

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Items 2a, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

CRD011

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES Twenty-first Session

Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, 7 – 11 October 2019

COMMENTS OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)

Agenda item 2 a), Matters arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and other Committees CX/FFV 19/21/2

African Union appreciates the fact that the standard for Aubergines was adopted at step 8 at CAC41 and that the draft standard for Ware potatoes has moved to step 5. These are key produce in Africa that are traded in large quantities. African Union also note that CAC41 endorsed the note that “provisions for decay in ‘Extra’ class were optional and, depending on the nature of the produce, may not be applicable or necessary”. This will help exporters to ship their consignment with limited trade disruption.

Agenda item 4, Draft Standard for Garlic (at Step 7) CX/FFV 19/21/5

Issue/Background: Section 5.1.1, “Quality Tolerances (Extra Class)” allows the inclusion of produce from two additional classes (Class I and Class II)

Position: African Union proposes that “Extra Class” should not include produce, satisfying requirements of “Class II”. The requirement should read as follows; “Five percent by number or weight of bulbs not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class I. ~~Within this tolerance not more than 1% in total may consist of produce satisfying the requirements of Class II~~”

Rationale: There should not be three classes in one package.

Issue/Background: Section 5.1.2, Class I:

Produce has been included in Class I that does not meet the minimum requirements for Garlic as specified in section 3.1

“Ten percent by number or weight of bulbs not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II. Within this tolerance not more than 1% in total may consist of produce satisfying neither the requirements of Class II nor the minimum requirements, or of produce affected by decay”.

Position: African Union proposes to delete “satisfying neither the requirements of Class II nor the minimum requirements, or of produce” so that it reads as follows; “Ten percent by number or weight of bulbs not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II. Within this tolerance not more than 1% in total may consist of produce ~~satisfying neither the requirements of Class II nor the minimum requirements, or of produce affected by decay~~”.

Rationale: For a produce to be classified, it should meet the minimum requirements.

Issue/Background: Section 5.1.3, Class II:

Produce has been included in Class II that does not meet the minimum requirements for Garlic as specified in section 3.1

“Ten percent by number or weight of bulbs satisfying neither the requirements of the class not the minimum requirements. Within this tolerance not more than 2% in total may consist of produce affected by decay. In addition, not more than 5% by weight of bulbs may have cloves with externally visible sprouts”

Position: African Union proposes to delete “satisfying neither the requirements of Class nor the minimum requirements, or of produce” so that it reads as follows; “Ten percent by number or weight of bulbs not satisfying ~~neither the requirements of the class not the minimum requirements~~. Within this tolerance not more than 2% in total may consist of produce affected by decay.

In addition, not more than 5% by weight of bulbs may have cloves with externally visible sprouts”.

Rationale: For a produce to be classified, it should meet the minimum requirements.

Agenda item 5, Proposed Draft Standard for Ware Potato (at Step 7) CX/FFV 19/21/6

1. **Issue/Background:** Section 4. Provisions concerning sizing

The table has been modified from that in the proposed Draft Standard document for Ware potato discussed at CCFFV 20. The new table has changed the original size codes from alphabets A, B, C and D to numerals 1, 2, 3 and 4. The information in the table has also been inverted, starting with the largest size codes and ending with the smallest. The original size descriptors have also been deleted from the table. In the absence of the size descriptors (small potato, long varieties, round varieties), there is an overlap in the ranges (35 – 80 and 25 – 75) provided for the equatorial diameters used in sizing ware potatoes.

Position: African Union proposes that the contents of the table be reviewed with reference to the original table. Numbers and letters should not be used interchangeably without clear descriptors

Rationale: In the original table, the size codes were provided in alphabets (A, B, C, D) with descriptors for each size code (small potato, long varieties and round varieties). The current table uses numerals for the size code without descriptors. Thus, there is an overlap in the proposed equatorial diameter used in sizing. Code size 2 (25-75mm) overlaps with code size 3 (35-80mm). In the original table, code size 2 was designated B (long varieties) and code size 3 was designated C (round varieties). With the descriptors, even though the numbers overlapped, the user of the standard would know that they are comparing two different varieties. Without the descriptors, it is impossible to assign the size code due to the overlap.

2. **Issue/Background:** Section 5.1. **Quality tolerances, sub section c;**

There is no footnote clarifying the requirements.

Position: African Union proposes that footnotes be added to explain how many marks should be awarded to the bullet marks in the table under (c) Defects.

Rationale: The percentage of defective produce by number or weight has not been stated for the defects listed in the table. Having a maximum value for each defect stated in the list (c) defects will aid users of the standard. Otherwise, as the table is constituted, it suggests that for produce in Class II with defects in (a) Frozen decay, soft rot and/or internal breakdown equal to 2.5%, then a total of 7.5% of brown stains, cuts, bites listed under (c) defects is allowed, provided there are no other (c) defects. There should be a maximum percentage for each bullet point under (c) defects, with the total not exceeding the maximum allowed for all (c) defects.

3. **Issue/Background:** Section 7.2.4 Commercial identification.

Position: When size is determined by the equatorial diameter, we propose size to be expressed as the maximum equatorial diameter in mm.

Rationale: Sizing is done in accordance with the existing trade practices that require the package to be labeled with the size and method used.

