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Agenda item 2

CX/SCH 25/8/2  
August 2025

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**CODEX COMMITTEE ON SPICES AND CULINARY HERBS**  
**Eighth Session**

**13-17 October 2025**  
**Guwahati, Assam, India**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**  
**AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 47TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CCEXEC86 AND CCEXEC87)**

Standards and related texts adopted by the Commission<sup>1</sup>

1. CAC47(2024) adopted the:
  - (i) *Standard for spices derived from dried or dehydrated fruits and berries - small cardamom* (CXS 357-2024), at Step 8.
  - (ii) *Standard for spices derived from dried or dehydrated fruits and berries - allspice, juniper berry, and star anise* (CXS 358-2024), at Step 5/8.
  - (iii) *Standard for spices derived from dried or dehydrated roots, rhizomes and bulbs – turmeric* (CXS 359-2024), at Step 5/8.
  - (iv) *Standard for spices derived from dried or dehydrated fruits and berries – vanilla*, at Step 5.
2. In relation to texts forwarded from 17th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF17, 2024), CAC47 adopted the Maximum levels (MLs) of lead in spices for dried aril; dried floral parts; dried fruits and berries; dried paprika and sumac; dried Sichuan pepper and star anise; dried rhizomes and roots; dried seeds; dried celery seeds
3. All MLs adopted at Step 5/8 have been included in the *General standard for contaminants and toxins in food and feed* (CXS 193-1995).
4. In relation to texts forwarded from 55th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticides Residue (2024), CAC47:
  - (i) adopted the Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) at Step 5/8 for almond hulls; almonds; bean (hay and/or straw); beans with pods (*Phaseolus* spp.); cane berries (subgroup); cherries (subgroup); onion, bulb; potato; potato, flakes/granules, and
  - (ii) revoked the associated Codex Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticide (CXLs), for spices - roots and rhizomes; spices-seeds.

Approval<sup>2</sup>

5. CAC47 approved new work on:
  - (i) Standard for sweet marjoram
  - (ii) Standard for dried seeds-coriander
  - (iii) Standard for large cardamom
  - (iv) Standard for cinnamon

<sup>1</sup> REP24/CAC paragraphs 29 to 32 and Appendix II and III

<sup>2</sup> REP24/CAC paragraph 169 (i) and Appendix V

Standard for dried floral parts – dried saffron; country of harvest labelling<sup>3</sup>

## 6. CAC47:

- (i) requested the Codex Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter (CL) to Members and Observers seeking potential solutions to the use of Country of Harvest (COH) in food labelling of spices, recognizing the concerns that had been expressed by Codex Members.
- (ii) established an EWG, reporting to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, jointly chaired by Iran and Canada and co-chaired by India and Madagascar, working in English and French, to review the information gathered from the comments to the CL, and discussions at the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH7), CCFL48 and CAC47 to:
  - provide potential options which recognize Members' perspectives on the use of COH in addition to the mandatory declaration of Country of Origin (COO) in food labelling of spices, including saffron and vanilla;
    - review options for a definition for COH and consider how it differs from COO; and
    - consider whether any clarifications are needed to application of labelling provisions.
  - to prepare a report for consideration of CCFL49.
- (iii) invited CCSCH8 to also consider responses to the CL and make its own observations to CCFL49;
- (iv) strongly encouraged Codex Members to ensure that discussions in the EWG, CCSCH8 and CCFL49 be informed by all relevant interests.

7. The Codex Secretariat issued the CL 2025/07-FL in February 2025, with the deadline for comments in May 2025 and the replies to the CL have been published as Add.1 to this document.

Publication of the Standard for dried floral parts – dried saffron<sup>4</sup>

## 8. CAC47:

- (i) agreed that the Standard for dried floral parts – dried saffron should be published with the title Section 8.3 "Country of Origin and Country of Harvest" and with the following associated text "to be developed"; and
- (ii) noted that CAC49 may revisit this issue in the light of any advice it receives from CCFL49 in line with the pathway put in place.

