

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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STANDARD FOR QUICK-FROZEN LOBSTERS

CXS 95-1981

Adopted in 1981. Revised in 1995, 2004 and 2017. Amended in 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2024.

2024 Amendments

Following decisions taken at the Forty-seventh Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in November 2024, amendments were made in Section 6.4 Labelling of non-retail containers by replacing the text with a reference to the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021); and Section 7 Sampling, examination and analysis was amended by replacing methods of analysis with a reference to the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999).

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to quick-frozen raw or cooked lobsters, rock lobsters, spiny lobsters and slipper lobsters.ⁱ Furthermore, it applies to quick-frozen raw or cooked squat lobsters (red and yellow).

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1. Product definition

The product is prepared from lobsters from the genus *Homarus* of the family Nephropidae and from the families Palinuridae and Scyllaridae. It may also be prepared from *Nephrops norvegicus* provided it is presented as Norway lobster. For squat lobsters, the product is prepared from species of *Cervimunida johnii*, *Pleuroncodes monodon* and *Pleuroncodes planipes* of the Galatheidae family.

The pack shall not contain a mixture of species.

2.2. Process definition

The water used for cooking shall be of potable quality or clean seawater.

The product, after any suitable preparation, shall be subjected to a freezing process and shall comply with the conditions laid down hereafter. The freezing process shall be carried out in appropriate equipment in such a way that the range of temperature of maximum crystallization is passed quickly. The quick-freezing process shall not be regarded as complete unless and until the product temperature has reached -18 °C or colder at the thermal centre after thermal stabilization. The product shall be kept deep frozen so as to maintain the quality during transportation, storage and distribution.

Quick-frozen lobsters shall be processed and packaged so as to minimize dehydration and oxidation.

2.3. Presentation

Any presentation of the product shall be permitted provided that it:

- meets all requirements of this standard; and
- is adequately described on the label to avoid confusing or misleading the consumer.

The lobster may be packed by count per unit of weight or per package or within a stated weight range.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Lobsters

The product shall be prepared from sound lobsters which are of a quality fit to be sold fresh for human consumption.

3.2 Glazing

If glazed, the water used for glazing or preparing glazing solutions shall be of potable quality or shall be clean seawater. Potable water is freshwater fit for human consumption. Standards of potability shall not be less than those contained in the latest edition of the World Health Organization's *Guidelines for drinking-water quality*.¹ Clean seawater is seawater which meets the same microbiological standards as potable water and is free from objectionable substances.

3.3 Other ingredients

All other ingredients used shall be of food grade quality and conform to all applicable Codex standards.

3.4 Final product

Products shall meet the requirements of this standard when lots examined in accordance with Section 9 comply with the provisions set out in Section 8. Products shall be examined by the methods given in Section 7.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Antioxidants, humectants and preservatives used in accordance with Table 1 and Table 2 of the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995)² in food category 09.2.1 (Frozen fish, fish fillets, and fish products, including molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms) and its parent food categories are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this standard.

ⁱ Hereafter referred to as lobster.

5. HYGIENE

It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969),³ the *Code of practice for fish and fishery products* (CXC 52-2003),⁴ the *Code of practice for the processing and handling of quick-frozen foods* (CXC 8-1976)⁵ and other relevant Codex codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and guidelines for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria related to foods* (CXG 21-1997).⁶

6. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985)⁷ the following specific provisions apply:

6.1 Name of the food

The product shall be designated:

- lobster if derived from the genus *Homarus*;
- rock lobster, spiny lobster or crawfish if derived from species of the family *Palinuridae*;
- slipper lobster, bay lobster or sand lobster if derived from species of the family *Scyllaridae*;
- Norway lobster if derived from the species *Nephrops norvegicus*; and
- squat lobster if derived from the species *Cervimunida johnii*, *Pleuroncodes monodon* and *Pleuroncodes planipes*.

There shall appear on the label, reference to the form of presentation in close proximity to the name of the product in such descriptive terms that will adequately and fully describe the nature of the presentation of the product to avoid misleading or confusing the consumer.

In addition to the specified labelling designations above, the usual or common trade names of the variety may be added so long as it is not misleading to the consumer in the country in which the product will be distributed.

