



**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
37<sup>th</sup> Session, CICG  
Geneva, Switzerland, 14-18 July 2014**

**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OECD  
RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, 2013<sup>1</sup>**

**ACTIVITIES OF THE OECD FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SCHEME**

1. The 72nd Plenary Meeting of the Fruit and Vegetables Scheme held in December 2013 agreed to apply the Codex Standard for Pomegranate [CODEX STAN 310-2013] under the Scheme. This is the second Codex Standard approved by the Scheme as a benchmark standard.
2. As a result, the Scheme developed the OECD Explanatory Brochure on Pomegranate in 2013. This is the first OECD brochure based on a Codex Standard. Codex members were involved in the development of the brochure and provided valuable inputs. The brochure was published in early 2014 in hard copies and electronic version. The Brochure is also available on the website of the Scheme: [www.oecd.org/tad/fv](http://www.oecd.org/tad/fv). The OECD Secretariat would like to thank all Codex Member countries that participated in this exercise between the two Organizations and provided valuable input to the brochure. The brochure was officially launched during the 18th Session of the CCFFV in February 2014. The event served to enhance future collaboration between both organisations, e.g. on explanatory materials and capacity building.
3. The Scheme published the OECD Brochures on Melons, Shallots and Fresh Figs in 2014. The Scheme is currently working on draft OECD Brochures on Garlic, Cherries, Chinese cabbages, Chicories, Plums and Tomatoes.
4. The Scheme regularly undertakes peer reviews on national fruit and vegetables quality inspection system on a voluntary basis, to examine and assess its performance by experts from other countries under the umbrella of the OECD. The ultimate goal is to help improve policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established international standards and principles. The Scheme undertook a Peer Review on the national fruit and vegetables quality inspection system in Spain in 2013. The draft Peer Review Report is available on the Scheme's website. The next peer review will evaluate the Finish fruit and vegetables quality inspection system in September 2014.
5. The Scheme held a Meeting of the OECD Heads of National Inspection Services on 20-23 May 2014 in Warsaw, Poland. The main issues examined at the Meeting were: traceability (origin), application of tolerances interpretation of skin defects, guidelines on fruit and vegetables quality inspection. The Proceedings of the Meeting will be available at the website.
6. The OECD was involved in the organization of the following Training courses (i) International Training Course, Mojmirovce, Slovakia, 2013 and 2014; (ii) 2013 Annual Workshop on Application of Commercial Quality Standards for Fruits and Vegetables in Eastern Africa, October 2013, Nairobi, Kenya.
7. The OECD Scheme is currently developing the OECD Guidelines on Quality Inspection, which is expected to be finalized in 2014. It will be an illustrated publication with explanatory notes on rules of inspection.
8. All the OECD explanatory brochures, guidelines and peer review reports are available from the official website of the OECD Fruit and Vegetables Scheme ([www.oecd.org/tad/fv](http://www.oecd.org/tad/fv)) free of charges.

<sup>1</sup> This document has been prepared under the responsibility of the OECD.

## OECD WORK ON PESTICIDE

The Pesticides Programme was created in 1992 to help OECD countries:

- harmonise their pesticide review procedures,
- share the work of evaluating pesticides, and
- reduce risks associated with pesticide use.

The Codex Secretariat is observer at the Working Group on Pesticides, the upper body of OECD the Pesticides Programme.

Below is some information about the two OECD Groups which are of main interest to the work of Codex.

### OECD Residue Chemistry Expert Group

The Residue Chemistry Expert Group (RCEG) was established in 2003. Its objectives are to:

- Harmonise the way residue testing is conducted and results are interpreted,
- Develop methods to support international harmonisation of MRLs (the OECD does not set MRLs).