Future of Codex<sup>5</sup>

## 9. CCEXEC86 (2024):

- encouraged more Members to take leadership roles in committee working groups to ensure their sustainability and inclusiveness, while recognizing the challenges these Members may face and further encouraged the Codex Secretariat and experienced working group Chairs to proactively seek engagement of other Members and provide guidance and support.
- reminded Codex committees of the importance of good work management practices and prioritization of work to avoid the establishment of too many electronic working groups (EWGs) and the related burden on all concerned and ensure that agenda items can be adequately discussed within the available plenary session time.

Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031<sup>6</sup>

## 10. CAC47:

- adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031; and
- noted that the Codex Secretariat would present a monitoring framework at CCEXEC88 (July 2025) for review, and that comments on the revised version of the monitoring framework would then be sought from Members and Observers through a CL with the aim of submitting a final version to CAC48 for approval.

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<sup>3</sup> REP24/CAC paragraph 189

<sup>4</sup> REP24/CAC paragraph 196

<sup>5</sup> REP24/EXEC1, paragraph 61

<sup>6</sup> REP24/EXEC1, paragraphs 77 and 79 (i) (iv); REP24/EXEC2, paragraph 108 and Appendix II; REP24/CAC, paragraph 216 and Appendix IX

### Guidelines for new work proposals<sup>7</sup>

11. CCEXEC87 welcomed the Codex Secretariat's plans to develop practical guidelines for Members on the development of new work proposals and proposed that:

- the guidelines should encourage: development of group commodity standards; the drafting of commodity standards so as to facilitate future enlargement of their scope by adding similar products; and a review of standards that may have been developed by other organizations for commodities for which there is established international trade; and
- the Codex Secretariat engages with Members through the forthcoming FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to build awareness of the development of these guidelines, and the Handbook on EWGs, and seek input on issues that Members would wish to see included in these guidelines.

12. CCEXEC87 encouraged Members to respond, within the established deadlines, to committees' Circular Letters seeking proposals for new work and prioritisation of compounds for evaluation.

13. CAC47 welcomed the publication of the Handbook on EWGs<sup>8</sup> and encouraged its use and noted the ongoing work on developing a practical guide on the preparation of new work proposals, noting the opportunities for Members to provide input.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND OTHERS**

#### **43rd and 44th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS43 and CCMAS44)<sup>9</sup>**

14. CCMAS43 (2024):

- (i) endorsed the methods of analysis for the following spices:
  - small cardamom
  - allspice, juniper berry and star anise
  - turmeric
  - dried or dehydrated ginger
  - cloves
  - dried basil
  - saffron
  - nutmeg
  - dried or dehydrated chilli pepper and paprika
- (ii) for purposes of consistency, typed the Method V-8 for relevant provisions for all the spices and culinary herbs in question as Type IV; and aligned provision names and principles where necessary;
- (iii) CCMAS43, further took the following decisions:

#### *Moisture in cardamom and allspice, juniper berry and star anise*

- a. endorsed ISO 939 (moisture in cardamom and allspice, juniper berry and star anise) over the corresponding ASTA method as only one Type I Method is permitted;

#### *Test portion for and method for light seeds in small cardamon*

- b. noted that the IS 1907 is an Indian Standard (IS) for cardamon specifications. However, the specification regarding light seeds is already included in the Standard for spices derived from dried or dehydrated fruits and berries – small cardamom. IS 1907 makes reference to IS 1790 a standard for methods for spices and condiments, which determines a test portion from 100 g to 200 g depending on the nature of the material. CCMAS thus agreed to consult CCSCH regarding the test portion size and if the ISO 927 is applicable for the provision of light seeds; (See Appendix, Part 1 A of this document)

<sup>7</sup> REP24/EXEC2 paragraph 64(i); REP24/CAC Paragraph 22 (ii and iii)

