

**REPORT OF THE UNITED STATES DELEGATE
ON THE 22nd SESSION OF THE
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
April 25 – 29 and May 4, 2022
Virtual**

The 22nd Session of Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV22) was chaired by Mr. Alfonso Guati-Rojo Sánchez, Director General, General Bureau of Standards, Ministry of Economy of Mexico. More than 120 registered participants from 83 Member countries, one Member organization (the European Union), four Observer organizations, and Palestine participated in CCFFV22. The United States was represented by Delegate Dorian LaFond, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Alternate Delegate Trevor Gilbert, Produce Safety Expert, Office of Food Safety, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Mr. Steve Wearne, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), delivered opening remarks in which he highlighted that food systems are evolving, and Codex has to play a role in supporting the transition to sustainable food systems. Mr. Tom Heilandt, Codex Secretary, also addressed the Committee.

The United States accomplished its key objectives for the session. The three standards on the meeting's agenda were completed and forwarded to the CAC for final adoption at its next session (CAC45, currently scheduled to convene in November 2022). The discussion paper on the Definition of Terms used in the CCFFV Standard Layout, developed by Ghana and the United States, was accepted and will be published as an information document on the on the Committee website.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Standards Completed:

At this session, CCFFV completed work on three draft standards for submission for final adoption at Step5/8 at the 45th Session of Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC45). These three standards are:

- Draft Standard for Onions and Shallots
- Draft Standard for Berry Fruits
- Draft Standard for Fresh Dates

There was overwhelming support for the inclusion of tolerances for soft rot decay and internal breakdown in all fresh fruit and vegetable (FFV) classes. The European Union, and its member states' delegations, continued their objection to such tolerances in "Extra" Class, while the delegation of Colombia objected to any inclusion of such tolerances in the standards.

Discussion Paper on Glossary of Terms Used in the Layout for Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and Amendments to the CCFFV Standard Layout:

CCFFV22 accepted the discussion paper prepared by the delegations of the United States and Ghana, including its name change from “Glossary of Terms” to “Definition of Terms.” CCFFV22 also adopted changes to the CCFFV Standard Layout, including a provision that all deviations from requirements under Section 3.1 (Minimum Requirements) of the Standard Layout must be able to be seen with the naked eye or corrected 20/20 vision, and alignment of Section 7.2 (Labelling of Non-Retail Containers) with the new *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-retail Containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021).

MEETING SUMMARY:

Standards Recommended for Final Adoption at Step 5/8:

- **Draft Standard for Onions and Shallots:** CCFFV22 agreed that countries can retain their traditional sizing methods for onions and shallots while those in the standard are guides. CCFFV22 also agreed to include tolerances for soft rot decay and internal breakdown of 1.0% in “Extra” Class, and 2.0% in Classes I and II. The Committee noted that the values were justified by current trade practices. CCFFV22 will forward the proposed draft Codex standard for onions and shallots to CAC45 for final adoption at Step 5/8.
- **Draft Standard for Berry Fruits:** This draft standard was expanded to cover twenty-nine different small fruits and berries both cultivated and uncultivated, temperate, and tropical. The term “berries” is used as it is defined in the *Codex Classification of Foods and Animal Feeds*, Volume 22 of the Codex Alimentarius (1993). There was consensus that sizing should be optional and left to traditional trade practices. The Committee also agreed to include tolerances for soft rot decay and internal breakdown of 1.0% in “Extra” Class, and 2.0% in Classes I and II. CCFFV22 will forward the proposed draft standard for berry fruits to CAC45 for final adoption at Step 5/8.
- **Draft Standard for Fresh Dates:** The maturity requirements (i.e., minimum 20% moisture content at tamer stage) of this standard were contentious because, in many countries, dates at tamer stage are not referred to as fresh dates, and the minimum moisture content is lower than the maximum moisture content in the Codex Standard for Dates (dried). The meeting sided with the United States and other likeminded countries on the proposed 30.0% minimum moisture content and agreed to include tolerances for soft rot decay and internal breakdown of 1.0% in “Extra” Class, and 2.0% in Classes I and II. CCFFV22 will forward the proposed draft standard for berry fruits to CAC45 for final adoption at Step 5/8

Discussion Paper on Glossary of Terms Used in the Layout for Codex Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and Amendments to the CCFFV Standard Layout:

The CCFFV22 accepted the document prepared by the United States and Ghana, including its proposed name change to “Definition of Terms” as the document was not formatted in alphabetical order but in the sequence of the standard layout to facilitate ease of use. New labeling provisions were included as a result of adoption of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-retail Containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021) by CAC44 (2021).

The Committee also accepted the U.S. proposal to specify that deviations from requirements established under Section 3.1 (Minimum Requirements) of the CCFFV Standard Layout “shall

be observed by the naked eye or corrected 20/20 vision.” This change was initiated to reduce incidents of loupes and magnifying lens to search for quality defects in FFV.

Proposals for New Work:

CCFFV22 agreed to recommend that CAC45 approve proposals to develop new or amended standards for:

- Castillo lulo from Colombia (new standard)
- Fresh curry leaves from India (new standard)
- Bananas from Brazil (amendment to existing standard)

The United States expressed concern that the proposal for Castillo lulo only included production and export data from Colombia, while India’s proposal on fresh curry leaves did not contain any data. Due to these deficiencies, the United States’ position was that neither proposal met the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities as required by the Codex *Procedural Manual* (i.e., volume of production and consumption in individual countries, international or regional market potential). CCFFV22 forwarded all three proposals to the Codex Executive Committee for Critical Review and CAC45 for approval as new work. It requested that the delegation of Colombia to revise its proposal on Castillo lulo for direct submission to CAC45. CCFFV22 also agreed to recommend approval of new work to update all pre-2017 standards as proposed by the European Union. The Committee agreed that this work, to be led by Germany, would not involve any substantive changes; the updates would be restricted to formatting changes only.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION:

The date and place of the 23rd Session of the CCFFV were not set and will be determined by the host government (Mexico) in consultation with the Codex Secretariat.