

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 3

CX/NE 25/12/3

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NEAR EAST

Twelfth Session

Muscat, Oman

28 September - 2 October 2025

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Matters arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC46 and CAC47) and the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC85, CCEXEC86, CCEXEC87 and CCEXEC88)

Matters for information

Standards and related texts adopted by the Commission¹

1. CAC46 (2023) adopted at Step 5 the Regional standard for maamoul (Near East).

Appointments and elections²

2. CAC46 (2023) re-appointed Saudi Arabia as Coordinator for Near East for their second term. However, at CAC47 (2024), Saudi Arabia had to step down from the position of Coordinator for Near East following the election of Mr Khalid Al Zahrani (Saudi Arabia) as Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.
3. Subsequently, CAC47 appointed Oman to serve as Coordinator for Near East, following internal discussions and consensus among the Members of the region.

Codex budgetary and financial matters³

4. CAC46:
 - noted the increasing difficulty of delivering the Codex work plan, thanked Members already contributing extra-budgetary resources to Codex, and encouraged Members to consider extra-budgetary funding of the ongoing project to increase accessibility to Codex texts in the six official languages and work on monitoring the use and impact of Codex texts; and
 - urged Members to advocate with their government representatives to FAO and WHO for adequate funding for the Codex programme.
5. CAC47 recognised the benefits of capacity building and awareness raising events delivered both physically and virtually and supported their continuation as part of an appropriately blended approach that continues to build engagement.

Application of the Statements of Principle concerning the role of science in the Codex decision-making process and the extent to which other factors are taken into account (SoP)⁴

6. CAC46 reiterated that the draft "Guidance for Codex Chairpersons and Members on the application of the Statements of Principle concerning the role of Science in the Codex decision making process and the extent to which other factors are taken into account" remained serviceable and available as practical guidance for Chairpersons of CAC and its subsidiary bodies and for Members in situations when there is agreement on science but differing views on other factors/considerations.

¹ REP23/CAC paragraph 114

² REP23/CAC paragraph 224; REP24/CAC, paragraphs 239 and 246

³ REP23/CAC paragraph 214(v, vii); REP24/CAC paragraph 226(vi)

⁴ REP23/CAC paragraph 194(ii)

Future of Codex⁵

7. CCEXEC85 (2023) agreed that rather than develop a blueprint for the future of Codex, it was more appropriate to use the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 to guide the future direction of Codex and to consider, in parallel, a working model for future Codex work; and that the document (i.e. CX/EXEC 23/85/3, Appendix II) describing the key elements of a model for future Codex work remained a living document that should be periodically reviewed in light of experiences and learnings.
8. CAC46 endorsed the conclusions of CCEXEC85 regarding matters pertaining to the blueprint on the future of Codex.
9. CCEXEC86 (2024)⁶:
 - noted that, as the format of meetings continues to evolve, the document CX/EXEC 24/86/3 (Model for future Codex work) should be retained as a reference document, and periodic updates on the evolution of working mechanisms and identification of any challenges encountered that may require further consideration by CCEXEC, CAC or the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) should be provided through a working document prepared by the Codex Secretariat;
 - 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; and
 - reminded Codex committees of the importance of good work management practices and prioritization of work to avoid excessive establishment of 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 2026-2031⁷

10. CAC47 adopted the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 as contained in Appendix IX of REP24/CAC.
11. CCEXEC88 (2025)⁸ discussed the proposed monitoring framework as prepared by the Codex Secretariat and subsequently agreed upon a revised set of indicators for the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031, while asking the Codex Secretariat to further elaborate the means of verification and identify baseline information for the proposed indicators where possible. These proposed indicators will be circulated to all Codex Members and Observers via a Circular Letter for comments, which CCEXEC89 (3-7 November 2025) will consider⁹.
12. CCEXEC88 also noted that the monitoring framework for the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031 would be reviewed biennially and would be further discussed and submitted for approval by CAC48.

