



## Report of the U.S. Delegate, 18th Session, Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

The 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the [Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables \(CCFFV\)](#) met in Phuket, Thailand, from February 24 – 28 2014. The Session was attended by 86 participants representing 37 member countries, one member organization, three observer organizations and one international organization. The United States was represented by Delegate Dorian LaFond of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Alternate Delegate Dr. Kenneth Hinga of the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Codex Office and one industry advisor.

The meeting was successful in achieving major goals with respect to updating its terms of reference and reaching consensus on a number of individual standards and proposals for new work. The full report of the 18<sup>th</sup> Session will be made available on the Codex Alimentarius website at <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/>

### Key Issues

#### Proposed Draft Standard for Golden Passion Fruit

Based on written comments, previous discussions and the desire to ensure a more efficient use of the CCFFV's time and resources, the Committee broadened the scope of this standard to include two other widely traded passion fruit species, purple passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis Sims forma edulis*) and yellow passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis Sims forma flavicarpa*). These three passion fruit species represent approximately 90.0 percent of the global fresh passion fruit trade.

The Committee established an in-session Working Group, led by the United States, to revise the relevant sections of the draft standard to accommodate yellow and purple passion fruit species. The Committee endorsed the amendments (minimum requirements, sizing, and labeling) proposed by the Working Group, renamed the standard "Draft Standard for Passion Fruit," and forwarded it to the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2014) for adoption at Step 8.

Both of the U.S. objectives for this standard (broadening the scope of the standard and the sizing method) were attained.

#### Proposed Draft Standard for Durian

The Committee considered this draft standard and made changes to the text based on the product's unique skin, size, and smell. The Committee then agreed to forward the draft standard to 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for adoption at Step 5/8.

The harmonization of the provisions of this standard with other Codex FFV standards and trading practices were of particular interest the U.S.

#### Proposed Draft Standard for Okra

This draft standard was discussed with special emphasis placed on the minimum maturity requirements. The CCFFV decided that "maturity" was not a requirement in this product, but that "sufficiently developed" was. Hence, the language "sufficiently developed /not fibrous" was used. Sizing provisions were revised to reflect that okras are sized by various length ranges and a note was added to the table in the standard to indicate it is only for guidance purposes and for voluntary application. The Committee then agreed to forward the proposed draft standard for adoption at Step 5/8 by the next session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2014).

The sizing method and using appropriate language in this standard based on the characteristics of the product were key U.S concerns at this CCFFV session.

#### Review of the Maturity Requirements in the Codex Standard for Table Grapes

The United States, as chair of the Electronic Working Group (eWG) that evaluated the Organization for International Viniculture (OIV) proposal on revising the maturity requirements in the Codex Standard for Table Grapes (CODEX STAN 255-2007), summarized the working group's report. The eWG recommended that further discussion and/or



revision of maturity requirements should not be reopened in view of the complexity of the issue, the differing views expressed by CCFFV members, and the difficulty and number of years the existing requirements took to reach agreement. This decision was supported by the United States.

### **Review of the CCFFV Terms of Reference**

Discussion at the 17<sup>th</sup> CCFFV Session (2012) resulted in formation of an electronic working group (eWG) led by Japan to review the CCFFV's terms of reference. The report of the eWG was presented and discussed at the 18<sup>th</sup> CCFFV Session with the following outcomes:

- The Committee agreed to remove the reference to the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) from its terms of reference and to amend the terms of reference to refer to cooperation with other international organizations to avoid duplication in the standards development process.
- The Committee agreed to submit the revised terms of reference to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, through the Committee on General Principles, for adoption.

### **Proposals for New Work**

The Committee formed an in-session Priorities Working Group to discuss and prioritize the proposals for the elaboration of new standards. Only proposals submitted in advance of the meeting were discussed. After discussion and amendments to the proposals, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the WG and agreed to request the Commission to approve new work and subsequent eWGs to prepare proposed draft standards, for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next session, on the following: commodities

- Aubergine, eWG led by India and working in English only;
  - Garlic, eWG led by Mexico and working in English and Spanish;
  - Kiwifruit, eWG led by New Zealand and co-chaired by Iran, working in English only, and
  - Ware potatoes, eWG led by India and working in English only.
- The United States plans to participate in the eWGs on aubergine, garlic, and ware potatoes.

### **Proposed Codex Layout for Codex Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Standards**

The CCFFV noted that its standard layout had been on the agenda for several sessions but that little progress had been made; hence an in-depth discussion was held. The Committee indicated the importance of the layout in:

- identifying essential quality provisions that should be covered by FFV standards;
- facilitating the standards development process ;
- ensuring fair trade practices; and
- having the standard reflect current agricultural, industry and marketing practices without limiting future innovation. Participants expressed views that the current standard layout contains prescriptive provisions (language and other requirements) that delay completion of standards and should be reduced, simplified and/or replaced by overarching and flexible provisions. Additionally, the layout should provide a common format and trading language, and facilitate fair international trading practices and the application of Codex standards. The layout should also take into consideration other layouts developed by international organizations to facilitate harmonization of international standards.

The 18<sup>th</sup> CCFFV agreed to establish an eWG on the standard layout, led by the United States and co-chaired by Germany and working in English only, with the following mandate:

- to examine what needs to be changed in the proposed standard layout for Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, and make proposals for changes, including:
  - The introductory statement in relation to the nature of the produce;
  - Point of application of the standard (quality tolerances);
  - Sizing provisions;
  - Uniformity provisions;
  - How to approach food additives for fresh fruits and vegetables; and
  - The need for a glossary.



- to take into consideration the Codex Format for Commodity Standards (as laid out in the *Procedural Manual*), the Standard Layout for UNECE Standards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, and layouts developed by other international organizations.  
The United States supported the decision of the CCFFV.

### *Next CCFFV Session*

The 19th CCFFV Session is tentatively scheduled in 18 months. The exact time and venue will be determined by Mexico as the host Government in consultation with the Codex Secretariat.