

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 4(a)

CX/PFV 06/23/8-Add.1
July 2006

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

23rd Session,

Arlington, VA, Washington DC (metro area), U.S.A., 16 - 21 October 2006

PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX GUIDELINES ON PACKING MEDIA FOR CANNED VEGETABLES

(AT STEP 3)

Codex Members and Observers wishing to submit comments on the above matters, including possible implications for their economic interests, should do so in conformity with the Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts (Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual) before **15 September 2006**. Comments should be directed:

to:

Ms. Ellen Y. Matten,
US Codex Office,
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E-mail: uscodex@usda.gov - *preferably* -

with a copy to:

Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission,
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme,
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla,
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BACKGROUND

1. The 19th Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (March 1999) decided that all individual standards for canned vegetables should be combined into one standard for canned vegetables and that corresponding guidelines on packing media for canned vegetables should be elaborated¹. The 20th Session of the Committee (September 2000) accepted the offer of several delegations to prepare proposed draft standards on various processed fruits and vegetables including a proposed draft Codex Standard for Canned Vegetables along with Guidelines on Packing Media for Canned Vegetables (France)².

2. Due to time constraints, the 21st Session of the Committee (September 2002) returned a number of proposed draft Codex standards - including the one on canned vegetables and packing media - to Step 2 for redrafting based on the comments submitted at that Session. The revised text would be subsequently circulated comments at Step 3 and consideration by the next Session of the Committee. In taking this decision, the Committee reasserted France as leading country of the Working Group on Canned Vegetables including Guidelines on Packing Media for Canned Vegetables³. The Working Group considered the matter and produced a revised version that was presented to the 22nd Session of the Committee (September 2004) as working document CX/PFV 04/22/6.

¹ ALINORM 99/27, paras. 63 & 76.

² ALINORM 01/27, paras. 11 & 37.

³ ALINORM 03/27, para. 97.

3. The Working Group on Canned Vegetables met during the 22nd Session of Committee to discuss comments received in response to CX/PFV 04/22/6. It proposed further changes indicated in a Conference Room Document (CRD 16) which was produced during the meeting. This document was considered at the Plenary Session and the proposed changes discussed briefly. The Committee agreed to use the revised text as contained in CRD 16 as a basis for further discussion. To this aim, the revised document was appended to the report of the Session (ALINORM 05/28/27-Appendix V) and circulated for comments at Step 3. The Committee further agreed that the Working Group led by France would prepare a revised draft based on the written comments submitted at that Session as well as comments submitted at Step 3⁴ for circulation, additional comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next Session (October 2006)⁵.

WORKING GROUP ON CANNED VEGETABLES & PACKING MEDIA FOR CANNED VEGETABLES

4. The Working Group revised provisions for packing media in the proposed draft Codex Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables and prepared the proposed draft Guidelines on Packing Media for Canned Vegetables while noting the comments indicated below:

- 4.1 **Section 2.3** - Some delegations wanted to withdraw oil and vinegar from this Section because they were optional ingredients.
- 4.2 **Section 2.4** - For manufacturing canned vegetables, either the product is packed with liquid packing medium or not. When liquid packing medium is used, the internal pressure at 20°C is 100 at 200 millibars. Vacuum packaged carried out in compliance with (a) and (b) gives specific qualities to the product. So its possible to make an internal pressure lower than (a) and (b), but in this case is not possible to use the wording “vacuum packaged. The process of “vacuum packaged” is at the present time used for canned corn, but it can be used for others vegetables, and is important not to prevent innovations.

5. It is noted that the development of guidelines on packing media for canned vegetables comply with the simplification of Codex standards by developing horizontal texts covering a broad range of products whenever possible and pertinent. There are already some Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables e.g. Codex Standard for Canned Bamboo Shoots referring to these Guidelines in the relevant section.

6. Besides, when discussing how to approach provisions for packing media in Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables, the last Session of the Committee agreed to refer to the general provisions laid down in the Guidelines for Packing Media for Canned Fruits (CAC/GL 51-2003) and Vegetables (under development) while keeping the option to introduce specific provisions for packing media in addition to those set out in the relevant Guidelines to allow for adequate flexibility depending on the nature of the canned fruit or vegetable. It was however recognized that in certain cases it might not be possible to refer to the relevant Guidelines due to the specificity of the product⁶. It is therefore possible to include in the proposed draft Codex Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables (at Step 3) specific provisions or additional information that are technically pertinent based on the specificity of some vegetables.

