

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CL 2023/27/OCS-EXEC
March 2023

TO: Codex Contact Points
Contact Points of international organizations having observer status with Codex

FROM: Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission,
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

SUBJECT: **Request for comments on a proposal for an amendment of the *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (CXS 247-2005)***

DEADLINE: 28 May 2023

BACKGROUND

1. At the 22nd session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC22), Brazil introduced a discussion paper ([CRD07](#)) on a proposal for an amendment of the [General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars \(CXS 247-2005\)](#). CCLAC22 (2022) supported the proposal which would improve both precision and coverage of the standard for better adoption and transparency in the trade of grape juices ([REP23/LAC](#), paragraphs 96-97).
2. The proposed amendment concerns the Annex of CXS 247-2005 where it is proposed to stratify the referred single Minimum Brix Level for grape juice into two groups; one group for *Vitis vinifera* and hybrids thereof, keeping the current Minimum Brix Level of 16.0; and another group for *V. labrusca* and hybrids thereof, with a proposed Minimum Brix Level of 14.0. The objective of the proposed amendment is to improve the precision of CXS 247-2005 and to correctly reflect the Minimum Brix Level for reconstituted grape juice elaborated with *V. labrusca* and hybrids thereof by adding to the Annex a specific limit for this species.
3. The [General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars \(CXS 247-2005\)](#) was developed by the *ad hoc* Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Fruit and Vegetable Juice (TFFJ), which was dissolved by CAC26 in 2005. The standard is currently under the purview of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV), which was adjourned *sine die* by CAC43 in 2020.
4. A proposal for amending CXS 247-2005 was submitted to the Codex Secretariat by Brazil and presented to CCEXEC83 ([CX/EXEC 22/83/2 Add.3](#)).
5. CCEXEC83 (2022) and CAC45 (2022) noted that the Codex Secretariat would issue a Circular Letter (CL) requesting the views of Members and Observers on the proposed amendment to the CXS 247-2005, which would feed into the critical review by CCEXEC84 and its recommendation to CAC46 ([REP22/EXEC2](#), paragraphs 52-55; [REP22/CAC](#), paragraphs 163-166).

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

6. Codex Members and Observers are invited to provide comments on the 1) need to proceed with the proposed amendment of the *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (CXS 247-2005)* and 2) on the proposed amendment itself. The project document is contained in Appendix I of this CL, with the proposed amendment itself in its Annex.

GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF COMMENTS

7. Comments should be submitted through the Codex Contact Points of Codex Members and Observers using the OCS.
8. Contact Points of Codex Members and Observers may login to the OCS and access the document open for comments by selecting "Enter" in the "My reviews" page, available after login to the system.
9. Contact Points of Codex Members and Observer organizations are requested to provide general comments at the document level. Additional guidance on the OCS comment categories and types can be found in the OCS [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#).
10. Other OCS resources, including the user manual and short guide, can be found at the following link: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/resources/circular-letters/en/>.

11. For questions on the OCS, please contact Codex-OCS@fao.org.

PROJECT DOCUMENT**PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENT OF THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR FRUIT JUICES AND NECTARS
(CXS 247-2005)**

(Submitted by Brazil)

1. The purposes and the scope of the proposed amendment of the *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CXS 247-2005):

Grape juices produced from *Vitis vinifera* are significantly different from those produced from *Vitis labrusca*, being sugar content one of the most important parameters. Data collected in real production situations demonstrate that the sugar content of juices from *V. labrusca* are consistently below the minimum brix level of 16.0 at CXS 247-2005. In this sense, besides a positive nutritional impact due to a lower sugar content, grape juice from *V. Labrusca* provides an adequate balance between sweetness and acidity which is appreciated by the consumers.

The objective of the proposed amendment is to improve the precision of the *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CXS 247-2005), to correctly reflect the minimum Brix level for reconstituted grape juice elaborated with *V. labrusca* and hybrids thereof by adding to the Annex of the Standard a specific limit for this specie.

The proposal encompasses the stratification of the referred single Brix level for grape juice into 2 groups: One group for *V. vinifera* and hybrids thereof, keeping the minimum Brix of 16.0; and another group for *V. labrusca* and hybrids thereof, with a proposed minimum Brix of 14.0.

The proposal is in line with the current labelling provisions in CXS 247-2005, especially Sections 8.1.1.1 and 8.1.2.4, as well as with the provisions regarding the authenticity methodology listed in Section 9.

In addition, the proposed amendment is intended to encompass the diversity within the grape juice industry among Member countries. It improves both precision and coverage of the standard, envisaging better adoption and transparency in the trade of grape juices. Furthermore, the amendment aims to facilitate international trade and to promote the offer of grape juices from diverse regions, in line with the sustainable development goals - SDG 02 (food security and better nutrition) and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production).

2. Relevance and timeliness:

Vine is widely cultivated due to the economic value of wine and other grape derivatives. The grape berry is characterized by the presence of a wide variety of flavonoids, which have been investigated for their health promoting properties. The scientific research in the field of non-alcoholic grape products has been further stimulated in the last years globally.

