



Food and Agriculture
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World Health
Organization

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REP15/FICS

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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REPORT OF THE TWENTY FIRST SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Brisbane, Australia
13-17 October 2014

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Twenty First Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems reached the following conclusions:

Matters for Consideration by the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and by the 70th Session of the Executive Committee

Matters for adoption / approval

The Committee agreed to forward to CCEXEC70 and CAC38:

- Project Document on Proposal for new work to develop Principles and/or Guidelines for the Exchange of Information (including questionnaires) between Countries to Support Food Import and Export for approval as new work (see para. 28 and Appendix III);
- Project Document on Proposal for new work to develop Guidance for Monitoring the Performance of National Food Control Systems for approval as new work (see para. 36 and Appendix IV);
- Project Document on Proposal for new work to revise *Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations* (CAC/GL 19-1995) for approval as new work (see para. 46 and Appendix V); and
- Project Document on Proposal for new work to revise the *Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Food* (CAC/GL 25-1997) for approval as new work (see para. 54 and Appendix VI).

Matters of interest

The Committee agreed to consider at its next session:

- Discussion papers on System comparability / equivalence (see para. 63); and
- Discussion papers on the possibilities of the use of electronic certificates by competent authorities as well as the migration to paperless certification (see para. 63).

The Committee agreed to forward the response of CCFICS21 to Strategic Plan Implementation to EXEC70 and CAC38.

Matters referred to other Committees / Task Forces

The Committee held a discussion on Halal Food which is also of interest to the Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL), Food Hygiene (CCFH), the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Near East (CCNEA) as well as CCEXEC70 and CAC38.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) held its 21th Session in Brisbane, Australia, from 13 to 17 October 2014, at the kind invitation of the Government of Australia. Mr Gregory Read, First Assistant Secretary, Exports Division, Department of Agriculture, Australia, chaired the Session. The Session was attended by 53 Member countries and one Member organization, and 6 international governmental and non-governmental organizations, including FAO and WHO. The list of participants, including the Secretariats, is given in Appendix I to this report.
2. The Session was greeted by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, of Australia, Dr Paul Grimmes who reinforced Australia's commitment to this Codex Committee and Codex more generally.

Division of Competence¹

3. The Committee noted the division of competence between the European Union and its Member States, according to paragraph 5, Rule II of the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, as presented in [CRD1](#).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)²

4. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as its Agenda for the Session.

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Agenda Item 2)³

5. The Committee noted the information presented in document [CX/FICS 14/21/2](#).

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 – 2019: STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

6. The Committee noted that the Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 had been adopted by the CAC36 and that monitoring of its implementation was ongoing. The Committee considered the draft response to the questionnaire prepared by Australian Secretariat ([CRD2](#)).
7. Regarding the question related to Objective 1.1, the Committee noted the discussion held under Agenda Item 8(a), and agreed to inform the CAC that the Committee had started work on finalising suitable criteria to ensure the identification of high priority work areas.
8. Regarding the question related to Objective 2.1, several members emphasized the importance of Codex standards being based on science and risk analysis principles. They were of the opinion that even though CCFICS did not base its texts directly on the scientific advice of an advisory body such as JECFA, it was important to note that the CCFICS texts were based on scientific principles. On the other hand some members pointed out that CCFICS mainly focused on developing guidance that did not require scientific advice. The Committee agreed to indicate both points in the response.
9. The Committee agreed that the work of CCFICS was linked to risk management decisions and responded to the question linked to activity 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 as reflected in the response provided in Appendix II.
10. Regarding the question related to Objective 3.1, some members emphasized the importance of all official languages being used in all general Codex Committees in order to improve the participation of members.
11. Regarding the question related to Objective 3.2, the Committee noted that the Committee could use informal debate through workshops and seminars to reflect on emerging issues. The Committee also agreed that it could hold workshops on the use of CCFICS texts. FAO indicated their interest to cooperate on this issue.
12. Regarding the question related to Objective 4.2, the Committee noted that workshops have proven to be effective in building consensus around specific subjects.

