



Report of the United States Delegate to the 10th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food

April 4-8, 2016
Rotterdam, Netherlands

The 10th Session of the CCCF was attended by 56 Member countries, one Member organization (the European Union), and 14 international organizations. The U.S. Delegation was led by Dr. Lauren Posnick Robin, Head of Delegation, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, and Mr. Terry Dutko, Alternate Delegate, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, assisted by five government and three non-government advisors.

Summary/Highlights

Overall, the United States was satisfied that the 10th Session of the [Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food \(CCCF\)](#) was a productive meeting, achieving results generally in line with U.S. objectives.

The Committee advanced a number of texts for final adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) at its 39th Session in June, 2016:

- draft maximum level (ML) of 0.35 mg/kg for inorganic arsenic in husked rice (Step 8);
 - revised draft MLs for lead in a number of processed foods, including ready-to-drink fruit juices and nectars at 0.03 mg/kg; canned fruits (canned berries and other small fruits) at 0.1 mg/kg; canned vegetables (canned leafy vegetables and canned legume vegetables) at 0.1 mg/kg; jams, jellies and marmalades at 0.1 mg/kg; pickled cucumbers at 0.1 mg/kg; preserved tomatoes at 0.05 mg/kg with deletion of the note on the adjustment of the ML to take into account the concentration of the product; and table olives at 0.4 mg/kg (Step 5/8);
 - draft revision of the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxins in Cereals (Step 8); and
 - draft revised Annexes to the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxins (Step 5/8).
- The Committee will continue work on a number of texts, and agreed to:

- re-establish the electronic working group (eWG), led by the United States, to continue to review MLs for lead in fruit juices and nectars that are obtained exclusively from berries and other small fruits, canned brassica vegetables, canned chestnuts and canned chestnut puree, fungi and mushrooms, mango chutney, and processed tomato concentrates, and to add two new food categories, i.e., fish and pulses, for consideration by the next session of the Committee;
- return the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Arsenic Contamination in Rice to Step 2/3 for further development by the eWG, circulation for comments, and consideration at the next session of the Committee;
- return the proposed draft MLs for cadmium in chocolate and cocoa-derived products to Step 2/3 for further development by the eWG, circulation for comments, and further consideration at the next session of the Committee;
- return the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxins in Spices and its annexes to Step 2/3 for further development by the eWG, circulation for comments and consideration by the next session of the Committee;
- establish an eWG to prepare a revised proposed draft annex for ergot and ergot alkaloids to the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals ;
- expand work on the MLs for mycotoxins in spices through an eWG that will address questions raised by the Committee and develop a report for consideration at the next session; and
- re-establish the eWG, led by Japan and co-chaired by New Zealand and Canada, to prepare a discussion paper with proposals for MLs for methylmercury in fish, including a project document for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

The Committee also endorsed five chemical contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants for evaluation by the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and agreed to reconvene the in-session Working Group on Priority List for Contaminants and Naturally Occurring Toxicants for Evaluation by JECFA at the next session of the Committee.

The following paragraphs discuss the issues that were raised during this session in more detail. The full report of the Session can be found on the Codex website, www.codexalimentarius.net



MEETING SUMMARY

Draft Maximum Levels for Inorganic Arsenic in Husked Rice

The Committee agreed to advance the ML of 0.35 mg/kg for inorganic arsenic in husked rice for final adoption by the CAC with the understanding that the ML would be reviewed three years after the implementation of the Code of Practice for Prevention and Reduction of Arsenic Contamination in Rice. The review will take into account all available data with the clear intent to lower the ML as appropriate. Reservations to the maximum level were made by European Union and Norway, who favored a lower ML and India, who disagreed with the data used to derive the ML.

Proposed Draft Revision of the Maximum Levels for Lead in Selected Fruits and Vegetables (Fresh and Processed) in the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995)*

The United States chaired the eWG to review MLs for lead in selected fruits and vegetables (fresh and processed).

The Committee recommended lowering MLs for a number of commodities as summarized above, and that consequently the current ML of 1 mg/kg be revoked when the revised MLs are adopted.

The Committee re-established the eWG, which will be led by the United States and work English only, to continue reviewing MLs in other foods, as described in the highlights section of this report.

Proposed Draft Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Arsenic Contamination in Rice

The Committee returned the Code of Practice to Step 2/3 for further development, comments, and consideration by its next session.

The Committee will continue working on the Code of Practice through an eWG to be chaired by Japan and co-chaired by Spain, working in English only, in anticipation of receiving more information and more available data.

