Importance of Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Structure and Functions
(Agenda Item 3)
at
“Strengthening Food Safety Standard Setting and Effective Participation in Codex activities”
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Coverage

- Introducing Codex – functions, documentation, organization
- Scientific basis for Codex Work
- Current initiatives and work priorities
Introducing Codex - functions, documentation, organization
Codex Alimentarius Commission

- An Intergovernmental body
- **Founded** in 1962 to implement the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme – jointly hosted by FAO & WHO (1st session 1963) – 50th anniversary 2013
- **Mandate**
  - protect the health of consumers
  - ensure fair practices in international food trade
- **Membership** - 187 countries + 1 member org (EU) – representing 99% of world population
- **Observers**: 240 international organizations: 56 IGOs, 168 NGOs, 16 UN (representing scientific, industry, trade, consumers)
- **Headquarters**
Functions of Codex

• Develops harmonised international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice (for consumers health and fair trade practices)

• Promotes coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

• Determines the priorities, initiates the preparation of standards, finalizes after consultation with the national Governments, publishes - also amends standards in the light of latest developments
Codex outputs/Documentation

• **Codex alimentarius** in Latin means food code - it is a collection of food standards, guidelines and related texts ie the documentation developed by the CAC

• **Standards/guidelines for**
  - Food Hygiene
  - Food Labelling
  - Food additives and contaminants
  - Residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs
  - Inspection and certification systems
  - Commodities (e.g. milk, meat, fruits and vegetables, processed foods)
  - Foods derived from biotechnology

✔ All Codex texts are available from the [List of standards](http://www.codexalimentarius.org/standards/en/) of Codex website

✔ The numerical Codex standards for **food additives, veterinary drugs maximum residue levels & pesticide maximum residue levels**, can also be accessed via databases that facilitate their use.
The Codex Scorecard

This table gives the number of Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice by subject matter as of July 2015 after the decisions of the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

- Commodity Standards: 191
- Codes of Practice: 51
- Guidelines: 73
- Maximum Levels (MLs) for contaminants in food: 17
- MLs covering food additives: over 3770
- Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for pesticide residues covering pesticides: 4347
- MRLs for residues of veterinary drugs in foods covering veterinary drugs: 196
- MRLs for residues of veterinary drugs in foods covering veterinary drugs: 610
- MRLs for residues of veterinary drugs in foods covering veterinary drugs: 75
Codex Strategic plan 2014-2019

• **Vision:** The CAC should be the **pre-eminent international food standards setting body** to protect the health of the consumers & ensure fair practices in the food trade

• **Core values:** collaboration, inclusiveness, consensus, transparency

• **Strategic goals:** 4
  1) Set international food standards - current & emerging issues
  2) RA principles applied in development of Codex standards
  3) Facilitate effective participation of all Codex members
  4) Implement effective & efficient work management practices

• **Objectives & work plans** - activities, milestones, measurable indicators
Procedural manual (25th edition)

• Intended to help Member Governments participate effectively in the work of the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

• Contains
  – Statues of CAC: legal basis, mandate, operating procedures, concept & reasons for Codex
  – Rules of Procedure
  – Additional procedures for the elaboration of Codex standards & related texts, basic definitions and guidelines for the operation of CAC & its subsidiary bodies (Codex committees).
# Organization Structure

## CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Committee</th>
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### active

- Milk and Milk Products (NZ)
- Processed Fruits and Vegetables (USA)
- Fish and Fishery Products (Norway)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (Mexico)
- Fats and Oils (Malaysia)
- Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (USA)
- Sugars (Colombia)
- Spices and Culinary Herbs (India)

### adjourned

- Meat Hygiene (New Zealand)
- Vegetable Proteins (Canada)
- Natural Mineral Waters (Switzerland)
- Cocoa Products and Chocolate (Switzerland)
- Antimicrobial Resistance (Republic of Korea)
- Fruit and Vegetable Juices (Brazil)
The Commission

• The **decision-making body** of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

• Consists of **member governments**, as well as a number of international government (IGOs) and non-government organizations (INGOs) which have official **observer status** with the Commission

• **Chair and 3 Vice Chairs**

• Presently **meets annually**, with meetings alternating between Rome (FAO Headquarters) and Geneva (WHO Headquarters)
The Executive Committee (CCEXEC)

• Established by CAC - acts as the executive organ of CAC.