New Food Sources and Production Systems (NFPS)¹⁰

13. CAC46 highlighted the importance of addressing challenges posed by NFPS and the important role Codex could play in this, noted that the current working mechanisms were adequate to address any new work on NFPS that Members might propose, and encouraged Members to submit discussion papers or new work proposals, either to active Codex committees or to the Executive Committee through the Codex Secretariat.

Regional standards^{11,12}

14. CCEXEC85 in addressing the challenges with application of the criteria for regional standards in the context of regional needs, indicated that regardless of whether a commodity was traded internationally or not, a proposal for new work for either a regional or worldwide standard could be submitted from FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to CCEXEC for critical review, and to CAC for final approval and decision on the nature of the standard and by whom it should be developed.

⁵ REP23/EXEC2 paragraph 38; REP23/CAC paragraphs 7-8

⁶ REP24/EXEC1, paragraph 61; REP24/CAC, paragraph 238(ii)

⁷ REP23/EXEC1 paragraph 115; REP23/EXEC2 paragraphs 54(i)(a); REP24/CAC paragraph 214(ii, iii), REP25/EXEC1 paragraph 82

⁸ REP25/EXEC1 paragraphs 63 ff., Appendix II

⁹ Further information about the Codex Strategic Plan 2026-2031 can be found in CX/NE 25/12/10.

¹⁰ REP23/CAC paragraph 206

¹¹ REP23/EXEC2 paragraph 92(ii)

¹² REP25/EXEC1 paragraphs 50(iii), 51

15. CCEXEC88 recommended that CAC48 request all committees working on commodity standards to take a more horizontal approach to such standards and to ensure that new work proposals clearly identified the key issues and challenges to be addressed by Codex so that the most appropriate type of Codex texts could be identified and recommended.
16. CCEXEC88 noted the importance of close collaboration between coordinating committees and other relevant committees when developing regional commodity standards to avoid duplication of work and ensure effective use of expertise.

Proposal for the development of new work on a camel milk commodity standard¹³

17. Following discussion on a proposal for the development of new work on a camel milk commodity standard at CCNE11, and subsequently at CCEXEC87¹⁴, CAC47 recommended that the United Arab Emirates, as the proponent of the proposal, and New Zealand, as host country of the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products (CCMMP), work together to conduct a gap analysis and further review the new work proposal. This analysis would then be circulated via a circular letter to seek inputs from interested Members and Observers on the need for, and possible extent of new work on camel milk, with the view that the proposal on camel milk would be subject to critical review by CCEXEC89 and consideration by CAC48.
18. Further information on the status of the gap analysis and relevant updates were provided at CCEXEC88, which further noted that such a gap analysis of relevant Codex texts regarding camel milk commodities had been completed, and that, in line with CAC47 guidance, remaining documentation to facilitate the critical review by CCEXEC89 was being prepared, with a view to consideration for approval of the proposed new work by CAC48.

Practical guidelines for new work proposals and Handbook on Electronic Working Groups (EWGs)¹⁵

19. CCEXEC87 (2024) encouraged Members to respond to committees' Circular Letters seeking proposals for new work and prioritization of compounds for evaluation, within the deadlines set out in those Circular Letters.
20. 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 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 was established international trade;
 - the Codex Secretariat engages with Members through the forthcoming FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to build awareness of the development of these guidelines, and the *Codex EWGs Handbook*, and seek input on issues that Members would wish to see included in these guidelines.
21. CAC47 welcomed the publication of the *Codex EWGs Handbook*¹⁶, and encouraged its use.

Matters of interest to the region arising from regional and other international organizations¹⁷

22. CCEXEC88 agreed to recommend CAC48 to endorse an amendment to the agenda of the coordinating committees to include an item on "Matters of interest to the region arising from regional and other international organizations".

