



## CCFH52

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Hope this letter finds you in good health. I want to formally convey to you that the **52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH52)** has been postponed from November 2021 to **February 28 – March 4, 2022**, with the report adoption scheduled for March 9, 2022.

We have traditionally met in-person for all our previous 51 sessions, and now we will have the first endeavor into an all-virtual meeting for our 52<sup>nd</sup> Session. On the one hand, the virtual platform will provide an opportunity for new delegates to attend CCFH52 who could not otherwise participate, thereby growing our CCFH family. On the other hand, the virtual platform for CCFH52 will indeed pose time constraints on our discussions, as we envision having only three-hour sessions of plenary each day. This is approximately half the time we would normally have allocated for plenary in an in-person session. You know how much I enjoy interacting with you during the meetings, so this one will most definitely feel different, but hopefully equally productive.

Given the need for the virtual format, the CCFH Secretariat, Codex Secretariat and I would like to propose an abridged agenda for CCFH52. We will focus most of our time in plenary on items that are currently in the Step procedure—notably the following:

- Draft guidance for the management of biological foodborne outbreaks (at Step 7)
- Proposed draft Decision Tree (revision of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene*) (CXC 1-1969) (at Step 4)
- Proposed draft Guidelines for the control of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) in beef, raw milk and cheese produced from raw milk, leafy greens, and sprouts (at Step 4)
- Proposed draft Guidelines for the safe use and re-use of water in food production (at Step 4)

The virtual platform will also limit our ability to get together outside of plenary for informal discussions, so it is important that we use the time allocated every day to find consensus and advance the work currently in the Step procedure. We are really close to wrapping up some of the work and making good progress at CCFH52. CCFH delegates have always had an ability to find ways forward when things got difficult, and I trust the same will be true in the virtual setting.

Over the coming months, I would encourage you to provide comments in response to the Circular Letters. The better we prepare for the virtual meeting, the easier it will be to make progress. I would also suggest bookmarking the [CCFH52 Codex webpage](#) and checking it often for updated information and for downloading any new documents relevant to the upcoming Session.

We truly hope that we can return to our traditional meeting format for the following session of the Committee. If we all do our part and control the pandemic, we may potentially meet in person for the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the CCFH, planned for late November 2022. By making progress on those items in the step process and clearing the agenda at CCFH52, we will be able to take up new work at CCFH53. Until that time, discussion papers will continue to be developed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the CCFH Secretariat at [ccfh@usda.gov](mailto:ccfh@usda.gov).

Looking forward to seeing you all soon,  
albeit in little boxes on my computer screen.

*Dr. J. Emilio Esteban*  
*CCFH Chairperson*

