



Report of the U.S. Delegate, 35th Session, Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses

The 35th Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) met in Bad Soden am Taunus, Germany from November 4-8 2013. The session was chaired by Dr. Pia Noble, Head of the Division of Specific Foods, Food Supplements and Food Additives, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection. 263 delegates representing 69 Member Countries, one Member Organization and 33 International Organizations attended the Committee.

The United States was represented by the Delegate, Dr. Paula Trumbo, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; Dr. Allison Yates, alternate Delegate, USDA Agricultural Research Service; four governmental advisors and three non-governmental advisors.

Dr. Bernhard Kühnle, Director-General for Nutrition, Food Safety and Animal Health of Germany's Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection welcomed delegates and commended the contributions of CCNFSDU toward the success of Codex work in the last 50 years, especially in supporting global efforts to address the challenges of malnutrition in children and diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, Mrs. Awilo Ochieng Pernet, expressed gratitude to the Government of Germany for hosting the Committee since 1966.

At the 35th session:

CCNFSDU advanced to the 37th CAC Session for adoption at Step 5:

- Proposed draft revision of the General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods (CAC/GL 9-1987)

CCNFSDU continued work on:

- Proposed draft additional or revised NRVs based on nutrient requirements for inclusion in the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling;
- Amendments to the Codex Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children to include a new Part B for underweight children;
- Review of the Codex Standard for Follow-Up Formula, and;
- Proposed draft revision of food additives in infant formula.

CCNFSDU agreed to undertake the following new work to implement the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health:



- The establishment of conditions for claiming that a food is free of *trans* fatty acids.
- The establishment of a proposed NRV-NCD for potassium (i.e., an NRV based on a level associated with reduction of NCD risk), and consequent amendments to the list of NRVs-NCD in the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling.

CCNFSDU agreed to consider at its next session:

- A discussion paper and draft project document prepared by Zimbabwe and South Africa on a definition for “biofortification.”

Below is a summary of the discussion at this meeting. The full report of the 35th CCNFSDU session can be found in REP14/NFSDU on the Codex web site: <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/> .

Matters Referred to CCNFSDU

41st Session of the Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL)

Claim for "Free" of Trans Fatty Acids

At its 2013 session, CCFL requested CCNFSDU to establish conditions for a claim that a food is “free” of *trans* fatty acids. Canada volunteered to draft a proposal, which will take into account related work by the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) and will be considered for the next session.

45th Session of the Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)

Food Additive Provisions

In response to inquiries from CCFA, CCNFSDU clarified that:

- In the Standard for Infant Formula and Formulas for Special Medical Purposes Intended for Infants (CODEX STAN 72-1981), Note 55 applies to all relevant provisions, including those with numerical levels and those at Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).
- The limits of sodium that apply to certain food additive provisions in the Standard for Canned Baby Foods (CODEX STAN 73-1981) should also apply to relevant provisions in the Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children (CODEX STAN 74-1981).



Matters of Interest Arising from FAO and WHO

Matters of interest reported by FAO and/or WHO include:

- The process for convening FAO/WHO Joint Expert Meetings on Nutrition (JEMNU);
- Recent FAO work, including a 2013 report on Dietary Protein Quality Evaluation in Human Nutrition, and;
- Recent WHO work, including NUGAG work to update guidelines on sugars and fatty acids, and publications and meetings related to maternal, infant and young child nutrition and to monitoring NCDs.

Proposed Draft Revision of the Codex General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods (CAC/GL 09-1987)

The full-day physical working group meeting followed by plenary discussions was successful in resolving a number of challenging issues and advancing the document for adoption at Step 5. Among the main aspects included under this work are encouraging rational and safe addition of essential nutrients to foods; clarifying the applicability of these principles to voluntary and mandatory nutrient addition; extending the principles to encompass appropriate purposes of nutrient addition beyond correcting a demonstrated deficiency, and; considering scientific advances in nutrient risk assessment.

