

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 8

CX/FFP 00/8

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

Twenty-fourth Session
Ålesund, Norway, 5-9 June 2000

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR SMOKED FISH

(Prepared by Denmark)

The 22nd Session of the Committee agreed to develop a standard for cold-smoked fish, with the understanding that the inclusion of other products would be considered at a later stage. The 23rd Session considered a first draft of the standard which was presented for information only, since it had not been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee agreed that member countries should provide their comments directly to Denmark in order to facilitate the revision of the Proposed Draft.

The Proposed Draft Standard, prepared by Denmark, is hereby circulated for comments at Step 3 of the Procedure. It may be noted that the draft refers to pre-packed cold smoked fish, although earlier discussion referred only to "smoked fish", and the Committee may wish to clarify the Scope.

Governments and international organizations wishing to submit comments should do so in writing to the Secretary, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy, preferably by email with a copy to the Chairman of the Committee, Dr. John Race, Norwegian Food Control Authority, P.O. Box 8187, Dep. N-0034, Oslo, Norway (Fax. +47.22.24.66.99) **before 30 April 2000.**

PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR PRE-PACKED COLD SMOKED FISH
(At Step 3 of the Procedure)

SCOPE

This standard applies to chilled or frozen, pre-packed, ready-to-eat cold smoked fish and sliced and similar transformed products thereof. It does not apply to speciality products where cold smoked fish constitutes only a part of the edible contents, nor to minced products based on cold smoked fish.

DESCRIPTION***Product definition***

Cold smoked fish is the product:

- (a) Prepared from fresh or frozen fish of the below mentioned species and treated with smoke generated from smouldering wood at a temperature which will not cause visible coagulation of the flesh. The fish can be salted or not before smoking.
- (b) The following fish species are considered covered by the standard:

Salmo spp.
Onchorhynchus spp.
Hippoglossus spp.
Herring
Gadidae
Scombridae
xxx

Process definition

Salting according to custom and usually to a content of between 3% and 6% NaCl in the water phase (w/w) and possibly drying. Smoked to taste with cold/cooled smoke at a lower temperature than to cause visible coagulation.

The product is either refrigerated [to below 3°C] or [quick] frozen. The product is packaged in materials that will not transmit harmful substances to the product. If the salt content of the product is less than 3% in the water phase and the product is packaged to the exclusion of oxygen (e.g. vacuum packed) the product shall be presented [deep] frozen.

Presentation

Any presentation of the product shall be permitted provided that it:

- (i) meets all requirements of this standard
- (ii) is adequately described on the label to avoid confusing or misleading the consumer. Cold smoked fish could be sliced or prepared likewise.

ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS***The raw material***

Cold smoked fish shall be prepared from fresh or frozen fish from the species mentioned under 2.1 and be of a quality complying with point 3.1 in the standard for frozen finfish, unviscerated and eviscerated. If salted fish is used for smoking purposes it shall comply with the standard for salted fish.

Food additives

Food additives may only be used in accordance with the Codex Alimentarius General Standard of Food Additives¹.

Other ingredients

Salt to be used must be of food grade.

Wood for generation of smoke must not have been treated with any chemicals such as paint or impregnating materials.

Liquid smoke or other preparations are not permitted.

Final product

Products shall meet the requirements of this standard and any other relevant standard as described in section 4.

HYGIENE AND HANDLING***Foreign material***

The final product shall be free from any foreign material, that poses a threat to human health.

Test Results

When tested by appropriate methods of sampling and examination prescribed by Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the product:

- (i) shall be free from micro-organisms or substances originating from micro-organisms in amounts which may represent a hazard to health in accordance with standards established by the CAC - (Observe that the (CAC) sampling plans for pre-packed foods according to the preamble does not cover situations where the health of the consumer is at stake) - , and
- (ii) shall not contain histamine that exceeds 20 mg/100 g in any sample unit
- (iii) shall be free from other substance in amounts which may represent a hazard to health in accordance with standards established by the CAC.

