



Report of the United States Delegate on the 46th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH)

November 17-21, 2014

Lima, Peru

The 46th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene ([CCFH](#)) was attended by 182 delegates representing 58 member countries, one member organization (the European Union (EU)), and 13 international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The United States was represented by the Delegate, Ms. Jenny Scott, FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition; Co-Alternate Delegates Dr. Kerry Dearfield, USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, and Dr. Andrew Yeung, FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition; four government advisors; and nine non-government advisors.

The 46th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene ([CCFH](#)):

- Completed work on the Proposed Draft *Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: Trichinella spp. in Meat of Suidae* and forwarded it for adoption at Step 8 by the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) (2015).
 - Completed work on the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods* and forwarded it for adoption by the CAC at Steps 5/8.
 - Agreed to continue work related to Annexes to the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods*, including annexes on microbiological criteria and on environmental monitoring, by an electronic working group led by Canada and the U.S.
 - Agreed to continue work on the *Guidelines for the Control of Nontyphoidal Salmonella in Beef and Pork Meat* by both an electronic working group and a physical working group led by the U.S. and Denmark.
 - Agreed to continue work on *Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Foodborne Parasites* by an electronic working group led by Japan and Canada.
 - Agreed to establish an electronic working group, led by Brazil and France, to continue work on revising the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* to eliminate redundancies and identify additional changes of a non-editorial nature.
 - Agreed to replace the food hygiene sections of five meat commodity standards (luncheon meat, corned beef, cooked cured ham, cooked cured pork shoulder, and cooked cured chopped meat) with a standardized text referring to relevant codes of hygienic practice and to forward these amendments to the standards to CAC for adoption.
 - Agreed to insert a reference to the FAO/WHO "Risk Manager's Guide to the Statistical Aspects of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods" in sections 4.5, 4.8 and 4.9 of the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods* and discontinue work on developing such an annex to this document.
 - Agreed to establish an electronic working group, led by France and Thailand, to prepare a proposal for consideration by the 47th session of CCFH on updating the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* and its HACCP annex.
- A summary of the results of the 46th Session of CCFH is given below. The full report of the Session can be found on the Codex website, www.codexalimentarius.org.

MEETING SUMMARY

PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTROL OF SPECIFIC ZONOTIC PARASITES IN MEAT: TRICHINELLA SPP. IN MEAT OF SUIDAE

At the 45th Session of CCFH (2013), the Committee completed work on the Proposed Draft *Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: Trichinella spp. in Meat of Suidae* and agreed to forward it to the Codex Alimentarius Commission for adoption at Steps 5/8. However, the 37th Session of the Commission (2014) noted the concerns of some delegations and adopted the proposed draft Guidelines at Step 5 with the understanding that further consideration of the Guidelines in CCFH would be focused only on sections 7.3 (Selection of risk-based control measures) and 9 (Monitoring and Review). Of particular concern in CCFH were the ways to provide assurance of public health protection once a negligible risk compartment was established. After an in-session physical working group meeting, consensus was reached by noting that ongoing assurance of public health should be based on avoiding meat contaminated with *Trichinella* spp. from entering commerce and that public health protection



can be assured by (1) reviewing evidence from audits of herds for compliance with conditions described in the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code; or (2) a risk-based slaughter surveillance program that takes into account information from historical testing results supplemented with review of information from audits of herds; or (3) a slaughter surveillance program demonstrating that prevalence of infection does not exceed one infected carcass per million pigs slaughtered with at least 95% confidence.

The Committee agreed to forward the Proposed Draft *Guidelines for Control of Specific Zoonotic Parasites in Meat: Trichinella spp. in Meat of Suidae* for adoption by the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) (2015) at Step 8.

PROPOSED DRAFT CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR LOW MOISTURE FOODS

At the 44th Session of CCFH (2012), the Committee agreed to begin new work on a *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods* and agreed to establish an electronic working group (eWG) led by Canada and co-chaired by the United States. CCFH also requested that FAO/WHO undertake work to provide the Committee with scientific advice on the low moisture foods. The eWG developed a draft code, which was discussed at the 45th Session of CCFH (2013). The Committee returned the proposed draft code for revision by a re-established eWG to take into account the report of the FAO/WHO on low-moisture foods when it became available. This eWG prepared a revised document for circulation based on comments submitted to and the discussion at the 45th session of CCFH. The document was further revised by a physical working group just prior to the 46th Session of CCFH, taking into consideration information from the FAO/WHO report on low-moisture foods. Additional revisions were made during the plenary session and the two annexes (one on a microbiological criterion for *Salmonella* and one on environmental monitoring) were deleted pending further discussion.

