

**REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATE ON THE
16TH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOODS**

**April 18-21, 2023, Utrecht, Netherlands
April 26, 2023, Virtual Report Adoption**

The 16th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF16) convened April 18-21, 2023 in the Netherlands, with virtual report adoption on April 26, 2023. The session was chaired by the Netherlands and was attended by 51 Member Countries, one Member Organization (the European Union), and 10 observer organizations. The U.S. Delegation was led by Dr. Lauren Posnick Robin (Head of Delegation) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, and Mr. Alexander Domesle (Alternate Delegate) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. The U.S. Delegation also included 4 government advisors and 1 non-governmental advisor.

CCCF16 was a productive session and completed work on maximum levels (MLs) for lead, ochratoxin A, and aflatoxins, and a Code of Practice (COP) for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cassava and Cassava-Based Products, which were recommended for final adoption by the 46th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC46, 2023), consistent with U.S. positions and comments.

Notably, the Committee recommended final adoption of the following MLs: 0.15 mg/kg lead in soft brown, raw, and non-centrifugal sugars; 0.02 mg/kg lead in ready-to-eat (RTE) meals for infants and young children (work chaired by Brazil); 20 µg/kg total aflatoxins (AFT) in chili pepper and nutmeg; and 20 µg/kg ochratoxin A (OTA) in chili pepper, paprika and nutmeg (work chaired by India).

CCCF also recommended a two-year approach to continue work on an ML for AFT in RTE peanuts, with (1) a proposal for the next session (CCCF17, 2024) for a clear definition for RTE peanuts and categorization of peanuts and (2) following discussion and agreement on the definition for RTE peanuts at CCCF17, a proposal for ML(s) for RTE peanuts and associated sampling plans for consideration by CCCF18 (2025, work chaired by India).

The Committee forwarded a proposal for new work proposed by the United States on a COP or Guidelines for Prevention or Reduction of Ciguatera Poisoning (work to be chaired by the United States and co-chaired by France, Panama, and Spain) to CAC46 for approval.

The Committee also recommended final adoption of a COP for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cassava and Cassava-Based Products (work chaired by Nigeria and co-chaired by Ghana) and Sampling Plans for Total Aflatoxins in Certain Cereals and Cereal-Based Products Including Foods for Infants and Young Children (work chaired by Brazil and co-chaired by India).

The Committee also agreed to work on the following Discussion Papers for consideration at its next session:

- Revision of the *COP for Prevention and Reduction of Cadmium Contamination in Cocoa Beans* (CXC 81-2022), to extend the COP to all foods (paper prepared by the United States),
- Review of the *COP for the reduction of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feeding Stuffs for Milk-Producing Animals* (CXC 45-1997) (paper prepared by Canada)
- Review of the *COP for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004) to explore whether there are new measures supporting revision (paper prepared by Brazil)
- Tropane alkaloids (paper prepared by China, to be assisted by Saudi Arabia)
- Acrylamide (paper prepared by India, to be assisted by Saudi Arabia)

The following represents the summary of the most significant agenda items and issues from the 16th Session. The full official report of the Session can be found on the [Codex website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

Texts for adoption at CAC46 (2023)

The Committee sent the following draft COP to CAC46 (2023) for adoption at Step 5/8 (final adoption):

- Draft COP for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cassava and Cassava-Based Products

The Committee sent the following draft MLs to CAC46 (2023) for adoption at Step 8 or Step 5/8 (final adoption):

- Draft ML for lead in soft brown, raw, and non-centrifugal sugars
- Draft ML for lead in RTE meals for infants and young children
- Draft ML for AFT in chili pepper and nutmeg
- Draft ML for OTA in chili pepper, paprika and nutmeg
- The Committee sent the following sampling plans to CAC46 (2023) for approval
Sampling Plans for Total Aflatoxins in Certain Cereals and Cereal-Based Products Including Foods for Infants and Young Children

New Work

The Committee forwarded for approval by CAC46 a proposal for new work on the following for CCCF17 (2024):

- Work chaired by the United States, and co-chaired by France, Panama, and Spain, on a COP or Guidelines for Prevention or Reduction of Ciguatera Poisoning

The Committee agreed to explore possible new work for future consideration or to continue ongoing work on the following topics for CCCF17 (2024):

