

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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**Agenda Item 10**

**CX/NFSDU 05/27/11  
November 2005**

## **JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**

### **CODEX COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES Twenty-seventh Session**

**“Brückenforum Bonn”, Friedrich-Breuer-Strasse 17,  
Bonn, Germany, 21 – 25 November 2005**

### **Proposal To Amend the Codex General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods (CAC/GL 09-1987)**

**Committee:** Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses

**Prepared by:** Canada

**Date:** October 1, 2005

#### **1. PURPOSE AND THE SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED NEW WORK**

The Codex General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods (CAC/GL 09-1987) provide guidance on the addition of essential nutrients to foods. The intent of the Principles includes the maintenance or improvement of the overall nutritional quality of foods, and the prevention of the indiscriminate addition of essential nutrients to foods thereby decreasing the risk of health hazard due to essential nutrient excesses, deficits or imbalances.

The traditional means used to add essential nutrients to food is the direct addition of these substances to the food, and this is what the Principles in their current format address. Recently, however, augmentation or enhancement of the essential nutrients in foods of plant and animal origin is also being achieved through genetic modification of the animal or plant organism that is the source of the food (e.g., beta-carotene production in rice) or through alterations to livestock feed composition resulting in nutritionally enhanced animal products (e.g., higher levels of nutrients in eggs or dairy products).

Similar considerations are appropriate regardless of the means used to increase the essential nutrient content of a food. The General Principles guiding the addition of essential nutrients to foods would generally equally apply to the augmentation or enhancement of essential nutrients in foods through non-traditional means, as would many of the Basic Principles included within the General Principles.

## **2. ITS RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS**

The work is in line with the Terms of Reference for the CCNFSDU including

- (a) to study specific nutritional problems assigned to it by the Commission and advise the Commission on general nutrition issues; and
- (b) to draft general provisions, as appropriate, concerning the nutritional aspects of all foods.

The work is timely since the nutritional enhancement of foods by means other than the traditional direct addition of nutrients to foods is a rapidly evolving area which may have a significant impact on the nutritional profiles of traditional foods and the intake of essential nutrients by consumers. It is essential that consumers are protected from risk to health due to nutrient excesses or imbalances that may result from the augmentation or enhancement of the essential nutrients in foods through genetic modification of the animal or plant organism that is the source of the food, or through alterations to livestock feed composition.

The work is also timely in view of the ongoing work of the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology on the Food Safety Assessment of Food Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants Modified for Nutritional or Health Benefits.

## **3. THE MAIN ASPECTS TO BE COVERED**

The work would involve a review of the Codex General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods to determine their relevance and applicability to the augmentation or enhancement of essential nutrients in foods through non-traditional means, such as genetic modification of the animal or plant organism that is the source of the food, or through alterations to livestock feed composition. If required, the proposed work could be incorporated as additional text, potentially as an Annex, to the Codex General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods (CAC/GL 09-1987). It is not intended to revise the current provisions of the General Principles.

## **4. AN ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORK PRIORITIES**

The proposed new work would assist governments in protecting consumers from health hazard due to the indiscriminate enhancement or augmentation of the essential nutrient in foods through non-traditional methods such as genetic modification of plant or animal organisms that are the source of the food or through alterations to livestock feed composition. It would also lessen impediments to international trade.

## **5. RELEVANCE TO THE CODEX STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The proposed new work is consistent with the Strategic Vision outlined in the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Strategic Framework (2003-2007). It would contribute to: Objective 1 - Promoting sound regulatory frameworks; Objective 2 - Promoting widest and consistent application of scientific principles and risk analysis, Objective 4 - Enhance capacity to respond effectively and expeditiously to new issues, concerns and developments in the food sector, and Objective 6 - Promoting maximum application of Codex standards.

## **6. INFORMATION ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND OTHER EXISTING CODEX DOCUMENTS**

The Codex General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods may be considered by other Codex Committees in the development of guidelines and standards. The new work would be particularly relevant and complementary to the work of the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology on food derived from recombinant-DNA plants modified

for nutritional or health benefits which will elaborate guidance on issues such as assessing the nutritional consequences of the changes made to these foods, as well as whether the nutrient intakes are likely to be altered by the introduction of such foods into the food supply.

7. **IDENTIFICATION OF ANY REQUIREMENT FOR AND AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC ADVICE**

None foreseen

8. **IDENTIFICATION OF ANY NEED FOR TECHNICAL INPUT TO THE STANDARD FROM EXTERNAL BODIES SO THAT THIS CAN BE PLANNED FOR**

None foreseen

9. **THE PROPOSED TIME-LINE FOR COMPLETION OF THE NEW WORK, INCLUDING THE START DATE, THE PROPOSED DATE FOR STEP 5 AND THE PROPOSED DATE FOR ADOPTION BY THE COMMISSION; THE TIME FRAME FOR DEVELOPING GUIDELINE SHOULD NOT NORMALLY EXCEED FIVE YEARS**

Subject to approval, the new work could commence following the 29th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting (2006). Proposed amendments to the General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods could be circulated for government comments at Step 3 in 2007 following the 28th Session of the CCNFSDU (2006). It is anticipated that the 29th Session of the CCNFSDU (2007) could advance the document to Step 5 and the 30th Session of the CCNFSDU (2008) could advance the document to Step 8. Therefore, a total of three (3) years would be required to complete this work.