

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 2

**CX/FH 01/2-Rev.¹
August 2001**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

**Thirty-fourth Session
Bangkok, Thailand, 8 - 13 October 2001**

REPORT BY SECRETARIAT ON MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES TO THE FOOD HYGIENE COMMITTEE

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 48TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Antibiotics Used on Agricultural Commodities and Antimicrobial Resistant Bacteria in Food (ALINORM 01/4, paras 36-37) - Coordination of Work

The Executive Committee noted that the first of these matters had been raised by the Committee on Pesticide Residues (ALINORM 01/24A para. 122) and the second by the Committee on Food Hygiene (ALINORM 01/13A, paras 132-142). In relation to the first matter, the Executive Committee was of the opinion that the use of antimicrobials on agricultural commodities should be subject to evaluation within a risk analysis framework; the question was whether the normal process used for the evaluation of pesticides was the appropriate one. In the second case, the Executive Committee agreed that consideration should be given to the consideration of antimicrobial resistant micro-organisms in food within a risk analysis framework on a case-by-case basis as micro-organism/food combinations were being assessed.

The Executive Committee agreed however that the issues raised by these Committees required a more general and multidisciplinary and multi-agency response. It noted the on-going work of the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods and the Task Force on Animal Feeding. Moreover, it was aware of the recommendations contained in the *WHO Global Principles for the Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance in Animals Intended for Food*² and the work of the OIE. It noted that in the past, attempts to coordinate work between Codex Committees with diverse mandates had not always been successful and that the establishment of new task forces to deal with these specific issues had helped to resolve the issues at hand. Without prejudice to the possibility of establishing a new Task Force, it recommended that FAO and WHO should give consideration to convening as soon as possible a multidisciplinary expert consultation in cooperation with OIE and if required the IPPC, to advise the Commission on possible directions to be taken

¹ This paper supersedes the version distributed to the Codex-Direct List and posted on the Codex website on 21 August 2001.

² WHO document WHO/CDS/CSR/APH/2000.4

including the establishment of a new task force if necessary. The consultation should consider all uses of antimicrobials in agriculture and veterinary use (including aquaculture) and take into account the role played by antimicrobials as essential human and veterinary medicines. It noted that the convening of an additional expert consultation in the forthcoming biennium would be subject to the availability of funds.

This matter will be considered under Agenda Item 12. The Committee is invited to discuss it in the light of the above consideration by the Executive Committee.

Pending Referral Arising from the 47th Session of the Executive Committee – “Risk analysis - Hazard analysis”

While considering the Implementation of Decisions taken by the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission³ on Risk Analysis (ALINORM 01/3, para. 42) the Executive Committee provided clarification regarding the term “relevant Committees” and in order to overcome confusion about the usage of the terms “risk analysis” and “hazard analysis”, referred this matter to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene for a clear statement of the difference between the two terms and explain how they apply in practice and to the Committee on General Principles for subsequent action.

The last 33rd Session of the Committee considered this matter and in order to respond adequately to the referral of the Executive Committee accepted the offer of the Delegation of the United States to prepare a short paper for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

The Committee therefore is invited to consider the paper prepared by the United States (see CX/FH 01/2-Add.1) and agree on a clear statement to be forwarded to the Committee on General Principles for subsequent action.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 24TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (ALINORM 01/41)

The following items considered by the 24th Session of the Commission are pertinent to the work of the Committee:

2.1 FAO CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE BEYOND THE YEAR 2000: SCIENCE-BASED DECISIONS, HARMONIZATION, EQUIVALENCE AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION (PARAS 42-44)

It was noted that the Melbourne Conference had directed to the Codex Alimentarius Commission certain recommendations. Other recommendations had been directed to FAO and WHO or else to Member governments.⁴ The Commission specifically **endorsed** the following recommendations of the Melbourne Conference and requested the Executive Committee to monitor their applications and their incorporation in the Medium-Term Plan as appropriate:

Recommendation 12: exchange of information about potentially hazardous foodstuffs moving in international trade;

Recommendation 13: urgency of Codex guidance on the judgement of equivalence;

Recommendation 14: consideration of the special needs of developing countries;

Recommendation 16: standards development for food composition, sensory quality and safety;

Recommendation 17: standards not to be over-prescriptive or unnecessarily stringent;

Recommendation 18: promote and extend the General Principles of Food Hygiene and HACCP to the whole food chain;

Recommendation 21: effectiveness of the use of written comments.

The Committee is invited to use the above recommendations where appropriate.

³ CX/EXEC 00/47/7.

⁴ Recommendations 1,2,3,5,7,9,10,13,15,19,20 of the Melbourne Conference.

2.2 CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, PROPOSED DRAFT MEDIUM PLAN 2003-2007 AND THE CHAIRPERSON'S ACTION PLAN⁵ (PARAS 46-70)

The Commission adopted the draft Strategic Framework, including the Strategic Vision Statement (for details see Appendix II of ALINORM 01/41), the web:

<http://www.codexalimentarius.net/cac24/alinorm0141/appiie.htm#E9E18>

The Commission agreed that the draft Medium-Term Plan should be revised by the Secretariat in the light of the Strategic Framework, the Commission's discussion and the written comments received, and should incorporate the elements of the Chairperson's Action Plan agreed to by the Commission.