In addition to updating provisions in line with main aspects of this work, the Committee agreed to change the document title from “General Principles” to “Principles” and continue with a document structure that includes an Introduction, Scope, Definitions, General Principles, and Principles for Specific Types of Addition of Essential Nutrients. The Committee will aim to reach agreement on remaining text at its next session.

Proposed Draft Additional or Revised Nutrient Reference Values for Labelling Purposes in the Codex Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (Based on Nutrient Requirements)

At its 2012 session, the Committee agreed to advance to Step 5/8 proposed draft Nutrient Reference Values-Requirements (NRVs-R) for the following vitamins and minerals which were adopted by the Commission in 2013: vitamin K, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B₆, folate, vitamin B₁₂, pantothenate, biotin, calcium and iodine. It agreed to establish an electronic working group to review the current NRV-R for protein in accordance with relevant principles, make recommendations for additional or revised NRVs-R for eight vitamins and minerals, and recommend a final definition of “Recognized Authoritative Scientific Body” which is referred to in the principles for establishing NRVs.

The Committee agreed on a final definition of “Recognized Authoritative Scientific Body” (RASB) which incorporated an additional criterion that there be a primary evaluation of the scientific evidence. Also agreed upon was that the basis of an NRV-R for a nutrient in which daily intake reference values are available from more than one RASB should be considered on a case-by-case basis and take into account the physiological endpoint(s).

For protein, the Committee considered scientific updates and recommended that the current NRV-R of 50 g per person be retained. This decision was reached based on an assessment that the WHO/FAO dietary reference intake value (DIRV) of 0.83 g/kg body weight per day recommended in a 2007 WHO publication was suitable, and that use of a reference mean adult body weight of 60 kg was also suitable in calculating the protein NRV-R.

For the eight vitamins and minerals, the final report of the electronic working group identified suitable DIRVs that could be considered as a basis for an NRV-R, but did not recommend proposed draft values for these nutrients. In addition, there were seven additional minerals that still needed to be considered for the establishment or updating of NRVs-R. The Committee agreed to proceed with this work in two phases. Australia offered again to chair an electronic working group (eWG) which will recommend revised or additional NRVs-R and provide supporting information for some of these nutrients by the 2014 and 2015 CCNFSDU sessions. The Committee deferred detailed discussion of time frame for initiating work to establish NRVs-R for older infants and young children 6 to 36 months of age until the next session.

Proposed Draft Amendment to the Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children (Codex STAN 74-1981) to Include a New part B for Underweight Older Infants and Young Children

In 2011, the Commission approved new work to include a new Part B for underweight children in the above standard, and the delegation of India chaired eWGs on this topic in 2012 and 2013.

At the Committee meeting, India introduced the working document and explained that underweight in children was defined as children having weight-for-age below -2 standard deviations or weight-for age z-score <-2. The WHO expressed concern with this proposed scope, noting that underweight is a combination of stunting and wasting in which there are different dietary needs and that the introduction of increased energy-dense processed cereal –based foods to underweight children who are mostly stunted would not improve their nutritional status. Consequently, the WHO representative with the support from many delegations and observers requested reconsideration and clarification of the scope of the new work. Several other delegations and some observers suggested that the work be discontinued.



After some discussion, the Committee agreed to return the proposed draft amendment to Step 2/3 for redrafting by a eWG which would further reconsider the scope of this new work in light of WHO guidance documents. A recommendation on whether to continue this work will be made at the next session.

Review of the Codex Standard for Follow-Up Formula (CODEX STAN 156-1987)

In 2012, the Committee proposed new work to review the Standard for Follow-up Formula (FUF) subject to approval by the Commission, and established a eWG chaired by New Zealand and co-chaired by France and Indonesia to begin this review.