Raw Materials

It is recommended that the raw materials for and the products covered by this code are prepared and handled in accordance with the relevant Codex Codes of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products.

LABELLING

In addition to the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packed Foods the following specific provisions apply.

Name of the Food

The name of the product as declared on the label shall contain the words "Smoked" in combination with the name of the fish appropriate to the species of the fish according to the law, custom or practice in use in the country of distribution.

In addition to the specified labelling designations above, the usual or common trade names of the variety may be added so long it is not misleading to the consumer in the country in which the product will be distributed.

¹ Codex Alimentarius General Standard of Food Additives (under preparation)

Net contents

Where sliced products are interleaved with sheets of paper/other material the net weight is determined by subtracting from the gross weight of the package the weight of the packaging material including the interleaving sheets.

If glazed the net weight is the weight without glaze.

Storage Instructions

The label shall contain storage conditions for the product.

It must be clearly stated on the labelling, if the product has been kept in storage in frozen condition, but is then thawed prior to sale and sold as a fresh product.

Labelling of Non-retail Containers

Information on the above mentioned provisions shall be given on the container as well as the lot identification and the identification of the manufacturer.

SAMPLING, EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS***Sampling***

- (i) Sampling of lots for examination of the product shall be in accordance with the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Sampling Plans for Pre-packed Foods (AQL-6.5) CAC/RM 42-1977. A sample unit is the primary container or for individually packed products at least a 1 kg portion of the sample unit.
- (ii) Sampling of lots for the examination of net weight shall be carried out in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan meeting the criteria established by CAC.

Sensory and Physical Examination

Samples taken for sensory and physical examination shall be assessed by persons trained in such examination and in accordance with procedures elaborated in Sections 6.3 through 6.5 and the "Code of Practice for the Sensory Evaluation of Fish and Shellfish" (under elaboration)

Determination of Net Weight

The net weight is determined as the weight of the product as presented to the consumer exclusive packaging material, interleaving material, glaze etc.

Determination of Parasites

The entire sample unit is examined non-destructively by the naked eye for the presence of parasites and trace of their activity such as gelatinised parts of the flesh.

Determination of Histamine

AOAC 977.13 (15th Edition, 1990).

DEFINITION OF DEFECTIVES

A sample unit shall be considered as defective when it exhibits properties defined below.

Foreign matter

The presence in the sample unit of any matter, which has not been derived from the fish or the smoke, does not pose a threat to human health, and is readily recognised without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing practice.

Parasites

- (i) The presence of any [visible] live parasites.

- (ii) The presence of more than 2 parasites per kg of the sample unit detected by the method described under section 6.4 with a capsular diameter $> 3\text{mm}$ or a parasite not encapsulated and $> 10\text{ mm}$ in length.
- (iii) The presence of distinct gelatinization of the flesh affecting more than 5% by surface of the sample unit.

Odour and Flavour

A sample unit affected by persistent and distinct objectionable odours or flavours characteristic for decomposition or rancidity or other sensorial impressions not characteristic for the product.

LOT ACCEPTANCE

A lot will be considered as meeting the requirements of this standard when:

- (i) The total number of "defectives" as classified according to Section 7 does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of the appropriate sampling plan in the Sampling Plans for Pre-Packed Foods (AQL-6.5) - (CAC/RM 42-1977)
- (ii) The average net contents of all packages examined is not less than the declared weight, provided there is no unreasonable shortage in any package.
- (iii) The requirements in Sections 3, 4 and 5 are met

"ANNEX A"

END PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

Contaminants

Contaminants should be limited in accordance with the Codex Alimentarius General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Foods², with special attention on benzo(a)pyrene and volatile N-nitroso compounds.

Micro-organisms

Taking into consideration that cold smoked fish does not undergo a bactericidal treatment, there will be a risk for the presence of pathogens, in particular *Listeria monocytogenes*, in the final product.

Microbiological criteria for *Listeria monocytogenes* in the final product should be set by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.

² Codex Alimentarius General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Foods (under consideration)