

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
Eighth Session, Geneva  
30 June - 9 July 1971

REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION  
OF THE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

UNADOPTED

Introduction

1. The Executive Committee held its Seventeenth Session at WHO Headquarters, Geneva, on 25 June 1971. The Committee was presided over by the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr. G. Weill (France) and in the presence of the three Vice-Chairmen, Dr. N. de Heer (Ghana), Mr. A. Miklovicz (Hungary) and Mr. G.R. Grange (United States of America). The following representatives from the geographic locations mentioned were present: for Africa, Ing. A. Abderrazak from Tunisia; for Asia, Mr. K. Ando from Japan; for Europe, Dr. D. Eckert from the Federal Republic of Germany; for Latin America, Ing. J.H. Piazzini from Argentina; for North America, Dr. D.G. Chapman from Canada; for South-West Pacific, Mr. I.H. Smith from Australia.

2. Before proceeding to the adoption of the agenda, the Chairman informed the Committee that, in accordance with the Committee's recommendation at its Sixteenth Session, he had written to the Directors-General of FAO and WHO, drawing their attention to the extreme importance which the Executive Committee attached to the work of FAO/WHO on pesticide residues as well as to the need for ensuring that this work received high priority. The Chairman informed the Committee of the replies which he had received from the Directors-General and the Committee noted their contents with satisfaction. The Committee considered that the replies of the Directors-General should be made known to the Commission, and it was, therefore, decided that they should be annexed to this Report. (App. I and II).

Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda.

Progress Report on Acceptances of Recommended Codex Standards

4. The Committee had before it document ALINORM 71/6, containing a progress report on acceptances of Recommended Codex Standards as at 31 May 1971. This document, which would also be before the Eighth Session of the Commission, set out the replies of

thirteen countries (Argentina, Bolivia, China, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Israel, Liberia, Monaco, Philippines, Portugal, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America), with respect to the acceptance of the <sup>four</sup> Recommended Codex Standards (General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, Standard for Canned Pacific Salmon, European Regional Standard for Honey, and first series of International Tolerances for Pesticide Residues) which had been sent to governments for acceptance shortly after the Seventh Session of the Commission. The Committee was informed orally that China had further indicated that, in the case of the Recommended International Tolerances for Pesticide Residues, it would be its intention to pass from Target Acceptance to Full Acceptance in 1973.

5. The Committee noted that, since its last session, the U.S.A. had made known its position regarding the Recommended General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, the details of this position being contained in document ALINORM 71/6. Mr. G.R. Grange drew the Committee's attention to the fact that imported products would be permitted to move freely in the U.S.A. only if they were labelled in accordance with the Recommended General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods and also complied with the deviations set out in the U.S. reply. The Committee also noted the action being taken in the U.S.A. concerning the Recommended Standard for Canned Pacific Salmon and the Recommended International Tolerance for hydrogen cyanide (details of this action are given in document ALINORM 71/6).

6. The Committee was informed by the Representative of the region of Latin America that, in addition to having accepted with minor deviations the Recommended Codex Standards for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, Canned Pacific Salmon and Honey and to having given Full Acceptance to the first series of Recommended International Tolerances for Pesticide Residues (see ALINORM 71/6), Argentina had now indicated that it accepted a substantial number of the Recommended Codex Standards which had very recently been sent to governments for acceptance (a summary of these acceptances is attached as Appendix III to this Report). The Committee was also informed that these acceptances had the force of law in Argentina, applicable both domestically and to imports.

7. The Representative of the South-West Pacific region indicated that New Zealand expected to be in a position to indicate very shortly its position with regard to acceptance of the four Recommended Codex Standards referred to above. He communicated the view of New Zealand that Acceptances with Minor Deviations should be referred to the appropriate Codex Commodity Committee concerned. He also drew the Committee's attention to the fact that in countries with a federal structure, such as Australia, replies would, of necessity, be longer in forthcoming, because of the need to consult the proper authorities in the various states in the country.

8. Dr. N. de Heer drew the Committee's attention to the useful role Codex Contact Points could play in encouraging and promoting the acceptance of Recommended Codex Standards in their countries. He also considered that the representatives of regions on the Executive Committee could perform a similar useful role in their respective regions.

9. The Committee considered the desirability of Member Governments making available at specific intervals to the Commission information on action taken in their countries related to Recommended Codex Standards, such as the information which had been made available by the USA and which had been reproduced in Appendices to document ALINORM 71/6. The Committee agreed that such information would be very useful, and recommended that Member Governments be requested to make available to the Secretariat, prior to each session of the Commission, information on the status of acceptance or other action taken on each Step 9 Standard, in respect of which a final reply had not yet been made by the Member Government concerned.