Conclusion

13. The Committee agreed to forward responses as shown in Appendix II to EXEC70 and CAC38.

¹ [CRD 1](#) (Annotated Agenda – Division of competence between the European Union and its Member States)

² [CX/FICS 14/21/1](#)

³ [CX/FICS 14/21/2](#); [CRD2](#) (Proposed Responses to the Strategic Plan Implementation); [CRD8](#) (comments of Philippines); [CRD11](#) (Draft Project Document for Proposal to Revised the General Guidelines for Use of the Term "Halal")

DISCUSSION ON HALAL FOOD

14. The Chairperson recalled that when discussing a project document submitted by Egypt, the Executive Committee had recognised the importance and growing volume of trade and consumption of halal food worldwide and had recommended that the project document should be re-scoped in order to identify gaps with existing relevant Codex texts and the advice of CCFL and CCFICS should be sought to assist the CCEXEC and Commission to take a decision. A revised project document was submitted to CCFL41 which was scheduled to meet the week after the CCFICS. The Chairperson proposed to hold a brief exchange on the topic and the possible relevance to the work of CCFICS.
15. The Delegation of Lebanon introduced the document ([CRD11](#)) on behalf of Lebanon and Egypt. The document had been developed based on a workshop held by Egypt and identified gaps in the existing *General Guidelines for the Use of the Term Halal* (CAC/GL 24-1997). The delegation informed the Committee that a second document for submission to CCFICS had not yet been finalized. This would be done for the upcoming session of the CCNEA that would also consider discussions held in CCFICS and CCFL. The delegation also urged the Committee to consider the use of Arabic language in all discussions related to this topic to allow the widest possible participation of interested parties.
16. One delegation said that they did not think that the gaps in the existing guidelines had been identified nor did they see the relationship to the work of CCFICS. Others were of the opinion that the principles and framework in which halal standard sat were within the mandate of this Committee and there was significant overlap with other guidance already developed by CCFICS.
17. Several delegations welcomed the proposal and were of the opinion that certain gaps in the present guidelines had been identified in part 3 of the document and that harmonized guidance on this topic was required but needed to be defined carefully. It was noted that different standards on halal food had been developed by different organizations.
18. Other delegations while recognizing the importance of halal food trade were of the opinion that more information from concerned countries was needed in order to establish clearly any role for the CCFICS, and the relevance of this work to the mandate of CCFICS would need to be clearly established. The connection to the work of other Codex Committee (e.g. CCFH) and the OIE in this area as well as other regional organizations was also mentioned and that this topic was more relevant to ensuring fair practices in the food trade.
19. The Chairperson summarized that there was an appreciation in the Committee of the importance of halal food trade and the need for harmonized guidance. However, it was still unclear how, and through which Committee(s), Codex could best provide this guidance. More reflection was needed in regard to what should be the international guidance, including common views from countries concerned on the interpretation of halal rule, and what could be the role of CCFICS. Possible CCFICS work might include developing appropriate guidance for providing assurances that halal requirements have been met. He said that the request of Lebanon for the use of Arabic would be considered for CCFICS.

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS (Agenda Item 3a)⁴

20. The Representative of FAO presented FAO and WHO's work in relation to the mandate of CCFICS, as contained in document [FICS/21 INF/1](#), with regard to recent tools and other ongoing work (risk based imported food control guidance, tool to assess national food control systems, evidence informed risk management decisions considering multiple criteria among others). In particular, the FAO/WHO work on the assessment of food control systems was highlighted, as it would be a means for countries to assess, in a robust and measurable way, the performance of their own system. The representative said that a fully developed first draft had been field tested in the Gambia, Morocco, Sierra Leone and Zambia and that lessons learnt from these tests are currently being integrated into a second draft which will be shortly field tested in Iran and Chile. In relation to the development of this tool, a Technical Meeting on performance and assessment of food control systems will be held in 2015.

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS (Agenda Item 3b)⁵

21. The Committee noted the information provided by WTO, OIE and WCO on activities relevant to its work, as presented in [FICS/21 INF/2](#), [FICS/21 INF/3](#) and [FICS/21 INF/4](#) respectively.

