

INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES

Communication from the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex)

The following communication, received on 17 October 2012, is being circulated at the request of the Codex secretariat.

A. CODEX SESSIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE (JULY 2012)

- Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (Mexico City, Mexico, 3-7 September 2012)
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (Madang, Papua New Guinea, 19-22 September 2012)
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (Batumi, Georgia, 25-28 September 2012)
- Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (Bali, Indonesia, 1-5 October 2012)
- Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (Montego Bay, Jamaica, 15-19 October 2012)

1. The **Committee on Fish and Fishery Products** forwarded to the Commission for adoption the Draft Standard for Smoked Fish, Smoke-Flavoured Fish and Smoke-Dried Fish; the draft Standard for Fresh/Live and Frozen Abalone (*Haliotis* spp); the amendment to the Standard for Quick Frozen Fish Sticks (Nitrogen Factor for South Atlantic Hake); the Proposed Draft Performance Criteria for Reference and the Proposed Draft Revision of the Procedure for the Inclusion of Additional Species in Standards for Fish and Fishery Products; and the Confirmatory Methods for Marine Biotoxins in the *Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs* for adoption as a draft standard. The Committee agreed to proceed with its work on the Proposed Draft Standard for Quick Frozen Scallop Adductor Muscle Meat, the Proposed Draft Code of Practice for the Processing of Scallops and the Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (section on sturgeon caviar); and to consider further food additive provisions in the standards for Fish and Fishery Products and issues related to histamine at the next session. The Committee initiated new work on a Code of Practice for Fish Sauce, subject to approval by the 36th Commission.

2. The **FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees** consider Codex matters of interest to the region, promote exchange of information within the region on food legislation and food control issues, Codex structures and participation, the use of Codex standards, identifying issues related to the use or non-use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional levels. They define the problems and needs of the region concerning food standards and food control, and some of them develop regional standards for products that may not be traded internationally but for which there is significant

regional trade. The Commission also forwarded the Draft Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019 to Coordinating Committees for their advice, as well as some other questions.

3. FAO and WHO generally convene regional workshops on issues of interest to the region in conjunction with the Coordinating Committees, and with funding from the Codex Trust Fund (see below "Technical Co-operation").

B. FORTHCOMING CODEX MEETINGS

- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (Tokyo, Japan, 5-9 November 2012)
- Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (New Orleans, United States of America, 12-16 November 2012)
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (San Jose, Costa Rica, 19-23 November 2012)
- Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (Bad Soden am Taunus, Germany, 2012)
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for the Near East (Beirut, Lebanon, 21-25 January 2013)
- FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Africa (Yaoundé, Cameroon, 29 January-1 February 2013)
- *Ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding (Bern, Switzerland, 4-8 February 2013)
- Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (Chiang Mai, Thailand, 18-22 February 2013)
- Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (Langkawi, Malaysia, 25 February, 1 March 2013)

4. The **Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems** will continue its work on the elaboration of the Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems. The Committee will also consider discussion papers addressing: the burden of multiple questionnaires directed at exporting countries; monitoring regulatory performance of national food control systems and the need for further guidance on food safety emergencies.

5. The **Codex Committee on Food Hygiene** will consider in particular the Proposed Draft Revision of the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria, the Proposed Draft Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: *Trichinella spiralis* and *Cysticercus bovis*; the Proposed Draft Revision of the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Spices and Dried Aromatic Plants*; and the Proposed Draft Annex on Berries to the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*.

6. The *ad hoc* Intergovernmental **Task Force on Animal Feeding** will consider the Draft Guidelines on Application of Risk Assessment for Feed, Proposed Draft Guidance for use by governments in prioritizing the national feed hazards, how to apply existing Codex risk assessment methodologies to the various types of hazards related to contaminants/residues in feed ingredients, including feed additives used in feedingstuffs.

C. SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

1. **Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues**

7. The summary report of the 2012 JMPR held in September 2012 is available at the FAO and WHO websites as follows:

FAO: "http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/Pests_Pesticides/JMPR/2012_JMPR_Summary_Report_F2_.pdf"

WHO: http://www.who.int/foodsafety/chem/jmpr/summary_2012.pdf

2. **Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Public Health Risks of Histamine and Other Biogenic Amines from Fish and Fishery Products** (FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 23-27 July 2012)

8. The objectives of the meeting were:

- (a) To review the public health and trade impacts of existing histamine limits (Table 1) in various fish and fishery products;
- (b) To review the epidemiological and toxicological data and examine whether any risk-based control limits can be recommended for different fishery products;
- (c) To examine the impact of a range of risk-based sampling plans for monitoring histamine levels in various fish and fishery products.

The meeting aimed at providing the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products with an overview of the public health risks associated with histamines and related amines, a commentary on existing limits in terms of their appropriateness and implications for application and control as well as the potential impact of these limits with a range of sampling plans and suggested approaches for risk-based control of histamine and related amines in fish and fishery products.

3. **Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting: Foodborne Parasites – Prioritization for Risk Management** (FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 3-7 September 2012)

9. This meeting was implemented following the request of the 42nd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, with the following main objectives:

- (a) To provide an overview of the global problems associated with foodborne parasites for the purpose of risk ranking;
- (b) To apply a systematic risk ranking/prioritization approach to the available information to identify parasite/commodity groups of greatest concern; and
- (c) To provide an overview of the risk management options and approaches available for the control of prioritized foodborne parasites.

D. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

10. The following activities were carried out with the support of the Codex Trust Fund.

11. Prior to the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific (Madang, Papua New Guinea, 19-22 September 2012) FAO and WHO convened a Technical Workshop on Developments Relevant to Pacific Island Countries (17-18 September 2012).

12. Prior to the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (Batumi, Georgia, 25-28 September 2012), FAO and WHO, with the support of Poland as host country, convened an FAO/WHO Regional training Workshop on Codex Alimentarius: 50 years of Codex: achievements, lessons learnt and challenges in the European Codex region (24 September 2012).

13. FAO and WHO convened a capacity development regional training workshop on Codex in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, on 9-11 October 2012, for countries in Central Asia.

14. Similar workshops will be held in conjunction with the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees to be held from November 2012 to February 2013.