<sup>8</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd3481en>

<sup>9</sup> REP24/MAS paragraphs 10 and 20(v), MAS43/CRD03

Volatile oils in small cardamom and allspice, juniper berry and star anise

- c. endorsed ISO 6571 over AOAC 962.17 for volatile oils on dry basis (small cardamom and allspice, juniper berry and star anise) to ensure consistency with decisions for other spices and culinary herbs currently listed in the *General Standard for Method of Analysis and Sampling* (CXS 234-1999);

Methods for curcuminoids content, on dry basis (colouring power) and provision name - Turmeric

- (iv) did not endorse the methods for curcuminoids content on dry basis (colouring power) as the ISO 5566 does not measure curcuminoids directly, and that the method measures the absorption of light at 425 nm and then converts that absorption to a curcuminoid content. CCMAS43 noted that it was possible for colouring adulterants to affect this measurement value and also noted that the name of the provision was inconsistent with other similar provisions such as “colouring strength (expressed as crocin)” in the *Standard for Dried Floral Parts – Saffron* (CXS 351-2022). CCMAS43 requested CCSCH to either:
  - a. recommend a method that directly measures the curcuminoids and then to change the provision accordingly to “curcuminoids”; or
  - b. change the name of the provision to make it clear that the provision is “colouring power expressed as curcuminoids” (See Appendix, Part 1 B)

The method for pungency, Scoville heat units and appropriate provision name - dried chilli and paprika

- (v) endorsed the ISO 3513 (pungency, Scoville Heat Units), but did not endorse the ASTA 21.3 (pungency, Scoville Heat Units) in dried chilli and paprika. Similar to the ISO 5566 method for colouring power, the ASTA 21.3 method quantifies capsaicin and oleoresins and then converts those concentrations into “pungency, Scoville Heat Units”. The conversion to Scoville Heat Units makes the method Type I (i.e. the provision, “pungency” is defined by the conversion factor of the method), but there can only be a single Type I method for a provision. CCMAS43 requests that CCSCH either:
  - a. redefines the provision to “capsaicinoids” in which case the AOAC 995.03 could be recommended for endorsement as a Type II or Type III method: or
  - b. responds to CCMAS that ASTA 21.3 is preferred over ISO 3513 in which case CCMAS may revoke the ISO 3513 and replace the method with ASTA 21.3 as a Type I method. (See Appendix, Part 1 C)

The method for mould visible – cloves

- (vi) endorsed the Method V-8 (mould visible – cloves) as Type IV but did not endorse the ISO 927 and requested that CCSCH should confirm whether ISO 927 would be a better Type I method. This method had been endorsed for the same provision for certain other spices and culinary herbs (e.g. dried or dehydrated ginger, turmeric).

Information document - e-book with the sampling plans applications

15. CCMAS44 (2025) agreed to publish the information document, namely the e-book with the sampling plans applications which aims to facilitate the understanding and implementation of the *General guidelines on sampling* (CXG 50-2004) and to remove current information document titled “Practical examples of sampling plans” from the Codex website.

16. CCMAS44 also noted the possible need for CCMAS to provide support to commodity committees in their review of sampling plans.

**54th and 55th Sessions of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA54 and CCFA55)<sup>10</sup>**

17. CCFA54 (2024) endorsed the food additives provisions in the *Standard for dried or dehydrated roots, rhizomes and bulbs – turmeric* (CXS 359-2024).

18. CCFA55 (2025)<sup>11</sup>:

- (i) Revised food additive provisions of the GSFA in relation to the alignment of the following eight CCSCH standards:
  - *Standard for dried oregano* (CXS 342-2021).
  - *Standard for dried roots, rhizomes and bulbs: Dried or dehydrated ginger* (CXS 343-2021).

