



Agenda Item 2

MAS 35 INF 1

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING**Thirty-fifth Session**
Budapest, Hungary, 3 - 7 March 2014**FAO/WHO INFORMATION PAPER ON ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE COMMITTEE**

1. The need for guidance on sampling, and sampling plan development and implementation for various contamination situations in a wide range of food commodities is one which FAO and WHO are well aware of through their communications with regulatory authorities and their technical assistance programmes. The scope of FAO and WHO's work on sampling covers various contaminants including chemicals, microorganisms and other possible mixtures of low levels of genetically modified crops. This document aims to provide CCMAS with information of relevant FAO and WHO activities and tools and highlight the role these organizations play in providing technical assistance and developing capacities in this field.
2. **FAO mycotoxin sampling tool:** As part of its technical assistance to developing countries in mycotoxin prevention control, the FAO mycotoxin sampling tool (<http://www.fstools.org/mycotoxins>) was developed. The tool provides support in analyzing the performance of sampling plans and determining the most appropriate plan to meet the defined objectives. The tool includes a user guide which provides a step-by-step instruction on how to use the tool in the development of sampling plans for 24 mycotoxin-commodity combinations.
3. **FAO/WHO histamine sampling tool:** Based on one of the recommendations of the 2012 Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on the Public Health Risks of Histamine and other Biogenic Amines from Fish and Fishery Products (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3390e/i3390e.pdf>), FAO/WHO developed a tool to support decision making related to the establishment and use of sampling plans for detection of histamine. The tool provides support in two main areas: designing a sampling plan and analyzing the performance of a sampling plan. The tool is available at <http://www.fstools.org/histamine>.
4. **FAO/WHO web-based tool to assess the performance of microbiological sampling plans:** FAO/WHO developed a user-friendly web-based tool to assess the performance of both presence/absence sampling plans and concentration-based sampling plans for microbial hazards. The tool aims to provide those responsible for the elaboration and implementation of sampling plans for microbiological testing as part of their food safety control and verification activities with the means of designing sampling plans that meet their needs and assessing their performance under a range of different contamination levels. The tool is available at <http://www.fstools.org/sampling>.
5. **FAO/WHO tool for risk assessment of *Cronobacter* spp. in powdered infant formula:** Developed as part of the FAO/WHO response to the challenges countries and producers were facing with this product/pathogen combination, this tool includes a component to assess the impact of different sampling plans (in support of sampling plan design or analysis) for end-product testing of *Cronobacter* spp. in terms of both risk reduction and product rejection. The tool is available online at <http://www.fstools.org/ESAK/Home.aspx>.

6. **FAO/WHO resource document on the statistical and mathematical considerations related to the establishment and implementation of microbiological criteria in foods:** Responding to a request from the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, FAO/WHO implemented a joint technical meeting in October 2013 to identify the key statistical and mathematical considerations underlying microbiological criteria and their associated sampling plans and consider how to transmit such information in an easy to understand manner to a broad food safety audience. As follow-up to the meeting, a resource document focusing on three core areas has been developed: section 1) basic concepts related to microorganisms in foods and sampling; section 2) making decisions about an individual product log; and section 3) making decisions related to process verification. The document is currently under review and is scheduled for publication in mid-2014. For further background information on the document please refer to the “Matters arising from the work of FAO and WHO” document prepared for the 45th session of CCFH at ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/ccffp/ccffp33/fp33_03e.pdf.
7. **FAO information document on sampling for GMO testing:** FAO is preparing a compilation of examples of sampling approaches for GMO testing based on information available in the relevant literature and other publicly available sources. This will be published in 2014.
8. **FAO guidance on a risk based imported food control:** FAO is currently finalizing guidance on risk based imported food control, where sampling programmes and strategies are being considered as one of the tools available for risk management. While this guidance discusses sampling in the context of imported food control, it cannot respond to all questions about sampling procedures, programmes, plans and strategies, their implementation and the underlying choices to be made by food control authorities in the broader context of food control.
9. A primary objective of many of the abovementioned tools and activities is to support the implementation of a range of related Codex texts and help countries overcome some of the challenges they face in this regard. While these tools address specific areas there is also a recognition of the need to address sampling in its broadest context from a food control authorities perspective and bring overall concepts and specific guidance (e.g. as provided under the above mentioned tools) under the same umbrella.
10. For more information about the relevant activities and tools developed by FAO and WHO, contact us at food-quality@fao.org and foodsafety@who.int. Feedback on the sampling tools above can be also sent to food-quality@fao.org.