

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 6

**CX/NASWP 00/6
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC

Sixth Session

Perth, Australia, 5 – 8 December 2000

REVIEW AND PROMOTION OF ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS AND MAXIMUM RESIDUE LIMITS FOR PESTICIDES BY COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

The 5th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South-West Pacific (CCNASWP) (October 1998) noted that the current Codex acceptance procedures were not often applied in practice and were probably irrelevant in light of the relevant WTO Agreements¹. It also noted that the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) had had extensive discussions on the revision of the Codex acceptance procedures. Subsequently consideration was to be given by the 14th Session of the CCGP to this matter, however, the CCGP decided to advise the Commission that, due to the diversity of opinions it was not possible to recommend changes to the current Acceptance Procedure at the present time².

Circular Letter (CL00/34 NASWP) invited Member Countries to provide the updated information on the review and promotion of acceptances of Codex Standards and Maximum Residue Limits for pesticides for consideration at the 6th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (CCNASWP).

Considerations

CCNASWP is invited to consider updated information provided by Member Countries in response to CL00/34 NASWP which is reproduced at Attachment 1 to this paper.

¹ ALINORM 99/32, paras 16-20.

² ALINORM 99/33A, paras 52-57.

AUSTRALIA

The Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA) has prepared a draft proposal which, subject to acceptable national dietary risk assessments and its adoption by Ministerial Council, will incorporate Codex Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) into the Australian *Food Standards Code*. Dietary risk assessments has now been completed for the majority of agricultural and veterinary chemicals to assess the potential impact of the new standards on the exposure of the Australian consumer to chemical residues. This proposal will not affect the MRLs currently established in New Zealand.

In relation to exports, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service has always taken a proactive approach to promoting the uptake of Codex standards by importing countries, particularly in respect of MRLs. This approach is in respect of both pesticides and veterinary chemicals. In any given year there would be occasions when Australia would ask that an importing country consider acceptance of an Australian exported commodity based on an established Codex CXL, particularly in respect of horticultural produce.

CANADA

Canada recalls that the 22nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission agreed that there was a need to revise the Codex acceptance procedures and referred the matter to the CCGP for consideration. The last Session of CCNASWP recommended that the Commission request the WTO Secretariat to indicate the availability of information or data which would be of utility to Codex in analysing the status of the use or acceptance of Codex standards. This recommendation was endorsed by the 47th Session of the Codex Executive Committee.

Canada has initiated a project where we are examining those Codex standards, Codes of Practice and Guidelines which have been adopted by Codex since 1995. The purpose of the exercise is to determine which Codex standards/Codes/Guidelines are consistent with Canadian requirements. We will consider adopting those Codex standards that meet Canadian health and safety requirements.

NEW ZEALAND

Maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides are established in New Zealand to ensure that any residues present in crops at harvest or in food commodities following storage or transport do not pose an appreciable health risk to consumers. Levels are set consistent with good agricultural practice (GAP). They also recognise the presence of environmental contaminants from the historical use of pesticides.

The procedures used in the establishment of MRLs in New Zealand generally follow those adopted internationally, and involve:

- the assessment of the MRL likely to remain at harvest (or at the point-of-sale) following use of the particular pesticide consistent with good agricultural practice, and
- the confirmation that any such level will not be a hazard to consumers of the treated food, this being determined using internationally recognised (WHO/FAO) methodology of ensuring that the national estimate of dietary intake (NEDI) for chronic intake is below the acceptable daily intake (ADI). Estimates of acute dietary intake risk, again using recently adopted FAO/WHO methodology are also conducted where necessary.

Although New Zealand is a net exporter of food, there is a significant import trade in food, particularly from Australia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. With respect to pesticide residues on imported food, New Zealand supports the principle of recognising the requirements of our trading partners, while still ensuring the safety of domestic and imported food. This is reflected in one of the provisions of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement, where food complying with Australian (ANZFA) MRL standards has been given “free distribution” status within New Zealand.

New Zealand is one of the few countries that has reported 100% acceptance of Codex pesticide MRLs, either at the “full acceptance” level (where the Codex level is compatible with New Zealand GAP, or at the “free distribution” level (where the Codex MRL is not relevant to New Zealand conditions). This ability to accept Codex MRLs is based on a specific section in the *New Zealand Food Regulations 1984* that references the Codex Alimentarius.