In 2019, the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) started to work on the Definition of Reconstituted Grape Juice (Provisional Draft Resolution VITI-SCRAISIN 20-678B), in the Sub-commission Table Grapes, Raisins and Unfermented Vine Products (SCRAISIN), as proposed initially by the Brazilian delegation. Currently, after many discussions in the working group and with the OIV member countries, the project is pending on the harmonization of the minimum Brix level, as the Brazilian delegation warns that for *V. labrusca* grapes and their hybrids, the Brix level should be 14.0, instead of 16.0 (recommended at CODEX STAN 247 2005). As the organization and the member countries wish to be harmonized with the international standard, at the last meeting of the SCRAISIN the President of the Group suggested to move the document forward the resolution to step 7; notwithstanding, further forwarding of the document at OIV would be dependent on the request for amendment of the current standard for the minimum Brix level of reconstituted grape juice of the Codex Alimentarius.

In that sense, Brazil expressed its willingness to bring this situation to the attention of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as it would be important to evaluate whilst current standard may be reviewed to provide a better guidance to member countries and the grape juice industry, taking into consideration that the reference at the Annex need to be amended as a unique Minimum Brix Value for both grape species may not be inclusive for all grape varieties, bringing prejudice to the *V. labrusca* and hybrids thereof.

3. The main aspects to be covered:

During the 4th Session of the Ad hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Fruit and Vegetable Juices (Fortaleza, Brazil, 11 - 15 October 2004), the Task Force agreed to retain the minimum Brix value of 16.0 as

proposed at its Session and confirmed by the Brix calculation form used to determine the international average Brix values for grape juice.

This amendment aims to update the Minimum Brix Level for reconstituted grape juices and reconstituted purée in the *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CXS 247-2005) – Annex, proposing the separation of the single reference into 2 groups: Group 1 - *Vitis vinifera* and hybrids thereof, keeping the minimum Brix of 16.0; and the Group 2 - *Vitis labrusca* and hybrids thereof, with a minimum Brix of 14.0.

In addition, taking into account the recommendation to move to more inclusive standards where possible, the amendment would bring clarity to the Standard, enabling clear correlation between CXS 247-2005 and the species of grapes listed in its Annex.

4. An assessment against the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*:

According to the OIV (2022), the global vineyard surface area is estimated to be 7.3 mha in 2021. Grape is produced at commercial scale in 91 countries of the world (FAOSTAT, 2020), making it available worldwide for direct consumption and for the elaboration of non-alcoholic and alcoholic derivative products. Data from the FAOSTAT (2020) displays that the total quantity of grape juice exported in 2020 was 643,079 tonnes, representing a total of \$ 697,749K, worldwide.

Therefore, the proposal for amendment of *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CXS 247-2005) is consistent with the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* of the Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual, in particular the criterion:

- i. Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries; and
- ii. International and regional market potential.

5. Relevance to the Codex Strategic Objectives:

The proposed amendment meets the criteria outlined in Goals 1 and 2 of the Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025, which are:

Goal 1.2: Timely Codex response to emerging issues and the needs of Members. Addressing this current issue as aforementioned stated in a timely manner enables Codex to revise and respond, effectively and expeditiously, through the promotion of a sound regulatory framework worldwide for foods entering international trade.

Goal 2.2: Promote the submission and use of globally representative data in developing and reviewing Codex standards. Increased use of Codex Standards is achieved by making the standard always updated, representing the specification of each product globally. Effective response of the Codex Alimentarius, such as the proposed update, enables internationally harmonized efforts to provide inclusive documents.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents as well as other Ongoing Work:

This proposal is related to the existing *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CXS 247-2005).

7. Identification of Requirement for Availability of Expert Scientific Advice:

Given that the expected changes are punctual and related to consistency improvement, no scientific advice is intended as necessary.

8. Identification of need for technical input to the standard from external bodies:

None.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of work:

It is expected that the decision to undertake this amendment would be accepted by the Commission taking into account the critical review conducted by the Executive Committee, in line with Section II of the Procedural Manual - *Procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards and related texts*.

It is suggested the issue of a Circular Letter to Member Countries requesting comments whether the proposed amendment outlined in the Annex is ready for adoption.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR FRUIT JUICES AND NECTARS
(CXS 247-2005)**

ANNEX

MINIMUM BRIX LEVEL FOR RECONSTITUTED JUICE AND RECONSTITUTED PURÉE AND MINIMUM JUICE AND/OR PURÉE CONTENT FOR FRUIT NECTARS (% V/V) AT 20°C

Botanical Name	Fruit's Common Name	Minimum Brix Level for Reconstituted Fruit Juices and Reconstituted Purée	Minimum Juice and/or Purée Content (% v/v) for Fruit Nectars
<i>Vitis vinifera</i> L. or hybrids thereof	Grape	16.0	50.0
<i>Vitis labrusca</i> or hybrids thereof		<u>14.0</u>	