

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2 (a)

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

AD-HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL CODEX TASK FORCE ON ANIMAL FEEDING

Third Session

Copenhagen, Denmark, 17 - 20 June 2002

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 2003-2007

1. The 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2001) discussed and finally adopted¹ the draft Strategic Framework, including the Strategic Vision Statement. It agreed that the draft Medium-Term Plan should be revised by the Secretariat in the light of the Strategic Framework, the Commission's discussion and the written comments (in response to the Circular Letter CL 2001/26-EXEC) and should incorporate the elements of the Chairperson's Action Plan agreed to by the Commission. The revised draft Medium-Term Plan would then be circulated for the inputs of Codex Coordinating Committees, other Codex Committees, member governments and international organizations, further consideration by the 50th and 51st Sessions of the Executive Committee and finalization at the 25th Session of the Commission.

STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE ON THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN THE CODEX DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH OTHER FACTORS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT: CRITERIA

2. The 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted² the Criteria for the Consideration of Other Factors proposed by the Codex Committee on General Principles with some amendments, for inclusion in the Procedural Manual (Appendix to the Procedural Manual after the Statement of Principles).

CONSENSUS BUILDING

3. In regard to the Chairperson's Coordination and Advisory Group to facilitate more efficient consideration and finalization of draft standards, the 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission noted³ that Chairpersons of Codex Committees and Task Forces had been meeting on an informal basis in the margins of some Codex meetings. The Commission agreed that this group should continue to meet, as required, on an informal basis to provide a coordinating role but without the power to take decisions or make recommendations to the Commission.

RISK ANALYSIS POLICIES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

4. The 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission confirmed⁴ its initial mandate to the Committee on General Principles to complete the development of the Working Principles for Risk Analysis as a high priority, with a view to their adoption in 2003.

¹ ALINORM 01/41, paras. 46-70 and Appendix II

² ALINORM 01/41 paras. 93-98

³ ALINORM 01/41, para. 57

⁴ ALINORM 01/41, paras. 71-85

5. The Commission adopted the following position concerning precaution in the framework of Codex:

“When there is evidence that a risk to human health exists but scientific data are insufficient or incomplete, the Commission should not proceed to elaborate a standard but should consider elaborating a related text, such as a code of practice, provided that such a text would be supported by the available scientific evidence”.

6. The Commission also recommended that relevant Codex Committees should continue to develop and document the application of risk analysis in their work. It was agreed that the risk analysis policies developed by the Committees would be presented in a single document to the next session of the Commission.

TRACEABILITY

7. The 49th Session of the Executive Committee⁵ discussed how to address the general issue of traceability in the framework of Codex on the basis of a document prepared by the Codex Secretariat. The Executive Committee recommended that the Committee on General Principles consider the following aspects of traceability: as food safety objective (i.e. as an SPS measure); and as a legitimate objective as a TBT measure. However, the Executive Committee was of the opinion that the first consideration should be given to the use of traceability as a risk management option in the Working Principles for Risk Analysis. The Executive Committee also noted the role of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems in relation to the development of procedures for the application of traceability in food import and export inspection and certification systems..

8. The 10th Session of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (February 2002) considered⁶ the information paper on Traceability in the Context of Inspection and Certification Systems prepared by the Australian Secretariat and had an extensive debate on the application of traceability in the framework of food inspection and certification systems. Considering the relevance of this issue for the CCFICS and consistent with the mandate provided by the Executive Committee to identify specific areas for the application of traceability to inspection and certification systems in relation to food safety issues, the CCFICS decided that a working group should draft a discussion paper on this matter for circulation, comment and further consideration at its next meeting.

9. The 3rd Session of the *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Codex Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (March 2002) considered⁷ the issue of traceability in the framework of the *Draft Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology* (Section III - Principles - Risk Management).

10. The Task Force was of the opinion that the resolution of this issue was important in order to reach a final conclusion on the text of the draft Principles. It noted that the addition of a new paragraph after paragraph 20 of the draft Principles concerning tools for the implementation and enforcement of risk management measures made it possible to place the question of traceability into context as a one of these tools, leaving aside its use for other purposes. On this basis a compromise text was drafted and accepted by the Task Force. In drafting this compromise text, the Task Force recognized that there were applications of product tracing (traceability) other than the risk management of foods derived from biotechnology, and that these applications be consistent with the provisions of the SPS and TBT Agreements. The representative of 49th Parallel Biotechnology Consortium noted that such applications would also need to be consistent with the provisions of the Cartagena Protocol after its entry into force. The Task Force noted that further consideration of these broader issues would continue within Codex.

⁵ ALINORM 03/3, paras. 29-33

⁶ ALINORM 03/30, paras. 53-68

⁷ ALINORM 03/34, paras. 22-28

11. The following paragraph, with its footnote, were therefore included in the *Draft Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology*:

21. Specific tools may be needed to facilitate the implementation and enforcement of risk management measures. These may include appropriate analytical methods; reference materials; and, the tracing of products⁸ for the purpose of facilitating withdrawal from the market when a risk to human health has been identified or to support post-market monitoring in circumstances as indicated in paragraph 20.

12. The Task Force finalized the *Draft Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology* and the *Draft Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Risk Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants* and advanced them to Step 8 for final adoption by the 25th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

13. The 17th Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles noted⁹ the conclusions reached by the *Ad-hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology and the work undertaken by the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems and other Committees on traceability. The Committee could not reach a consensus on the need to create a working group to develop a definition for the purposes of Codex as well as working principles to address this question in concerned Committees. However, it agreed to undertake work on this matter and agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a discussion paper considering how the Committee could best contribute to consideration on this issue in Codex taking into account the work of other relevant committees. The Secretariat was also asked to provide a draft definition for Codex use.