⁴ [CX/FICS/21 INF/1](#)

⁵ [FICS/21 INF/2](#); [FICS/21 INF/3](#); [FICS/21 INF/4](#)

DISCUSSION PAPER ON PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE ELABORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF QUESTIONNAIRES DIRECTED AT EXPORTING COUNTRIES (Agenda Item 4)⁶

22. The delegation of Costa Rica, introduced the document [CX/FICS/ 14/21/3](#) and recalled that at its 20th Session, CCFICS in principle supported the revised approach to address the issue of the burden of multiple questionnaires and also considered it necessary to clarify in the project document that: the new work aimed at providing guidance on which information might be useful to assess the exporting country's national food control system or parts thereof; the scope of the work was the exchange of information between Competent Authorities of importing and exporting countries; and the focus of the work would initially be limited to specific areas of trade or specific products or groups of products entering the market for the first time.
23. The delegation also pointed out that the proposed principles and guidelines for the elaboration and management of questionnaires directed to exporting countries would contribute to: obtaining more information; establishing mutual confidence between importing and exporting countries; assisting in simplifying complex procedures and helping in the optimisation of time and resources.
24. The Chair reminded the Committee that it had been working on the document since its 19th Session, and had so far held two electronic working groups and two informal workshops in Costa Rica and Belgium to develop a better understanding of the issue and the scope of the proposed work.
25. The Committee reaffirmed its support for the new work and considered the draft project document taking into account the criteria applicable to general subjects as set out in the Procedural Manual. The Committee agreed that:
- The scope of this document covers new trade and existing trade that is also subject to assessment through the use of questionnaires;
 - The scope would be limited based on the risk of food categories where an exchange of information between importing and exporting countries was necessary to ensure protection of the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade;
 - The document would focus on the exchange and management of information between competent authorities in general, including but not limited to the appropriate use of questionnaires;
 - The decision as to whether the document would be an Annex to an existing guideline or a stand-alone document would be taken at a later stage
26. The Representative of FAO said that the term "assessment of food control system" currently used in the project document usually implied a review with a wide scope when used in the context of capacity building work of FAO and other international organizations. However, the Representative was of the opinion that the intent of the proposed new work should be limited to simplifying the means for obtaining information regarding the controls related to food intended for export.
27. The Representative of the World Customs Organization informed the Committee that WCO supports exchange of information between nations, and has developed guidance that could inform Codex when undertaking this work⁷. WCO offered to assist the Committee in this endeavour.

Conclusion

28. The Committee agreed to the proposal of the Working Group as regards new work on the development of principles and/or guidelines for the exchange of information (including questionnaires) between countries to support food import and export and to submit the project document (Appendix III) through CCEXEC70 to CAC38 for critical review and approval as new work respectively.
29. The Committee also agreed to establish an electronic working group, (with a possibility of convening a physical working group in English, French and Spanish) chaired by New Zealand and Co-chaired by Brazil and Mexico and working in English and Spanish, to prepare the proposed draft standard for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next Session.

⁶ [CX/FICS 14/21/3](#); [CRD3](#) (Comments of the European Union, Ghana, India, Nigeria, and Thailand); [CRD8](#) (Comments of Philippines); [CRD12](#) (Comments of New Zealand); [CRD15](#) (Comments of the Republic of Korea)

⁷ GNC: <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/gnc.aspx>

Risk Management: <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/instruments-and-tools/rmc.aspx>

DISCUSSION PAPER ON PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR MONITORING REGULATORY PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS (Agenda Item 5)⁸

30. The Delegation of the United States of America introduced [CX/FICS 14/21/4](#), and recalled that discussions on this topic had been held in CCFICS19 and 20 and the electronic working group established by CCFICS20 had revised the project document and prepared an outline of the proposed Principles and Guidelines for Monitoring Regulatory Performance of National Food Control Systems in addition workshops held in Belgium and Costa Rica had helped to gain better understanding of the issue, scope of the work and the timeliness for starting the work now.
31. The Committee generally supported the new work and noted that through discussion in the electronic working group and the two workshops, the need to limit the scope to self evaluation of a country's food control system and develop general international guidance in this area had been recognized. The Committee noted that there had not been enough time to gain ample experience with the implementation of CAC/GL 82-2013, but that several countries had already started working on monitoring their national food control systems and it would be useful to have a consistent framework and understanding of the terminology used in this regard.
32. The Representative of FAO informed the committee about the ongoing work on the FAO/WHO food control assessment tool, as well as the technical consultation that would be organized on monitoring performance and assessment of food control systems. On that basis, FAO and WHO would be keen to cooperate in the development of this new work, if it was approved by the Commission.
33. The Representative of OIE informed the Committee of the OIE evaluation system (i.e. Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services) that included a critical competency on food safety. To date 117 OIE Members had been evaluated. He expressed OIE's readiness to collaborate with CCFICS on this issue.
34. The Committee considered the project document taking into account the criteria applicable to general subjects as set out in the Procedural Manual and agreed:
 - To delete "regulatory" from the title;
 - That the term guidance rather than principles and guidelines should be reflected in the new work proposal.;
 - All relevant expert advice including the outputs of the upcoming FAO technical consultation on monitoring systems for national food control system would be taken into account; and
 - Collaboration with external bodies including FAO, WHO, OIE and IPPC would be sought.
35. The delegation of Norway suggested that workshops in this area could be held in conjunction with the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committees, as delegates from the regions could benefit from the discussion.