Nine OECD Test Guidelines have been published, as follows: **TG 501** Metabolism in Crops; **TG 502** Metabolism in Rotational Crops; **TG 503** Metabolism in Livestock; **TG 504** Residues in Rotational Crops (Limited Field Studies); **TG 505** Residues in Livestock; **TG 506** Stability of Pesticide Residues in Stored Commodities; **TG 507** Nature of Pesticide Residues in processed Commodities - High Temperature-Hydrolysis; **TG 508** Magnitude of Pesticide Residues in Processed Commodities; **TG 509** Crop Field Trial.

Seven Guidance Documents are available: Definition of Residue; Overview of Residue Chemistry Studies; Magnitude of Pesticide Residues in Processed Commodities; Pesticide Residue Analytical Methods; Crop Field Trials; and Residues in Livestock.

The Guidance Document on Residues in Livestock was updated in 2012/2013, the update being published on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013. The revision includes an updated OECD Table of Feedstuffs Derived from Field Crops (available in the Guidance Document on Overview of Residue Chemistry Studies). Specifically, this Guidance Document describes current differences in OECD countries in livestock feeding practices and diet composition and factors influencing the determination of dietary burden and dose selection, and provides guidance for interpreting results from OECD TG 505 studies.

The MRL Calculator, a tool for statistical calculation of MRLs was published in 2011. It is an Excel spreadsheet simple to use without requiring extensive statistical knowledge from the user.

All the documents mentioned above and the MRL calculator are available on the OECD public web site:

<http://www.oecd.org/env/ehs/pesticides-biocides/publicationsonpesticideresidues.htm>

The following outputs are in preparation: revision of the Guidance Document on Crop Field Trials (to deal with proportionality issues, clarify sampling procedures and take into account national / Codex information on recent changes in crop groups) and development of a Rotational Crop Field Trial Guidance Document).

### OECD Expert Group on Minor Uses

The Expert Group on Minor Uses (EGMU) was established in 2007. The current work plan of the OECD EGMU focuses on issues associated with cooperation, technical and policy activities with the aim of facilitating the development of data and registration of pesticides for minor uses. As with many OECD chemicals and pesticide projects, the EGMU works towards providing the infrastructure, guidance and tools for promoting the registration of pesticides for minor uses, including aspects of data requirements, data generation and opportunities for harmonization to make available data useful across countries. The OECD work focuses on developing tools for risk assessment and mechanisms to facilitate co-operation and work-sharing. For further information, see the OECD website: <http://www.oecd.org/env/ehs/pesticides-biocides/minoruses.htm>

Two Guidance Documents have been published: a Guidance Document on Defining Minor Uses of Pesticides and a Guidance Document on Regulatory Incentives for the Registration of Pesticide Minor Uses.

Two survey reports have been published: the Survey Results on Regulatory Incentives for the Registration of Pesticide Minor Uses and the Survey Results on Efficacy & Crop Safety Data Requirements and Guidelines for the Registration of Pesticide Minor Uses.

All OECD Minor Uses publications are available at:

<http://www.oecd.org/env/ehs/pesticides-biocides/publicationsonminorusesofpesticides.htm>

Currently, three main activities are underway, as follows.

- **Project 1:** *work towards developing a Guidance Document to address & solve minor uses:*  
Responses to a questionnaire to collect information on existing national & regional processes and known data exchanges, distributed in June 2013, are being analysed and a report of the survey will be made available. A pilot data generation project (global residue/efficacy) is also being considered to be scheduled at a later stage after selection of an agreed commodity and pest/disease problem.
- **Project 2:** *Global Joint Reviews (GJRs) –enhancing minor uses from GJRs:*  
Information on GJRs relevant for minor uses are being collated and further sources of information are being explored. The first aim of the work is to identify differences in uses (crops) approved in various countries through GJRs. Subsequent aims would involve identifying the reasons for these differences and activities or initiatives that could enhance the scope of minor uses approved amongst countries through GJRs.
- **Project 3:** *work towards developing a Guidance Document on the exchange and use of international efficacy & crop safety data for minor uses:*

A draft of the guidance document is being developed. While some OECD countries do not currently require efficacy data, it was confirmed as an important consideration amongst the EGMU participants.

