

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 4.5, 6

CAC47/CRD50

Original Language Only

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-seventh Session

Geneva, Switzerland, CIG

25-30 November 2024

(Comments from International Fruit and Vegetable Juice Association (IFU))

Agenda item 4.5

IFU Opinion of CCFA's conclusion to allow the use of dimethyl dicarbonate (DMDC) in fruit juices and nectar products as a preservative under Note XS247

The International Fruit and Vegetable Juice Association (IFU), a 75-year-old global organization with nearly 300 members from over 80 countries, represents the juice industry worldwide. IFU has developed nearly 100 methods and recommendations to safeguard the quality and safety of fruit juices internationally.

IFU Comments

At the CCFA meeting in April the committee decided to approve the use of DMDC as a preservative in fruit juices and nectars using a Note XS247. As stated at the meeting, IFU is of the opinion that fruit juices can be packaged and sold without the use of preservatives to preserve their nature "as close as possible to the fruit from which it was prepared". However, during the CCFA meeting IFU was unable to secure any Governmental support for this position, due to other unrelated political issues, and it was subsequently passed.

IFU obviously accepts the position of the committee and thought that the committee's acceptance of this material as a preservative, so its use required labelling, was much better than adopting the position, used in some countries where it is considered a "processing aid", where no additional labelling would have been required.

However, this new development does present an issue in the association's opinion. In 2005, when the Codex standard was adopted by the CAC, two preservatives (sorbate and benzoate) were permitted for use in some countries, where it was felt that this was critical to have the additional protection that a preservative would offer to the microbiological integrity of the packaged product. So, with the present situation the GFSA permits the use of three preservatives but under two very different classifications. DMDC use is permitted, using a note XS247, which means that any product that contains this preservative does NOT conform with the Codex Standard for these product (e.g. 247, 2005). Whereas sorbate and benzoate can only be used where permitted by the importing country. We feel that the decision to approve the use of preservatives using two separate notes should be reconsidered by CCFA. We would therefore recommend to CAC that the decision proposed by the April CCFA meeting should not be ratified at this year's CAC meeting and the topic should be passed back to next year's CCFA to rationalise the position on this type of additive (preservative) and develop a consistent approach for their use.

IFU is also concerned that using the XS247 exclusion could confuse consumers as two retail products would carry the same legal name "fruit juice" or "fruit juice from concentrate" but there would clearly be a difference in the products as the ingredients list would be different with one showing the use of the preservative (DMDC) whereas the other would have a "clean" label. Also in many countries if a product does not conform to the standard for fruit juices the legal name "fruit juice" or "fruit juice from concentrate" can not be used as this is considered a protected term.

Secondly

IFU is of the opinion that using this type of "XS" note can and is misleading to the consumer as they cannot make any reasoned judgement from the legal name of the product they wish to buy. IFU is aware that this later topic is probably not one directly for CCFA consideration and should perhaps be considered by both CCFA, where this type of note is normally used, and CCFL for their considerations on the topic. The use of an XS note goes far beyond the use of preservatives in fruit juices as XS notes are presently permitted in

excess of 100 product types where there are existing Codex Standards for food products and new additives have been considered and approved for use with this exception.

Agenda item 6

Subject: Lack of Consensus in the Electronic Working Group (EWG) on the Proposed Amendment of Brix Level for Grape Juice from *Vitis labrusca* or Hybrids Thereof

Introduction

The International Fruit and Vegetable Juice Association (IFU), a 75-year-old global organization with nearly 300 members from over 80 countries, represents the juice industry worldwide. IFU has developed nearly 100 methods and recommendations to safeguard the quality and safety of fruit juices internationally.

This document addresses IFU's formal concerns regarding the recommendation made by the Chair of the Electronic Working Group (EWG) on the Proposed Amendment of the Minimum Brix Level for Grape Juice from *Vitis labrusca* or Hybrids Thereof.

Background

The EWG, chaired by Brazil, was tasked with discussing an amendment to the General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (CXS 247-2005) to lower the minimum Brix level for *Vitis labrusca* juices.

Despite the active participation of multiple member countries and observers, including IFU, consensus was not achieved during the EWG's two rounds of discussion. Specifically:

- In the first round, 8 out of 10 participants opposed the amendment or requested further technical information.
- In the second round, all 5 participants expressed significant concerns.

However, the Chair proceeded to recommend the adoption of the proposal, disregarding these objections.

Technical Concerns

IFU strongly opposes the proposed amendment for the following reasons:

1. Precedent for the Industry:

Establishing different Brix levels for different grape species could create challenges for international trade. Previous derogations for orange, pineapple, and apple were based on production-weighted Brix data supplied by producer countries. No similar justification has been provided in this case.

2. Adulteration Risk:

A lower Brix level increases the risk of product adulteration by water addition, undermining product integrity.

3. Lack of Distinguishing Method:

Differentiating between *Vitis labrusca* and *Vitis vinifera* would require new and costly DNA-based methods, which are currently unavailable or validated.

4. Existing Standards and Data:

The current Brix value of 16 accounts for blending practices in juice concentrate processing. Data from Brazil showed that in most seasons (63%), average Brix values exceeded 16, further supporting the current standard.

5. Trade and Economic Impact:

The amendment could distort international trade by giving competitive advantages to certain regions due to reduced production costs.

6. Reconstitution of Concentrates:

The Brix levels in the appendix of CXS 247-2005 apply to reconstituted juices from concentrate. The proposed amendment does not align with the flexibility permitted by reconstitution practices.

Request for Reevaluation

IFU and other Codex Members invested significant time and resources to provide detailed technical feedback. Unfortunately, these contributions were not adequately addressed in the final recommendation.

In light of the lack of consensus and insufficient technical justification, IFU respectfully requests the following:

1. That the Codex Secretariat reevaluates the procedure followed by the EWG.

2. That the adoption of the proposed amendment is retained within the step system until comprehensive data and justification are provided.