10. In line with the idea of making as much information as possible available to Member Governments regarding action taken in individual countries having a bearing on acceptances of Recommended Codex Standards, the Executive Committee considered that it would be useful if legislative material and studies related to Recommended Codex Standards was made available to Member Governments by the Secretariat acting in cooperation with the Legislation Branches of FAO and WHO.

11. The Committee again considered the question of how acceptances with minor deviations should be dealt with. It also considered the question of when and under what circumstances it might be appropriate for the Commission to decide that a given Recommended Codex Standard be published in the Codex Alimentarius. The Executive Committee felt that it was necessary to give further consideration to the criteria that might be applied for determining whether a deviation was minor and whether a standard should be published in the Codex Alimentarius. However, from a procedural point of view, the Committee endorsed the proposal that the task of examining replies from Member Governments on acceptances of each Recommended Codex Standard might best be entrusted to the Executive Committee which would, when timely and appropriate, recommend action by the Commission or other steps, such as referral to the appropriate Codex Committee. Similarly, the Executive Committee would advise the Commission on whether, in its view, a given Recommended Codex Standard should be published in the Codex Alimentarius. The Executive Committee agreed that it would, at its next session, examine in detail the substantive and procedural problems which had been raised and that it would, therefore, be desirable to arrange for a session slightly exceeding the normal duration of mid-term sessions.

Information on Finance for 1970/71 and 1972/73

12. The Executive Committee noted the contents of document ALINORM 71/7 on the above subject, and, in particular, that the increase in the budget for 1972/73 was due almost entirely to increased costs.

Arrangements for distribution and proposed charges for Recommended Codex Standards over and above free quotas to Governments

13. The Executive Committee was informed that, having regard to the increasing demand for substantial numbers of Recommended Codex Standards both from governments and interested trade organizations, and to the request made by the Executive Committee at its last session, the Director-General of FAO now proposed, subject to agreement by WHO, to change the status of Recommended Codex Standards from main documents, for which there was no charge, to priced publications. This change of status would apply to Step 9 and Step 10 standards only. Under the proposed new arrangements, governments would continue to receive a free quota of Recommended Codex Standards, but the quota would be in accordance with a recent formula for the distribution of priced publications adopted by the FAO Conference. This formula is based on the contribution of Member Governments of FAO to the budget of the Organization. In the great majority of cases, governments would receive substantially the same number of copies free of charge as under the existing system, which is based on the requirements made known by the governments themselves some years ago. However, in certain cases, the number of copies received by governments

would be somewhat different under the new formula. It would also be possible for governments to obtain supplies in excess of their free quota at half-price, and, in addition, arrangements could be made to have bulk supplies made available to governments on favourable terms. Consultations were proceeding with WHO regarding the proposed new formula with a view to making such arrangements as would be in the best interest of governments. The proposal to change the status of Recommended Codex Standards would facilitate the re-issue of standards as and when required.

14. Various members of the Executive Committee drew attention to the growing interest in and demand for Recommended Codex Standards, especially from industry, and stressed the need for adequate supplies to be readily available. The Executive Committee noted that the question of centralizing arrangements for the distribution of Recommended Codex Standards was under consideration.

15. The Executive Committee noted that <sup>when</sup> the proposed new arrangements had been finalized, governments would be informed of their free quota entitlement, and would also be invited to indicate their wishes regarding the purchase of standards at half-price. Governments would also be invited to indicate the person or body to which copies of Recommended Codex Standards should be sent and in this connection, the importance of Codex Contact Points would be brought to their attention.

#### Draft Agenda for Proposed Third FAO/WHO Conference on Food Additives

16. At the Seventh Session of the Commission, the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany drew the Commission's attention to the desirability of holding a Third Joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Additives to provide guidance to the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives on matters such as the evaluation of the technological efficacy of food additives, means of dealing with urgent problems, such as the concern which had been expressed by the Canadian delegation at the Commission regarding the levels of mercury found in food, especially fish, in certain areas, and also other matters relating to the control of food additives. The Codex Committee on Food Additives discussed this question at its last session in the light of a proposed agenda for a Third Food Additives Conference, which had been prepared by the Federal Republic of Germany.

17. The Executive Committee at its last session was informed that the Codex Committee on Food Additives had concluded that, provided its Terms of Reference were enlarged, it could discuss the items proposed for the Conference. Having noted that FAO and WHO were considering holding a Third Food Additives Conference and that

budgetary provision had been made for holding the Conference by the Director of the Nutrition Division of FAO, the Executive Committee requested that the proposed draft agenda for the Conference be communicated to its Seventeenth Session for information. The proposed Draft Agenda is attached as Appendix IV to this Report.