• The total membership of the CCEXEC is 17

• Geographically balanced - one member country elected from each geographic regions:
  
    ➢ Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East, North America, The Southwest Pacific

• The Regional Coordinators of the six regions

• Chair and 3 Vice Chairs same as of CAC
Under its Rules of Procedure, CAC is empowered to establish four kinds of subsidiary bodies:

- **General Subject Committees** (also referred to as horizontal), establish standards/guidelines applicable to all foods;
- **Commodity Committees** (also known as vertical), prepare standards for specific commodities;
- **FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees**, through which regions or groups of countries coordinate food standards activities in the region, including development of regional standards;
- **Ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces**, which are time-limited and prepare standards and guidelines on specific issues.
FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees

• Have **no standing host countries** - are hosted by the member country who is regional coordinator.

• **Host country rotates amongst members of region** - needs to have capacity to provide logistic/administrative support for organizing meetings - pay part or all costs associated with hosting meeting.

• **The role of regional coordinator** - coordinate views of the region in preparation of texts for submission to CAC. Also assist CCEXEC and CAC as required, by advising them of views of their region on various matters.

• **Coordinators nominated at each session** of the Coordinating Committee and appointed at next session of Commission. They hold office from the end of this session and may be re-appointed for a second term.
Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces

- Have a specific mandate - for a limited period of time - are hosted by a member country - dissolved once their work is completed - may be re-activated if additional work is required.

- Examples of ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Forces are:
  - Task Force on Animal Feeding, 2000–2004 and 2011-2013; and
  - Task Force on Fruits & Vegetable Juices, 1999-2005
  - Task Force on the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods, 2006-2008;
  - Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance, 2006-2011
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National Policy Priorities in Codex

• Strengthen national structures to support efficient management of Codex activities
  ➢ For high level leadership and strategic oversight of programme and priorities for countries
  ➢ Recognise and support inter agency collaboration on Codex
  ➢ To support effective engagement of industry and consumers
  ➢ To ensure limited national resources are used efficiently

• Support development of food safety and quality standards based on Codex
  ➢ Based on science, meet health protection needs of countries;
  ➢ Important for regulating trade (imports and exports)

• Strengthen capacity for participation in Codex in priority areas
  ➢ To influence international standards;
  ➢ To advance development of international standards for products of importance to countries
Scientific basis for Codex work
Basis for the establishment of Codex standards

Sound scientific analysis and evidence based on risk analysis

The food standards, guidelines and other recommendations of “Codex Alimentarius shall be based on the principle of sound scientific analysis and evidence, involving a thorough review of all relevant information, in order that the standards assure the quality and safety of the food supply.

Other legitimate factors

When elaborating and deciding upon food standards Codex Alimentarius will have regard, where appropriate, to other legitimate factors relevant for the health protection of consumers and for the promotion of fair practices in food trade”

(Statements of Principle concerning the Role of Science in the Codex Decision-making Process and the Extent to which Other Factors are taken into account; in the Procedural Manual)
Other legitimate factors

• Other legitimate factors may be identified in the risk management process but:

  ➢ Should **not affect scientific basis** of risk analysis

  ➢ Should not create **unjustified barriers** to trade (particular attention should be given to the impact on developing countries)

  ➢ Only those factors which can be accepted on a **worldwide basis** should be taken into account (some legitimate concerns of governments are not generally applicable or relevant worldwide)
Scientific basis for Codex work - Risk Assessment Bodies

Codex committees, when developing standards, rely on independent scientific advice provided by expert bodies organized by FAO/WHO.

JECFA

JMPR

JEMRA

JEMNU (Nutrition)

Ad hoc consultations

Chemical hazards

Microbologic hazards

Countries can request, access and contribute data to this process.
THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF CODEX

International Risk Assessment Bodies
- JMPR: Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues
- JECFA: Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives
- JEMNU: Joint Expert Meeting on Nutrition
- JEMRA: Joint Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment
- Ad Hoc Expert Meetings

CODEX Committees

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

International Food Standards

Consumer Protection & Food Trade

http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/
Current work priorities of Codex
Current initiatives and work priorities

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)
- Arsenic in rice
- Spices & culinary herbs - Pepper, Rosemary & Thyme
- Growth promoters
- Processed cheese
- **Halal** (labelling and certification)
- Labelling of GMOs
- Revision of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969) and its HACCP Annex
- Use of **electronic certificates** by competent authorities and migration to paperless certification
- CCASIA Proposed **Code of Hygienic Practice for Street Vended Foods**
Keys to the success of Codex

• Member driven
• Consensus decisions
• Transparency – website – observers
• Flexible procedure allowing all to comment
• Science/ risk based food safety standards
THANK YOU

Welcome Questions!