- Work chaired by Brazil on draft MLs for lead in culinary herbs (fresh/dried) and spices (dried)
- Work chaired by New Zealand and co-chaired by Canada on a sampling plan for methylmercury in fish
- Work chaired by India on a proposal for CCCF17 (2024) on a clear definition for RTE peanuts and categorization of peanuts and a proposal for ML(s) for RTE peanuts and associated sampling plans for CCCF18 (2025)
- Work chaired by the European Union and co-chaired by Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States, on guidance on data analysis for development of MLs and for improved data collection
- Discussion paper by the United States on revision/extension to all foods of the *COP for Prevention and Reduction of Cadmium Contamination in Cocoa Beans* (CXC 81-2022)
- Discussion paper by Brazil on review of the *COP for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004) to explore whether there are new measures supporting revision
- Discussion paper by Canada on review of the *COP for the Reduction of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feeding Stuffs for Milk-Producing Animals* (CXC 45-1997) to explore whether there are new measures supporting revision
- Discussion paper by China on tropane alkaloids and the feasibility of possible follow-up actions in response to the Joint Expert WHO/FAO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) assessment
- Discussion paper by India on acrylamide
- Work led by Canada on implementation of a three-year pilot project on the review of existing CCCF Codex standards
- Work led by the European Union on pyrrolizidine alkaloids and the feasibility of possible follow-up actions to the JECFA assessment
- Work led by the JECFA Secretariat on cadmium and lead in quinoa

MEETING SUMMARY

Adoption of the agenda (Agenda item 1)

The United States proposed adding an agenda item to be considered under Other Business (Agenda Item 17): a discussion paper on an expanded COP for the prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in foods.

Matters of Interest Arising from Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) including JECFA (Agenda Item 3)

Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) led the side event on “Foresight: Looking into Emerging Issues in Food and Feed Safety” before the plenary session. FAO recently published “Thinking about the Future of Food Safety – A Foresight Report,” which discusses important emerging issues in food and agriculture with a focus on food safety implications, including climate change, changing consumer behavior and food consumption patterns, new food sources and food production systems, technological innovations and scientific advances, microbiome science, circular economy, and food contact materials.

Maximum Levels for Lead in Certain Food Categories (Agenda Item 5)

Brazil, as Chair of the electronic working group (EWG), introduced the item and explained that the MLs had been discussed in the EWG and at a virtual working group (VWG) prior to the plenary. The recommendations of the VWG were summarized in a Conference Room Document (CRD07). The Committee discussed the following proposed MLs:

- **Soft brown, raw, and non-centrifugal sugars.** The EWG Chair noted general support for an ML of 0.15 mg/kg. CCCF noted that this ML was consistent with the ML for white and refined sugars of 0.1 mg/kg adopted by CAC45 (2022), as brown, raw, and non-centrifugal sugars are less refined than white and refined sugars. CCCF agreed to forward an ML of 0.15 mg/kg for lead in soft brown, raw, and non-centrifugal sugars to CAC46 (2023) for final adoption at Step 5/8.
- **RTE meals for infants and young children.** The EWG Chair explained that there was general support from the EWG and VWG for a single ML of 0.02 mg/kg, the same ML which was adopted at Step 5 (interim adoption) by CAC45 in 2022. Nigeria and India supported an ML of 0.03 mg/kg, as proposed by the EWG, and Ecuador supported 0.04 mg/kg, considering the analytical capacities of countries. The Chair asked if Nigeria would like to make a reservation. Nigeria stated that they did not know the rationale for 0.02 mg/kg as they were not at the pre-session VWG. The Chair asked Brazil to explain the change from an ML of 0.03 mg/kg, which was one of the options discussed in the EWG, to an ML of 0.02 mg/kg, which was generally supported by the VWG. Brazil highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of various MLs. The CCCF Chair noted that the issue had been extensively discussed in the VWG and an ML of 0.02 mg/kg was adopted at Step 5 last year. CCCF agreed to forward an ML of 0.02 mg/kg for lead in RTE meals for infants and young children to CAC46 (2023) for final adoption at Step 8.

CCCF agreed to re-establish the EWG to consider MLs for culinary herbs (fresh/dried) and spices (dried), for consideration by CCCF17 (2024).