<sup>10</sup> REP24/FA paragraph 51, Appendix IV

<sup>11</sup> REP25/FA paragraph 73(i) and (ii); and Appendix V Part A and VI, Part B

- *Standard for dried floral parts: cloves* (CXS 344-2021).
  - *Standard for dried basil* (CXS 345-2021).
  - *Standard for dried or dehydrated garlic* (CXS 347-2019).
  - *Standard for dried floral parts – saffron* (CXS 351-2022).
  - *Standard for dried seeds – nutmeg* (CXS 352-2022).
  - *Standard for dried or dehydrated chilli pepper and paprika* (CXS 353-2022).
- (ii) Revised the reference to commodity standards for the GSFA - Table 3 Additives for Food Category 12.2.1 “Herbs and Spices (ONLY SPICES)”.
- (iii) Revised food additive sections for the following eight CCSCH Standards (CXS 342-2021, CXS 343-2021, CXS 344-2021, CXS 345-2021, CXS 347-2019, CXS 351-2022, CXS 352-2022, and CXS 353-2022).

#### Consideration of a group food additive “SULFITES” in CXS 343-2021

19. CCFA55 agreed to consult CCSCH on the possible general principle of expanding provisions to all food additives in a group that shares an appropriate technological function and to forward the following explanatory text for consideration:

“CCFA55, while aligning the food additive sections in *Standard for dried roots, rhizomes and bulbs: Dried or dehydrated ginger* (CXS 343-2021) with those in the GSFA, noted that CXS 343-2021 permitted the use sulfur dioxide (INS 220) only as a bleaching agent and that in the GSFA, this additive was under a group food additive “SULFITES”. It was further noted that according to the Codex Procedural Manual, “Food additives that share a numerical group ADI will be considered as a group without further restrictions on the use of individual additives in that group. Therefore, CCFA55 requests that CCSCH:

- a) clarify why only sulfur dioxide is allowed for use in products conforming to CXS 343-2021; and
- b) consider why it would not be appropriate to include other additives under the same group header with same functional classes” (See Appendix, Part 2 A)

#### GSFA Table 3 related questions

20. CCFA55 agreed to consult CCSCH on whether standardized spices require Table 3 additives in GSFA, or if both standardized spices and culinary herbs could be included in the Annex to Table 3, for consideration by CCFA56 or later and to forward the following explanatory text for consideration:

In considering the alignment of food additive provisions in herb and spice commodity standards with the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995), CCFA notes that the Annex to Table 3 (the list of food categories for which Table 3 additives are not permitted) specifically excludes spices in food category 12.2.1 (Herbs and Spices), meaning that Table 3 additives are permitted in spices, but not in herbs. (See Appendix, Part 2 B)

However, a minimal number of additives are permitted in both Standardized spices and herbs: “only anticaking agents are permitted in ground/powdered herbs”; only anticaking agents are permitted in ground/powdered spices, sulfur dioxide (as a preservative) in green peppers (as per the *Standard for black, white and green peppers* (CXS 326-2017)) and sulfur dioxide (as a bleaching agent) in dried or dehydrated ginger (as per the *Standard for dried roots, rhizomes and bulbs: Dried or dehydrated ginger* (CXS 343-2021)). No other additives are permitted in standardized spices.

There was recent work at CCFA53 ([REP23/FA](#)) to:

- 1) revise the descriptors of FCs 12.2.1 and 12.2.2; and
- 2) to move the provisions for sweeteners in FCs 12.2 and 12.2.1 and consider their use in FC 12.2.2.

In the Report of the EWG on the GSFA (CX/FA 22/53/8), it was indicated that there appeared to be general consensus that herbs and spices are “pure” products in which the use of food additives should be limited. These same comments also noted that the use of additives may be justified in “seasonings” that are not justified in herbs and spices. There was also general consensus that there is overlap of products captured in FC 12.2.1 and 12.2.2.

Given that food additive use should be limited in both herbs and spices, and that the descriptors of FCs 12.2.1 and 12.2.2 have been revised such that there is no longer any overlap between them (REP23/FA; CAC 46), it would seem prudent to treat herbs and spices the same and include them both

in the Annex to Table 3. Accordingly, any food additive provisions would be set out in Tables 1 and 2 of the GSFA.