At this 2013 meeting, diverse views were expressed on the role of FUF in the diets of older infants and young children. The WHO representative informed that its 2013 statement entitled "Information Concerning the Use and Marketing of Follow-Up Formula" addressed the non-necessity and current unsuitability of follow-up formula and growing concern of the impact of FUF marketing strategies on breastfeeding. Several delegations and observers supported the WHO position and considered that the standard for infant formula was adequate for infants up to 12 months, whereas other delegations and observers viewed a Codex standard for follow-up formula was necessary to ensure product quality and safety and mostly supported separate provisions for older infants and young children. The U.S. expressed that if the Committee decides on separate provisions for FUF for older infants, then the Codex infant formula standard should serve as a starting basis.

After some discussion, the Committee agreed to establish a eWG chaired by New Zealand and co-chaired by Indonesia and France. The working group is charged with:

- a) continuing to review the nutritional requirements of older infants and young children;
- b) comparing these with current compositional requirements in the existing infant formula and follow-up formula standards; and
- c) reporting on the findings in a discussion document for the next Committee meeting.

Proposed Draft Revision of the List of Food Additives in Infant Formula

The delegation of Switzerland informed the Committee that 2011 consultations were held with the International Special Dietary Food Industries (ISDI) to review a list of additional additives proposed for use in infant formula and determine which are necessary for use, but that further consideration of the proposals were needed because of divergent views received in submitted comments.

The Committee agreed to establish a eWG chaired by Switzerland to consider the comments, evaluate the technological need for the food additives, and provide recommendations to the Committee on the list of additional additives and next steps.

Discussion Paper on a Potential NRV for Potassium in Relation to NCD Risk (NRV-NCD)

The delegation of the United States introduced a discussion paper which proposed to initiate new work to establish an NRV-NCD for potassium. In support for this work, it was pointed out that the WHO recommended in 2012 that potassium intake from food be increased and sodium intake decreased to reduce blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and coronary heart disease in adults. This new work also supports the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and complements the recently adopted NRV-NCD for sodium in providing an additional means for Codex member governments to reduce the burden of diet-related NCDs. The discussion paper provided a preliminary assessment of potassium in relation to the general principles for establishing NRVs-NCD.

The Committee agreed to initiate new work to establish an NRV-NCD for potassium and to submit the project document for the 37th Session of the Commission for approval. Subject to this approval, the Committee further agreed to establish a eWG chaired by the United States and co-chaired by Chile to recommend a proposed NRV-NCD for potassium and consequent amendments to the listing of NRVs-NCD in Section 3.4.4.2 of the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling.

Discussion paper on Biofortification

The Committee noted that CCFL had requested that CCNFSDU consider establishing a definition for biofortified foods. The Observer from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) introduced a discussion paper on biofortification and indicated that there was an expansion of production of biofortified food crops with increased levels of nutrients such as vitamin A, iron and zinc, especially in developing countries. The Observer further explained that biofortified crops could be produced through a number of ways including agronomic practices, genetic modification or conventional breeding, and that there were multiple definitions of "biofortification." Several delegations expressed support for this work but some delegations, including the United States, acknowledged the complexities involved in considering potential work in this area and the need to carefully define the scope. The Committee agreed to accept the offer by Zimbabwe and South Africa to develop a discussion paper and project document on a definition of biofortification to consider at the next session.

Other Business and Future Work

The delegation of Belgium raised a concern that the term "kamut" is a registered trademark for a type of cereal, but had been used in the Standard for Foods for Special Dietary Use for Person Intolerant to Gluten (CODEX STAN 118-1981). The delegation proposed to replace this name with the common name "khorasan wheat." An Observer



commented that “kamut” was a widely used name that is well known to consumers and advised against removing this name from the list of cereals that can cause gluten intolerance.

The Codex Secretariat clarified that member states agreed to use the term “kamut” as the common name of a cereal and there were no objections at the time. The Committee noted that a final decision to change the name rests with members, who can propose an amendment to the Standard.

Date and Place of the Next Session

The 36th Session of the CCNFSDU is scheduled to be held in Bali, Indonesia from November 24 to 28 2014, with final arrangements subject to confirmation by the Host Country and Codex Secretariat.