

Science-Based Standards for the Global Marketplace: Codex Alimentarius and its Relevance to Spices

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Overview

- What is the Codex Alimentarius
- Relationship between Codex and WTO Agreements
- Principles and Values
- International Codex Structure
- Risk Assessment and Risk Management in Codex
- Committees and Relevance to Spices
- Challenges for Industry

What is the Codex Alimentarius?

- Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program (180+ members, plus observer organizations)
- Dual mandate:
 - Protect consumer health
 - Ensure fair practices in the food trade
- Responsible for coordinating international standards with the goal of harmonization
- Codex standards are voluntary

Relationship between Codex Standards and Trade Agreements (SPS & TBT)

- Trade agreements encourage harmonization and call for WTO members to base their standards on international standards
- Codex is recognized as the international standards-setting body for food safety standards (this means....)

Core principles and values: The Role of Science in Codex

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....

Consideration of other factors should not affect the scientific basis of risk analysis

---Codex Procedural Manual, Statements of Principle

The Role of Science in Codex

For food safety and nutrition matters, the Commission, as a risk manager, establishes its standards based on risk analysis and bases its work on the scientific advice provided by joint FAO/WHO expert bodies and consultations.

--Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2014-2019

Codex Core Values

- Collaboration
- Inclusiveness
- Consensus building
- Transparency

--Strategic Plan of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 2014-2019

Guiding Principles for U.S. Codex Policy

Codex must remain true to its principles and mandate to develop science-based standards to protect consumer health and promote fair trade practices

Codex should respect the distinction between the risk management roles and responsibilities of Codex and those of national regulatory authorities

A “science-based and rules-based” organization

International Codex Structure

- Codex Committees recommend standards
 - --Types of committees and standards (horizontal, commodity, general)
 - --Committees chaired by host governments, who bear costs of hosting
 - --Varying schedules
- Standards progress to final adoption by Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) through 8-Step procedure

Risk Assessment and Risk Management in Codex

- For certain types of standards, Codex relies on independent international FAO/WHO expert bodies to perform risk assessments
- Based on those risk assessments, Codex Committees make risk management recommendations to the CAC

Example: Pesticide Risk Assessment and Risk Management in Codex

- For pesticides, the risk assessment body is the Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)
- The Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) is the risk management body

How Countries Use Codex Standards

- Some Codex members use Codex standards as their domestic standards and/or apply them to imported foods
- The U.S. does not automatically accept Codex standards
- U.S. regulatory agencies must base their decisions on the procedures and standards established in U.S. law (example, pesticides standard and consideration of Codex in U.S. law)

Codex Alimentarius Commission

Executive Committee

Secretariat

General Subject
Committees

General Principles (CCGP) - France

Food Additives (CCFA) - China

Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) - Netherlands

Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF) -
USA

Pesticide Residues (CCPR) - China

Food Hygiene (CCFH) - USA

Food Labelling (CCFL) - Canada

Food Import and Export Inspection and
Certification Systems (CCFICS) - Australia

Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
(CCNFSDU) - Germany

Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) -
Hungary

Commodity
Committees

Fats and Oils (CCFO)
- Malaysia

Fish and Fishery
Products (CCFFP) -
Norway

Processed Fruits and
Vegetables (CCPFV) -
USA

Fresh Fruits and
Vegetables (CCFFV)
- Mexico

Sugars (CCS) -
Colombia

Spices and Culinary
Herbs (CCSCH) -
India

Regional
Coordinating
Committees

Africa (CCAFRICA)

Asia (CCASIA)

Europe (CCEURO)

Latin America and
the Caribbean
(CCLAC)

Near East (CCNEA)

North America and
the South West
Pacific (CCNASWP)

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Some Key Committees Relevant to Spices

- Committee on Food Hygiene
- Committee on Pesticide Residues
- Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs

Challenges for Industry

- Provide data and expertise needed to support reviews and standards development
- Seek international clearances, through Codex and in export markets
- Work internationally and within countries to build capacity and support
- Think creatively about ways to support and improve effectiveness Codex initiatives
- Participate! at country level and through observer organizations

Questions?

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