

June 2006

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

## Agenda Item 7

### JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

#### CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Twenty-ninth Session*  
*Geneva, Switzerland, 3 – 8 July 2006*

#### LIST OF PROPOSALS FOR THE ELABORATION OF NEW STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS (INCLUDING PROJECT DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED) AND FOR THE DISCONTINUATION OF WORK

##### Codex Committee on Food Labelling

##### **Proposed Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods (Ethylene)<sup>1</sup>**

##### **Project Document (Prepared by New Zealand)**

#### **Purposes and scope of the proposed standard.**

The purpose is to amend either Annex 1, section C or Annex 2, Table 4, to allow for the use of ethylene to ripen organic kiwifruit and other fruit.

#### **Its relevance and timeliness.**

There is increasing demand for organic fruit. Proper ripening is necessary in order to be able to present fruit of appropriate quality.

Ethylene is commonly used for ripening or degreening fruit, and is accepted, sometimes for specified fruits, in a number of national and international organic standards (USA, European Community, Japan, IFOAM). In plants ethylene acts as a plant hormone and it is produced by fruit, including kiwifruit, as part of their ripening processes. Since ethylene is a natural substance and is already a natural product in the ripening process of fruits, it is consistent with the principles of organic production.

Acceptance in the Codex Guidelines would contribute to the Codex objective of ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

#### **The main aspects to be covered.**

New Zealand proposes to include a new sentence in Annex 1, Principles of Organic Production, Section C – Handling, Storage, Transportation and Packaging, paragraph 82 to allow for the use of ethylene to ripen kiwifruit and other fruit.

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

The proposal is consistent with the criteria as follows:

<sup>1</sup> ALINORM 06/29/22, para. 77

*Volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trade between countries.* There is substantial trade in kiwifruit and other fruit.

*Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade.* Some national standards allow for the use of ethylene to ripen fruit, but some do not. This may lead to impediments in trade.

*International or regional market potential.* There is significant potential to develop trade in organic fruit.

*Coverage of the main consumer protection and trade issues by existing or proposed general standards.* The use of ethylene is not covered at present.

*Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies).* Ethylene for ripening is permitted in the IFOAM Basic Standards for Organic Production and Processing.

### **Relevance to Codex Strategic Objectives.**

The proposal is consistent with:

- a. Promoting sound regulatory framework
- b. Promoting maximum application of Codex standards.

### **Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents.**

The proposal is an amendment to the *Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Food*. It does not affect existing Codex documents.

### **Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice.**

None identified.

### **Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for.**

A technical justification prepared by New Zealand is attached.<sup>2</sup>

### **The proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the time frame for developing a standard should not normally exceed five years.**

Proposed start by CCFL in 2006. As this is a straightforward amendment it is expected that it should be completed and adopted by the Commission in 2007 or 2008.

### **The decision to undertake new work or to revise standards shall be taken by the Commission on the basis of a critical review conducted by the Executive Committee.**

### **Work to be led by:**

It is suggested that the work should be undertaken by the CCFL *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the organic guidelines. New Zealand is prepared to contribute.

### **Members of electronic working group:**

n/a

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<sup>2</sup> It was presented to the CCFL and is not reproduced in the present document.