Products shall be designated as cooked or raw as appropriate.

If the product has been glazed with seawater, a statement to this effect shall be made.

The term "quick-frozen", shall also appear on the label, except that the term "frozen" may be applied in countries where this term is customarily used for describing the product processed in accordance with subsection 2.2 of this standard.

The label shall state that the product should be maintained under conditions that will maintain the quality during transportation, storage and distribution.

6.2 Net contents (glazed products)

Where the food has been glazed, the declaration of net contents of the food shall be exclusive of the glaze.

6.3 Storage instructions

The label shall include terms to indicate that the product shall be stored at a temperature of -18 °C or colder.

6.4 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).⁸

7. SAMPLING, EXAMINATION AND ANALYSES

7.1 Sampling

- Sampling of lots for examination of the product shall be in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5. In the case of shell-on lobster, the sample unit is an individual lobster. In the case of shell-off lobster, the sample unit shall be at least a 1 kg portion of lobster from the primary container. In the case of squat lobster, the sampling unit shall be at least 1 kg portion.
- Sampling of lots for examination of net weight shall be carried out in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan meeting the criteria established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

7.2 Examination

7.2.1 Sensory and physical examination

Samples taken for sensory and physical examination shall be assessed by persons trained in such examination and using procedures elaborated in Section 7.2.2, the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999)⁹ and the *Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories* (CXG 31-1999).¹⁰

7.2.2 Determination of count

When declared on the label, the count shall be determined by counting all lobsters or tails in the primary container and dividing the count of lobster by the average deglazed weight to determine the count per unit weight.

7.3 Analysis

For checking the compliance with this standard, the methods of analysis and sampling contained in CXS 234-1999 relevant to the provisions in this standard shall be used.

8. DEFINITION OF DEFECTIVES

The sample unit shall be considered as defective when it exhibits any of the properties defined below.

8.1 Deep dehydration

Greater than 10 percent of the weight of the lobster in the sample unit or greater than 10 percent of the surface area of the block exhibits excessive loss of moisture clearly shown as white or yellow abnormality on the surface which masks the colour of the flesh and penetrates below the surface, and cannot be easily removed by scraping with a knife or other sharp instrument without unduly affecting the appearance of the lobster.

8.2 Foreign matter

The presence in the sample unit of any matter which has not been derived from lobster, does not pose a threat to human health, and is readily recognized without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing and sanitation practices.

8.3 Odour/Flavour

Lobster affected by persistent and distinct objectionable odours or flavours indicative of decomposition or rancidity, or feed.

8.4 Discolouration

Distinct blackening of more than 10 percent of the surface area of the shell of individual whole or half lobster, or in the case of tail meat and meat presentations distinct black, brown, green or yellow discolourations singly or in combination, of the meat affecting more than 10 percent of the declared weight.

9. LOT ACCEPTANCE

A lot shall be considered as meeting the requirements of this standard when:

- the total number of defectives as classified according to Section 8 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5;
- the total number of sample units not meeting the count or weight range designation as defined in Section 2.3 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5;
- the average net weight of all sample units is not less than the declared weight, provided there is no unreasonable shortage in any individual container; and
- the food additives, hygiene and labelling requirements of Sections 4, 5 and 6 are met.

NOTES

¹ WHO. 2017. *Guidelines for drinking-water quality: fourth edition incorporating the first addendum*. Geneva. www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241549950

² FAO and WHO. 1995. *General standard for food additives*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 192-1995. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

³ FAO and WHO. 1969. *General principles of food hygiene*. Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice, No. CXC 1-1969. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁴ FAO and WHO. 2003. *Code of practice for fish and fishery products*. Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice, No. CXC 52-2003. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁵ FAO and WHO. 1976. *Code of practice for the processing and handling of quick-frozen foods*. Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice, No. CXC 8-1976. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁶ FAO and WHO. 1997. *Principles and guidelines for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria for foods*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 21-1997. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁷ FAO and WHO. 1985. *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 1-1985. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁸ FAO and WHO. 2021. *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 346-2021. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁹ FAO and WHO. 1999. *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 234-1999. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

¹⁰ FAO and WHO. 1999. *Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 31-1999. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.