



Report of the U.S. Delegate, 33rd Session, Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products

The Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) had a productive 33rd Session, recommending adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission of two documents (Draft Performance Criteria for Methods, and Draft Standard for Fresh and Quick Frozen Raw Scallop Products, see below), on both of which the U.S. Delegates contributed substantially and the U.S. Delegation supported. The Committee also made substantial progress on other documents to establish harmonized international standards and codes of practice to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair trade practices for fish and fishery products. Bill Jones (FDA) and Tim Hanson (U.S. Dept. of Commerce/NOAA) were the U.S. co-delegates to CCFFP.

On the day before the Plenary Session, the U.S. delegation held consultations on the proposed agenda items with delegates from other countries and with the Committee Chairperson to facilitate discussion at the Session. The U.S. delegates also participated in working groups that met during lunch breaks and in the evening. During the Session, the U.S. delegates presented U.S. positions on issues and offered suggestions for developing draft revisions to standards and codes of practice, including:

- Draft Performance Criteria for Reference and Confirmatory Methods for Marine Biotoxins in the *Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs*;
- Standard for Smoked Fish, Smoke-Flavored Fish and Smoke-Dried Fish – Section 4 Food Additives;
- Draft Standard for Raw, Fish and Quick Frozen Scallop Products;
- Proposed Draft Code of Practice on Processing of Scallop Meat;
- Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (section on sturgeon caviar);
- Proposed Draft Code of Practice for Processing of Fish Sauce (which was advanced to Step 5);
- Proposed Food Additive Provisions in Standards for Fish and Fishery Products (food additive provisions in adopted standards);
- Discussion Paper on Histamine;
- Discussion Paper on Nitrogen Factors; and
- Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (optional product requirements for commodities).

Most decisions on these documents were aligned with U.S. positions, with some exceptions: The Committee decided that water alone could be added to frozen scallops, which is not allowed in the U.S. The Committee decided that roe-on scallops do not need harvest area pathogen controls, which are required in the U.S.

The U.S. Delegation, supported by other delegations, advocated successfully for inclusion of the mouse bioassay for paralytic shell poison in the Draft Performance Criteria that the Committee recommended for adoption by the Commission for the *Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs*, despite opposition by some delegations that favored chemical methods to the exclusion of biological methods of testing. The bioassay method is widely used, including the U.S., and the U.S. Delegation considers the method vital for protecting public health.

The U.S. Delegation also encouraged re-evaluation of the histamine limit because histamine presents a public health risk, but there was little support from other delegations to recommend the new work on histamine. The Committee decided to re-constitute an inter-sessional electronic working group to review existing guidance, consider susceptible species, and consider uncertainty factors.

Further information about the Session, please refer to the *Report of the Thirty-Third Session of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products*, available on the Codex website: <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/>