

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CX 4/35.2		CL 2016/21-CF July 2016
TO:	Codex Contact Points Interested International Organizations	
FROM:	Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme FAO E-mail: codex@fao.org	
SUBJECT:	Request for information on management practices for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in spices	
DEADLINE:	31 October 2016	
COMMENTS:	To: Codex Contact Point of Spain E-mail: cioa@msssi.es	Copy to: Secretariat Codex Alimentarius Commission Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme FAO E-mail: codex@fao.org

BACKGROUND

1. The 10th Session of the Committee on Contaminants in Foods¹ (2016) agreed on the following recommendations related to the development of the Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination on spices:

1.1 General provisions in the COP

- Limit the scope of work to that for spices only, noting that the production and processing practices were different between spices and culinary herbs.
- Include packaging technologies that ensure the maintenance of moisture, such as vacuum or modified atmosphere packing, as useful technologies, while acknowledging that these technologies were expensive and not always practical for use by all countries, but could be considered as options for use. The Committee also agreed to include the smoke-drying processes already widely used by countries.
- Consider the ongoing work in the Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs with regard to categorization of spices, as well as the work being undertaken by the Committee on Pesticide Residues on the revision of the [Classification of Food and Feed](#) (CAC/MISC 4-1989) (revision of commodity groups and the establishment of maximum residue limits for pesticides for spices).
- Include a reference to the [Code of Hygienic Practice for Low Moisture Foods](#) (CAC/RCP 75-2015) and its Annex on Spices and Culinary Herbs, and to not repeat general guidance from this Annex, but only in those cases where it was necessary to build on the measures already included in this Annex.

¹ [REP16/CF](#), paras 129 – 137.

1.2 Specific Annexes to the COP

- There is a need for further consideration on the approach to be taken for the Annexes, however the following categories are a useful starting point. There may not be a direct correlation of the grouping of spices for the annexes with the priority spices for the development of maximum levels as the intent of work on the annexes is to consider whether the same agricultural, production and handling measures could apply to groups of spices.
 - Dried fruits and berries (e.g. paprika, *chilli*, *black/white/pepper*)
 - Dried roots, rhizomes, bulbs (e.g. dried *ginger*)
 - Dried seeds (e.g. aniseed, mustard)
 - Dried floral parts (e.g. clove, saffron)
 - Dried leaves (e.g. bay leaf, curry leaf)
 - Dried bark (e.g. cassia, cinnamon)
 - Others (e.g. carambola, mace)

2. The Committee therefore agreed to:

- continue work on the COP and its Annexes (for total aflatoxins and for Ochratoxin A (OTA)), and to use the categories of spices as a starting point
- issue a Circular Letter to request information on all available proven measures used in practice to reduce contamination by mycotoxins in spices that would help guide the development of possible annexes to the COP
- establish an Electronic Working Group, chaired by Spain and co-chaired by The Netherlands and India to continue the drafting of the COP and its Annexes taking into account the discussion at CCCF10, written comments submitted to this session, and the information to be provided by the aforementioned CL.

Request for Information

3. Information is therefore hereby requested on *proven* good management practices to prevent and reduce contamination of mycotoxins (such as OTA and aflatoxins) in spices, either in individual spices or according to the categories of spices (not exhaustive list) specified in paragraph 1.2.

Based on information received, the eWG could then see if different management practices for individual spices or groups of spices could be distinguished and if the grouping used as starting point would need to be adapted.

4. Codex members and observers are encourage to submit available data as indicated in paragraph 3 to the Chair of the EWG in order to make progress in the development of the COP and its Annexes and to facilitate their consideration by CCCF11 (2017).