Code of Practice (COP) for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cassava and Cassava-Based Products (Agenda Item 6)

Nigeria, as Chair of the EWG and speaking also on behalf of Co-Chair Ghana, introduced the agenda item, noting that the EWG had revised the COP adopted at Step 5 in 2022 based on recommendations from CCCF15 and responses to Circular Letter (CL) 2022/91-CF. Brazil and the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) requested deleting a reference to ochratoxin causing porcine nephropathy. IFT also questioned language on crop rotation, which conflicted with current crop rotation practices for soil improvement and suggested introducing more flexibility. Dominica suggested adding information on fungicidal treatment and Indonesia suggested adding information on steaming as a heat treatment. The United States and IFT suggested that the phrase “storage facilities should be disinfected with approved fumigants and pesticides” be changed to “storage facilities can be disinfected with approved fumigants and pesticides.” CCCF agreed to forward the COP for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in cassava and cassava-based products to CAC46 (2023) for final adoption at Step 8.

Sampling plans for total aflatoxins in certain cereals and cereal-based products including foods for infants and young children (Agenda Item 7)

Brazil, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the agenda item and recalled that CCCF15 requested that the EWG work on harmonizing sampling plans for aflatoxins with existing plans in the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (General Standard, CXS 193-1995)* for deoxynivalenol and fumonisins and that the established performance criteria consider the typical ratio of the four aflatoxin isomers (AFB1, AFB2, AFG1, AFG2) in naturally contaminated cereal samples. The EWG Chair provided a summary of key points of discussion from the EWG and a physical working group (PWG) that met immediately prior to the plenary session. These points included that data from all countries supported an isomer ratio > 50:50 AFB1: AFB2+AFG1+AFG2, that AFB1 was the most toxic isomer, and that using a 50:50 isomer ratio to set performance criteria would allow an achievable limit of quantification (LOQ) for the minor isomers.

The EWG Chair noted general support in the PWG to (1) align sampling plans for ground products (e.g., flours) with the deoxynivalenol (DON) and fumonisins sampling plans in the *General Standard* but (2) to use a laboratory sample weight of 5 kg or higher for maize grain, rice (husked and polished), and sorghum, rather than the 1 kg sample weight in the DON sampling plan.

There was more extensive discussion on isomer ratios and how to establish LOQs and limits of detection (LODs) using a sum of components approach as recommended in the *Procedural Manual*. The EWG Chair recommended using a 50:50 isomer ratio to establish performance criteria, since using a higher ratio would result in LOQs for the minor aflatoxin isomers that were too low to be widely achievable. The European Union recommended that the LOD and LOQ requirements for single aflatoxin isomers not depend on an assumed isomer ratio but be set on a case-by-case basis. Japan supported use of a 50:50 isomer ratio but suggested that if LOQs for the minor isomers were too low to be validated, an alternate approach could be to assign an LOQ value up to the LOQ for AFB1. A footnote was added

citing this approach, with a request for evaluation by Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS). CCCF agreed to forward the sampling plan to CCMAS42 (2023) for endorsement and to CAC46 (2023) for final adoption and inclusion in the *General Standard* (CXS 193-1995).

Maximum Level (ML) for Total Aflatoxins in Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Peanuts and Associated Sampling Plan (Agenda Item 8)

India, as Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of Co-chair Senegal, introduced the item. CCCF12 (2018) had agreed to hold the proposed ML of 10 µg/kg at Step 4 to ensure implementation of the *COP for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004). CCCF14 (2021) and CCCF15 (2022) re-established the EWG led by India to reconsider new/additional data from the WHO Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS/Food) and to prepare a revised proposal for an ML for RTE peanuts. The EWG Chair explained the work process for CCCF16 (2023), explaining that there was insufficient time to obtain information to address the requests of CCCF14 and CCCF15 and to clearly present the data analysis for consideration by CCCF16 (2023). The EWG Chair recommended that work continue to CCCF17 (2024), to allow for resubmission and correction of data points noted as problematic, for example, those entered incorrectly. The GEMS/Food coordinator provided a presentation explaining the process on how data was downloaded and sorted for the EWG.

CCCF noted general agreement that work could be extended on an ML for AFT in RTE peanuts. The European Union offered to upload new data on peanuts, including data on country of origin. The European Union explained that they were a peanut importing region and imports to the European Union may be classified and treated in different ways, e.g., for further processing, for animal feed, and unspecified use. While peanuts sold at market or roasted are clearly RTE, it is not clear how import data would be classified in a paper prepared by the EWG.