Matters arising from other subsidiary bodies

Matters for information

26th and 27th Sessions of Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and certification (CCFICS26 and CCFICS27)¹⁸

23. CCFICS26 (2023) agreed to inform other Codex committees about the ongoing review and update of the *Principles for traceability / product tracing as a tool within a food inspection and certification system* (CXG 60-2006).
24. CCFICS27 (2024) agreed to continue with the review and update of the document.

33rd Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP33)¹⁹

25. CCGP33 (2023) agreed to inform other Codex committees of the ongoing work to update Section 2, Procedures for

¹³ REP24/CAC, paras 254 ff.; REP25/EXEC1 paras 105 ff.

¹⁴ REP23/NE, paras 104 ff.; REP24/EXEC24, paragraph 85 i.

¹⁵ REP24/EXEC paragraph 64(i) and 82(i); REP24/CAC paragraph 22 (ii & iii)

¹⁶ REP24/CAC, paragraph 22(ii); <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/ae7614e-d630-4665-a98c-74adcc4d3040>

¹⁷ REP25/EXEC1 paragraph 13

¹⁸ REP23/FICS paragraph 117(c); REP23/CAC paragraph 87

¹⁹ REP23/GP paragraph 69(iv)

the elaboration of Codex standards and related texts, Part 7 of the *Codex Procedural Manual* to better align with current practices in Codex and international publishing standards.

27th Session of the Codex Committee on Veterinary Residues in Drugs (CCRVDF27)²⁰

26. CCRVDF27 agreed on the new set of criteria for the extrapolation of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) to camelids and included it in Annex C - *Approach for the extrapolation of MRLs for veterinary drugs to one or more species of the Risk Analysis Principles applied by CCRVDF*. Consequently, the Committee agreed to recommend albendazole, ivermectin, and oxytetracycline for inclusion on the priority list for extrapolation to camelids (tissues and milk). CAC47 approved the priority list as proposed by the Committee.

28th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO28)²¹

27. CCFO28 agreed to forward the revised *Standard for olive oils and olive pomace oils* (CXS 33-1981) to CAC47 for adoption at Step 5/8. CCFO28, taking note of the discussions at this session, and in light of the need to elaborate a standard that embraced olive oils and olive pomace oils produced in the different geographical areas and taking into account the impact of climate change on composition of the olive oil produced in different geographical regions, agreed to inform CCEXEC that during the review of the CXS 33-1981, the need for collection and analysis of data that allows for assessment of the suitability of some of the parameters in CXS 33-1981 was identified.
28. Two members from the region expressed their reservation to the final adoption of the revised *Standard for olive oils and olive pomace oils* (CXS 33-1981), noting concerns regarding footnote c to section 3.2.3 4 α -Desmethylsterols composition (% total 4 α -desmethylsterols) which would in their view lead to an incorrect characterization of olive oil produced in one country as a non-authentic oil; posing a risk to more than 40% of virgin olive oil exports from that country, and negatively impacting producers.
29. While CAC47 adopted the revised standard, in recognition of the concerns raised, CAC47 also agreed to a framework for the collection of data to support further consideration of these issues, in which the Codex Secretariat would: undertake informal consultations with interested Members/Observers to prepare a draft framework for the data collection; circulate the draft framework for data collection for comments before finalisation; issue a CL for data collection on inter-regional variability and the applicability of the decision tree as defined in footnote (c); and submit the data to FAO with a view towards convening an expert working group to analyse the data and their applicability to footnote (c), time and resources permitting.
30. Moreover, to undertake the data collection and analysis, while also noting that the revision of many aspects of the standard had been completed and adopted by CAC47, an extension of the project timeline to CCFO30 for the completion of further work on CXS 33-1981, including on ordinary olive oil as agreed by CCFO27, and DAGs and PPP as agreed by CCFO28 was granted.

