

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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Agenda Item 6(a)

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES

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COMMENTS ON THE REPORT OF THE ELECTRONIC WORKING GROUP ON THE INCLUSION OF THE FOOD ADDITIVE PROVISIONS OF THE COMMODITY STANDARDS INTO THE GSFA

The following comments have been received from the following Codex Members and observers:
Brazil and IDF.

Brazil

- a) Recommendation 1, bullet 5: we consider that to additives for which the required quantities to achieve their technological functions are significantly different and/ or their use in one of the functions is justified to many categories and for another function the use is restricted, it should have a division of the provisions according to their functional classes. This can be done by elaborating distinct tables or including notes. For example: sweeteners and flavour enhancer additives.
- b) The description of Section 3.2 of the GSFA Preamble should be included in recommendation 1 and referred to in subsequent recommendations.
- c) Paragraph 31 of recommendation 4, and recommendation 6, are not applicable to this work's objective, since the Procedural Manual includes in page 94 the procedure for further revisions of the GSFA.

IDF

Comments of general nature

The IDF wishes to congratulate the USA and its working group partners in preparing the documents, which further develops the concept on how to deal with the GSFA/commodity standard food additive issue in a practical manner.

IDF generally supports the concept that the commodity standards are the authoritative reference points for functional food additive classes (i.e. by specifying which functional additive classes are justified), while the GSFA is the single authoritative reference point for the individual additives established to be safe.

Since both types of standard texts fall under the concept of a "food additive provision", we see a need for this difference to be made clear throughout all Codex documents and standards.

Finally, we note that some differences exist between this document and the CX/FA 07/39/7 (revision of the procedural manual), which has been developed by another CCFA working group. We strongly recommend that the concepts in the two documents be agreed upon before any amendments to the Procedural Manual are considered.

Specific comments

Re: Recommendation #1

A principle relating to the matching of commodity standards products and the GSFA food category system is missing and should be developed, for instance, as follows:

“g) Notwithstanding its presentation in the GSFA, a food additive should only be used in a food for which a Codex commodity standard exists, if it belongs to the functional additive class(es) specified in the relevant commodity standard.”

5th indent: Most food additives belong to more than one functional class. We are concerned that the loss of information about the max. level and the corresponding technical additive function will make it difficult, if not impossible, to cross-link functional classes specified in commodity standards and additive restrictions in the GSFA.

For instance, phosphates may act as acidity regulators in one particular concentration but as emulsifying agents in higher concentration. We wish to avoid that phosphates are used in cheese as acidity regulators, but in amounts that in reality function to melt proteins, i.e. emulsifying agents.

Further explanation of the intent is requested. The additional principle suggested above will assist in assuring an adequate cross-relationship. If the concept of only listing a food additive for a particular food category once is adopted, even though it may be used in this same food category for different functions, it is important that the Preamble to the GSFA contain language outlining this concept as well as incorporation of this principle in the Codex Procedure Manual.

6th indent: Generally speaking, this indent is more about management of the intermediate phase between the current and the future approach (and not principles), wherefore it is more appropriately located as part of Recommendation 4. In Recommendation 4, the commodity committee of concern should be involved in the consideration of additive provisions that differ from those in the commodity standard.

Further, maintaining the Step 3-4 and 6-7 food additive provisions for the GSFA if they conflict with the food additives in Codex commodity standards utilizes the opposite approach used in the one-to-one conversion process endorsed by 2006 CCFAC. It would seem appropriate that the following provisions apply if there is a conflict between the level of the Step 3-4 and 6-7 food additive provisions for the GSFA and the commodity standards:

1. Food additives in a commodity standard would automatically move into the GSFA in the applicable food category, if it does not appear there.
2. When the same food additive for the same functional class appears in both a commodity standard and the applicable food category in the GSFA, the food additive levels in the commodity standards would take precedent unless there was a technological reason to do otherwise.
3. If Step 3-4 and 6-7 food additive provisions for the GSFA do not appear in the commodity standard, they shall stay in the GSFA unless the Commodity Committee or other interested party can provide technical justification to remove them.