Agenda item 6, Proposed draft Standard for Fresh Dates (at Step 4) CX/FFV 19/21/7

1. **Issue/Background:** 4. Provisions concerning sizing, sub-section A

The word cultivar is not used correctly in the sentence, “When sized by count, size is determined by the number of individual cultivar per package”.

Position: African Union proposes that the word ‘cultivar’ be replaced with the word ‘fruit’ to read, “When sized by count, size is determined by the number of individual ~~cultivar~~ **fruit** per package”.

Rationale: The word ‘cultivar’ in that sentence misleads the reader/standard user while the word ‘fruit’ is more appropriate in that case

2. **Issue/Background:** 7.2.4 Commercial Specifications, Bullet point 4

There are fewer examples of fruit shape and status of epicarp of dates fruits

Position: African Union proposes to add more examples for shapes and epicarp status to read; “Fruit and seed length and width, pulp weight /fruit weight ratio, fruit shape (oval, oblong, elliptical, ovate, obovate, round, elongated), Epicarp (goffered, smooth, wrinkled, pleated, embossed, blistered, tattooed) and color of the fruit (optional)”.

Rationale: Adding these examples of shape and epicarp status gives a wider range of choice to the standard user when making decisions regarding the status of the dates fruits.

Agenda item 7, Proposed draft Standard for Yam (at Step 4) CX/FFV 19/21/8

1. **Issue/Background:** 3.1 Minimum requirements

A bullet point mentioning damage caused by pests is missing

Position: African Union proposes that bullet point seven be added and should read as follows: **“Practically free from damage caused by pests”**

Rationale: It is important to clarify that in addition to the requirement “practically free from pests”, there is also need to highlight the damage caused by these pests since these are two different aspects although one may cause the other, noting that practical existence of both affects the quality of yam.

Agenda item 8, Proposed draft Standard for Onions and Shallots (at Step 4) CX/FFV 19/21/9

1. Issue/Background: 3.2 Classification

This section lacks ‘Extra Class’

Position: African Union proposes that Extra Class be added to the Standard

Rationale:

- All other standards have Extra Class, which is assigned to produce with the highest quality
- Having Extra Class will enable exporters obtain a premium price for onions and shallots that have exceptional quality

2. Issue/Background: 4.2.1 For onions: The last sentence of the first bullet point conflicts with the preceeding sentence.

Position: African Union proposes that the last sentence of the first bullet point should be deleted to read, “5 mm where the diameter of the smallest onion is 10 mm and over but under 20 mm. ~~However, where the diameter of the onion is 15 mm and over but under 25 mm, the difference may be 10 mm~~”

Rationale:

- The provisions for the deleted sentence (for size range 15mm - 25mm) was causing an overlap with the previous size range of onions 10 mm to 20 mm in diameter.
- Deleting the sentence creates clear size ranges for onions without overlap

3. Issue/Background: 4.2.2 For shallots, the proposed tolerance range of difference in sizes in a package to create uniformity between the largest and smallest shallots within a package is greater than the size range for the shallots in the package. For example, a tolerance range of 10 mm is listed when the smallest shallot is 10 mm and over but under 15 mm. This gives a tolerance of 10 mm for a 5 mm size range.

Position: African Union proposes changing the size ranges and the tolerances allowed as follows:

To ensure uniformity in size, the range in size between produce in the same package shall not exceed;

- 5 mm for shallots of size range 10 mm - 20 mm
- 10 mm for shallots of size range 20 mm - 40 mm
- 20 mm for shallots of size range 40 mm - 60 mm

Rationale:

- in same package the tolerance in sizes between the largest and smallest shallots (to allow for size uniformity within the package) was greater than the size range of the shallots in the package.
- As the diameter of the shallots being sized is between 10 mm and 60 mm, the AU proposed size ranges and tolerances resolves the problem and stays within the range in diameter of shallots.

4. Issue/Background: 5.1 Quality tolerances

This section does not have tolerances for Extra Class

Position: African Union proposes that Extra Class be added to the Standard so as to read as “five per cent, (5.0%) by number or weight, of onions and shallots not satisfying the requirements of the class, included therein, is 0.5% tolerance for decay”.

Rationale: Quality tolerances must be specified for all classes.

Agenda item 9, Proposed Draft Standard for Berry Fruits (at Step 4) CX/FFV 19/21/10

1. Issue/Background: 2. Definition of produce

The list of berries the standard applies to is not exhaustive

Position: African Union proposes that the list be revised to make it more inclusive by adding missing berries such as Strawberries (*Fragaria ananassa*), Gojiberry (*Lycium barbarum*), Mulberry (*Morus*), etc

Rationale: The standard should be inclusive so as to make it have broad appeal and widespread usage.

Agenda item 10, Discussion paper on Glossary of terms used in the Layout for Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables CX/FFV 19/21/11

1. Issue/Background: The title for the discussion paper is misleading. According to Cambridge English Dictionary, a Glossary is defined as; “An alphabetical list, with meanings, of words or phrases in a text that are difficult to understand”.

Position: African Union proposes that the word ‘Glossary’ in the title of the discussion paper be replaced with the word ‘Definition’ so the title reads; “~~Glossary~~ Definition of Terms for Application in the Layout for Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables”

Rationale: As the terms in the discussion paper are not listed alphabetically, the discussion paper is not a glossary. Changing the title enables CCFV to keep the current format of the discussion paper, which is very beneficial because the terms are defined as they appear in each section of the proposed layout for Codex Standards for fresh fruits and vegetables.