Noting the historical problems with data classification, the United States proposed that the EWG prepare a discussion paper for CCCF17 (2024) to consider a definition for RTE and that work on an ML be delayed until this work was complete. Japan strongly supported the proposal by the United States, noting that it is difficult to tell which peanuts are RTE and, for this reason, Japan has not submitted data. The European Union concurred with the approach but added that deviations from the definition of RTE in the *General Standard* should be justified. The United States asked that the terms of reference of the re-formed EWG include two rounds of comments and that practical (not theoretical) examples be provided for how data points from GEMS/Food would be classified.

CCCF agreed to re-convene the EWG, chaired by India, to work over the next two years on the ML for AFT in RTE peanuts. CCCF agreed that the EWG should prepare a proposal with a clear definition for RTE peanuts and categorization of peanuts for consideration by CCCF17 (2024), working closely with the GEMS/Food administrator. Following discussion and agreement on the definition for RTE peanuts at CCCF17, the EWG should then propose an ML for RTE peanuts and associated sampling plans for consideration by CCCF18 (2025). CCCF also agreed that the EWG should work closely with the EWG on data

analysis on setting MLs, considering the decision of CCCF15 (2022) relating to data analysis, and have at least two rounds of comments per year in the EWG. Finally, CCCF agreed to inform the Codex Executive Committee (CCEXEC) of the decision and request extension of the timeline for completion of work to 2025.

Maximum Levels for Total Aflatoxins and Ochratoxin A in Nutmeg, Dried Chili and Paprika, Ginger, Pepper, and Turmeric and Associated Sampling Plans (Agenda Item 9)

India, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and explained that the EWG was proposing MLs of 20 µg/kg for AFT in dried chili pepper and nutmeg and MLs of 20 µg/kg for OTA in dried chili pepper, paprika, and nutmeg. The EWG recommended that no MLs be established for the remaining spices, because it would be “redundant,” and recommended that work continue the sampling plan for CCCF17 (2024). The CCCF Chair noted that several African countries had requested that work on MLs be postponed, allowing more time for data submission. Since the work was extended previously and the deadline for completion of work was pending, the CCCF Chair proposed continuing discussion of the MLs, but also proposed review of the MLs in three years’ time if sufficient new data are available.

Several countries made general comments about the presentation of data. The European Union commented on lack of clarity in presented rejection rates, Japan asked whether paprika was included, and India answered that paprika was included for OTA, but not AFT. Different proposals were made for naming and differentiating dried chili pepper and paprika (a kind of chili pepper). The United States said the definitions of spices for the MLs should align with definitions used by the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH). India stated that dried chili pepper and paprika were from the same botanical species but were traded and labelled separately. CCCF agreed to refer to each commodity separately in the *General Standard* (CXS193-1995), consistent with the approach taken in CCSCH. The European Union objected to the EWG’s wording that some MLs should not be considered because the MLs would be “redundant.”

OTA. There was overall agreement with the proposed MLs of 20 µg/kg for OTA in dried chili pepper, paprika, and nutmeg, including from the United States. There was also general agreement to stop work on MLs for OTA in ginger, turmeric, and black and white pepper. However, the European Union objected to the ML of 20 µg/kg OTA for nutmeg; Chile requested MLs of 20 µg/kg for OTA in ginger, black and white pepper, and turmeric, in addition to dried chili pepper, paprika, and nutmeg; and Brazil supported MLs of 30 µg/kg for OTA in dried chili pepper, paprika, and nutmeg. agreed to forward MLs of 20 µg/kg for OTA in chili pepper, paprika and nutmeg (dry, dried) for final adoption (Step 5/8) and to apply the MLs to the whole/powder/crushed/ground portion of the spices.

AFT. India, as Chair of the EWG, proposed an ML of 20 µg/kg for AFT in chili pepper and nutmeg. The European Union said the MLs should be lower, based on the ALARA (as low as reasonably achievable) principle. India responded that consumption of spices was low and harmonized MLs would benefit world trade and asked if JECFA could do an impact assessment. The JECFA Secretariat stated that an impact assessment for spices might not be a good use of resources as the public health impact of lower MLs would be negligible.