Matters for action

42nd, 43rd and 44th Sessions of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS42, CCMAS43 and CCMAS44)²²

Revision of the General guidelines on sampling (CXG 50-2004)

31. CCMAS39 (2018) agreed to revise the *General guidelines on sampling* (CXG 50-2004), noting views expressed that CXG 50-2004 was difficult to understand and that a revision was necessary to simplify and make it more readable and understandable. The revised CXG 50-2004 aimed at helping those responsible to select statistical sampling plans that are appropriate for inspections under specifications laid down by Codex standards²³ CAC46 subsequently adopted the revised CXG 50-2004.²⁴
32. CCMAS42 agreed to:
- request Codex committees to review their sampling plans in light of the revised Guidelines; and
 - remind Committees that sampling plans should be developed as needed in compliance with the revised guidelines and not by reference to CXG 50-2004.
33. To support the implementation of CXG 50-2004, CCMAS44(2025) agreed to publish the Information document – e-book with sampling plans apps and remove the current information document titled “Practical examples of sampling plans” from the Codex website.

Nitrogen to protein conversion factors (Nx)

²⁰ REP24/RVDF27, paras 60-62, Appendix V; REP24/CAC paragraph 131 bullet two.

²¹ REP24/FO, paras 85 ff.

²² REP23/MAS paras 29 and 81(ii), REP24/MAS paragraph 76; REP24/CAC paragraph 91, REP25/MAS paragraph 11(vi)

²³ REP18/MAS, paras 62, 63, 71

²⁴ REP23/CAC, paragraph 92(ii) and Appendix II

34. CCMAS43 (2024) noted that nitrogen to protein conversion factors (Nx) were included in both the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999) and in relevant commodity standards—or sometimes only in one of the two. As part of its efforts to establish CXS 234-1999 as the single reference and to consolidate Nx in one location for consistency and ease of access by analysts, CCMAS considered developing an annex to CXS 234-1999 that would compile all agreed Nx values.
35. CCMAS43 agreed to:
- forward the document titled “Nitrogen to protein conversion factors” for adoption as an Annex to CXS 234-1999 by CAC47;
 - inform the relevant commodity committees about the “Nitrogen to Protein Conversion Factor” document and remind them that it was their responsibility to identify and report the proposed nitrogen conversion factors to CCMAS to facilitate the endorsement process; and
 - recommend that relevant commodity committees consider removing Nx values in their commodity standards.
36. Noting the absence of an Nx value in both CXS 259R-2017 and the pertinent report of CCNE, CCMAS43 agreed to request CCNE to consider the proposed Nx value of 5.71, as the product is made from sesame seed, vegetal protein.
37. However, CAC47 returned the Annex to CXS 234-1999 on “Nitrogen to protein conversion factors” to CCMAS and requested CCMAS to make necessary updates and ensure consistency of Nx with those in commodity standards and resubmit the Annex to CAC for adoption in the future.
38. CCMAS44 updated the list and agreed to forward the list of Nx as amended (Appendix III of REP25/MAS) for approval by CAC48 for inclusion in CXS 234-1999 as an Annex, noting inconsistencies with the Nx for soy products and proposing that these factors should be reviewed in the future.

54th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH54)²⁵

39. In line with the recommendation of CCFH54(2024), CAC47 adopted the *Guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food* (CXG 103-2024) and encouraged the relevant FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to review their respective texts on street vended foods to ensure consistency with *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969) and CXG 103-2024 and consider the necessary follow-up action (e.g. revision).

48th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL48)²⁶

40. CCFL48 (2024) 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 redundancy for any future labelling provisions.

54th and 55th Sessions of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA54, CCFA55)²⁷

41. Based on the recommendations of CCNE11, CCFA54(2024) and CCFA55(2025) completed alignment of the food additive provisions in the regional standards for *Harissa (Red Hot Pepper Paste)* (Near East) (CXS 308R-2011), *Date paste* (Near East) (CXS 314R-2013), *Canned humus with tehena (Near East)* (CXS 257R-2007), *Canned foul medames (Near East)* (CXS 258R-2007); *Tehena (Near East)* (CXS 259R-2007) with the *General standard for food additives* (GSFA, CXS 192-1995). The food additive provisions in CXS 257R-2007, CXS 258R-2007, and CXS 259R-2007 were revised accordingly (No revisions were needed for CXS 308R-2011 and CXS 314R-2013).