Conclusion

36. The Committee agreed to transmit the revised project document on Guidance for Monitoring Performance of National Food Control Systems through to EXEC70 and CAC38 for critical review and approval as new work respectively (Appendix IV).
37. The Committee also agreed to establish, subject to the approval of new work by the Commission, an electronic working group working in English only (with a possibility of convening a physical working group working in English, French and Spanish), chaired by the United States of America, to prepare a proposed draft standard for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next session.

⁸ [CX/FICS 14/21/4](#); [CRD4](#) (comments of Dominica, European Union, Ghana, India, Nigeria and Thailand); [CRD8](#) (comments from Philippines); [CRD13](#) (workshop outcomes)

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE REVISION OF THE CODEX PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION IN FOOD SAFETY EMERGENCY SITUATIONS (Agenda Item 6)⁹

38. The delegation of the United States of America introduced the report of the electronic working group ([CX/FICS 14/21/5](#)) and informed the Committee that CCFICS20 had considered a discussion paper that contained a framework and basic outline for the revision of the Codex *Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations* (CAC/GL 19-1995). The delegation also pointed out that CCFICS20 had expressed general support for the work but had insufficient time to consider the proposal in-depth and therefore had requested the United States to review the document, through an electronic working group, taking into account comments provided during discussion. The delegation pointed out that the electronic working group had: indicated that the outline as presented at the CCFICS20 provided a satisfactory basis on which to begin a revision and; that also clarified matters related to the role of risk analysis, and risk management in this context.
39. While the Committee generally supported the proposal, one delegation expressed the opinion that the work should focus only on the exchange of information and that there should be no expansion of the scope to cover new issues.
40. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee on the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authority Network (INFOSAN) and the FAO Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety (EMPRES Food Safety), as well of the relevant guidance produced by FAO and WHO (FAO/WHO Guide for developing and improving national food recall systems; FAO/WHO Guide for application of risk analysis principles and procedures during food safety emergencies and FAO/WHO framework for developing national food safety emergency response plans). Noting the existing FAO/WHO guidance the Representative indicated that FAO and WHO would appreciate if the purpose and scope of the proposed work were further clarified.
41. The Committee noted the changes in the international environment and the additional guidance available from FAO/WHO since the adoption of the original text by the Commission in 1995 and the need to take them into account when revising it.
42. The Chair clarified that the new work intended to update the document to address gaps as competent authorities needed a comprehensive document for use in emergency situations.
43. The Committee considered the project document taking into account the criteria applicable to general subjects as set out in the Procedural Manual and agreed that following should be included:
- Available information such as INFOSAN; EMPRES Food safety and International Health Regulation (2005) (IHR);
 - Recent and emerging principles such as: roles and responsibilities; stakeholder engagement, communication and exchange of information in a transparent manner;
 - The principles for managing food safety emergency situation. .
44. The Representative of FAO indicated that FAO and WHO would contribute to the work of any electronic working group that would be set up, should the proposed work be approved by CAC.
45. The Representative of WCO while referring to the document FICS/21 INF/4 pointed out that one of the instruments and tools that the WCO had developed was the SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade. The Representative said that the SAFE Framework was intended to help countries secure supply chains from beginning to end but that the WCO and its Members had realised that incidents might happen nonetheless and had developed the Trade Recovery Guidelines to support countries how to respond to incidents, including the information exchange between Customs, other government agencies and the private sector. The guidelines are publicly available from the WCO website.

Conclusion

46. The Committee agreed to transmit the revised project document on the revision of *the Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations* (CAC/GL 19-1995) (Appendix V) through CCEXEC70 to CAC38 for critical review and approval as new work respectively.
47. The Committee also agreed to establish, an electronic working group working in English and Spanish (with a possibility of convening a physical working group working in English, French and Spanish), chaired by European Union and Co-chaired by Chile, to prepare the proposed draft standard for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next Session.

