



## **U.S. Delegate's Report, 20TH Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**

*October 2-6, 2017  
Kampala, Uganda*

The 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV), co-hosted by the Governments of Mexico and Uganda, was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 2 – 6 October 2017. The Session was attended by 118 delegates from 43 Member countries, one Member organization (the European Union) and observers from three regional and international organizations.

The United States was represented by Delegate Dorian LaFond, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Ken Lowery of the U.S. Codex Office, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and a non-government advisor.

Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister of Health of Uganda and Ms. Amelia Kyambadde, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of Uganda, addressed and opened the meeting, stressing the importance of efforts to increase awareness of the relevance of Codex standards to protect consumers' health and ensure fair practices in the food trade. The new chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius, Mr. Guilherme Costa of Brazil, also addressed the session via video.

The United States achieved most of its objectives at the 20<sup>th</sup> CCFFV Session. U.S. leadership on most issues on the CCFFV agenda and on the two working groups were very effective, as evidenced by the committee's agreeing to the CCFFV Standard Layout document (work chaired by the United States, with Germany as co-chair). The U.S. delegation continued to strengthen its reputation for reliability, problem solving capabilities, and leadership on international standard development.

### *Highlights*

At this session, the CCFFV:

- Completed work on the standard for aubergines/eggplant, which will be presented for final adoption at the July 2018 session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC 41);
- Agreed to propose new work on three additional standards (yams, onions and shallots, and berries other than strawberries); and
- Accepted the U.S. offer to take over the development of the Glossary of Terms and to convert it to a Discussion Paper to be presented at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the CCFFV.

Following is a brief summary of major issues discussed at the session. The full report of the 20<sup>TH</sup> Session of the CCFFV can be found in REP 18/FFV, posted on the Codex website at: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings-reports/en/>

### *Meeting Summary*

**CCFFV Standard Layout:** The revised CCFFV layout, prepared by a working group led by the United States and co-led by Germany, was accepted as a guidance document by the CCFFV. There was a lack of consensus on the inclusion of 1.0% tolerance for decay, soft rot, and internal breakdown for produce traded in Extra Class. The European Union (EU) with six of its members present, proposed a maximum of 0.5%, and was supported by Colombia and Morocco. Thailand's proposal of 0.0% was rejected by the majority of the delegations, who instead preferred 1.0%. The delegations favoring 0.0% to 0.5% maintained their opposition to the 1.0%, favored by the majority of delegations in every standard discussed. As a compromise, the Committee agreed that tolerances for defects will be evaluated based on the characteristics of the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (FFV) being standardized and current trade practices.

**Proposed Draft Standard for Aubergines / Eggplant:** This standard was initially completed and submitted to 39th CAC in 2016 for adoption. However, at the Commission, the EU objected to 1.0% tolerances for decay, soft rot, and internal breakdown in Extra Class, and so the standard was returned to the 20th CCFFV for redrafting. After much discussion, the 20<sup>th</sup> CCFFV agreed to forward the draft standard for aubergines to CAC41 (2018) for final adoption at Step 8 with the original tolerance of 1.0% for decay, soft rot and internal breakdown in Extra Class. The EU and two other delegations indicated their reservation to this decision.

**Proposed Draft Standard for Garlic:** The compromise text proposed by the electronic Working Group (eWG) would allow the standard to apply to smoked garlic (in regions where it is considered as fresh produce). However, a majority of the countries participating in the Session opposed the inclusion of smoked garlic in the draft standard for garlic. One delegation pointed out that in the EU's legislation (*Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006, 'Ail Fumé D'arleux'*) confirmed that "smoked garlic" (a specialty product in Europe) is smoked after the garlic is dried. Delegations opposing the inclusion indicated that smoking is a form of food processing, and as such, smoked garlic was a processed product. The Committee could not agree on the inclusion of smoked garlic and so the draft standard was retained at Step 6 to be circulated for another round of comments and considered again at the next session of the CCFFV.

**Proposed Draft Standard for Kiwifruit:** Although this standard was retained at Step 7 (and not advanced for final adoption), pending resolution of tolerances for decay in Extra Class, the committee made several important changes to the draft standard:

- Made sizing methods optional, thereby allowing each country to continue its domestic sizing practices;



- Discontinued the single uniformity requirement due to different sizing methods used; and
- Limited “specific minimum diameter/size per class/grade” only to three specific varieties.

**Proposed Draft Standard for Ware Potatoes:** This draft standard was returned for redrafting since tolerances for defects allowed (greening, soil and decay) are key matters of concern to most delegations.

**Proposals New Work:** The committee adopted the report of Priorities Working Group to elaborate the following news standards, pending approval by the CAC 41(2018):

- Standard for yam: eWG chaired by Costa Rica and co-chaired by Ghana, working in English and Spanish;
- Joint standard for onions and shallots: eWG chaired by Iran and co-chaired by India and Indonesia, working in English only; and
- Joint standard for berry fruits (excluding strawberries): eWG chaired by Mexico and co-chaired by Argentina, working in English and Spanish.

*Date and Place of the Next Session*

The date and place of the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the CCFFV were not set, and will be determined by the host government (Mexico) in consultation with the Codex Secretariat.