18. The Executive Committee was informed that the First Food Additives Conference was held in 1956, which was before the Codex Alimentarius Commission was established. The Second Food Additives Conference was held in 1965 and its purpose was to lay down guidelines governing the <sup>further</sup> work of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. The reasons for the proposed Third Food Additives Conference were as stated in paragraph 16 of this report and also to plan the direction of future work of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives.

19. The representatives of the regions of Europe and North America considered that such a Conference was necessary and drew attention to the fact that its scope extended beyond that of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, although the matters to be discussed at the Conference had a significant bearing on the work of the Commission in the field of contaminants in food. On the other hand, Mr. G.R. Grange stated that the U.S.A. was not convinced that such a Conference was necessary. The representative of the South-West Pacific region indicated that a number of items on the proposed draft agenda for the Conference would be of interest, especially in their effect on the work of the Codex Committee on Food Additives. He expressed the hope that if such a Conference were proceeded with, there would be no duplication of effort with the work of the Codex Committee on Food Additives. Dr. N. de Heer was not convinced that such a Conference was necessary.

20. In conclusion, therefore, and having noted the historical background to the previous Food Additives Conferences as well as the reasons for the proposed Third Food Additives Conference, some Members of the Executive Committee were in favour of holding such a Conference, while other Members were not convinced of the usefulness or need for such a Third Conference. It was noted that the proposed draft agenda stated that the matters to be discussed dealt specifically with contaminants in food. Some Members of the Executive Committee thought that some aspects of the proposed agenda needed to be clarified, particularly agenda item 3. Attention was drawn to the need for the relationship between the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives and the Codex Committee on Food Additives to be covered as well as the work of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Codex Commodity Committees in the field

of food additives. The point was also made that the proposed agenda item 4 should be moved up to follow immediately after item 2. The Executive Committee understood that the main purpose of the proposed Conference was to suggest general policy and guidelines for dealing with contaminants in food.

21. The Executive Committee noted that the question of whether the proposed Food Additives Conference should be held would have to be decided by the governing bodies of both Organizations. It felt, however, that governments would be assisted in defining their position, both as to the desirability of convening the proposed Conference and as to the subject matters to be covered, if the proposed Draft Agenda were sent to all Member Governments and if the latter were invited to consult Codex Contact Points.

#### Arrangements for Ad Hoc Working Group on Pesticide Residues

22. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction the statement of the Secretariat that the Government of Denmark had indicated its willingness to host the above meeting in Copenhagen. It was hoped that the precise date of the meeting would be given by the Danish delegation at the Eighth Session of the Commission.

#### Provisional Timetable of Codex Meetings for 1972-1975

23. The Executive Committee considered the proposed timetable contained in document ALINORM 71/28, which would also be before the 8th session of the Commission. The reasons for scheduling the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies in the way suggested in the document were given in document ALINORM 71/28 and elaborated upon orally by the Secretariat. Most members of the Executive Committee expressed concern at the proposal to lengthen the intervals between sessions of the Commission to a good deal more than 12 months. Concern was also expressed at the fact that no session, either of the Commission or of the Executive Committee had been scheduled for 1973. It was explained that the proposal to lengthen the interval between sessions of the Commission had been based on the consideration that the Commission, at its last session, had drawn attention to the need to increase the period between sessions in order to give Governments sufficient time to comment on Step 3 standards and also to enable governments to have sufficient time to consider these comments fully/ before sessions of the Commission. Taking into account that the

Programme's budget for 1972/73 had been drawn up on the basis of the proposed schedule of meetings for 1972/73 contained in document ALINORM 71/28, the Executive Committee agreed to recommend no change in the schedule for 1972/73 so far as sessions of the Commission were concerned but recommended that the 10th session of the Commission which was scheduled for July 1974 should be brought forward to a date as early as possible in 1974. This would reduce the rather lengthy interval between the Ninth and Tenth sessions of the Commission. The Executive Committee also recommended that the Twentieth Session of the Executive Committee scheduled for February 1974 should be brought forward to mid 1973, assuming that there would be a need to hold such a meeting.

24. Both Mr. G.R. Grange and the Representative of the region of North America, speaking on behalf of Canada thought that it was not necessary that the Milk and Milk Products Committee should meet on a yearly basis. The Representative of the region of North America stated that the Canadian authorities considered that, having regard to the present workload of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, it would be feasible to hold the 1972 session of that Committee in Rome prior to the Ninth session of the Commission. The Representative of the South-West Pacific region drew attention to the fact that the New Zealand authorities had expressed the wish that the meeting of the proposed new Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene be linked with the next session of the Codex Committee on Processed Meat Products.