CODEX SECRETARIAT

7. In order to keep the document simple, focused and in line with the standardized format and language usually applying in Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables, the Codex Secretariat would like to draw the attention of the Committee to a number of matters as indicated in Annex II to this document. Codex Members and Observers are kindly invited to take them into consideration when submitting comments at Step 3.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

8. Codex Members and Observers are invited to comment on the revised proposed draft Codex Guidelines on Packing Media for Canned Vegetables (see Annex I). The proposed draft Guidelines along with the comments submitted at Step 3 will be considered by the 23rd Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables.

⁴ Australia, Thailand.

⁵ ALINORM 05/28/27, paras. 77 - 80.

⁶ ALINORM 05/28/27 paras. 14 - 15.

**PROPOSED DRAFT CODEX GUIDELINES ON PACKING MEDIA
FOR CANNED VEGETABLES**

(AT STEP 3)

1. SCOPE

The following guidelines describe the composition and labelling requirements for packing media for use with canned vegetables.

2. COMPOSITION AND DESIGNATIONS TO BE USED IN LABELLING

2.1 Any of the following packing media may be used.

2.2 Water: eventually with added salt.

2.3 Water with added salt, and/or sugars and/or other sweeteners such as honey, or without added sugars, with or without aromatics plants, spices or extracts thereof, seasoning, regular or concentrated fruit juice, oil or vinegar. These ingredients should not alter in any way the flavour characteristic of the product.

2.4 “Vacuum packed”: the product is packaged without packing media, or with a packing media that does not exceed 20% of the product’s net weight and when the container is sealed in such conditions as to generate the following minimum internal pressure at 20°C :

(a) of [500 millibars] for containers of a capacity of 2550 ml or less.

(b) of [300 millibars] for containers of a capacity higher than 2550 ml.

2.5 The name of the product shall include the indication of the packing media as set out in Sections 2.2 and 2.4.

2.6 If an added ingredient or any seasoning, as set out in Section 2.3, does alter the flavour characteristic of the product, the name of the said ingredient should be affixed to the commercial designation of the product or in close proximity.

CODEX SECRETARIAT - SUGGESTIONS

In order to keep the document simple, focused and in line with the standardized format and language usually applying in Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables, the Codex Secretariat would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the following matter:

Section 2.3 - Sweeteners: The last session of the Committee had an exchange of views on the use of the different combinations of the terms “nutritive”/“carbohydrate”/“sweeteners” and the prefix “non” in front of any of these combinations in Codex commodity standards to indicate food additives or other foodstuff used for sweetening purposes.

The Codex Secretariat drew the attention of the Committee that, within Codex, the term “sweetener” refers only to food additives regardless of its caloric/nutritive value (e.g. intense, nutritive sweeteners, etc.) and was defined in the Codex Class Names and International Numbering System for Food Additives¹. For labelling purposes, the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods did not differentiate between the different kinds of food additives used for sweetening purposes and grouped them under the general term “sweetener” while all types of non-food additive sweeteners were designated as “sugars” and considered as food ingredients. The Committee therefore decided to request the advice of the Codex Committees on Food Additives and Contaminants and Food Labelling as per the correct use these terms in Codex commodity standards.

The Codex Committee on Food Labelling recommended that “foodstuffs with sweetening properties” was the most appropriate term with the understanding that it would be used only for description of ingredients in the Standard and not for labelling purposes. Therefore, when naming a foodstuff for sweetening purposes, they should be kept in the list of ingredients and the formula proposed by the CCFL should be used. However, for labelling purposes, the GSFL retains the term “sweetener” for food additives listed in the Section on Food Additives and “sugars” for those foodstuff with sweetening properties declared in the list of ingredients of the Section on Essential Composition and Quality Factors.

Besides, the Codex Committee on Food Additives is revising the Codex Class Names and International Numbering System for Food Additives. Meanwhile, the document in force defines “sweeteners” as “a non-sugar substance which imparts a sweet taste to a food”. Therefore, the term “sweetener” should be kept to indicate a food additive used for sweetening purposes under the relevant section of the Standard.

The Committee is invited to consider the use of one of the two terms depending on the type of compounds the provision is addressing e.g. whether a food additive (sweetener) or a foodstuff with sweetening properties (e.g. sugars as defined in the Codex Standard for Sugars, honey as defined in the Codex Standard for Honey, etc.).

The following is proposed as an alternative text:

Guidelines	Proposal
and/or sugars and/or other sweeteners such as honey, or without added sugars	<p><u>and/or sugars¹, honey² and/or other foodstuffs with sweetening properties</u> such as syrups or without added sugars</p> <p><u>1 - Sugars as defined in the latest edition of the Codex Standard for Sugars (CODEX STAN 212-1999)</u></p> <p><u>2 - Honey as defined in the latest edition of the Codex Standard for Honey (CODEX STAN 12-1981)</u></p>

¹ Codex documentation, including standards and related texts are available for downloading at: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/>.