

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
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Agenda Item 2

CX/QFF 08/01/2  
February 2008

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**AD HOC CODEX INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON**  
**THE PROCESSING AND HANDLING OF QUICK FROZEN FOODS**

**1<sup>st</sup> Session**  
**Bangkok, Thailand, 25 - 29 February 2008**

**MATTERS REFERRED TO THE TASK FORCE BY THE**  
**CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Establishment of the Ad Hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods***

1. The 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, July 2006) considered the *proposed draft Recommended International Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods* at Step 5. The Commission noted that different procedures had been applied for the revision of the Code since 1999, the latest allocating work by correspondence on the quality provisions, including Defect Action Points (DAPs) Analysis, to the U.S. Secretariat with a view to finalization of the hygienic/safety provisions by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene following adoption at Step 5 by the Commission. The Commission noted that the extensive work done by correspondence on the quality provisions including DAPs analysis, did not succeed in resolving a few outstanding issues, i.e., whether certain quality provisions could be better identified as hygienic/safety provisions and the inclusion of DAPs Analysis in the Code.

2. After an exchange of views on how to move forward with the Code, the Commission agreed to establish an *Ad-Hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods* to finalize the Code within a period of two years time with one session of the Task Force. The Commission agreed to the Terms of Reference for the Task Force (see Annex) and noted that they would allow the Task Force to discuss and finalize both quality and safety provisions of the Code without having to receive endorsement on the safety provisions by the Committee on Food Hygiene unless the Task Force decided otherwise.

3. The Commission accepted the invitation of Thailand to host the Task Force. The Commission also noted the willingness of the United States to assist Thailand in the practical operation of the Task Force<sup>1</sup>.

### ***Development of the proposed draft Recommended International Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods***

4. Thailand, with the assistance of the United States, taking note of comments submitted to the Commission at Step 5, undertook a revision of the Code to address issues of concern brought forward in the comments in order to facilitate the process of the revision of the Code. The revised text was circulated for comments under CL 2007/06-QFF (February 2007) which identified issues associated with the removal of the Defect Action Point Analysis and its replacement to essential quality provisions; whether the safety and quality provisions specific to quick frozen foods were adequately addressed in the Code, bearing in mind that the safety provisions were supplemental to those general provisions applying across foods in the *Code of Practice - General principles of Food Hygiene*; the necessity of retaining the specific provisions on temperature monitoring and control in the food chain as set out in the Annex and if retained whether the content should remain as an Annex or be entirely/partially transferred into the body of the Code and whether the material presented therein was too prescriptive and more flexibility was needed to meet changing technologies; etc.

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 06/29/41, paras 116-119 and Appendix X

5. Comments submitted in response to CL 2007/06-QFF were further analyzed by Thailand and the United States to produce a revised document as contained in CL 2007/35-QFF (September 2007) for consideration by the Task Force. Main topics for discussion remain those indicated in paragraph 4 and any other outstanding issues of general/specific nature either technical or organizational.

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

6. As indicated in the Terms of Reference, the Task Force is aimed at finalizing the *proposed draft Recommended International Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods* in one meeting, therefore, the matters referred hereafter are presented for information only.

##### **30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Rome, Italy, July 2007)**

7. The Commission adopted the *Strategic Plan 2008-2013*<sup>2</sup>. The Commission also considered the 11 proposals of the *Review of Codex Committee Structure and Mandates of Codex Committees and Task Forces*. Due to time constraints, the Commission only made decisions regarding Proposal 1 (numbers of meetings), Proposal 2 (number of subsidiary bodies), Proposal 3 (interval of meetings), Proposal 4 (duration of meetings) and Proposal 8 (conversion of regional standards into world-wide standards) and agreed to request the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee for further consideration of the other six Proposals<sup>3</sup>.

8. As regards the *Elaboration of New Standards and Related Texts*, the Commission noted that project documents submitted to the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee contained information that, while respecting the overall format as set out in the Procedural Manual, varied significantly in terms of quality and quantity, and therefore, endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee to encourage Codex committees, task forces and Codex Members to prepare future project documents according to the format set out in the current revision of the Procedural Manual and provide sufficiently detailed, relevant information with particular regard to the evidence-based assessment against each of all the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities<sup>4</sup>.

9. Further details on the above and other matters discussed at the last session of the Commission can be found in the report of the meeting (ALINORM 07/30/REP) available at: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/>

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

##### **60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee (Rome, Italy, December 2007)**

##### ***Guidelines on the Application of the “Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities Applicable to Commodities”***

10. The Committee agreed to append to its report the *Guidelines on the Application of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities applicable to Commodities*, which aim at providing guidance on what kind of information needs to be examined by the Executive Committee while performing the Critical Review. The Committee further agreed that these Guidelines should be made widely available in order to assist Codex Members and Codex subsidiary bodies when preparing project documents<sup>5</sup>.

11. Further details on the above and other matters discussed at the last session of the Committee can be found in the report of the meeting (ALINORM 08/31/3) available at: <http://www.codexalimentarius.net/>

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<sup>2</sup> ALINORM 07/30/REP, paras 131-138 and Appendix IX

<sup>3</sup> ALINORM 07/30/REP paras 144-161

<sup>4</sup> ALINORM 07/30/REP, para 97

<sup>5</sup> ALINORM 08/31/3, paras 4-9 and Appendix II

**ANNEX**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE  
AD HOC CODEX INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON THE  
PROCESSING AND HANDLING OF QUICK FROZEN FOODS**

**Objectives**

To finalize the International Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods.

**Terms of Reference**

To resolve all outstanding issues including quality and safety provisions with a view to the advancement of the Code to Step 8.

**Time frame**

The Task Force shall complete its work within two (2) years, with one (1) Session of the Task Force.