



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Twenty-seventh Session

(Comments submitted by Panama)

2. MATTERS RAISED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Panama appreciates the work carried out by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies in reviewing the issues raised. We value the decisions that will be taken at the 27th session of the CCFICS, which will address key issues such as the harmonization of inspection and certification systems to ensure that high standards of food safety and quality are maintained. Panama supports initiatives that seek to improve the implementation of international standards to strengthen confidence in global food trade.

It is crucial to continue to advance the standardization of analysis and testing methods for the detection of contaminants and adulterants in food.

3. INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Panama appreciates the enormous effort and work in the updates provided on the activities of FAO, WHO and other international organizations related to CCFICS. We recognize the crucial role of these organizations in promoting effective food inspection and certification practices. The initiatives presented, such as improvements in control systems and advances in certification frameworks, are essential to ensure that international standards are applied uniformly and adapted to emerging needs in food safety.

It is vital that coordination mechanisms and the integration of quality management systems between the organizations involved be strengthened. Panama suggests the development of an interoperability framework to facilitate the exchange of real-time information on standards and findings, which can improve efficiency and response to emerging issues.

4. DRAFT UNIFIED CODEX GUIDELINES ON EQUIVALENCE

Panama appreciates the work carried out on the draft Codex Unified Guidelines on Equivalence. This project, discussed at the 27th session of the CCFICS, is essential to establish a common framework that facilitates the mutual acceptance of food safety systems between countries. Panama supports the creation of guidelines that allow the equivalence of national inspection and certification systems, which is crucial to improve market access and ensure the quality and safety of food products.

It is essential that the equivalence guidelines include specific requirements on the validation of risk management systems and internal audits. Panama suggests that detailed guidelines be included on the certification of traceability and risk management systems that countries can implement through the regulations adopted in their national systems.

5. DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF FOOD FRAUD

Panama appreciates the effort in developing the draft Guidelines for the prevention and control of food fraud. This project, discussed at the recent CCFICS session, highlights the importance of establishing robust mechanisms to detect and prevent fraud in the food supply chain. Panama is making efforts to implement these guidelines to protect consumers and ensure the integrity of the food market through transparent and effective practices.

It is essential that the guidelines include validated methods for detecting food fraud, such as advanced chemical and biological analysis techniques.

Additionally, it is important that the guidelines propose strategies to foster international cooperation between the public and private sectors in implementing food fraud controls. These platforms may include early warning systems and verification mechanisms involving all actors in the supply chain.

While the development of robust guidelines is a positive step, there are significant inconsistencies in the implementation and enforcement of food fraud regulations internationally. Control and regulatory systems vary considerably between countries, which can lead to discrepancies in the detection and management of fraud. These differences can create loopholes that fraudulent actors can exploit, making it difficult to effectively implement uniform preventative measures.

In the case of Panama, one of the main challenges is the effective integration of the new guidelines in a diverse regulatory environment. Variations in regulatory frameworks and control standards between jurisdictions can hinder international coordination and collaboration. In addition, adapting to emerging technologies and advanced fraud detection techniques requires constant updating of practices and training of professionals in the sector.

6. REVIEW AND UPDATE OF PRINCIPLES FOR PRODUCT TRACEABILITY/TRACKING AS A TOOL IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION

Panama welcomes the review and update of the Principles for Traceability and Product Tracing. The developments discussed at the 27th session of CCFICS underline the importance of these principles as key tools for food inspection and certification. The ability to trace products throughout the supply chain is essential to manage risks and ensure effective response to food emergencies. Panama supports the update of these principles to improve transparency and security in international food trade.

It is critical that traceability principles include detailed specifications on the interoperability of tracking systems between countries. Panama suggests the inclusion of a global standard for the exchange of traceability data, which would allow for a smooth integration between national and international systems.

For Panama and the region, updating traceability principles is not only essential to strengthening food safety, but also to improving the country's competitiveness in international food trade. An efficient and standardized traceability system allows Panama to guarantee the quality and safety of its food products in the global market, which in turn facilitates access to new markets and protects the reputation of Panamanian products. In addition, effective traceability helps to respond quickly to food safety incidents, minimizing the impact on public health and the local economy. The ability to trace products accurately and transparently is also a crucial element to meet the requirements of international trading partners and to strengthen confidence in the country's food safety system.

