

Codex once again discusses biotoxin standards in bivalve molluscs

The Chilean government managed to have the proposed performance criteria for identification methods of marine biotoxins in live and raw bivalve molluscs once again discussed at the general meeting of the Codex Alimentarius, held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Delegates from Chile expect this standard to be adopted in the course of this week.

The Codex is the technical advisor body to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which sets food safety standards for products traded internationally.

Last February, the Chilean delegation led by Foreign Trade Deputy Director of the National Aquaculture and Fisheries Service (SERNAPESCA), Cecilia Solis, had the support of Latin American countries, the US and Japan, so that the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) does not eliminate the bioassay method on mice for paralytic toxin of the international standard.

For Chile, that would have economic consequences in the mussel farming industry and in marketing these products internationally reported SERNAPESCA.

In addition, in March, during the 35th session of the Codex Committee on Analysis Methods and Sampling (CCMAS), this rule was discussed and the bioassay was catalogued as Type IV, which by definition does not make it possible to use it for purposes of control, inspection and regulation.

"The immediate discussion at the 35th CCMAS meeting did not offer enough time for the Chilean delegation to reach consensus on its position and defense, since it usually includes a year's preparation," explained Solis.

Therefore, SERNAPESCA officials, those of the Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Quality (ACHIPIA), of the Agricultural and Livestock Service (SAG) and of the Directorate General for International Economic Relations (DIRECON) are participating in the CAC sessions.

"Behind the defense of our request there is coordination work with all countries that are interested in the issue," stressed SERNAPESCA Foreign Trade deputy director.

"We held meetings with several delegations to seek support for our motion, particularly with the countries of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), which made it possible for us to have support for the typing process to be reevaluated in the next CCMAS session in February 2015," she added.

During the CCFFP 33rd session, Solis showed the successful results of the National Surveillance and Control Programme for Harmful Algal Phenomena (Red Tide) Poisoning in molluscs.

At that meeting, the Chilean official explained that due to the complexity of the paralytic toxins (multiple analogues), the use of alternative methods such as the chemical ones is a field that "is still being developed and that does not provide the same guarantees or assurances as the bioassay currently used."

Source : <http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=70073> (21/07/2014)