CCCF agreed to forward an ML of 20 µg/kg for AFT in chili pepper and nutmeg (spices, dry, dried) for final adoption (Step 5/8) and to apply the ML to the whole/powder/crushed/ground portion. The European Union, Norway, and Switzerland expressed reservations to the MLs of 20 µg/kg for chili pepper and nutmeg. There was general agreement to discontinue work on AFT in ginger, paprika, black and white pepper, and turmeric. CCCF agreed to re-establish the EWG to continue work on the sampling plan for CCCF17 (2024).

Discussion Paper on a Code of Practice or Guidelines for the Prevention and Reduction of Ciguatera Poisoning (Agenda Item 10)

The United States, as Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of Co-Chair the European Union, introduced the discussion paper, stating that the EWG supported starting new work on a COP, even though there were some knowledge gaps. The European Union appreciated the work done by the United States and noted that member country comments made on the discussion paper should be considered in the draft COP. Australia also supported the work, noting that some Australian fish species affected by ciguatera may be missing from the list in the discussion paper. Both FAO and WHO representatives supported the proposed work. FAO provided comments in a CRD and highlighted the FAO e-learning course, while WHO noted that useful information can be found in its 2020 technical document, *Ciguatera poisoning*. When the CCCF Chair asked the plenary whether new work should proceed, the European Union agreed that it was important to start work now, even if all the issues were not clear. Singapore and Australia also spoke in support of new work on a COP. Japan agreed with the work proposal, as revised and presented in plenary. Chile asked whether a COP or Guidelines would be appropriate, and the United States said both would be acceptable, but preferred to work towards a COP. The Codex Secretariat suggested that for now, the project document could consider both options, to develop either a COP or Guidelines, allowing for the EWG to consider the issue and make a recommendation to the Committee. Japan noted that for a COP it will be important to gather and collect information and data on the effectiveness and feasibility of recommended practices, including analytical measures, and to confirm information on country measures.

CCCF agreed to recommend that CAC46 (2023) approve new work on a COP/Guidelines for the prevention or reduction of ciguatera poisoning and to establish an EWG, chaired by the United States and co-chaired by France, Spain, and Panama, working in English, to prepare a proposed COP/Guidelines for comments and consideration by CCCF17 (2024).

Guidance on Data Analysis for Development of Maximum Levels and for Improved Data Collection (Agenda Item 12)

The European Union, as Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of the Co-Chairs Japan, The Netherlands, and the United States, introduced the item and summarized key points of discussion and recommendations. The Chair explained that three VWG meetings were held in 2022, that the Co-Chairs prepared sections of the guidance, and that the Chair had prepared a final document combining the three sections, which was only made available immediately prior to the plenary session. A PWG also was held immediately prior to the session to present the document and prepare recommendations for the plenary.

The EWG Chair first presented recommended changes to the GEMS/Food database, while noting that these changes will be reviewed by GEMS/Food administrator for their feasibility of implementation. The United States made several recommendations and prepared changes to Section 1 (Data collection and submission) of the draft guidance, which were accepted by the Committee as well as other recommendations. Some suggested recommendations were noted for further consideration. The International Council of Beverages Associations asked that their recommendation to require submission of LOD and product type information be reflected in the report. The Chair explained that their comments were reflected in the PWG report (CRD06), but as discussed by the PWG, these fields would remain optional for now. Brazil asked that the term “method of analysis” be changed to “principles of methods of analysis.” The International Special Dietary Foods Industries (ISDI) commented on the importance of ensuring that the European Food Safety Authority and GEMS/Food databases can still communicate for automated data upload. The Chair clarified that the United States, as Co-Chair, will revise Section 1 for CCCF17 (2024), and there would be an opportunity for further discussion in the EWG with a view to present Section 1 for finalization by CCCF17 (2024).

The Chair explained that more work is needed on Sections 2 (Data selection/clean-up – generating overview of data) and 3 (Statistical analysis), but asked for concurrence on several specific recommendations from these sections, including: (1) whether there is a need to determine the specific minimum number of samples and, if so, to agree on a preferred option, (2) to agree on the appropriateness of including dietary exposure rates calculations in impact assessments of hypothetical MLs, and (3) whether a combined dataset or individual datasets should be used for developing MLs. In response to the proposed recommendations to plenary, Australia asked that language on including exposure rates calculations be changed to “further consider the role of the committee in calculating dietary exposure reduction rates when considering MLs.” The United States suggested that the minimum number of samples be referred to as the “provisional minimum number,” to reflect that work was ongoing on Section 3. Brazil asked that the recommendation to consider data availability and quality before deciding on new work be reflected in the Preamble of the final guidance.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations of the PWG, as presented by the Chair and amended in plenary:

