



Report of the U.S. Delegate, Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, 26th Session

Introduction

The 26th Session of the [Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables](#) (CCPFV) was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from October 15-19, 2012, and was co-hosted by the Governments of United States and Jamaica. The keynote address was delivered by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry Investment and Commerce, the Honourable Sharon Ffolkes Abrahams, who indicated it was the first time that Jamaica was co-hosting a Codex meeting and stressed that it was important given the significance of harmonized standards in the international trade in processed fruits and vegetables. U.S. Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater also welcomed the delegates. The Session was attended by 24 Member countries, 1 Member Organization, and Observers from 4 international organizations. The United States was represented by Delegate Dorian LaFond, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, and Alternate Delegate Paul South, FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition.

Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Table Olives (Revision of CODEX STAN 66-1981)

A working group meeting was held two days prior to the session. The European Union, chair of the working group, highlighted the changes made to the proposed draft and explained the issues on which there was no consensus: other permitted ingredients, provisions on the microbiological and physico-chemical criteria for packing brines, maximum defect tolerance for blemished fruits in green olives in the extra category and defects and allowances for non-whole styles. The Committee agreed to include a reference to the Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA) in the Food Additives section in accordance with the Procedural Manual.

The working group met several times during the week and reached agreement on the revised standard which was then adopted by the CCPFV. The standard was forwarded at Step 5/8 with omission of Steps 6 and 7 for adoption by the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).

Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Certain Canned Fruits (revision of remaining individual standards for canned fruits)

A working group meeting was held one day prior to the plenary session. The Delegation of Cuba, chair of the working group, presented the draft standard. There was consensus on the general provision of the standard, but not on the annexes (canned mangoes, pears and pineapples).

The annex on canned mangoes was discussed with changes made to reflect differing characteristics of mango varieties, trading and processing practices. There was consensus on using a general reference to the GSFA for the food additives section; however, some delegations opposed the inclusion of colors for use in canned mangoes. Due to time constraints, the Committee did not have an opportunity to discuss the pears and pineapples annexes. The Committee agreed to forward the proposed draft Standard for Certain Canned Fruits (general provisions) and the proposed draft Annex on Mangoes to the CAC for adoption at Step 5 and agreed to return the pears and pineapples annexes to Step 2/3 for redrafting.

Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Canned Bamboo Shoots

The Delegation of France, which led the working group on canned vegetables, introduced the proposed changes of the working group. The Committee agreed to retain the Standard as a stand-alone document rather than as an Annex to the Standard for Certain Canned Vegetables. The Committee also agreed to include in the scope a non-exhaustive list of species to serve as guidance on the relevant safe species for use in the canning of bamboo shoots.

After much discussion and agreement on minor modifications, the Committee advanced the standard to step 5/8 for adoption by the 36th Session of the CAC.

Proposed Draft Codex Standard for Certain Quick Frozen Vegetables



A working group meeting was held one day prior to the plenary session. The United States, chair of the Working Group, presented the report on the status of the Proposed draft Codex Standard indicating that it had concluded the General Provisions section of the standard and Annex VIII-Leeks, along with a recommendation that a working group be established to develop the section on Methods of Analysis and Sampling and to determine whether the current CCPFV Sampling Plan was appropriate for Quick Frozen Vegetables.

Due to time constraints, the Committee could not consider the other 10 annexes. It was agreed to establish an electronic Working Group on Methods of Analysis and Sampling led by the United States to review and prepare proposals related to the annexes under development for consideration at the next session. The Committee agreed to forward the General Provisions section of the Standard to Step 5 for adoption by the CAC.

Proposed Draft Sampling Plans Including Metrological Provisions for Controlling Minimum Drained Weight of Canned Fruits and Vegetables

At the 23rd CCPFV Session, the Delegation of France was tasked to lead a working group to perform this work based on its proposal. The next two CCPFV sessions determined that the proposed sampling plan was too complex for the intended purpose, and it was returned for redrafting. At this 26th CCPFV session, some delegations again expressed concern with replacing a well-established and accepted procedure that has not created problems in international trade with the proposed method that was more cumbersome and complicated and was based on OIML-R87, which is proven flawed and currently being revised.

In view of the current revision of OIML-R87 and its relevance to the proposed draft sampling plans, the Committee agreed to suspend work on the sampling plan and hold it at Step 4 pending the OIML-R87 review.

Food Additive Provisions for Processed Fruits and Vegetables: Additional Provisions for Inclusion in Selected Adopted and Standards under Development

The last Session established an electronic Working Group on Food Additives, chaired by the European Union and co-chaired by the United States of America, to resolve the food additive provisions associated with the standards currently being developed and selected standards previously developed. The working group was tasked to work within the framework of the GSFA with a view to establishing a general reference to the GSFA when feasible and to providing justification in light of Section 3 of the preamble of the GSFA for exceptions to the general reference if or when such reference was not appropriate.

The U.S. Delegation expressed concern that such prescriptive and detailed evaluation of every food additive was both time and resource consuming and should be discontinued in favor of a general reference to the GSFA. Additionally, the U.S. pointed out that the working group recommended removal of some food additives in the step process as "not being technologically justified" or not appropriate and/or scientific. The Committee adopted the Working Group's recommendations with some minor amendments.

Discussion Paper on the Possible Extension of the Territorial Application of the Codex Regional Standard for Ginseng Products

During the last session in 2010, the Republic of Korea asked the Committee to consider converting the regional Codex standard for Ginseng Products into a worldwide standard. The Committee requested to prepare a discussion paper and project document for the 26th Session.

The discussion paper explained that the trade volume of the products was expanding, various products were circulated around the world outside the Asian region, and many countries do not have legislation addressing ginseng products or have differing classification criteria, which can lead to confusion in international trade.

Many delegations, citing significant international trade in ginseng products as foods, supported the conversion of the regional standard into a worldwide standard. The 26th CCPFV session agreed with proposal and will take up this new work subject to approval by the CAC.

Discussion Paper on the Development of a Codex Standard for Flavored Water-Based Drinks



The Delegation of Kenya at the last CCPFV Session, viewing the proposed expanded mandate of the CCPFV to include "fruit and vegetable juices and related products" proposed new work on flavored water-based drinks. Kenya, to be assisted by Brazil and the United States, agreed to prepare a discussion paper on these products for consideration at the 26th Session. However, due to differing views that emerged after the 25th CCPFV session neither Brazil nor the United States assisted with the discussion paper.

The discussion paper explained the nature of water-based flavored drinks, the manufacturing procedure and scope of the international market. Noting that the CCPFV expanded mandate did not include such products, (the CAC declined to approve addition of "and related products" to the Committee's terms of reference) and that Kenya's main concern was the "unsafe or unregulated use of certain food additives," such as flavor enhancers, food color and preservatives, the Committee requested the Codex Committee on Food Additives to consider whether water-based flavored drinks are adequately covered by the food categories in the GSFA, and, if not, whether the appropriate food categories could be expanded to include these products and to determine whether there is a need to expand the list of food additives; e.g., to include flavor enhancers, preservatives, acidity regulators and colors.

Next Session

The next Session is tentatively scheduled to be held in 2014 in the United States (exact date and location to be determined).