



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NEAR EAST**

Eleventh Session

Rome, Italy

18 - 22 September 2023

CODEx WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION

(Prepared by the Coordinator for Near East)

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION¹

1.1. At the Tenth Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (CCNE10), the following matters were highlighted based on their relevance to the Codex work areas in which Members from the region face certain challenges:

- (i) Contaminants in Food.
- (ii) Pesticide Residues.
- (iii) Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses.
- (iv) Dried Fruits.

1.2 CCNE10 highlighted relevant Codex work areas in which Members from the region faced certain challenges in order to guide discussions and identify possible solutions.

1.3 Challenges preventing Members from stronger engagement have not been clearly identified, but may relate to a lack of awareness of the work undertaken by the Committee, insufficient national coordination, resource constraints or yet other issues.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to bring attention to Codex work that is particularly pertinent to the region in an effort to spark additional discussion at CCNE11 and the identification of ways to move forward in these matters based on the interest of the countries of the region and their priorities.

3. WORK ITEMS OF SPECIFIC RELEVANCE TO THE REGION

3.1 *Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)*

3.1.1 CAC44 adopted the revised *Code of Practice (COP) to Minimize and Contain Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance* (CXC 61-2005) and the *Guidelines on Integrated Monitoring and Surveillance of Foodborne Antimicrobial Resistance* (CXG 94-2021).

3.1.2 CCNE Members are encouraged to take into consideration these Codex texts and to develop further their policies to address foodborne AMR.

3.2 *Ongoing standard setting work of relevance to the region*

Table 1 provides an overview of other topics of special interest to Members in the region.

¹ CX/NE 19/10/8

Table 1: Non-exhaustive list of ongoing Codex work of special interest to CCNE

COMMITTEE	TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTERESTS TO THE NEAR EAST REGION	COMMENTS
CCFICS	Guidance on the prevention and control of food fraud	This issue was the subject of the keynote address and side event of the last two CCNE sessions respectively due to its particular relevance to the region. As work on this Guidance is still in an early phase of development there is the opportunity for Members to engage actively.
	Guidelines on the use of remote audit and inspection in regulatory frameworks	<p>The proposed draft guidelines were developed to assist competent authorities in the use of remote audit and inspection activities and to be used as an optional tool to support the effective delivery of official controls.</p> <p>CCFICS26 agreed to forward the proposed draft to CAC46 for adoption at Step 5/8.</p> <p>Given the need to audit food premises to verify their compliance with the requirements and the challenges that might be encountered while conducting physical visits, this guide can be a useful tool to conduct remote audit.</p>
CCFL	Guidelines on the Provision of Food Information for Pre-packaged Foods to be Offered Via E-Commerce	<p>Due to the progress the world is witnessing in electronic shopping platforms and the demand for food purchases via these platforms, these guidelines were initiated to ensure consumers buying pre-packaged foods via e-commerce have the information needed to be fully informed about the product.</p> <p>CCFL47 agreed to forward this document for adoption at Step 5 in CAC46 and to re-establish the EWG, chaired by the UK and co-chaired by Chile, Japan, India and China, to further develop the Guidelines consideration by CCFL48. With requests for comments being issued in advance of CAC46 and CCFL48 these provide a great opportunity for members to engage in the finalization of this work.</p>
	Application of food labelling provisions in emergencies (discussion paper)	This discussion paper, prepared by the United States of America and introduced during CCFL47 aims to assist countries in establishing flexibility in food labelling requirements in emergencies. This topic is of high importance to the region when dealing with food products that may require special labelling due to crises taking into account experiences of other countries during COVID-pandemic. Given the importance of the document, it will be a unique opportunity for members to participate in enriching this document. CCFL47 agreed to establish an EWG, chaired by the United States of America, to develop an updated discussion paper and a project document on developing guidelines on “Application of food labelling provision in emergencies”, taking into account the discussions at CCFL47.
	Trans fatty acids (TFA) (discussion paper)	A new work proposal was discussed at CCFL46 on the topic of labelling of TFAs and a circular letter was issued in March 2022 to seek input as to support the development of the discussion paper by

