



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

Twenty-third Session

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CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION

(Prepared by the Coordinator for CCAFRICA)

A. AFLATOXINS IN FOODS

1. In 2018, the 75th Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXC 75) acknowledged that chronic exposure to aflatoxins posed a serious public health threat and that a coordinated approach by Codex was required in identifying needs of developing countries in standard-setting and recommended establishment of MLs for aflatoxins in ready-to-eat peanuts to address the need of developing countries to address their trade concerns.

2. This was echoed by the First FAO/WHO/AU International Conference on Food Safety resolutions in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia that emphasized the importance of enhancing the participation of all countries in the standard-setting work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and facilitating the use of Codex standards. Improve the evidence base for food safety decisions through systematic efforts on the monitoring of foodborne hazards and the surveillance of foodborne diseases, on estimating the public health and economic burden of foodborne disease.

Relevance of the Aflatoxins concerns to CCAFRICA

3. Aflatoxin is of public health importance due to its ability to either cause diseases or promote disease damages. Aflatoxins when consumed in foods could cause liver cancer, suppressed immune systems, and retarded growth and development by contributing to malnutrition. Aflatoxin, compromises food security in the most vulnerable groups of people especially children in developing countries, especially in Africa.

4. Aflatoxin is a subject of concern to International trade due to economic losses incurred by farmers and exporters due to its presence. Export consignments belonging to the categories: cereals and bakery products, feed materials, fruits and vegetables, herbs and spices, nuts, nut products and seed, and other food products, which originated from Africa have faced rejections and seizures due to aflatoxin contamination. In 2018, several African countries including: Ghana, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Morocco, Madagascar, Gambia, Zambia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Egypt suffered rejection of their export products to the EU market due to aflatoxin contamination (RASSF, 2018).

5. In order to mitigate the adverse effect of aflatoxin, pre and post-harvest control and management steps would be deployed. The African Centre of Excellence for mycotoxin and food safety in Federal University of Technology Minna has been set up as a Centre of Excellence to address food safety concerns using multidisciplinary approaches. The Centre will also contribute to the development of standards based on data from surveillance of aflatoxins in selected staples and for HCN in cassava products to support elaboration of regional standard by Codex Alimentarius Commission.

B. CODEX TRUST FUND (CTF)

6. The initial Codex Trust Fund (CTF1) came to an end in December 2015, and the successor trust fund (CTF2) was officially launched in 2016 at CAC39. CTF2 focused on in-country capacity building to promote more effective participation in Codex, in contrast to CTF1, which focused on increasing participation at Codex meetings by developing countries.

Situation Analysis

7. Out of the ten (10) successful countries which benefited from CTF2, round two, Five (5) countries were from Africa. They include – Mali, Rwanda, Cape Verde, Guinea and Burkina Faso.

8. CAC41 launched round 3 of CTF2, and this round benefitted five (5) individual CCAFRICA Members (Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Gambia, Malawi & Nigeria) and one group application (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and South Sudan). In overall CCAfrica region has benefitted more than any other region and this was attributed to quality applications.

Conclusion

9. There is need to widen the scope of CTF to include an element of a very limited time bound assistance in participation in Codex meetings as CCAFRICA member states explore alternate sources of funding including factoring Codex work in their budgets.

C. OTHER TOPICS ON CODEX STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS.

Prevention and Control of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

10. AMR is still an issue in the region and current efforts to address this global threat need to be stepped up. The regional member states have played an active role in the current work by the *ad hoc* intergovernmental task force on antimicrobial resistance (TFAMR). This is through the respective EWG on *Draft Revision of the Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance (CXC 61-2005)*; and *Guidelines on integrated monitoring and surveillance of foodborne antimicrobial resistance*. Adoption of the COP and guidelines will help African countries address public health and trade concerns.

Amendments to the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (CXC 52- 2003) to align with the Guidance for Histamine Control

11. The adoption of Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products to align it with the Guidance for Histamine Control is of importance to CCAFRICA as they facilitate regional and global trade through harmonization of development of food standards.

12. Other topics of special interest to the region are as indicated below

Committee	Examples of topics of Special Interest (list not exhaustive)
CCFL	Proposed draft guidance for the labelling of non-retail containers
	Proposed draft guidelines on front of pack nutrition labelling
	Proposed draft guidelines Internet sales of foods and e-commerce
CCNFSDU	Proposed draft guidelines for ready-to-use therapeutic foods
	Proposed draft definition for biofortification
CCCF	Establishment of ML for HCN in cassava and cassava-based products and occurrence of mycotoxins in these products
	Aflatoxins in cereals (establishment of MLs for total aflatoxins in wheat, maize, sorghum and rice (specifying the categories)
	Development of a Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in cocoa
CCPR	Various topics on Maximum levels (MLs) for Pesticide Residues in particular the registered pesticides in Africa that are unsupported by the original manufacturers identified in Table 2A.
CCSCH	Proposed draft standard for dried roots, rhizomes and bulbs — dried or dehydrated ginger
	Proposed draft standard for dried chili pepper and paprika
	Proposed draft standard for dried floral parts – dried cloves
CCFFV	Proposed Draft Standard for Yam
	Proposed Draft Standard for Onions and Shallots
CCFO	Revision of the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils (CODEX STAN 210-1999): Essential composition of sunflower seed oils – drafting of the physical and chemical parameters

D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is invited to consider and review the above topics as outlined in this paper and in particular address the following issues:

- a) Note the topics highlighted above with a view to support the ongoing work,
- b) Encourage countries to jointly prepare and submit new work proposals of common interest; possibilities of information exchange amongst the countries of the region, including relevant data and scientific expert advice for preparing new work proposals.
- c) Encourage members to consider co-hosting arrangements with a view to enhance participation of the region in the topics relevant to the region.
- d) Identifying suitable ways for engagement of eligible countries of the region with Codex Trust Fund (CTF2) round 4, which was launched at CAC42, for their capacity building, including establishment of national level Codex structures; possibilities of submission of joint applications;