25. The Executive Committee drew attention to the fact that meetings should not be scheduled on an automatic basis but only when the workload justified the convening of meetings. The Executive Committee considered that the intervals between sessions of the Commission should be such as to enable the Commission to survey satisfactorily the progress of its subsidiary bodies and to finalize standards. The Executive Committee agreed to recommend that the Ninth Session of the Commission should be held in November 1972 and the Tenth session as early as possible in 1974, taking into account that, it would not be possible, for budgetary reasons, to schedule a meeting of the Commission in 1973 (in which it was proposed to hold the Food Standards Conference in Africa) without cancelling meetings of some of the subsidiary bodies in the 1972/1973 biennium which were a charge on the budget of the Programme.



Proposal to hold Food Standards Conference in Africa in 1973

26. At the Seventh Session of the Commission, the African delegations drew attention to the special needs of the developing countries of Africa in the field of basic food legislation, food standards, control services, laboratory facilities, training of personnel, etc. In order to enable African countries to be in a position to accept and implement Recommended Codex Standards, it would be necessary to make available to them advice and assistance in establishing the necessary infrastructures. The Secretariat undertook, at the Seventh Session of the Commission, to consider how best to suggest approaching the problem of meeting these needs.

27. For the purpose of making an accurate assessment of the needs of the African countries in the fields mentioned in paragraph 26 above, budgetary provision has been made for the holding of a Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Conference in Africa in 1973. The proposal to hold a Food Standards Conference in Africa in 1973 together with a proposed possible draft agenda for the Conference, prepared by the Secretariat, was considered by the Executive Committee at its Sixteenth Session. The Executive Committee considered that the proposed draft agenda should incorporate written proposals which had been communicated to its Sixteenth Session by Dr. N. de Heer. The revised draft agenda, set out in paragraph 6 of ALINORM 71/11, incorporates the proposals of Dr. de Heer.

28. At the current session, Dr. de Heer stressed the importance of the proposed Food Standards Conference and also the need to ensure that organizations such as ISO and the Scientific, Technical and Research Committee (STRC) of OAU should be associated with the work. He also considered that it would be desirable to appoint a Coordinator for Africa and to establish a Coordinating Committee for Africa, but he thought that the Coordinating Committee probably would not need to meet for some considerable time yet in view of the pending Food Standards Conference.

29. The Executive Committee recommended:

- (a) that steps be taken by FAO and WHO to organize and make arrangements for a Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Conference in Africa in 1973;
- (b) that the provisional agenda for the Conference might be along the lines of that suggested in paragraph 6 of ALINORM 71/11, but that it would be understood that the proposed provisional agenda would be subject to change in the light of further consultation with the African countries;
- (c) that it might be useful to appoint a Coordinator for Africa at the Eighth Session of the Commission<sup>if,</sup> as required under the Rules of Procedure, a majority of the

African Members of the Commission so proposed;

- (d) that it would also be useful for the Commission to envisage the establishment of a Coordinating Committee for Africa so that the necessary budgetary estimates could be drawn up for inclusion in the proposed budget for 1974/75.

The role of the Coordinator would be to advise and assist the Secretariat in preparing for the Conference and, in time, to assist and coordinate the work of any Codex Committee that may be set up in the region, as well as serving as Chairman of the Coordinating Committee for Africa.

Ref. ACP - CX 4/40

Rome, 3 May 1971

Seizième session du Comité exécutif de la Commission  
du Codex Alimentarius

Monsieur le Président,

Je vous remercie de votre lettre du 29 mars dans laquelle vous attiriez mon attention sur le rapport de la seizième session du Comité exécutif de la Commission du Codex Alimentarius. J'ai en particulier apprécié vos observations au sujet du paragraphe 21.a de ce rapport.

Je reconnais pleinement la nécessité pour la FAO d'accorder une attention accrue au très important problème des résidus de pesticides dans les denrées alimentaires et j'ai récemment pris diverses dispositions pour renforcer les efforts que nous déployons de concert avec l'Organisation mondiale de la santé. Parmi ces mesures, je citerai les suivantes:

- a. Autorisation de recruter immédiatement un fonctionnaire du cadre organique chargé de mettre au point sur le plan technique les publications touchant à la protection phytosanitaire et de participer à la préparation des rapports et monographies qui résultent des réunions conjointes annuelles FAO/OMS d'experts des résidus de pesticides.
- b. Révision de notre accord avec l'OMS au sujet des publications conjointes afin d'accélérer l'élaboration de la documentation provenant de nos réunions conjointes annuelles d'experts des résidus de pesticides.