- On the proposed changes in GEMS/Food and a workplan for CCCF17
- On a plan to elaborate a list of topics covered under Sections 2 and 3 that will need further discussion after CCCF17
- That CCCF should further consider the Committee’s role (versus JECFA’s) in calculating dietary exposure reduction rates for setting MLs
- That the provisional minimum number of samples is 59
- That at this stage a combined global dataset is to be used for ML development and individual datasets per year or per region for additional consideration in ML development, but this topic can be discussed further after CCCF17
- To recommend to WHO the development of additional training materials for using the GEMS/Food database

- On a more structured process for elaborating Calls for Data
- On the consideration of data availability and quality before deciding on new work and
- To hold a PWG immediately prior to CCCF17 (2024) to discuss the guidance document.

CCCF re-established the EWG chaired by the European Union, co-chaired by Japan, the Netherlands and the United States, to continue work on a general guidance on data analysis for ML development and improved data collection.

Forward Work-Plan for CCCF: Review of Staple Food-Contaminant Combinations for Future Work of CCCF (Agenda Item 13)

The Host Country Secretariat, the Netherlands, speaking also on behalf of the Codex and JECFA Secretariats, introduced the item and provided a summary of the PWG held prior to the session, which discussed options for future work as outlined in a discussion paper prepared for this session. There was general support for an EWG to further develop the approach to review staple food-contaminant combinations, with flexibility on the methodology. However, the Committee agreed that if no chair could be identified for an EWG and there were no objections to postponement, the Committee could revisit this topic in 3 to 5 years' time. The Committee further acknowledged that staple foods were already considered in the framework of the review of Codex standards for contaminants as a prioritization criterion (Agenda item 14) and that new work on staple food contaminant combinations could still be proposed following the existing procedures in CCCF. As there were no volunteers to chair the work, CCCF agreed to postpone discussion on the identification of staple food-contaminant combinations and revisit this topic in 3 years' time.

Review of Codex Standards for Contaminants (Agenda Item 14)

Canada, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item and highlighted conclusions from a VWG held prior to CCCF16, including responses to 8 charge questions, as reflected in CRD03. CCCF agreed to endorse the recommendations of the VWG, including the proposed updates to Lists A, B, and the Overall Highest Priority List (OHPL). In response to a recommendation for the WG Chair to review standards in List B to determine whether the standards recommended for re-evaluation came from a member country, CCCF, or CAC, the United States requested that the EWG for CCCF17 (2024) consider using a more selective review process based on concrete recommendations for re-review, rather than based on all requests for a re-review recorded in meeting reports. The Chair Canada agreed that they will consider changes as part of the ongoing trial basis.

Brazil volunteered to chair an EWG, working in English, to develop a discussion paper exploring whether there are new measures supporting revision of the *COP for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Peanuts* (CXC 55-2004). Canada volunteered to chair an EWG, working in English, to develop a discussion paper reviewing the *COP for the Reduction of Aflatoxin B1 in Raw Materials and Supplemental Feeding Stuffs for Milk-Producing Animals* (CXC 45-1997). The United States asked that the report reflect Brazil's proposal to explore whether there are new measures to control aflatoxin contamination. The Chair agreed to do so, and also noted this proposal would be reflected and pertain to both topics.

CCCF also agreed to reconvene the WG, chaired by Canada, to meet prior to CCCF17 (2024) to consider comments received from the circular letter on priorities for review of existing Codex standards for contaminants and to make recommendations for consideration by CCCF.

Follow-up work to the outcomes of JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert consultations (Agenda Item 15)

The European Union, as Chair, presented the recommendations from a VWG held prior to CCCF16 (2023) (summarized in CRD04), focusing on possible follow-up actions in response to the outcomes of JECFA evaluations and FAO/WHO expert consultations on tropane alkaloids, ergot alkaloids and trichothecenes (T-2 toxin, HT-2 toxin, and diacetoxyscirpenol), and recalled the recommendations from CCCF15 (2022), i.e., to develop a discussion paper to look into the need and feasibility of possible follow-up actions and identifying leading countries to carry out the work identified. China volunteered to prepare a discussion paper on tropane alkaloids. No volunteers were identified for work on ergot alkaloids or trichothecenes.