All food additives in the commodity standards must meet the requirements for inclusion into the GSFA. If some food additives do not, a list should be maintained by CCFA that prioritizes these food additives for JECFA review to determine whether they can be included in the GSFA in a reasonable time frame.

7th indent: Generally speaking, the 4 principles identified above for Step 3-4 and 6-7 food additive provisions for the GSFA should also apply to Step 8 food additives in the GSFA. In the case of one-to-one standards, the existing GSFA list additives were fully replaced by the additives listed in the corresponding commodity standard, even those that were already adopted at Step 8. We recommend the same approach (outlined as 3 steps above) is applied for food additives in Codex commodity standards that fall in the one-to-many category. Otherwise, it would be necessary to specify the rationale for handling these differently.

Because this indent is more about management of the intermediate phase between the current and the future approach (and not principles), it is more appropriately located as part of Recommendation 4.

Further, an additional principle should be stated that the commodity standards should only contain a table of functional classes of food additives and exceptions to the GSFA (if accepted by the CCFA). This will clarify the various Codex Committee responsibilities.

Recommendation # 2

For commodity standards with no food additive provisions, no action is needed. However, there is a concern that if a commodity standard has no food additive provisions, but the GSFA in the corresponding food category allows for food additives, how is this conflict resolved? At a minimum, there should be a reference in the commodity standard food additive section to the applicable parts of the GSFA, noting that the food additives listed there do not apply to this commodity standard.

Recommendation #3

In cases, where a commodity standard exists, but where the Commodity Committee originally responsible for the drafting has been abolished or adjourned, it would be appropriate either to establish a new Task Force or, alternatively, that the CCFA establishes a small Working Group with food technology expertise in the commodity of concern to oversee the inclusion of food additives into the GSFA.

Recommendation #4

CCFA should request each existing Codex Commodity Committee to identify commodity standards which they have the expertise to provide recommendations to CCFA for incorporating the food additive provisions into the GSFA, based on the principles identified earlier. The Commodity Committees, using the identified principles, will be responsible for drafting a recommendation for each commodity standards on how the food additives will be incorporated into the GSFA. These recommendations will be subject to review and approval by CCFA and should be handled as step 5/8 documents to be forwarded for CAC endorsement. If conflict between the Codex Commodity Committee and CCFA arises, then a CCFA Working Group should be appointed to finalize a recommendation to CCFA. The membership of this CCFA Working Group should include equal numbers of volunteers from the Codex Commodity Committee and CCFA and report back to both the CCFA and the Codex Commodity Committee; however, decisions by the CCFA shall be final.

Recommendation #5

IDF recommends that CCFA designate CCMMP for immediate priority to work on the transfer of food additives in the Codex milk and milk product standards to the GSFA since substantial groundwork has already been laid by this committee. This will also allow for preparation of work, documents and recommendations for the 2008 session of CCMMP. It is important to note that CCMMP should be encourage to work on this issue soon as possible, since its last planned last session is 2010.

Appendix I

The rationale and/or procedure that has lead to the information in the second column (whether a certain food category contain non-standardized food) is unclear. For instance, the cheese standard A-6 may correspond to the whole GSFA food category for cheese, whereas the milk powder standard certainly does not (dried milk with less protein than permitted by the standard).

There are a few inaccuracies in the table related to Codex dairy standards:

- Item 1.5.1 Milk Powders and Cream Powders appears to contain non-standardized food, but the table indicates it does not.
- With regard to creams (A-9), it is noted that the additive list is under review, based on the activities of the 2006 CAC, but the table indicates it is not under review.
- With regard to cheese (A-6) (1.6.1), it is noted that it contains additive provisions for ripened cheeses (including mold ripened cheeses) only, and simply cross references to standards 208 (cheeses in brine) and 221 (unripened cheeses, including fresh cheeses). Standards 208 and 221 are the standards containing the additive provisions for these specific groups of cheeses and should be referenced in the table.