

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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Agenda Item 6b

NFSDU/41 CRD 12

Original language only

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND FOODS FOR SPECIAL DIETARY USES

Forty-first Session

Dusseldorf, Germany  
24 – 29 November 2019

### DISCUSSION PAPER RISK MANAGEMENT POSSIBILITIES FOR THE REDUCTION OF TRANS FATTY ACIDS

*Comments by Indonesia, Kenya, Senegal, IMACE*

#### INDONESIA

Indonesia wishes to express its appreciation to Canada for preparing Discussion Paper on Risk management possibilities for the reduction of TFAs. Indonesia supports option C to adopt regulations that prohibit the use of partially hydrogenated oil (PHO) in processed foods.

#### KENYA

Kenya commends Canada for the comprehensive proposals they have put together in this discussion paper. It is necessary that Codex develops some guidance on risk management for reduction of TFAs. Kenya notes the specific proposal in option D that proposes development of a code of practice for the reduction of TFAs. The success of this code will go a long way in guidance the industry on measures necessary to be put in place to manage, eliminate or reduce TFAs in products. However, while this is a move in the right direction, there also need to consider developing tolerance limits in products especially in processed products hence making Option B a viable option. Kenya therefore supports the two-way approach where the industry will be guided by a code of practice and limits established in processed products to limit the TFAs.

#### SENEGAL

**Recommandation** : Le Comité est invité à tenir compte des rôles potentiels en matière de gestion des risques du Codex présentés dans le tableau 1.

**Position du Sénégal** : Le Sénégal soutient les options B et E pour être considérées par le Comité.

**Commentaire** : Il est important de définir des limites des AGT dans les aliments et d'informer les consommateurs à travers l'étiquetage

#### IMACE – THE EUROPEAN MARGARINE ASSOCIATION

##### Specific comments

##### DISCUSSION PAPER (FROM CANADA)

##### RISK MANAGEMENT POSSIBILITIES FOR THE REDUCTION OF TRANS FATTY ACIDS

##### IMACE GENERAL POSITION:

- We welcome the discussion paper on risk management possibilities for the reduction of TFAs, prepared by the government of Canada for the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses.
- **The European margarine and spread industry stands for high-level of protection for consumers' health.** We have made significant progress in lowering the industrial TFA content of our products through product reformulation and optimised refining processes, and we keep on monitoring industrial TFA closely. Thanks to the successful voluntary reformulation efforts from the vegetable oil and fat sector, the intake of industrial TFA is below the limits of public health concern in the majority of EU Member States.
- Both animal and industrial fats are sources of TFA in a diet. Whether ruminant or non-ruminant, TFA have the same detrimental effect on health. **IMACE thus particularly welcomes that the suggested risk management options target all TFA in processed food**, regardless of their origin.

- Among the 7 scenarios proposed, IMACE and its members believe two scenarios would be more effective in reducing TFA in food, whilst others would have limited impact.

#### **IMACE ENDORSES:**

##### **Risk Management Option B: Adopt regulations that limit TFA levels in processed foods.**

- Mandatory maximum limits for TFA levels in processed food would contribute to high-level harmonisation and would be instrumental to effectively tackle TFA worldwide. With such benchmarks, low TFA levels would be the default case and limit health risks for consumers, regardless of their knowledge and understanding of TFA.
- This option is in line with the current European legislation, which sets a maximum level of 2% for industrial TFA on fat basis and which will be applicable as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. IMACE is favourable to aligning global practices on this benchmark, while ensuring it applies to both ruminant and industrial TFA. Such harmonisation would have a positive impact on trade in the long run.
- To mitigate the risks identified in the discussion paper, IMACE suggests setting a transition period of 3-5 years to allow for countries and industry globally to comply and adapt their practices.

##### **Risk Management Option E: Adopt regulations related to the mandatory declaration of TFA on labels of pre-packaged processed foods.**

- Labelling is a useful tool towards educating and informing consumers about food and nutrition. Given the negative impact of TFA on health, a mandatory declaration would be a most cost-effective way to draw consumers' attention as to the presence of TFA and their association with heart diseases and type 2 diabetes. IMACE thus see such a measure as an opportunity to communicate on nutrition towards consumers.
- Furthermore, mandatory labelling of TFA content in pre-packaged processed foods would be instrumental in addressing a lingering unlevel playing field. Indeed, in many countries, it is required to indicate the presence of industrial TFA, but not of ruminant TFA. IMACE is therefore supportive of Option E as a way to restore fair trading practices in the fat sector.

#### **IMACE STRONGLY ADVISES AGAINST:**

##### **Risk Management Option G: Adopt regulations that require the declaration of PHO and fully hydrogenated oil in ingredient lists of pre-packaged processed foods.**

- Contrary to option E, option G indirectly addresses TFA reduction via a PHO and FHO declaration. However, a vast majority of consumers worldwide are unfamiliar with the concepts of partial or full hydrogenation. Most consumers ignore the link between hydrogenation, trans fats and health impacts. Therefore, requirements for PHO and FHO labelling would not contribute to improving their understanding of food and nutrition.
- Consumers' choice is a powerful indicator for industry to change practices. Using labelling to educate them about the impact of trans fats on health would empower them and further provide incentives for industry to reformulate. IMACE believes that any endeavour to regulate and reduce the TFA content of food should directly target the latter.

#### **IMACE'S VIEWS ON OTHER SCENARIOS:**

- **Risk Management Option A: Develop voluntary limits for TFA levels in processed foods.** IMACE and its members believe voluntary thresholds would have extremely limited impact on TFA reduction worldwide and would not push for better harmonisation. In this regard, Option B would be more effective.
- **Risk Management Option C: Adopt regulations that prohibit the use of PHO in processed foods.** Following the above argumentation on Option G, IMACE believes that targeting the process – e.g. partial hydrogenation – misses the point of raising awareness, informing and educating about TFA.
- **Risk Management Option F: Adopt regulations that permit claims about TFA on the labels of pre-packaged processed foods.** A 'TFA free' claim would allow to communicate about the impact of TFA on health. To effectively protect consumers, such claims should be permitted only on food products complying with a maximum level of 2 g TFA / 100 g fat. The claim should concern both industrial and ruminant TFA. Setting a clear threshold would act as an incentive for food business operators worldwide to reduce the TFA (ruminant and industrial) content in all processed foods.