The Committee agreed to forward the proposed draft *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods* to the 38th session of the CAC (2015) for adoption at Step 5/8. The Committee further agreed to establish an electronic working group, with Canada and the United States as co-chairs, to review existing codes dealing with low-moisture foods and determine if they can be incorporated as annexes; to consider the development of an annex on examples of microbiological criteria for different low-moisture food categories based on the FAO/WHO report; and to consider the annex on environmental monitoring to determine when to refer to *Salmonella*, when to refer to Enterobacteriaceae, and when to refer to both.

PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTROL OF NONTYPHOIDAL SALMONELLA SPP. IN BEEF AND PORK MEAT

At the 45th Session of CCFH (2013), the Committee agreed to begin new work on *Guidelines for the Control of Nontyphoidal Salmonella spp. in Beef and Pork Meat* via an electronic working group (eWG) led by the U.S. and co-chaired by Denmark. This work was approved at the 2014 session of the CAC. A draft document was circulated for comment prior to the 46th Session but was not discussed in detail at the meeting. The Committee agreed to retain the current three-part structure (common sections plus beef and pork specific sections) for now. The Committee also agreed to request that FAO/WHO conduct a systematic literature review on control measures from primary production to consumption similar to that done when developing guidelines for control of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in chicken meat. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic working group and a physical working group, both led by the U.S. and Denmark, with the physical working group meeting in May or June (most likely May 27-29, 2015 and hosted by the EU) to update the draft based on submitted comments and the literature review conducted by FAO/WHO. The Committee also requested that FAO/WHO hold an Expert Meeting prior to the 47th Session of CCFH to review the technical basis of the mitigation/intervention measures proposed by the working groups.

PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES ON THE APPLICATION OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE TO THE CONTROL OF FOODBORNE PARASITES

At the 45th Session of CCFH (2013), the Committee agreed to start new work on *Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Foodborne Parasites*. The Committee agreed to establish a physical working group (which was held in Japan in May 2014), led by Japan and Canada, to discuss and prepare proposals for the structure and approach for the document, as well as for possible annexes; an electronic working group, led by Japan and Canada to develop the proposed draft Guidelines based on the proposals of the physical working group; and a physical working group (which met immediately prior to the 46th Session) to consider the submitted comments. CCFH focused on issues identified by the working group and the recommendations of the physical working group held just prior to the meeting.



The Committee agreed to keep the current five food categories rather than subdividing them and to add a sentence on the parasites of public health concern to the food categories. The Committee also agreed to continue to elaborate general guidance for controlling fishborne parasites in the document and not move that information to the *Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products*. The Committee recommended creating a table of examples of validated inactivation measure for parasites in an annex, but control measures would not be described for all 24 parasites ranked by an FAO/WHO expert meeting. Measures for control of *Trypanosma cruzi* in fruit juices were deleted, as this is an issue limited to unprocessed products in specific areas and is not relevant to products traded internationally. The Committee agreed to not consider testing as a control measure at this stage and agreed to delete the sections on hand washing facilities but instead to include a statement noting the importance of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* in controlling parasites transmitted via the fecal-oral route.

The Committee agreed to establish an electronic working group, led by Japan and Canada, to prepare revised draft guidelines for circulation for comments prior to the 47th Session of CCFH. As a pWG was requested to be held immediately preceding the Plenary session, it is likely that such a meeting will be held.

PROPOSED REVISION OF THE CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

At the 44th Session of CCFH (2012), Brazil was charged with developing a discussion paper on revision to the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* (CAC/RCP 53-2003) and its annexes, specifically with regard to eliminating duplication and redundancies and to identify provisions that might be missing from the Code. The 45th Session of CCFH (2013) requested that an electronic working group, co-chaired by Brazil and France, use the information to prepare a consolidated version of the Code and its annexes and identify any additional changes for consideration at the 46th Session of CCFH. CCFH generally supported the revisions, but noted that changes of a non-editorial nature had been made. Concerns were expressed that moving commodity-specific provisions from the annexes and applying them more broadly resulted in more stringent control measures than necessary in some cases. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic working group, led by Brazil and France, to continue to remove redundancies but ensure changes are editorial; to identify additional, non-editorial changes, and to prepare a discussion paper on the scope of the work for the 47th Session of CCFH (2015).

OTHER MATTERS

Mathematical and Statistical Aspects of Microbiological Criteria

In revising the *Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997), CCFH had recommended development of an annex on the more technical and statistical aspects of microbiological criteria and sampling, and requested that FAO/WHO provide technical support. In October 2013, FAO/WHO held a Technical Meeting on the Statistical and Mathematical Considerations for the Elaboration of Microbiological Criteria, from which they developed a "Risk Manager's Guide to the Statistical Aspects of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods." In light of this document, the Committee agreed there was no longer a need to develop an annex to the microbiological criteria document. Instead, the Committee agreed to insert a reference to the FAO/WHO "Risk Manager's Guide to the Statistical Aspects of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods" in sections 4.5, 4.8 and 4.9 of the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods*.

