



Report of the U.S. Delegate to the 23rd Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils

February 25-March 1, 2013 Langkawi, Malaysia

The [Codex Committee on Fats and Oils \(CCFO\)](#) held its 23rd Session from February 25-March 1, 2013 in Langkawi, Malaysia. The Session was attended by 101 participants from 35 Member countries, one Member Organization (EU), and four Non-Governmental Observer Organizations. The United States delegation was led by the U.S. Delegate, Mr. Martin Stutsman of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and consisted of four U.S. government representatives and two non-governmental advisers.

The United States fully participated on all agenda items covered during the session. The Committee recommended one standard for adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) at Step 5/8 (amending the current standard for rice bran oil) and extensively discussed a proposed standard for fish oils, which was returned to Step 2 for further work. The Committee also reviewed six discussion papers related to possible new work; none were approved. The Committee did not complete its agenda.

The full report of the 23rd Session of the CCFO can be found in REP 13/FO, posted on the Codex website at http://www.codexalimentarius.org/download/report/794/REP13_FOe.pdf. Below is a summary of the actions taken at the meeting:

Review of substances on the draft and proposed draft lists of acceptable previous cargoes (Agenda Item #2) The CAC had directed the CCFO to review the two lists as a matter of priority and to identify the most critical substances for review by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), taking into account limited JECFA resources. The Committee:

- created a standing agenda item in every session of the CCFO to consider review of the lists.
- considered several amendments to the list.
- created an electronic Working Group (eWG), chaired by Malaysia, to assess the substances on the list between sessions.
- agreed to convene a physical Working Group (pWG) to review the findings in the eWG in connection with the next CCFO session.
- created specific terms of reference for the Committee as to how they were to address these functions.

IUPAC methods of analysis for relative density and for erythrodiol+UVAOL content (Agenda Item #2)

The Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS), noting that the



International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) methods were no longer available, asked if the relative density testing was still necessary, or whether alternative methods would suffice, and whether the International Olive Council (IOC) methods were appropriate for erythrodiol+uvaol.

The Committee:

- asked the American Oil Chemists' Society (AOCS) representative to investigate and inform the CCFO about appropriate methodology for relative density at the next meeting.
- agreed to include IOC method COI/T.20/doc. No 30-2011 (available on the IOC website) in Sections 8.7 & 8.8 of the Codex Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils.
- agreed to include the IOC method in Section 8.7 for the determination of sterol composition, in addition to the methods currently included in the Standard (Appendix II).

Halogenated solvents in olive oil (Agenda Item #2)

The Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) asked the CCFO whether halogenated solvents were necessary in the production of olive pomace oils.

The Committee:

- advised that halogenated solvents were no longer used in producing olive pomace oils and should be considered a contaminant.
- revised section 2.3 of the Codex Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils to exclude halogenated solvents from those authorized to make olive pomace oil.
- retained the contaminant limits on halogenated solvent in the standard until such time as the CCCF includes appropriate provisions for limits on halogenated solvents in the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (GSCTFF) so that the standard contaminant provision could be used instead.

Lead and arsenic limits in several CCFO standards (Agenda Item #2)

In reviewing the contaminant section in the previous agenda item, the CCFO noted that lead and arsenic contaminant sections appeared in the Standards for Edible Fats and Oils not Covered by Individual Standards, for Named Animal Fats, and for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils, while identical limits already appeared in the GSCTFF.

The Committee:

- deleted these provisions in these standards and replaced them with the general reference to the GSCTFF.
- deleted the methods of analysis for lead and arsenic in the above standards and in the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils.

Proposed Draft Standard for Fish Oils (Agenda Item #3)

An eWG chaired by Switzerland had circulated a proposed Draft Standard for Fish Oils and a significant number of country comments had been submitted just prior to the meeting.

The Committee discussed this standard for two thirds of the meeting without resolution of most of the issues. The overall outcome was to return the draft standard to Step 2 in the step process to come up with a revised standard that would address many of the comments. The CCFO report [REP13/FO] on the Codex Alimentarius Website contains a detailed description. Some of the specifics of interest:

The Committee:

Section 1— Scope

- made several clarifying language changes.
- limited the scope to fish oils presented in a state for human consumption.
- limited the scope to fish oils regulated as foods.
- removed references to crude fish oil and moved them to the product description section.

Section 2 — Description

- eliminated references to “by-products” and referred instead to the definition of “raw material” as found in the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products.
- included crude fish oil with notes that only certain sections will apply to crude fish oil.
- retained sections dealing with definitions of fish oil ethyl esters in square brackets.
- acknowledging concerns about the very large number of named fish oils, sent this section back to the eWG to be supported by composition data and trade data sufficient to meet the criteria for new work as spelled out in the Codex Procedural Manual.
- concluded that the entirety of Section 2.1-2.63 was in need of substantive further work and retained the section in square brackets with a request for trade data on individual named fish oils and their fatty acid composition profiles.

Section 3 — Essential Composition and Quality Factors

- many delegations echoed the U.S. concern about the robustness and validity of the fatty acid profile data presented in Table 1. There were concerns as to the source of the data, whether it could be verified, when it was performed, the analysis used, and whether it was representative of

the geographical, climatic, and varietal variation of the individual fisheries in a global environment. Some delegations suggested that the table should be advisory until the data were shown to be robust and representative of a global fishery.

- concluded that the entirety of Section 3 was in need of substantive further work and retained the section in square brackets.