*CCSCH is invited to consider if standardized spices require Table 3 additives, or if both standardized spices and culinary herbs could be included in the Annex to Table 3, meaning that Table 3 additives should not be used, unless set out in Tables 1 and 2 of the GSFA.*

CCSCH is also invited to consider the following issues for action or comment:

i) Revisions to the general reference to the GSFA in the template for spice and culinary herb (SCH) Standards

Were both standardized spices and culinary herbs to be placed in the Annex to Table 3, then the “Food Additives” section of the SCH Standards need only make reference to Tables 1 and 2 of the GSFA, and not Table 3.

On the other hand, should spices continue to be excluded from the Annex to Table 3, then a modification to the “Food Additives” is nonetheless recommended. Specifically, for anticaking agents in spices the Food additive text in the template should read “Anticaking agents listed in Table 3 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995) are acceptable for use in the ground/powdered form of {SCH spice group or individual SCH spice}.”; while for anticaking agents in herbs, the Food Additive text in the template should read, “Anticaking agents listed in Table 1 and Table 2 of food category 12.2.1 (herbs and spices) of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995) are acceptable for use in the ground/powdered form of {SCH herb group or individual SCH herb }.”

ii) Revision to the “References to Commodity Standards for GSFA Table 3 Additives” of the GSFA

Were both standardized spices and culinary herbs to be placed in the Annex to Table 3, then the listings for spice standards should be removed from the “References to Commodity Standards for GSFA Table 3 Additives” of the GSFA.

iii) Clarification regarding non-standardized spice products

While standardized herbs and spices are deemed to be relatively pure products, food category 12.2.1 also makes reference to “Spices may also be found as blends in powder or paste form.” Spice pastes do not fall under the relevant standards and would thus be non-standardized. It is conceivable that certain additives (e.g., antioxidants) might be necessary in certain pastes, such as in a roux. Is CCSCH aware of any non-standardized products that require Table 3 additives, generally; or could non-standardized products also be included in the Annex to Table 3, such that any necessary food additives could be defined in Tables 1 and 2? The latter would allow the entirety of food category 12.2.1 to be added to the Annex to Table 3 of the GSFA.

#### 48th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL48)<sup>12</sup>

21. CCFL48 agreed to endorse:

- (i) the labelling provisions in the Standard for dried or dehydrated roots, rhizomes and bulbs – turmeric
- (ii) Section 8.3.1 of the Standard for dried floral parts – dried saffron.

22. CCFL48 could not reach consensus to endorse Section 8.3.2 of the Standard for dried floral parts – dried saffron and thus referred the matter to CCEXEC87 and CAC47 for consideration.

23. CCFL48 agreed to inform all committees to take note of the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985) and the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021) and strive to follow the format, the terminology and the flow to avoid the redundancy for any future labelling provisions.

<sup>12</sup> REP24/FL, paragraphs 33 to 36

**18th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF18)<sup>13</sup>**

24. CCCF18(2025) agreed to:

- i. forward to CAC48:
  - a) an ML of 2.5 mg/kg for spices, dried bark for adoption at Step 8; and
  - b) an ML of 2.0 mg/kg for lead in dried culinary herbs for adoption at Step 5/8 (with the omission of Steps 6 and 7), with the explanatory note for fresh culinary herbs below:  
*"MLs for fresh culinary herbs may be derived based on the moisture content of the fresh herb in relation to the dry herb."*
- ii. discontinue work on the ML of 2.5 mg/kg for lead in dried culinary herbs (at Step 7).
- iii. advance the sampling plan for total aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in certain spices to Step 8 for adoption by CAC49 after endorsement by CCMAS45.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

25. CCSCH8 is invited to:

- (i) Note the information from CAC and its subsidiary bodies as provided in the relevant paragraphs above.
- (ii) Consider the responses to the CL 2025/07-FL, seeking potential solutions to the use of Country of Harvest (COH) in food labelling of spices, under paragraph 6 and provide the necessary observations/responses to CCFL49 for their consideration (Please also refer to the CX/SCH 25/8/2 Add.1).
- (iii) Address the issues and questions from CCMAS43 as presented in paragraph 14 (iii) b, 14 (iv) and 14 (v) (Please also refer to the Appendix Part 1 A-C).
- (iv) Address the issues and questions from CCFA as presented in paragraphs 19 and 20 above (Please also refer to the Appendix Part 2).