D'autre part, je crois savoir qu'à l'OMS, le Dr. Candau et ses collaborateurs étudient la possibilité de recourir à des ordinateurs dans ce domaine, plus particulièrement la mise au point de modèles mathématiques qui permettront d'estimer avec plus de précision les rapports entre les doses journalières acceptables de pesticides établies par les experts de l'OMS et les concentrations de résidus de pesticides tolérées dans les denrées alimentaires, fixées par les experts de la FAO.

Monsieur Gérard WEILL  
Président de la Commission  
du Codex Alimentarius  
78, rue de Varenne  
Paris (7e)  
France

Je tiens à vous assurer que nous sommes pleinement conscients de l'importance que revêt le problème des résidus de pesticides dans les produits alimentaires et que nous faisons tout notre possible, compte tenu du personnel dont nous disposons, pour renforcer les activités dans ce domaine en étroite coopération avec l'Organisation mondiale de la santé.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'assurance de ma haute considération.

A. H. Boerma  
Directeur général

Réf.: C 14/83/11

Genève, le 24 juin 1971

Votre réf.: O.A.A/No 14754

Monsieur le Président,

Je vous remercie de votre lettre du 29 mars par laquelle vous avez bien voulu attirer mon attention sur le rapport de la Seizième session du Comité exécutif de la Commission du Codex Alimentarius et, en particulier, sur la partie du rapport concernant la procédure d'élaboration de tolérances pour les résidus de pesticides.

Je tiens à vous assurer que, de concert avec la FAO et compte tenu de nos ressources budgétaires et du personnel dont nous disposons, nous nous efforçons de développer au maximum nos activités dans ce domaine si important pour la protection de la santé. L'établissement de normes internationales en matière de résidus de pesticides dans les denrées alimentaires est un élément essentiel de l'action internationale tendant à prévenir et à déceler les effets nuisibles provoqués par les polluants chimiques du milieu et les discussions qui ont eu lieu récemment à la Vingt-Quatrième Assemblée mondiale de la Santé ont souligné l'importance que notre Organisation attache aux travaux de la Commission du Codex Alimentarius.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'assurance de ma haute considération.

Dr. M.G. Candau  
Directeur général

Monsieur Gérard Weill  
Président de la Commission du Codex Alimentarius  
Comité Interministériel de l'Agriculture et de  
l'Alimentation  
Comité français de l'Organisation des Nations Unies  
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78, rue de Varenne  
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DECISIONS OF ARGENTINA ON STEP 9 STANDARDS

Full Acceptance

- Methods of analysis for Processed Fruits and Vegetables
- Methods of analysis for Fats and Oils
- Pesticide residues (2nd series)
- General standard for fungi and fungus products
- Dried fungi
- Fungus Chanterelle
- Quick-frozen gutted Pacific salmon

Acceptance with Minor Deviations

- Dried glucose syrup
  - General standard for fats and oils
  - Lard
  - Edible tallow
  - Shrimps or prawns
  - Edible cottonseed oil
  - Margarine
  - Rendered pork fat
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DRAFT AGENDA FOR A PROPOSED THIRD FAO/WHO CONFERENCE ON FOOD ADDITIVES

(Dealing specifically with contaminants in foods)

(Prepared by FAO Nutrition Division and WHO Food Additives Unit)

1. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman and appointment of Rapporteurs.
  2. Adoption of Agenda.
  3. Review of work carried out by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (1955-1971):
    - (a) Factual summary of food additives evaluated and specifications developed;
    - (b) Review of principles of toxicological evaluation.
  4. Relation between environmental contamination and contaminants in food.
  5. Review of work already done in the above field (Item 4) by international organizations.
  6. Measures and international action required to assess the levels and hazards of food contamination by environmental pollutants and to assist in its prevention and control:
    - (a) Need for surveillance and monitoring of relevant data.
    - (b) Evaluation of data with particular reference to the concept of total load from all sources.
  7. Strengthening of procedures for rapid international consultation and coordinated action concerning food additives and contaminants (including environmental pollutants).
  8. Future work on food additives:
    - (a) Review of technological efficacy of various classes of food additives.
    - (b) Other areas to be covered:
      - (i) Packaging materials
      - (ii) Processing aids
      - (iii) Animal feed adjuncts
      - (iv) Flavouring materials

with assignment of priorities for evaluation and revaluation.
  9. Other business.
  10. Adoption of the Report.
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