The last EGMU meeting took place at OECD headquarters (Paris) on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013. At this meeting the work plan for EGMU was updated to reflect progress in the ongoing projects outlined above, and to initiate related but new activities in the areas of identifying *priority* minor uses for data generation and data exchange and developing a process for assessing trial protocols for future minor use GJRs.

## **OECD WORK ON RISK/SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF PRODUCTS OF MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY**

### Biosafety and Food-Feed safety programmes

7. The assessment of the safety of products derived from modern biotechnology (GMOs) is an important challenge for countries as transgenic crops are increasingly cultivated worldwide, and as human foods and animal feeds derived from such crops are being marketed internationally. In order to increase the efficiency of the risk/safety assessment process and coordinate efforts, the OECD works to harmonise country approaches and to share information used in this assessment. Two closely related programmes are being implemented:

- The *Working Group on Harmonisation of Regulatory Oversight in Biotechnology* addresses aspects of the environmental risk/ safety assessment of transgenic organisms (plants, animals, micro-organisms);
- The *Task Force for the Safety of Novel Foods and Feeds* addresses the safety assessment of foods and feeds made from transgenic commodities.

8. The main purpose of the work is threefold: i) To assist national authorities in evaluating the potential risks of transgenic products and ensuring high standards of safety; ii) To foster communication and mutual understanding of the regulatory processes in different countries; and iii) To reduce the potential for non-tariff barriers to trade.

9. Both programmes identify a common base of scientific information useful in assessing the safety of specific products. The aim is to ensure that the types of information and data used in safety assessments, as well as the methods used to collect these elements, are as similar as possible amongst countries.

### Main output

10. The main outputs of the two bodies are the “OECD Consensus Documents” which constitute practical tools for safety assessors, regulators and other stakeholders. These documents compile key information on major crops, trees, micro-organisms as well as on introduced traits, which are believed to be relevant to risk/safety assessment when comparing new (genetically-engineered) products to conventional ones. The documents relating to *Environmental Safety* focus mainly on the biology of plants (Species and taxonomic group, reproductive biology, potential for out-crossing with related species, centres of diversity, agronomic practices, major uses and other relevant elements). The documents for *Food and Feed Safety* contain information on the key nutrients, toxicants, anti-nutrients and allergens (latest composition publications dealt with soybean and oyster mushroom). Work on micro-algae will start in 2014. To date, a total of 70 documents are available on [www.oecd.org/biotrack](http://www.oecd.org/biotrack).

11. In addition, a database on genetically-engineered plant products was developed for public availability, and is being updated by participants in these OECD programmes. The database aims to allow regulatory officials to easily share basic information on biotech products that have been approved for commercial application in terms of food, feed or environmental safety. As at February 2014, the database contained information on about 200 biotech products from 14 plant species, approved in one or more of 10 countries and the E.C.

#### Collaboration with FAO and Codex

12. The FAO and the Codex Alimentarius Commission are observers in these activities, which involve several non-members of the OECD including developing countries, and other interested Organisations. The work includes crops and commodities often produced in tropical and sub-tropical regions (e.g. rice, cotton), with recent developments focused on sweet potato, sorghum or sugarcane as a result from the active involvement of Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Philippines, South Africa and Thailand among others. The publications contemplated for 2014 include documents on the biology of cassava and eucalyptus, and on the composition of common bean. In addition, an on-going FAO-OECD collaboration is aiming to harmonization and data exchange between respective Food Safety databases.

13. Example of practical cooperation with Codex: when dealing with the appropriate comparators for testing new varieties, the OECD Food Safety Documents always refer to the "Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Food Derived from Recombinant DNA Plants" CAC/GL 45/2003 of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, including its Annexes II and III updated in 2008. Similarly, documents from the Codex Standard Series (e.g. on Sugars, on Named Vegetable Oils constitute useful sources of information and key references when developing these OECD documents.