

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 2

FL48/CRD16

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE ONLY

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Forty-eighth Session

Québec City, Québec, Canada

27 October - 01 November, 2024

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES

(Comments from Iran, Kenya)

Iran

Clarify the distinction between country of origin and country of harvest; provide rationale why the provision for country of harvest should be mandatory and how such a declaration would be beneficial for fraud prevention.

Country of Origin: Based on the CXS-1-1985 (GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS) paragraph 4.5

4.5.1 The country of origin of the food shall be declared if its omission would mislead or deceive the consumer.

4.5.2 When a food undergoes processing in a second country which changes its nature, the country in which the processing is performed shall be considered to be the country of origin for the purposes of labelling

Country of Harvest: The word "harvest" is defined as the act or process of gathering agricultural crops in "Glossary of Terms for SCH Standards". Based on this, the "country of harvest is the country in which the gathering of the crops takes place", but this item has not been included in the CXS-1-1985. (see Glossary of Terms for SCH Standards)

Although the country of origin and the country of harvest may be the same for many food commodities, but these are two different terms, especially for some of valuable agricultural products such as spices, tea, coffee. As such it will be beneficial for CCSCH to include in its glossary of terms an explanation of country of origin and/or country of harvest as it specifically applies to spices and culinary herbs.

Based on some scientific references plant origin concepts relating to classical botany (plant geography, knowledge of adventive and rural species, understanding of history of development of whole floras), bio-archaeology (plant remains, pictorial records), - paleontology and philology while the concept of plant harvesting is related to its cultivation and farming conditions.

One of the labelling problems in the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) is the issue of mentioning the country of harvest, which is requested by the members of this committee for some special products such as saffron, vanilla, cardamom, etc. and it faces problems due to the lack of relevant infrastructure and omit it can mislead the buyer or the seller may use this gap to mislead the consumers. so it's better to origin and harvest country.

Saffron is a high value spice which it is important point to mention the place of its cultivation since the changes in geographical condition and climate affect the main characteristics of it. So, the quality characteristics of saffron vary considerably depends on the country where it has been cultivated. The labelling provisions should provide clear and reliable information to consumers.

The treatment of saffron, including mixing saffron from different countries, can be eligible for changing the label even though this process does not change the nature of the product but it has a great effect on its quality. Therefore, CCSCH6 recommended the standard for saffron includes the labelling provisions for adoption.

As mentioned above authenticity of agricultural products such as spices, tea, coffee, etc. according to the country of harvest, is important for the consumer, and the mandatory mention of the country of harvest on the label is important for fair trade and respecting the rights of the producer and consumer. Mandatory declaration of the country of harvest for dried saffron was intended for the protection of the true origin and authenticity of the product. Labelling of the country of harvest would provide the consumer the information on originality including the type and nature of the plant and thus empower them to make an informed choice. This also prevented fraud. (see REP22/SCH para 30).

The codex draft Standard for dried floral parts – saffron., which, despite Step 8 in December 2022, is still in correspondence with the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, and this has caused a delay in the publishing of this standard. (see REP24/SCH, paragraph 10 and REP24/SCH Appendix II).

The Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) has raised issues in its reports and in response to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) for publishing approval. (see REP24/SCH para 10 and REP24/SCH Appendix II, III).

Referring to the above points, in order to solve the labeling problem regarding agricultural products and spices, we request that the definition of term “Harvest” be added and item of “country of harvest” considered, added as mandatory to the Codex CXS-1-1985.

Kenya

Matters arising from the 46th sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC46) and 84th, 85th and 86th sessions of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCEXEC84, 85 and 86)

Kenya takes note the information communicated CAC and CCEXEC in relation to advancement of draft standards to step 5 and future of Codex and the Codex Strategic plan 2026-2031. Kenya's comment on matters for action from the Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH7) is indicated under agenda 4.