Proposed Draft Maximum Levels for Cadmium in Chocolate and Cocoa-Derived Products

The Committee returned the proposed draft ML for cadmium in chocolate and cocoa-derived products to Step 2/3 for further elaboration.

After an extensive discussion, the Committee agreed on the following food categories for establishing MLs for cadmium:

- intermediate products, i.e., cocoa liquor and cocoa powder
 - finished products based on total cocoa solids content (%), i.e., chocolate and cocoa powder ready for consumption
- The Committee noted that the in-session Working Group had determined that it would be most practical to work on the MLs based on a total cocoa solids content since this information is readily available on the label.

Draft Revision of the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals and Proposed Draft Annexes (CAC/RCP 51-2003)

The Committee generally supported the revised draft Code of Practice and Annexes after making some additional edits to terminology and forwarded them for final adoption by the CAC at its June 2016 session.

Proposed draft Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Spices

The Committee returned the Code of Practice and its annexes to Step 2/3 for further development

The Committee agreed to:

- continue work on the annexes and use the categories of spices as a starting point,



- issue a Circular Letter to request information on all available proven measures used in practice to reduce contamination by mycotoxins in spices that would help guide the development of possible annexes to the Code of Practice, and
- re-establish the eWG, chaired by Spain and co-chaired by The Netherlands and India, to continue drafting of the Code of Practice and its annexes, taking into input received in response to the Circular Letter.

Discussion paper on an Annex for Ergot and Ergot Alkaloids to the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals (CAC/RCP 51-2003)

The Committee agreed to include an annex for ergot and ergot alkaloids and noted that this work is related to the work on annexes to the CAC/RCP 51-2003.

The Committee will circulate the proposed draft annex for comments at Step 3 and establish an eWG, chaired by Germany and co-chaired by the United Kingdom, working in English only, to prepare a revised proposed draft based on comments and input received.

Discussion Paper on the Development of Maximum Levels for Mycotoxins in Spices

The Committee agreed on the need to expand this work further and re-established an eWG, chaired by India and co-chaired by the EU, working in English only, with the following terms of reference:

- provide a rationale for selection of spices in Group 1(chili, paprika, ginger, nutmeg, pepper, and turmeric);
- provide a rationale for selection of total aflatoxins and Ochratoxin A;
- take into account the outcome of the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) 2016 evaluation;
- consider trade aspects of existing national standards; and
- prepare a Project Document for new work with proposals for MLs for these spices

Discussion Paper on Maximum Levels for Methylmercury in Fish

The Committee agreed to establish an eWG, chaired by The Netherlands and co-chaired by New Zealand and Canada, working in English only, to prepare a discussion paper presenting proposals for:

- one ML for fresh tuna or MLs for different tuna species, if the need for differentiation is justified,
- consideration of the need for a separate ML for canned tuna, whether based on occurrence data or derived from MLs for fresh tuna, and
- the need for MLs for other species of fish.

The Committee will consider submitting a Project Document to the Commission for approval of new work, pending the outcome of the eWG.

Priority List of Contaminants and Naturally Occurring Toxicants for Evaluation by JECFA

The Committee endorsed the following list of contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants for JECFA evaluation:

- Dioxins – full evaluation (toxicological assessment and exposure assessment) to update 2001 JECFA assessment and incorporate data on developmental effects from *in utero* exposures.
- Inorganic arsenic – The 2011 JECFA evaluation addressed cancer effects. This evaluation would focus on non-cancer effects (neurodevelopmental, immunological and cardiovascular) and could inform future risk management needs.
- Scopoletin – full evaluation (toxicological assessment and exposure assessment) in fermented Noni juice.
- Ergot alkaloids – full evaluation (toxicological assessment and exposure assessment). Evaluate relationship between ergot sclerotia and ergot alkaloids.
- Fumonisin in wheat – assessment to evaluate the need and feasibility of setting MLs

The Committee agreed that an eWG, chaired by the European Union, would prepare a discussion paper on the review of the *Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Dioxin and Dioxin-like PCB Contamination in Food and Feed (CAC/RCP 62-2006)* to evaluate if recommendations from the JECFA assessment on non-dioxin-like PCBs could be included.



The MLs for total aflatoxins in ready-to-eat peanuts, which are held at Step 4 pending the outcome of the 83rd JECFA November 2016 exposure assessment for health impact, will be considered at the Committee's next session. India will prepare proposals for these MLs, which will take into account 83rd JECFA's findings.

Next Session

The 11th Session of CCCF is tentatively scheduled to be held in approximately one year's time at a venue outside of The Netherlands, the final arrangements being subject to confirmation by The Netherlands and the Codex Secretariat.