

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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Agenda Item 9

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS

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Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 16 -20 February 2009

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK

Proposal for the Technical Amendment of Standard for Named Vegetable Oils Update of Variety of Rapeseed Oil – low erucic acid (Prepared by Canada)

Proposal

Canada is proposing that CCFO update in the Codex Standard for Named Vegetables Oils, Codex Stan 210 with a minor nomenclature amendment to sections 2.1.12 and 2.1.13 to replace *Brassica campestris* L with *Brassica rapa* L.

Objective

To incorporate the technical correction for the accuracy in nomenclature of one of the varieties of oil-bearing seed for high-erucic rapeseed oil and low-erucic rapeseed oil so that it is consistent with current international taxonomic nomenclature.

Background

Scientific names are assigned using a formalized system and the nomenclature used is governed by an internationally agreed upon code: International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (ICBN) - current version: Vienna (2006)¹. This code is prepared under the authority of the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants and is maintained by International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT)². The code aims at the provision of a stable method of naming taxonomic groups, avoiding and rejecting the use of names that may cause error or ambiguity or throw science into confusion.

Brassica campestris is considered to be a subspecies of *Brassica rapa*. *Brassica rapa* the current and acceptable name for this species according to USDA Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN)³ as well as Integrated Taxonomic Information System (IT IS) of Canadian Biodiversity Information Facility (CBIF)⁴.

There has been some discussion on the status of *B. campestris* and *B. rapa* relative to each other. In 1753 Linnaeus, described them both, which led to discussion on which name to use to describe the species.

¹ <http://ibot.sav.sk/icbn/main.htm>

² http://www.botanik.univie.ac.at/iapt/index_layer.php

³ http://www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/tax_search.pl

⁴ http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/itisca/taxaget?p_ifx=cbif

Metzger (1833)⁵ made a very detailed study of the cultivated *Brassica* species in Western Europe and was the first author who combined both the species. Later this view was supported by cytogenetic studies (U, 1935) and crossing experiments (Olsson, 1954). Since Metzger (1833) chose *B.rapa* as the name for the combined species, this choice must be followed (ICBN, 1983; Art 57) as long as is accepted in broader sense. Unfortunately, many authors have not acted in accordance with ICBN, Art 57. Consequently, the name *B. campestris* is frequently used for the combined species which resulted in the inconsistency in the use of *Brassica rapa* vs *Brassica campestris*. The commission that oversees the taxonomical nomenclature discussed this issue and concluded that *B. rapa* is the correct scientific name for what used to be called *Brassica campestris*. In the updated editions of the ICBN, *Brassica rapa* is listed as the correct name for this species.

Currently, the standard lists the following varieties from which the Rapeseed oil-low erucic acid can be derived: *Brassica napus* L., *Brassica campestris* L. and *Brassica juncea* L. species.

A relatively minor technical amendment by replacing the *Brassica campestris* L. with *Brassica rapa* L. would update the standard with respect to current taxonomy for one species for the rapeseed oil and rapeseed oil-low erucic acid hence ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

⁵ Taxon, Vol. 36, No.3 (Aug, 1987), pp. 625-634