Section 4 — Food Additives

- authorized flavorings, and antioxidants as permitted additives, eliminated colors, antioxidant synergists and chelating agents and put sequestrants and antifoaming agents in square brackets.
- heard proposals to include rosemary extract, astaxanthin, lecithin, citric acid, tocopherols, and ascorbyl palmitate as antioxidants. This was supported and echoed by several delegations. Lecithin, citric acid, and tocopherols are already at Step 7 for inclusion in the General Standards for Food Additives (GSFA) and ascorbyl palmitate is already permitted. Rosemary extract and astaxanthin had not been evaluated by JECFA. Some delegations were opposed to astaxanthin because it could be used as a color.
- referred rosemary extract to the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) identifying it as an antioxidant that is used in fish oil but put astaxanthin in square brackets.

Section 5 — Contaminants

- asked CCCF to include current levels for arsenic and lead in the GSCTFF and asked CCCF to reevaluate the levels. When reevaluating, the CCCF was asked to consider whether the ML should be based on total arsenic or inorganic arsenic, noting that the relatively non-toxic organic form is most predominant in seafood.
- placed provisions for cadmium, mercury, PCB, dioxins and furans in square brackets.
- recognizing that pesticide and veterinary drugs were used on farmed fish, inserted general text on pesticide and veterinary drug residues but retained it in square brackets.

Section 6 — Hygiene

- placed section on crude oil in square brackets.

Section 7 — Labeling



- placed the entire section in square brackets.

Section 8 — Methods of Analysis and Sampling

- much of section 2 to which this relates is in square brackets and the arsenic method is being reviewed by CCCF. This section was also left in square brackets.

Overall conclusion — the document was returned to Step 2 and a Circular Letter (CL) will be issued to invite participation in addressing the many issues identified.

Proposed Amendments to the Parameters for Rice Bran Oil in the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils (Agenda Item #4)

The Committee agreed to:

- amend certain rice bran oil fatty acid parameters in Table 1 of the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils.
- amend certain desmethylsterol levels for rice bran oil in that standard.
- advance the proposed changes to Step 5/8 for adoption by the CAC.
- request comments from CCMAS on whether mean \pm 3SD is appropriate to establish ranges.

Discussion paper on the Amendment of the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils: Sunflower Seed Oils (Agenda Item #5)

The Committee:

- returned the document to obtain more composition data and trade data sufficient to meet the criteria for new work as spelled out in the Codex Procedural Manual.
- revised the scope to eliminate the proposal to remove “gaps” between fatty acid ranges.
- created an eWG to continue the work on the proposal for consideration at the next Session.
- agreed to issue a CL to solicit composition data that was not previously provided by the major producing countries.

Discussion Paper on Cold Pressed Oils (Agenda Item #6)

The Committee:

- amended the scope to cover walnut oil, almond oil, hazelnut oil, pistachio oil, flaxseed oil, and avocado oil.



- created an eWG to continue work on the proposal for new work and to obtain more composition data and trade data sufficient to meet the criteria for new work as spelled out in the Codex Procedural Manual.

Discussion Paper on the Amendment of the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils: High Oleic Soybean Oil (HOSBO) (Agenda Item #7)

The United States had chaired an eWG, working with Argentina, Australia, Colombia and Mexico, to develop this proposal. HOSBO is expected to gain widespread acceptance over the next few years because of its improved performance over regular soybean oil and its more healthful composition.

The Committee:

- concluded that the data presented did not demonstrate sufficient “volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trading between countries,” and “international or regional market potential,” as required by the Procedural Manual criteria for new work.
- created an eWG, chaired by the United States, to further develop the proposal for the next Session, to include trade data sufficient to meet the criteria for new work as spelled out in the Codex Procedural Manual.
- The United States, noting that this is a recurring question for all of the new work proposals being considered by the CCFO, requested guidance on what would be considered sufficient trade data for initiation of new work.

Discussion Paper on the Amendment of the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils for the addition of Palm Oil with High Oleic Acid OxG (Agenda Item #8)

The Committee:

- concluded that the data presented did not demonstrate sufficient “volume of production and consumption in individual countries and volume and pattern of trading between countries,” and “international or regional market potential,” as required by the Codex Procedural Manual criteria for new work.
- created an eWG, chaired by Colombia, to further develop the proposal for the next session, to include trade data sufficient to meet the criteria for new work as spelled out in the Codex Procedural Manual.

Discussion Paper on the Revision of the Limit for Campesterol in the Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils (Agenda Item #9)

Australia presented the results of analyses of more than 1600 samples of olive oil from non-Mediterranean countries to demonstrate that the campesterol levels in the existing Codex standard is not truly representative of the global variation in authentic olive oil



and that certain varieties of olives that are suitable for climatic conditions in non-Mediterranean countries routinely have levels of campesterol that are greater than the limit provided in the standard. Australia also provided information on how the campesterol variability is being used to discriminate against non-Mediterranean olive oil in the international marketplace. The United States provided samples for this work, believes that this new work is warranted, and strongly supported the proposal. The issue was opposed primarily by Mediterranean IOC member countries that argued that the limit was necessary to detect adulteration. They noted that the IOC was engaged in a study of 193 samples from 13 countries representing all growing regions and wanted to see what the IOC would say about this issue.

The Committee:

- concluded that there was no “agreement to start new work.”
- concluded that there was no agreement to establish or continue an eWG to further pursue the matter.
- The United States and Australia expressed their reservations on this decision.

Discussion Paper on the Amendment of the Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils: Content of delta-7-Stigmastenol (Agenda Item #10)

Since no documents were distributed by Syria, the issue was not discussed.

The remaining agenda items were not discussed due to time constraints.

This included:

Reference To Acceptance/Voluntary Application In Codex Standards (Agenda Item #11)

Other Business And Future Work (Agenda Item #12)

- Proposal by Argentina to amend the oleic acid levels for peanut oil in the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils
- Proposal by Argentina to provide for high stearic high oleic acid sunflower oil in the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils.

Date and Time of the Next Meeting (Agenda Item #13)

The next session is scheduled to be held in Malaysia from February 9-13, 2015.