Codex Strategic Plan

The 36th Session of CAC (2013) had adopted the Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and the Codex Secretariat had prepared a template for use by committees in monitoring implementation of the Strategic Plan. Specific replies to the questions in the template were prepared for consideration by the Codex Executive Committee and the CAC at their 2015 sessions (see Appendix II of Rep 15/FH).

Information Documents

The Codex Committee on General Principles developed guidance on making available information documents from Codex Committees. These documents are by-products of on-going Committee work that have been developed by the Committee; contain information useful to national governments, Codex members and observers and Codex Committees; and are not considered appropriate for adoption as Codex standards, guidelines or codes of practice or as recommendations for inclusion in *the Procedural Manual*. These documents will be made available on the Codex



website of the Committee. The Committee agreed to request the Codex Secretariat to make available as a CCFH information document the “Process by which the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene Will Undertake its Work.”

Hygiene Sections in Meat Standards

The 32nd Session of CAC (2009) agreed to retain five meat commodity standards (luncheon meat, corned beef, cooked cured ham, cooked cured pork shoulder, and cooked cured chopped meat) but to have specific sections updated by relevant committees since no subject Committee existed to update them. The Committee agreed to replace the food hygiene sections of the five meat commodity standards with a standardized text referring to relevant codes of hygienic practice and to forward these amendments to the standards to CAC for adoption.

RECOMMENDED NEW WORK FOR CCFH

Based on an established process for addressing new work proposals, a CCFH *Ad Hoc* Working Group for the Establishment of CCFH Work Priorities, led by the United States, with the assistance of Peru, met immediately prior to the 46th Session and considered the following:

- A discussion paper and project document from Egypt to develop a *Codex Standard for Frozen and Chilled Meat*; and
- A discussion paper and project document on the need to revise the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969, hereafter the GPFH text) and its Annex: *Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application* (hereafter the HACCP Annex).

Discussion and Recommendation for new work on a *Codex Standard for Frozen and Chilled Meat*

The proposal for a commodity standard included veterinary drugs, pesticides and chemical contaminants, which are outside the mandate of CCFH. Moreover, the Codex Secretariat confirmed that a commodity standard is not within the remit of CCFH. The hygiene aspects of the proposal could, however, be included in a revision of the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat* (CAC/RCP 58-2005), which is on the CCFH Forward Workplan.

The Working Group agreed to recommend to plenary that, because the request for new work was for a commodity code, which is not within the remit of CCFH, it was not appropriate work for CCFH. The request should be forwarded through the Secretariat to the Codex Executive Committee. The Committee agreed with this recommendation.

Discussion and Recommendation for Revision the *General Principles of Food* and its HACCP Annex

Finland presented the proposal for new work on revision of the GPFH and its HACCP Annex, which would clarify the relationship between the GPFH and HACCP and provide additional HACCP guidance helpful to food business operators. Consideration should be given to including the HACCP principles in a “General Principles for Food Safety Management Systems,” leaving the guidance in an Annex. Hazard Analysis could be placed at the start of assessment of the safety for any kind of food process in order to objectively assess hazards and where they should be addressed, either within Good Hygiene Practices or by the implementation of one or more CCPs within a HACCP system. Further guidance for conducting a Hazard Analysis, for CCP determination, and for Critical limits, Monitoring and Corrective actions is needed. Figures should be revised to be more useful. There is a need to more clearly distinguish validation from verification within Principle 6.

Most delegations supported enhancing the GPFH and its HACCP Annex, but caution was urged given the potential impact on Codex documents and country legislation tied to these documents. Some delegations supported the Food Safety Management Systems concept, but others did not. It was noted that more focus should be placed on changes needed to the GPFH.

The Working Group agreed to recommend to plenary that CCFH consider establishing a working group to revise the scope of the work on the GPFH and its HACCP Annex in light of the Working Group discussions and to prepare a revised project proposal for the 47th Session of CCFH. The Committee agreed with this recommendation and agreed to establish an electronic working group, led by France and Thailand, to prepare a proposal for consideration by the 47th Session of CCFH (2015) on updating the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* and its HACCP annex.

Discussion of Work on Verotoxigenic *E. coli* in Beef

Uruguay briefly discussed the importance of controlling verotoxigenic *E. coli* in beef as both a public health and a



trade issue. This item of work is on the Forward Workplan but no project document for new work has been submitted. The Committee agreed that Uruguay should submit a discussion paper and project document, accompanied by a risk profile, for consideration by the 47th Session of CCFH (2015).

Forward Workplan and Working Group on New Work Priorities

No change was made to the Forward Workplan.

The Committee agreed to re-establish the working group on CCFH work priorities, which will meet the day before the next session of the Committee and will be chaired by the U.S.

NEXT SESSION OF CCFH

The 47th Session of CCFH is tentatively scheduled for November 9-13, 2015 in Boston, MA.