



Report of the U.S. Delegate, 1st Session, Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs

The [Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs \(CCSCH\)](#) convened its first Session in Kochi (Cochin), Kerala, India, from February 11-14, 2014. The Session was chaired by India as host country and attended by 101 delegates from 40 member countries and one member organization, observers from six international organizations and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United States was represented by Delegate Dorian LaFond of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Alternate Delegate Dr. George Ziobro of the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Codex Office, one government advisor and one industry advisor.

This first Session of the CCSCH focused on establishing the work management modalities and operating procedures of the Committee in line with the guidelines provided in the Codex Alimentarius *Procedural Manual*. Specifically, the Committee established parameters for the development of standards based on the Committee's terms of reference as well as the timely submission of project proposals, and approved four new work proposals.

The full report of the Session will be made available on the Codex Alimentarius website at <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/>

Key Issues

Work Management Modalities of the CCSCH

Meeting Interval: The Committee agreed to meet approximately every eighteen (18) months and that the session length would be up to five days, based on the workload. The Committee agreed to consider the timing of sessions of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV) in planning its future sessions. India also confirmed its willingness to co-host future sessions of the Committee once it has gained some experience as host country.

Consideration of new work within CCSCH: The Committee agreed to establish a Working Group at the beginning of each session to evaluate proposals for development of new standards using the prioritization criteria set out in the Codex *Procedural Manual*.

Grouping of commodities in general standards (based on parts of the plant from which they are derived): The need for grouping commodities based on parts of the plant used was discussed as a way of simplifying the Committee's workload and of facilitating standardization. This would involve using a lateral format that includes a section on general provisions (common to the similar products that are in the group) and individual annexes containing requirements that are specific to the individual products. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic Working Group, led by India, to prepare a discussion paper for the next session that will: (i) clarify the intent and purpose of the grouping of spices and culinary herbs, including the rationale; and (ii) propose the grouping of spices and culinary herbs, taking into account scientific and technical information and the work on classification and groupings used by other committees.

Standard Layout: The Committee established an electronic Working Group, led by India, to prepare a standard layout in line with Codex guidelines. Additionally, the standard layout will reference the work of the Codex horizontal committees responsible for the evaluation of additives, pesticides, contaminants, labelling and sampling issues.

Proposals for New Work

The CCSCH established an in-session Working Group, led by the United States, to evaluate the standards development proposals received. The Working Group agreed to evaluate only the proposals submitted in writing in advance of the meeting. The following outcomes of the Working Group review were adopted by the Committee:

Rosemary (submitted by India) and saffron (Islamic Republic of Iran): These proposals were returned for redrafting due to insufficient information.

Nutmeg (Indonesia): Because of its late submission, members and observers were unable to study the project document prior to the meeting. The submitting member Indonesia was advised to review and revise the proposal to adhere to the CCSCH's terms of reference.



Paprika (Argentina): The Committee agreed to seek clarification from the upcoming sessions of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV) and the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV) as to whether paprika was in their work plan. Consequently, the proposal for new work on paprika (as presented) was placed on hold for reconsideration at the next session.

Approved proposals: The Committee agreed to recommend the development of the following standards for approval as new work by the 37th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2014), and the members listed below volunteered to lead electronic working groups (eWGs) to begin the work:

- Black, White and Green Pepper (BWG Pepper), eWG led by India
 - Cumin, eWG led by the European Union and co-chaired by India
 - Oregano, eWG led by Argentina and co-chaired by Greece
 - Thyme, eWG led by the European Union and co-chaired by Switzerland
- India, Indonesia and the United States had submitted project documents for the standardization of black, white and green pepper. The U.S. deferred the leadership of this standard to India; however, the U.S. will actively work with India in this regard. The United States plans to participate fully in all of the working groups and will work actively to influence the requirements within the proposed standards consistent with Codex principles.

Summary

Consistent with U.S. goals for this meeting, the CCSCH remained true to its mandate as a new commodity committee and adhered to Codex Guidelines on the Application of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities (Criteria Applicable to Commodities) as outlined in the Codex *Procedural Manual* in guiding its review of proposals. In addition, the CCSCH recognized the importance of existing mechanisms that facilitate cross-committee interactions, in particular accepting the approach of cross-referencing the science-based guidelines and standards developed by the Codex general subject committees (e.g., with respect to texts developed to address food safety issues, such as food hygiene, contaminants, and pesticide residues).