ANTIBIOTICS USED ON AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES AND ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANT BACTERIA IN FOOD

14. The 48th Session of the Executive Committee (June 2001) noted¹⁰ that the first of these matters had been raised by the Committee on Pesticide Residues and the second by the Committee on Food Hygiene. In relation to the first matter, the Executive Committee was of the opinion that the use of antimicrobials on agricultural commodities should be subject to evaluation within a risk analysis framework; the question was whether the normal process used for the evaluation of pesticides was the appropriate one. In the second case, the Executive Committee agreed that consideration should be given to the consideration of antimicrobial resistant micro-organisms in food within a risk analysis framework on a case-by-case basis as micro-organism/food combinations were being assessed.

15. The Executive Committee agreed however that the issues raised by these Committees required a more general and multidisciplinary and multi-agency response. It noted the on-going work of the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods and the Task Force on Animal Feeding. Moreover, it was aware of the recommendations contained in the WHO Global Principles for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in Animals Intended for Food¹¹ and the work of the OIE. It noted that in the past, attempts to coordinate work between Codex Committees with diverse mandates had not always been successful and that the establishment of new task forces to deal with these specific issues had helped to resolve the issues at hand. Without prejudice to the possibility of establishing a new Task Force, it recommended that FAO and WHO should give consideration to convening as soon as possible a multidisciplinary expert consultation in cooperation with OIE and if required the IPPC, to advise the Commission on possible directions to be taken including the establishment of a new task force if necessary. The consultation should consider all uses of antimicrobials in agriculture and veterinary use (including aquaculture) and take into account the role played by antimicrobials as essential human and veterinary medicines. It noted that the convening of an additional expert consultation in the forthcoming biennium would be subject to the availability of funds.

⁸ *It is recognised that there are other applications of product tracing. These applications should be consistent with the provisions of the SPS and TBT Agreements. The application of product tracing to the areas covered by both Agreements is under consideration within Codex on the basis of the decisions of 49th Session of the Executive Committee.*

⁹ ALINORM 03/33, paras. 5-13

¹⁰ ALINORM 01/4, paras. 36-37

¹¹ WHO document WHO/CDS/CSR/APH/2000.4

16. The 34th Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (October 2001) considered the issue of antimicrobial resistant bacteria in foods¹² and generally supported the conclusions of the Executive Committee, especially as related to convening a multidisciplinary expert consultation to address antimicrobial resistance. It noted that regardless of whether or not an Ad Hoc Task Force was established, a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to these risk assessments would be required. The Committee agreed that the emergence of pathogen-specific antimicrobial resistance such as fluoroquinolone-resistant *Campylobacter* in poultry be examined as data are available for future risk assessments.

17. The 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods¹³ (December 2001) considered the issue of antimicrobial resistance and the use of antimicrobials in animal production and confirmed the decision taken during its 12th Session that the CCRVDF should develop a code of practice for the containment of antimicrobial resistance and agreed to further elaborate a proposed draft Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Antimicrobial Resistance¹⁴ for circulation, comment and further consideration at its next Session.

DIOXIN AND CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION OF FOODS THROUGH FEED

18. The 34th Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (March 2002) considered¹⁵ a Position Paper on Dioxins and Dioxin Like PCBs¹⁶ and agreed that it should focus its discussions on dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs only and that non-dioxin like PCBs should not be considered at present. The Committee agreed that it should not draft maximum levels at this time and to further revise the Position Paper for consideration at its next Session. The Committee stressed the need of collecting data on dioxin levels in foods and feedingstuffs as well as exposure data from regions outside Europe.

19. The Committee agreed¹⁷ to further revise the draft Code of Practice for Source Directed Measures to Reduce Dioxin and Dioxin Like PCB Contamination of Foods¹⁸ for consideration at its next session.

PREVENTION (REDUCTION) OF MYCOTOXIN CONTAMINATION IN CEREALS

20. The 34th Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants agreed¹⁹ to forward the revised proposed draft Code of Practice for the Prevention (Reduction) of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals, including Annexes on Ochratoxin A, Zearalenone, Fumonisin and Tricothecenes, to the Executive Committee for preliminary adoption at Step 5.

CODEX AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON ANIMAL FEEDING - INTERIM REPORT

21. The 24th Codex Alimentarius Commission noted²⁰ the results of the work undertaken by the Task Force on Animal Feeding in developing a Draft Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding and endorsed the interim report and was informed that a final Draft Code would be proposed for adoption at its next session. The Commission decided to circulate the Interim Report to Member countries and Observers.

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, LABELLING AND MARKETING OF ORGANICALLY PRODUCED FOOD LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS

22. The 24th Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted²¹ the Draft Guidelines as proposed by the Committee. The Delegation of China pointed out that the section on veterinary drugs for livestock required further clarification as to the substances which were actually allowed in an organic production system and the definition of relevant limits. The Commission noted that this could be addressed as part of the regular review of the Guidelines.

¹² ALINORM 03/13, paras. 158-162

¹³ ALINORM 03/31, paras. 71-78

¹⁴ CX/RVDF 01/10, Appendix B

¹⁵ ALINORM 03/12, paras. 148-153

¹⁶ CX/FAC 02/26

¹⁷ ALINORM 03/12, paras. 154-156

¹⁸ CX/FAC 02/27

¹⁹ ALINORM 03/12, paras. 123-125

²⁰ ALINORM 01/41, paras. 210-211

²¹ ALINORM 01/41, paras. 150-151

PROPOSED DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE CODEX CLASSIFICATION OF FOODS AND ANIMAL FEEDS

23. The 24th Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted ²² the Proposed Draft Amendments at Step 5 of the Accelerated Procedure as presented.

²² ALINORM 01/41, para. 147