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<sup>13</sup> REP25/CF, paragraphs 45, 46, 60, and 87, Appendix III, IV and VI



## APPENDIX

## Additional information

This Appendix provides additional information extracted from the codex reports/ standards with a view to facilitating discussions by the Committee.

**PART 1: Matters arising from CCMAS****A. Table 1. Methods of Analysis for dried or dehydrated fruits and berries - small cardamom** ([REP22/SCH-APPENDIX VI, page 50](#))

Parameter	Method	Principle	Type
Light seeds	IS 1907**	Visual examination followed by gravimetry	III

\*\*IS 1907 is a method of analysis based on Indian standard

**B. Table 1. Methods of Analysis for dried or dehydrated chili pepper and paprika** ([REP22/SCH-APPENDIX V, page 46](#))

Parameter	Method	Principle	Type
Pungency Scoville Heat units	ASTA 21.3	Chromatography	IV
	ISO 3513	Sensory evaluation	I

**C. Table 1. Methods of analysis for dried or dehydrated roots, rhizomes and bulbs - turmeric** ([REP24/SCH- APPENDIX VI, page 41](#))

Parameter	Method	Principle	Type
Curcuminoids content on dry basis (Colouring power)	ISO 2825 and ISO 5566	Spectrophotometry	I

**PART 2: Matters arising from CCFA****A. Standard for dried roots, rhizomes and bulbs: Dried or dehydrated ginger (CXS 343-2021)****4. FOOD ADDITIVES**

**4.1.1** Anticaking agents listed in Table 3 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995)<sup>1</sup> are acceptable for use in powdered form of the foods conforming to this standard.

**4.1.2 Bleaching agents**

INS No.	Food additive	Maximum level
220	Sulphur dioxide	150 mg/kg, as residual SO <sub>2</sub>

**General standard for food additives (CXS 192-1995) - Table 1 - Food additives under the group food additive "SULFITES"**

INS	Food additive	Functional classes
220	Sulfur dioxide	Antioxidant, Bleaching agent, Flour treatment agent, Preservative
221	Sodium sulfite	Antioxidant, Bleaching agent, Flour treatment agent, Preservative
222	Sodium hydrogen sulfite	Antioxidant, Preservative
223	Sodium metabisulfite	Antioxidant, Bleaching agent, Flour treatment agent, Preservative
224	Potassium metabisulfite	Antioxidant, Bleaching agent, Flour treatment agent, Preservative
225	Potassium sulfite	Antioxidant, Preservative
539	Sodium thiosulfate	Antioxidant, Preservative, Sequestrant



**B. GSFA TABLE 3****ANNEX TO TABLE THREE****Food Categories or Individual Food Items Excluded from the General Conditions of Table Three**

The use of additives listed in Table Three in the following foods is governed by the provisions in Tables One and Two.

- 12.2.1 Herbs and spices (EXCLUDING SPICES)

**Descriptors of Food Categories (FCs) 12.2, 12.2.1 and 12.2.2**12.2 Herbs, spices, seasonings, and condiments (e.g. seasoning for instant noodles):

This category describes items whose use is intended to enhance the aroma and taste of food.

12.2.1 Herbs and spices:

Herbs and spices are usually derived from botanical sources, and may be dehydrated, and either ground or whole. Examples of herbs include basil, oregano and thyme. Examples of spices include cumin and caraway seeds. Spices may also be found as blends in powder or paste form.

12.2.2 Seasonings and condiments:

Condiments and seasonings are mixtures of herbs and spices together with other food ingredients (such as salt, vinegar, lemon juice, molasses, honey or sugar, and sweeteners). Examples include meat tenderizers, onion salt, garlic salt, Oriental seasoning mix (dashi), topping to sprinkle on rice (furikake, containing, e.g. dried seaweed flakes, sesame seeds and seasoning), and seasoning for noodles. The term “condiments” as used in the Food Category System does not include condiment sauces (e.g. ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard) or relishes.