Identification of the appropriate food category for mixed zaatar

42. CCFA55 agreed to seek clarification from CCNE on the appropriate corresponding Food Category (FC) of the GSFA (12.2.1 or 12.2.2) to the *Regional standard for mixed zaatar (Near East)* (CXS 341R-2020) prior to proceeding with the alignment of the standard.
43. To facilitate the consideration of issue, CCFA55 agreed to forward to CCNE the following text:
- In order for CCFA to align the food additive provisions for mixed zaatar conforming to the *Regional standard for mixed zaatar (Near East)* (CXS 341R-2020) with the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995), CCFA must determine to which food category of the GSFA the commodity standard corresponds.
 - CCNE11 (CX/NE 23/11/3 Add. 1; and REP23/NE para. 32-34) and CCNE10 (REP20/NE para. 86) determined, considering the composition and characteristics of mixed zaatar, that the more appropriate categorization for these products was that of “Herbs” under FC 12.2.1 (Herbs and Spices) rather than the previous categorization of FC 04.2.2.2 (Dried vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes and aloe vera), seaweeds, and nuts and seeds). The CCNE referred this matter back

²⁵ REP24/FH, paragraphs 169-170, REP24/CAC paragraphs 54 and 60

²⁶ REP24/FL, paragraph 27

²⁷ REP23/NE, paras 26 ff.; REP24/FA paras 13-14 and 59 ii.b and Appendix VI, Part A.3.

to CCFA, which was discussed during CCFA54. However, also in 2023, CCFA53 (REP23/FA, para. 97) agreed to revise the descriptors for food categories 12.2.1 (Herbs and Spices) and 12.2.2 (Seasonings and Condiments) to minimize the overlap that existed between them. The new descriptors read as follows:

- Descriptor for FC 12.2.1: *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.*
- Descriptor for FC 12.2.2: *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.*
- Discussions held during CCFA54 on the matter referred from CCNE highlighted that the products conforming to CXS 341R-2020 consisted of, to a large extent (more than 50%), sesame seed and other ingredients like grains and nuts, legumes, pomegranate, molasses, vegetable oil, and wheat bran, which were not herbs (REP24/FA, para. 13). It is therefore suggested that, given the revisions to the food category descriptors, food category 12.2.2 might be more appropriate for standardized mixed zaatar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

44. CCNE12 is invited to:

- (i) note the matters for information arising from CAC, CCEXEC, CCFA, CCFICS, CCFL, CCGP and CCMAS;
- (ii) encourage Members to:
 - (a) actively engage in opportunities to contribute to the discussions in CCEXEC and CAC including by responding to the relevant Circular Letters;
 - (b) consider taking up leadership roles in committee working groups;
- (iii) consider the request from CCMAS42 and CCMAS43 on:
 - (a) reviewing sampling plans in CCNE standards in light of the revised CXG 50-2004, and
 - (b) to consider the Nx value of 5.71 for the commodity under CXS 259R-2017 and request CAC to include this value in the annex on Nx to CXS234; and
 - (c) consider the removal of the Nx in the Regional standard for Doogh (CXS 332R-2018) in light of the annex in CXS 234-1999, which already contains the Nx for milk and milk products and possibly replacing with a cross-reference to CXS 234-1999.
- (iv) review the *Regional code of practice for street-vended foods (Near East)* (CXC 71R-2013) to ensure consistency with CXC 1-1969 and CXG 103-2024 and consider the necessary follow-up action in line with the request of CCFH54; and
- (v) consider the recommendation from CCFA55 regarding the suitability of food category 12.2.2 for standardized mixed zaatar and advise on its appropriateness.