



## Report of the U.S. Delegate, 27th Session, Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables

The 27th Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV) convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from 7 to 11 September 2014. Mr. Richard Boyd of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, chaired the Session. The Session was opened by Mary Frances Lowe, U.S. Codex Manager, on behalf of Brian Ronholm, Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture. She congratulated the Committee on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and stressed the importance of Codex adhering to its mission of developing science-based food safety and quality standards that protect consumer health and ensure fair trade practices, while adapting to the challenges of an ever-changing world and meeting the diverse needs of a greatly increased number of member countries and stakeholders.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Session was attended by delegates from thirty-one member countries, one member organization (the European Union) and three international intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations. The United States was represented by Delegate Dorian LaFond (AMS) and Alternate Delegate Yingqing Ma (U.S. Food and Drug Administration), assisted by four government advisors.

### *Matters of interest to the United States:*

**Draft Standard for Certain Canned Fruits (General Provisions and Annexes for Canned Pears, Canned Mango and Canned Pineapples):** The annexes were amended to reflect current processing and trading practices in sizing, fill of container, food additives, optional ingredients and defect allowances. The general provision and annexes for Canned Pears and Canned Mangoes were forwarded to the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2015) for adoption. The Canned Pineapple annex was returned to the working group for further consideration of proposed revisions by the in-session working group, including how best to address the different varieties of cored and uncored pineapples.

**Draft Standard for Certain Quick Frozen Vegetables (Revision of Individual Standards for Quick Frozen Vegetables) (General Provisions Applying to all Quick Frozen Vegetables and Annexes for Carrots, Corn-on-the cob, Leeks, and Whole Kernel Corn):** This standard includes general provisions and eleven individual annexes specific to each covered product. The general provisions and the four aforementioned annexes were completed after changes were made to sections on sizing, fill of container, food additives, optional ingredients and defect allowances, and forwarded to the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of Codex Alimentarius Commission (July 2015) for final adoption. The remaining seven annexes were returned to an electronic working group led by the U.S. for further redrafting and consideration.

**Proposed Draft Standard for Ginseng Products (Conversion of the CCASIA Regional Standard for Ginseng Products to a Worldwide Standard):** The committee completed the conversion of the regional standard into an international standard and forwarded it to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for final adoption. The standard covers ginseng varieties derived from *Panax ginseng* C.A. Meyer and *P. quinquefolius* L. and excludes ginseng for medicinal purposes, as this is outside the scope of Codex. Based on objections from the United States and others, a proposal to limit the applicability of the standard based on national legislation was not accepted; however, it was noted that some countries also consider ginseng as a medicine.

**Food Additive Provisions in the Codex Standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables:** Although this standard was completed in 2007, the Committee could not reach agreement on the food additive provisions and formed an electronic working group to address outstanding issues. The disagreement mostly stemmed from some countries' preference for a general reference to the Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA), consistent with the work of the Codex Committee on Food Additives, while others preferred to list specifically allowable food additives. Those that preferred a specific list argued that a general reference was appropriate when all the foods in a commodity standard fall under a single food category in the GSFA, but here, products covered under the standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables fall under multiple food categories in the GSFA. The U.S. delegation urged the Committee to find a resolution, given that no agreement on the food additives provision had been reached in the past six years since the standard's completion, and disagreed with forming another working group to revisit this matter for the next session. Ultimately, the Committee agreed to make a general reference to the GSFA and clarified that the permitted food additives in the agreed functional classes are limited to those in the specific food category covering that a particular pickled fruit or vegetable falls rather than all of the food categories applicable to products under the standard for Pickled Fruits and Vegetables. The Delegation of the European Union expressed its reservation.



**Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce:** The Delegation of Brazil presented a document and led discussion on the possibility of revising existing and developing new Codex standards for dry and dried produce within the CCPFV. The Committee recalled that the Terms of Reference of CCPFV allow for the development of worldwide standards for processed fruits and vegetables which include dry and dried produce.

The United States requested the Committee to consider carefully the following before deciding whether new work was warranted: the need to (i) clarify the scope of any proposed work, in particular the definition of "processed" as it applies to dry and dried produce and to fruits dried with or without preservatives; (ii) develop a definition of dry and dried produce that is consistent with its Terms of Reference; and (iii) decide if and/or which dried tree nuts can be considered as a processed product. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic working group led by Brazil with the following terms of reference "to re-assess conclusions of the discussion paper and evaluate provisions of remaining dry and dried products standards that might need revision."

**Status of Work on the Review of Codex Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables:** The Codex Secretariat provided an update on the status of work on the review and revision of Codex standards for processed fruits and vegetables since the re-establishment of the Committee in 1998, when CCPFV was mandated to review all of its existing individual standards to determine the necessity for revision and, when possible, to group similar products into more horizontal standards.

No delegations proposed new work or offered to lead the revision of any unrevised standard. The Codex Secretariat agreed to develop amendments to the 17 unrevised CCPFV standards using a horizontal approach that would update general sections on hygiene, contaminants, labelling and food additives, following the templates provided for these sections in the *Codes Procedural Manual*. The Secretariat will circulate the resulting document for comment and for discussion at the next session. The United States urged that the Secretariat use a general reference to the Codex General Standard for Food Additives Standard (GSFA) in the relevant food additive sections, in accordance with the *Procedural Manual*.

**Discussion Paper on Standards for Dried Chillies, Dried Garlic and Dried Ginger:** Recognizing that some products could fall both within the scope of CCPFV and the new Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH), the Committee welcomed continuous coordination with CCSCH and agreed that paprika, dried chili peppers, dried garlic and dried ginger could be considered for new work in CCSCH rather than CCPFV.

In summary, this was a very successful meeting for the United States. Due to the technical expertise of the delegation, the United States was able to explain and resolve numerous issues during working group meetings and in the plenary session. By working closely with other like-minded delegations, the United States framed its positions from a global perspective and therefore successfully garnered support from many delegations.