The Commission agreed that the activities envisaged in the Medium Term Plan should include cost estimates to determine whether the objectives could be achieved within available resources and that the revised draft Medium-Term-Plan be circulated for the inputs of the Codex Coordinating Committees, other Codex Committees, Member governments and international organizations for further consideration and finalization at the 25th Session of the Commission (see CL 2001/26-EXE).

The Committee is therefore invited **to provide its input** to the draft Medium-Term-Plan.

2.3 RISK ANALYSIS POLICIES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION⁶ (PARAS 71-85)

The Commission adopted the position, in regard to the consideration of precaution, that:

“When there is evidence that a risk to human health exists but scientific data are insufficient or incomplete, the Commission should not proceed to elaborate a standard but should consider elaborating a related text, such as a code of practice, provided that such a text would be supported by the available scientific evidence” (para. 83).

2.4 TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE (PARA. 92)

The Commission **adopted** the revised Terms of Reference as amended by the Committee on General Principles (see Appendix I of this document).

2.5 STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE ON THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN THE CODEX DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH OTHER FACTORS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT: CRITERIA (PARAS 93-98)

The Commission amended and adopted Criteria for the Consideration of Other Factors Referred to in the Second Statement of Principle on the Role of Science related to “other legitimate factors” in the Codex Decision Making Process and the Extent to Which Other Factors are Taken into Account.

For details see ALINORM 01/41 and:

<http://www.codexalimentarius.net/cac24/alinorm0141/appiie.htm#E10E31>

⁵ ALINORM 01/6, ALINORM 01/6-Add. 1 and 3, Commission/CAC/LIM 1 and ALINORM 01/4

⁶ ALINORM 01/9, CAC/LIM 1 (comments of Consumers International), CAC/LIM 11 (comments of Argentina)

2.6 TEXTS ELABORATED BY THE FOOD HYGIENE COMMITTEE (PARAS 100-101)

The Commission **adopted** the Draft Code of Practice for Bottled/Packaged Drinking Waters (Other Than Natural Mineral Waters)⁷ at Step 8.

*Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for the Transport of Food in Bulk and Semi-Packaged Food*⁸

The Commission amended the last sentence of the Introduction to clarify that the Code was not applicable to, and did not take precedence over, other Codex commodity-specific codes already in existence for such commodities in bulk, for example the Code of Practice for the Transport of Edible Fats and Oils in Bulk (CAC/RCP 036-1987, Rev. 1-1999). The Commission also deleted a reference regarding the food transported directly from the field to the market (Section 2.1) and **requested** the Committee on Food Hygiene to consider the implications of this provision in relation to foods moving into international trade with the view to amending the Code if necessary. The Commission **adopted** the Draft Code at Step 8 as amended.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX COMMITTEES

3.1 FAO/WHO REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ALINORM 01/36, PARAS 33-37)

*Report on Food Safety Matters of Interest to the Region Including Contamination by Salmonella and Emerging Pathogens (Agenda Item 5)*⁹

While considering the *Guidelines for the Obtaining of Data of Interest for Microbiological Risk Assessment* under Agenda Item 5 “Report on Food Safety Matters of Interest to the Region Including Contamination by Salmonella and Emerging Pathogens” the Committee thanked Brazil and INPPAZ for their excellent work and unanimously considered that the proposed change to formulate the above-mentioned Guidelines was of interest not only to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean but also to other regions and could serve as a methodology guide in support of the activities being developed by the CCFH and the group of experts of the *Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Microbiological Hazards in Foods*. The Committee therefore thought it appropriate that this document be submitted for the consideration of the CCFH at its next meeting to give it an international dimension.

At the request of the Government of Brazil this matter is placed under Agenda Item 15 of the present agenda.

⁷ ALINORM 01/13, Appendix II; CAC/LIM 3 (Comments of USA).

⁸ ALINORM 01/13A, Appendix III; ALINORM 01/21, Part 1- Add. 2 (Comments of India, Malaysia); CAC/LIM 3 (Comments of USA).

⁹ CL 2000/41-LAC; CX/LAC 01/5 (comments from Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay); CRD 1 (comments from Dominican Republic); CRD 2 (comments from Argentina); CRD 5 (Brazil: *Guidelines for the Obtaining of Data of Interest for Microbiological Risk Assessment*); CRD 13 (comments from Peru) and CRD 17 (comments from Costa Rica).

Appendix I

ALINORM 01/33A, APPENDIX II

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE PROCEDURAL MANUAL

SECTION III OF THE PROCEDURAL MANUAL

SUBSIDIARY BODIES UNDER RULE IX.1 (B) (I)

Terms of Reference of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene

Add the following provisions:

- ◆ To suggest and prioritize areas where there is a need for microbiological risk assessment at the international level and to develop questions to be addressed by the risk assessors
- ◆ To consider microbiological risk management matters in relation to food hygiene and in relation to the microbiological risk assessment activities of FAO and WHO.