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		requesting information on labeling options to support the reduction and limitation of TFAs. At CCFL47 the discussion was postponed to CCFL48 meeting, which will also consider the discussion paper to be considered by CCFO28. Members therefore have two upcoming opportunities to contribute to the discussions on TFAs – CCFO28 and CCFL48.
CCPR	Priority lists of pesticides for evaluation/re-evaluation by JMPR	
CCR/DF	Priority list of veterinary drugs for evaluation/re-evaluation by JECFA	
CCCF	Priority list of contaminants for evaluation by JECFA	
	Possible risk management measure(s) for acrylamide in foods taking into account the most recent JECFA evaluations	CCCF16 agreed to establish an EWG, chaired by India and co-chaired by Saudi Arabia, working in English, to develop a discussion paper on acrylamide in foods taking into account the most recent JECFA evaluations, to look into the feasibility of risk management measure(s) for consideration by CCCF17. Members are encouraged to participate in the EWG and share data if available.
CCFH	Proposed Draft Guidelines for the safe use and reuse of water in food production	CCFH53 agreed to forward the proposed draft Guidelines and Annex 1 for adoption at Step 5/8 by CAC46, while two other annexes remain under development at Step 2/3. An EWG, chaired by the EU and co-chaired by Chile and the International Dairy Federation (IDF) was established to further develop the annex on fishery products and initiate the development of the annex on dairy products. Members are encouraged to participate in the EWG and to provide comments on the draft document once circulated.
	New work proposal on the development of Guidelines for food hygiene control measures in traditional markets for food	The proposed new work would provide national and local governments worldwide with relevant advice to ensure that traditional markets for food are designed and managed effectively to promote food safety for the food sold in the markets. The project document has been forwarded to CAC46 for approval as new work. This new work proposal is of high importance to the region due to the importance of traditional markets in Member countries of the region. Therefore, developing the guideline will aid in ensuring the safety of the end product to the consumer.
CCNFSDU	Harmonized probiotic guidelines	CCNFSDU43 agreed to establish an EWG chaired by Argentina and co-chaired by China and Malaysia, to further refine and clarify the proposal and to develop a revised discussion paper and project document.

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CCSCH	Draft standard for dried floral parts - Saffron	The draft Standard for dried floral parts - saffron was adopted at Step 8 in CAC45. However it is not yet published as the labelling provisions were not endorsed by CCFL. CCFL47 had not endorsed the food labelling provisions concerning country of origin and country of harvest and had referred them back to CCSCH for reconsideration and requested CCSCH to clarify the distinction between country of origin and country of harvest and to provide a clear rationale for why the provision for the country of harvest should be mandatory and how such a declaration would be beneficial for fraud prevention who requested clarification/justification from CCSCH on the mandatory inclusion of Country of harvest.
	Proposed draft standard for dried small cardamom	The proposed draft standard for dried small cardamom was adopted at Step 5 in CAC45. In addition, CCSCH6 agreed to establish an EWG, chaired by India and co-chaired by Guatemala and Iran (Islamic republic of), working in English only, to consider the outstanding parameters or values, taking into account the comments submitted at Step 6 as well as discussions at CCSCH6. Members are encouraged to participate in the EWG and share data if available.
CCFFV	Proposed draft standard for fresh dates	This will be discussed at the upcoming CCFFV23 in 2024. The draft standard for fresh dates was adopted at Step 5 in CAC45. Members are also reminded of the outcome of CCFFV22 which agreed to retain the ranges for moisture content to 30 - 85%". Members are encouraged to participate in the EWG and to provide comments on the draft document once circulated.
CCFO	Paper to address the possible work that CCFO could undertake to reduce TFAs or eliminate PHOs	This paper was a result of matters for action released from CCNSFDU41 and CCFL 46 sessions requesting CCFO for a possible way to reduce TFAs or eliminate partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs). Two members of CCNE have collaborated for preparation of discussion paper. This possible work will be circulated and members can participate to provide their comments, to be discussed later at the upcoming CCFO meeting.
	Revision of the Standard for Olive Oils and Pomace Olive Oils (CXS 33-1981): Sections 3, 8 and Appendix	This will be discussed at the upcoming CCFO28 in 2024. Members are also reminded of the outcome of CCFO27 which agreed to retain the definition for OVOO and its associated footnote as well as related parameters in the standard until CCFO30, when final discussions would be held to decide as to whether to retain/remove the provision in the standard. Among the reasons for this agreement was to allow countries to modernize techniques to produce higher quality olive oil.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CCNE11 is invited to:

- consider the above information and discuss the issues as proposed;
- consider if the matters identified at CCNE10 are still relevant and provide further information accordingly;
- identify Codex work relevant to the region not included in the document and
- prioritize the issues of greatest interest to the region and consider means to ensure the views of the region are transmitted in the related discussions.