

**RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION**

Statement by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at the Meeting  
of 2-3 April 2003

Several Codex meetings were held since the last session of the SPS Committee (November 2002), and in particular the following:

**Codex Alimentarius Commission (25<sup>th</sup> Session, 13-15 February 2003)**

The 25<sup>th</sup> (Extraordinary) Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission was convened to consider the *Joint FAO (WHO Evaluation of Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards)*. The Commission adopted a Statement concerning the outcome of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation for submission to the Governing Bodies of FAO and WHO (World Health Assembly and FAO Conference). In particular the Commission:

- supported the overall thrust of the Evaluation report and expressed its commitment to the implementation of strategies that would meet the objectives of the recommendations contained therein;
- was of the opinion that its existing mandate to protect consumers' health and to ensure fair practices in the food trade continued to be appropriate but might be discussed in the future;
- emphasized that its first priority would be the development of standards having an impact on consumer health and safety;
- called for a more coordinated approach for capacity building between FAO and WHO and requested the parent bodies to urgently analyse their existing means of providing capacity building and inform the Codex Alimentarius Commission on how they will improve coordination and distribution of work drawing on their mutual strengths and synergies.

A Circular Letter (CL 2003/8-CAC) was distributed to ask for further comments on specific recommendations of the Evaluation, for consideration at the 26<sup>th</sup> (Regular) Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Rome, Italy, 30 June-7 July 2003).

**Trust Fund**

The Trust Fund for the Participation of Developing Countries and Countries in Transition in the Work of Codex was launched during the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by the Directors-General of FAO and WHO. The Trust Fund is intended to assist developing countries and countries in transition to increase their participation in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Commission discussed a progress report on the establishment of the Trust Fund. The FAO/WHO Consultative Group for the Trust Fund will take into account the discussions held at the Commission in order to revise and complete the proposed criteria for the selection of

beneficiaries. Once the proposed criteria have been reviewed by the Commission (July 2003), a first call for application and the selection of beneficiaries will begin, subject to the availability of sufficient funding.

### **Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems**

The Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (Adelaide, 2-6 December 2002) finalized the draft *Guidelines for the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* for adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Committee agreed to ask for further comments on a discussion paper on the *Judgement of Equivalence of Technical Regulations Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems*. The Committee discussed the question of traceability in the context of inspection and certification systems but did not reach any specific conclusion and agreed to discuss it further at its next session.

### **Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology**

The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (Yokohama, 11-14 March 2003) finalized the *Draft Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Produced Using Recombinant-DNA Microorganisms*, including an *Annex on the Assessment of Possible Allergenicity*. This completes the work assigned by the Commission to the Task Force as regards the establishment of recommendations to address risk analysis of foods derived from biotechnology.

### **Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants**

The 35<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (Arusha, Tanzania, 17-21 March 2003) finalized the *Draft Codex General Standard for Irradiated Foods*, the *Draft Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Patulin Contamination in Apple Juice and Apple Juice Ingredients in Other Beverages* and the *Draft Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals, including Annexes on Ochratoxin A, Zearalenone, Fumonisin and Tricothecenes*.

### **Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding**

The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding finalized the *Proposed Draft Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding*. This completes the work assigned by the Commission to the Task Force.

### **Forthcoming Meetings**

- Committee on Pesticide Residues (Rotterdam, Netherlands, 31 March – 5 April 2003)
- Committee on General Principles (Paris, France, 7-11 April 2003) Risk Analysis/Traceability
- Committee on Food Labelling (Ottawa, Canada, 28 April – 2 May 2003)
- Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Fruits and Vegetable Juices (Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, 5-9 May 2003)
- Codex Alimentarius Commission (Rome, Italy, 30 June – 7 July 2003).

The **Codex Committee on Food Labelling** (31<sup>st</sup> Session, May 2003) will consider the version of the *Guidelines for the Production Processing Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods*: criteria for permitted substances and lists of permitted substances. It will continue its discussion of the controversial question of labelling of foods derived from biotechnology, and proceed with the consideration of nutrition labelling and health claims, among other labelling issues. The Committee will also discuss traceability and labelling of country of origin.

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