7. DISCUSSION PAPER ON GUIDANCE ON THE APPEAL MECHANISM IN THE CONTEXT OF REJECTION OF IMPORTED FOOD

Panama welcomes the development of the discussion paper on the appeal mechanism in the context of the rejection of imported foods. This document, discussed at the last session of the CCFICS, is vital to establish fair and transparent procedures to resolve disputes over the acceptance of food products. Panama supports the implementation of mechanisms that guarantee that decisions on the rejection of foods are based on clear and objective criteria, promoting more equitable and efficient trade.

The appeal mechanism needs to include detailed procedures for the technical and scientific review of rejection decisions. Panama suggests including a panel of independent technical experts that can review decisions and provide impartial assessments based on scientific evidence.

8. Discussion paper on the standardisation of health requirements

Panama welcomes the preparation of the discussion paper on the standardization of sanitary requirements. The CCFICS session has underlined the need to harmonize these requirements to facilitate international trade and ensure the protection of public health. Panama supports the standardization of sanitary requirements, as this contributes to eliminating unnecessary barriers and ensuring that all countries comply with uniform food safety standards.

It is important that the standardization of sanitary requirements be based on updated data on emerging risks and trends in food safety. Panama suggests that the document include a continuous review process based on epidemiological surveillance and recent scientific studies to keep the requirements aligned with best practices.

The standardization of sanitary requirements is especially relevant due to its strategic role in international food trade, facilitated by its geographic location and ports. The standardization of these requirements not only helps reduce the administrative burden and costs associated with regulatory compliance, but also strengthens Panama's ability to compete in the global market by ensuring that its products meet the most demanding international standards. In addition, the implementation of uniform requirements contributes to improving the effectiveness of risk management and response to food safety incidents, thus protecting public health and consolidating consumer confidence in Panamanian products. Standardization also facilitates access to international markets, promoting a fairer and more transparent trade environment.

9. REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE LIST OF EMERGING TOPICS OF GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

Panama welcomes the review and update of the list of emerging issues of global importance, including Appendix A, and the proposals for new work related to these issues. The 27th session of CCFICS has highlighted the need to identify and address emerging issues that could have a significant impact on global food security. Panama supports efforts to keep this list updated, ensuring that it reflects current and future challenges in the food industry and consumer protection.

9.1 REVIEW AND UPDATE OF APPENDIX A: LIST OF EMERGING TOPICS OF GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

Panama welcomes the review and update of Appendix A, which contains the list of emerging issues of global importance. This appendix is essential to ensure that the Codex Alimentarius Committee identifies and prioritizes emerging challenges in global food security. Updating this list allows new and relevant issues to be addressed in a timely manner, ensuring that standards and guidelines are adapted to current market and public health needs.

From a technical perspective, it is crucial that the update of Appendix A includes a comprehensive assessment of emerging risks related to the globalization of food trade and changes in consumption patterns. Panama suggests that a detailed review of trends in the food industry be carried out, such as the emergence of new allergens, the proliferation of alternative food products, and the impacts of new production and processing techniques on food safety.

9.2 PROPOSALS FOR NEW WORK RELATED TO EMERGING TOPICS OF GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

Panama supports proposals for new work related to emerging issues of global importance, recognizing the need to address emerging challenges through specific research and guidelines. These proposals should be aimed at identifying and mitigating potential risks that have not yet been addressed in existing standards. The development of new guidelines and protocols in response to these emerging issues is essential to maintaining the integrity of the global food safety system.

From a technical perspective, it is essential that new work be based on a rigorous analysis of current and future data on emerging issues. Panama suggests prioritizing proposals that include analysis of the implications of digitalization in the supply chain, food waste management, and food security in relation to food production from non-traditional sources, such as insects and modified crops.

10. OTHER MATTERS

Panama appreciates the attention paid to other issues discussed during the sessions. The country is willing to collaborate on any additional initiatives that arise, supporting efforts that contribute to the improvement of international standards and the strengthening of global food security. Panama values the opportunity to participate in these discussions and to work together to implement measures that benefit international food trade and protect the health of consumers.