CCCF agreed to establish an EWG, chaired by China, working in English, to prepare a discussion paper on tropane alkaloids for CCCF17 (2024). CCCF also agreed to reconsider possible follow-up actions on ergot alkaloids and trichothecenes at CCCF17; and to reconvene, as necessary, the in-session WG at CCCF17, chaired by the European Union.

Priority list of contaminants for evaluation by JECFA (Agenda Item 16)

The United States, as Chair, presented updates and recommendations from a VWG held prior to CCCF16 (summarized in CRD05). The VWG recommended adding thallium, proposed by the United States, and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) (e.g., PFOS, PFOA, PFNA, and PFHxS), proposed by Singapore, to the priority list for full evaluation (toxicological assessment and exposure assessment). Regarding PFAS, the JECFA Secretariat recommended that this family of compounds might be addressed through an *ad hoc* expert meeting.

The Chair noted that Indonesia had proposed addition of ethylene oxide (EtO) and 2-chloroethanol (2-CE) to the priority list, however, questions remained as to whether EtO should be viewed as a contaminant, pesticide, or impurity in a food additive, so consultation would be needed. For this reason, the VWG recommended that Indonesia's proposal to add EtO and 2-CE to the priority list be deferred until next year to await input from the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR), including whether EtO meets the definition of a pesticide under Codex, and if not, whether some coordination with regards to the risk assessment would be required between JMPR and JECFA to evaluate this compound as a contaminant. The VWG also recommended that the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) be informed of CCCF decisions.

India requested the inclusion of acrylamide in the priority list, noting they had new data on acrylamide in foods. The JECFA Secretariat made the Committee aware that acrylamide was already evaluated by JECFA in 2005 and 2011, and acrylamide was identified as a genotoxic carcinogen and therefore a health-based guidance value could not be established. A third evaluation was unlikely to have a different outcome, and CCCF had already

developed a *COP for the Reduction of Acrylamide in Foods* (CXC 67-2009) as an outcome of the JECFA evaluations. India expressed interest in developing a discussion paper on acrylamide in foods.

The Codex Secretariat recalled the decision at CCCF14 (2019) to ask JECFA to issue a call for data on cadmium and lead in quinoa in two years' time. At the request from JECFA Secretariat, a table listing calls for data will be added to the Priority List in the future to support JECFA's work.

Belgium reported that according to CCFA53 (2023), no data sponsor stepped forward to support the request from CCCF14 (2019) for CCFA to review or develop lead specifications for bentonite, charcoal (activated carbon), and diatomaceous earth. CCCF agreed to encourage CCCF and CCFA delegations to coordinate with each other to submit data on lead in bentonite, diatomaceous earth, and charcoal (activated carbon) to proceed with establishing new specifications.

Brazil noted that scopoletin had been retained in the priority list at the request of the Coordinating Committee on North America and Southwest Pacific (CCNASWP16, 2023) (see Agenda Item 2) and questioned whether the final adoption of the Regional Standard for Fermented Noni Juice developed by CCNASWP could be delayed until JECFA performed a safety evaluation of scopoletin. The Codex Secretariat noted that this was a regional standard and adoption decisions were up to Members of that region present at CAC. If Members are concerned about the adoption of this standard, they should convey their concerns to the Executive Committee, under the Critical Review, or express concerns at CAC if this standard is considered for adoption.

The Committee agreed to endorse the priority list, to continue to request comments and/or information on the priority list for consideration by CCCF16 (2023), and to reconvene the WG at CCCF17 (2024) chaired by the United States.

Other Business and Future Work (Agenda Item 17)

As a follow-up to the side event on Foresight on Emerging Issues in Food and Feed Safety, CCCF noted the possibility to have an agenda item on emerging issues at future sessions. Also, the Chair noted that a Circular Letter could be issued with selected emerging issues as topics for comments, which could be discussed at a side event prior to the plenary.

The Committee reviewed a provisional agenda for CCCF17, including new discussion papers on tropane alkaloids, acrylamide, possible revision of the COP for aflatoxin B1 in animal feedstuffs, possible revision of the COP for aflatoxin in peanuts, and an expanded COP for the prevention and reduction of cadmium contamination in foods.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

CCCF17 is scheduled to convene in approximately in one year, with final arrangements subject to confirmation by the Host Country and the Codex Secretariat.