission as to whether, from the procedural point of view, these methods could be considered for endorsement in relation to authenticity and quality criteria, as no numerical value had been established. The committee proposed to add an explanation to the standard why no numerical values can be given, as the methods are meant to compare sample values to data from variable sources (par 61 and 64, ALINORM 05/28/23). In its 28<sup>th</sup> session the Commission agreed with this procedure (par 61, ALINORM 05/28/41) and in its 27<sup>th</sup> session CC-MAS did endorse the temporarily endorsed methods (par 57, ALINORM 06/29/23).

In its 27<sup>th</sup> session the Committee, too, discussed methods and criteria for methods of analysis for dioxins (par 92-97, ALINORM 06/29/23) and products derived of biotechnology (par 84-87, ALINORM 06/29/23). Also in these cases it was concluded that CC-MAS was not in the position to endorse methods or criteria, as no specific specifications have been given in Codex Standards.

It is appropriate to consider whether CCMAS should seek extension of its scope beyond precisely defined specifications.

In the case of fruit juices, the problem was solved by adding an explaining note.

In the dioxin case no specifications exist, yet. In fact, endorsed methods are required to obtain reliable data as a basis for a specification. CCMAS should not hamper the work of CCFAC by delaying the availability of reliable data.

Also in the case of products derived of modern biotechnology the availability of reliable methods goes before setting limits or labeling requirements.

In these three cases valid arguments are present to require methods for Codex purposes and therefore, it is useful to extend the scope of CCMAS to such cases.

## **EXISTING ADMINISTRATIVE LIMITATIONS**

At the moment three phrases in existing texts put limitations to the scope of CCMAS in the cases under discussion:

- the terms of reference specifically mention Codex Committees, whereas Task groups too end up with methods (see Annex I)
- the "General Criteria for the Selection of Methods of Analysis" under (d) require "direct pertinence to the Codex Standard" (see Annex I)
- the "Recommendations for a Checklist of Information Required to Evaluate Methods of Analysis Submitted to the CCMAS for Endorsement" especially point *1.1.3 Analyte or Property* and *1.1.4 Codex Specification or Limit* require "the specification, limit, tolerance or guideline which is given in the standard and which provides the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable material" and noted that this boundary should be defined in the standard, whether it was numerical or not.

From the cases involved in the past, it appears that it is not only the Terms of Reference that limit the scope CCMAS, but some other texts as well. To bring the work of CCMAS in line with the requirements of the analytical community these should be re-envisaged as well.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

To bring the work of CCMAS in line with the requirements of the analytical community it is recommended, that

- CCMAS discusses the limitations of its scope as outlined above
- CCMAS asks for endorsement of a work item to
  - o identify unwanted restrictions to its scope in CODEX-texts and
  - o propose changes, where appropriate

## **ANNEX I. Background documents**

The 15e Edition of the procedural Manual states the current terms of reference (p. 129) and General Criteria for the Selection of Methods of Analysis (p. 72)

### ***Terms of reference:***

- (a) to define the criteria appropriate to Codex Methods of Analysis and Sampling;
- (b) to serve as a coordinating body for Codex with other international groups working in methods of analysis and sampling and quality assurance systems for laboratories;
- (c) to specify, on the basis of final recommendations submitted to it by the other bodies referred to in (b) above, Reference Methods of Analysis and Sampling appropriate to Codex Standards which are generally applicable to a number of foods;
- (d) to consider, amend, if necessary, and endorse, as appropriate, methods of analysis and sampling proposed by Codex (Commodity) Committees, except that methods of analysis and sampling for residues of pesticides or veterinary drugs in food, the assessment of micro biological quality and safety in food, and the assessment of specifications for food additives, do not fall within the terms of reference of this Committee;
- (e) to elaborate sampling plans and procedures, as may be required;
- (f) to consider specific sampling and analysis problems submitted to it by the Commission or any of its Committees;
- (g) to define procedures, protocols, guidelines or related texts for the assessment of food laboratory proficiency, as well as quality assurance systems for laboratories.

### ***General Criteria for the Selection of Methods of Analysis***

- (a) Official methods of analysis elaborated by international organizations occupying themselves with a food or group of foods should be preferred.

(b) Preference should be given to methods of analysis the reliability of which have been established in respect of the following criteria, selected as appropriate:

(i) specificity

(ii) accuracy

(iii) precision; repeatability intra-laboratory (within laboratory), reproducibility inter-laboratory (within laboratory and between laboratories)

(iv) limit of detection

(v) sensitivity

(vi) practicability and applicability under normal laboratory conditions

(vii) other criteria which may be selected as required.

(c) The method selected should be chosen on the basis of practicability and preference should be given to methods which have applicability for routine use.

(d) All proposed methods of analysis must have direct pertinence to the Codex Standard to which they are directed.

(e) Methods of analysis which are applicable uniformly to various groups of commodities should be given preference over methods which apply only to individual commodities.