



## Report of the United States Delegate on the 38th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling

*May 8-12, 2017  
Budapest, Hungary*

The Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) convened its 38th Session from May 8-12, 2017 in Budapest, Hungary. The session was chaired by Hungary and attended by delegates from 47 Member countries, 1 Member organization (the European Union), and 11 observer organizations. The United States was represented by Dr. Gregory Noonan, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (Delegate); Dr. Timothy Norden, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture (Alternate Delegate) and two other governmental advisors.

Progress was achieved on a number of issues, and the Committee agreed on ways to address problems identified in other areas, as described below.

### *Summary/Highlights*

At this session, CCMAS:

- Endorsed the methods for the Standard on Quick Frozen Vegetables, Standard on Infant Formula, Standards on Cumin, Thyme, Black, White and Green Pepper, Standard on Fish Oils, Standard on Laver Products and Standard on Tempe and Standard on Unrefined Shea Butter.
- Agreed to seek further consultation from the relevant Codex Committees on the methods on free fatty acids in the Standard of Quick Frozen French Fried potatoes, RM methods in the Standard on Quick Frozen Vegetables, sampling plans for Standard on Ginseng and Standard on Quick Frozen Vegetables, acid value for the Standard on Laver Products, methods for insect damage, mammalian excreta and mold damage in the Standards for Cumin, Thyme, and Pepper and sampling plans for the Standards on Cumin, Thyme, and Pepper.
- Agreed to develop a template that can be used by committees to develop sampling plans. New Zealand will be leading this effort.

The full official report of the session is available on the Codex Alimentarius website at <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/>.

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

There were a number of firsts at the meeting, with a new Chair of the Committee, Dr. Marot Hibbey, and the United States serving as Chair of the physical working group on method endorsement, with Australia as the co-chair. The U.S. Delegate had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Hibbey prior to the Interagency Meeting (IAM) on Saturday May 6 and he also attended the Physical Working Group (PWG) on Sunday May 7. Although Dr. Hibbey did not have any CODEX experience prior to the meeting he



quickly earned the respect of the Committee during the opening day of the plenary. He was open to comments from all delegates, well-organized and clear in the decisions that were being made. He did not come to the Committee with a predetermined outcome and was open to building consensus of the delegates. Dr. Hibbey did not generate new work ideas or push the committee in a particular direction and achieved a clear and organized session.

As for the physical working group (PWG), on the positive side, the discussions followed a more open and formal procedure, in line with the decorum and rules of Codex. Additionally, chairs Australia and the United States clearly stated the conclusions of the PWG, even when that conclusion was that consensus could not be reached. These clear statements produced less confusion and fewer extended discussions when the PWG report was discussed in plenary. On the negative side, the lack of preparation and involvement by both the Standard Developing Organizations (SDOs) and delegates, led to a far longer PWG than had been scheduled, which may lead to inconsistent or poor decisions. The feedback on the PWG was mixed, with some delegations asking for improvements and others stating that it was better than previous years. The Secretariat and the U.S. Chair discussed some changes which could address some of these issues.

### **MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER COMMITTEES and ENDORSEMENT OF METHODS OF ANALYSIS PROVISIONS AND SAMPLING PLANS IN CODEX STANDARDS (Agenda Item 2 and 3)**

On Matters Referred and Matters for Endorsement, the largest issue was the lack of endorsement of a number of sampling plans from multiple committees (Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia, and Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs). The plans presented, while simple and similar to other sampling plans adopted by Codex, may not be appropriate. While these plans have been endorsed for other commodities in the past, but with comments that they do not meet the requirements in the General Guidelines on Sampling CODEX-GL50. New Zealand has offered to work with a number of CCPFV members on developing appropriate plans. It will be beneficial of other countries, such as the US and Canada to be involved in this process, but for now, it will be handled by a more informal discussion among delegates of the two committees. The plans will eventually be discussed and considered by CCMAS.

### **CRITERIA FOR ENDORSEMENT OF BIOLOGICAL METHODS USED TO DETECT CHEMICALS OF CONCERN (Agenda item 5)**

There has been very little progress made this work and some of the recent documents addressed issues that were outside of the Terms of Reference of the electronic Working Group. It appears that countries that support this work are seeking acceptance of the mouse bioassay as a Reference Method, even though this would meet opposition, especially from the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.



## **PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE GUIDELINES ON MEASUREMENT UNCERTAINTY (CAC/GL 54-2004) (Agenda item 8)**

Germany has been leading this effort, but not with full support from the European Union. The discussion document that was presented at CCMAS 37 was complicated and simply drew on other texts, while not adding anything new to the discussion that helped to clarify the determination of measurement uncertainty. At an in-session Working Group, much of the text was removed from the discussion paper, and Germany presented small, reasonable changes to CAC/GL-54-2004. The European Union then pushed for a new project document, despite the minor nature of the changes being considered. A concern is that new project document may be used by some countries to require the use of measurement uncertainty when determining if a value exceeds a limit. The US would not support this, and other countries have expressed similar concerns. The US will participate in the development of the new project document to try to keep such a proposal from becoming part of an amendment to GL-54-2004.

### *Next Session*

The 39th Session of CCMAS is tentatively set to meet within 18 to 24 months in Budapest, Hungary.