⁹ [CX/FICS 14/21/5](#); [CRD5](#) (Comments of Dominica, European Union, Ghana, India, Nigeria and Thailand); [CRD8](#) (comment from Philippines)

DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO GUIDELINES FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN COUNTRIES ON REJECTIONS OF IMPORTED FOOD (Agenda Item 7)¹⁰

48. The Delegation of the United States of America introduced [CX/FICS 14/21/6](#) and recalled that CCFICS19 considered specific proposals from an electronic working group on future work on animal feeding established by the CAC to include feed in the scope of the *Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Food* (CAC/GL 25-1997). CCFICS19 noted the importance of the task and agreed to ask the United States of America to prepare a discussion paper on this issue. CCFICS20 partly discussed the paper and agreed to establish an electronic working group to revise it based on the comments made
49. The Committee discussed the paper in detail and noted, that there were shortcomings in the guideline which went beyond the mandate to include animal feed in the scope, such as the lack of consideration on the importance of informing the competent authorities of the exporting country on reasons for rejections of food. The Committee also noted that including animal feed in the guideline caused the need for additional revisions to the text that also went beyond the original scope of the work.
50. In this regard, the Committee agreed that it was not possible to complete the currently proposed revision relating specifically to animal feeds without a more complete revision. The Committee agreed to propose new work to revise the guideline to address the shortcomings identified and to complete the task of including animal feed, and noted in particular that:
- Information exchange on rejection should involve competent authorities as well as other relevant parties; and
 - Existing Codex documents referring to measures taken in case of rejections of food/feed should be taken into account, in particular, CAC/GL 47-2003 and CAC/GL 19-1995.
 - The revised guideline should be clearly distinct in scope and coverage to that provided in CAC/GL 19-1995.
51. The Committee also noted that not only food safety but other aspects such as invalid certification, fraud and mislabelling can be the reason for rejections of food/feed.
52. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee that FAO had received expression of interest from different regions (e.g. Latin America, through the Inter American Development Bank, and Near East) to receive assistance from FAO to work on a template to promote harmonization on reporting for rejections.
53. The Committee expressed the general concern that the proposal for new work to address the shortcomings in CAC/GL 25-1997 had been developed only during the session and thus there had not been sufficient time for delegations to consult with their capitals. Notwithstanding this concern, the Committee acknowledged that it was important to proceed with the review in a timely manner to ensure that the Guideline can achieve its purpose of providing adequate guidance to competent authorities on the exchange of information on rejected food/feed.

Conclusion

54. The Committee agreed to transmit the project document on the revision of the *Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Food* (CAC/GL 25-1997) (Appendix VI) through CCEXEC70 to CAC38 for critical review and to be considered for approval as new work respectively.
55. The Committee also agreed to establish, an electronic working group working in English only (with a possibility of convening a physical working group working in English, French and Spanish), chaired by Australia and co-chaired by Canada, to prepare the proposed draft standard for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next Session.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 8)¹¹

DISCUSSION PAPER ON CONSIDERATION OF EMERGING ISSUES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE WORK OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

56. The delegation of the United States introduced document [CX/FICS 14/21/7](#) and noted that in the margins of CCFICS20, emerging challenges for food regulators had been considered to identify themes that the Committee could consider in discussions on its future strategy and work plan.

¹⁰ [CX/FICS 14/21/6](#); [CRD6](#) (comments of European Union, Ghana, India, Nigeria and Thailand); [CRD8](#) (comments of Thailand); [CRD9](#) (comments of Brazil); [CRD10](#) (comments of Australia); [CRD16](#) (comment of El Salvador)

¹¹ [CX/FICS 14/21/7](#); [CRD7](#) (comments of Dominica, Ghana, India and Thailand); [CRD8](#) (comments of Philippines), [CRD11](#) (Draft Project Document to revise the General Guidelines for Us of the Term "Halal"); [CRD14](#) (comments of Netherland); [CRD15](#) (Republic of Korea)

57. The Chairperson stated that the paper provided an opportunity for CCFICS to examine issues of international significance in a more strategic way and respond to them in a timely manner. He proposed that it should be continuously updated to take into account emerging issues and challenges and that was important to retain and update the history section.

Discussion

58. The Committee generally agreed with the issues described in the paper and the proposal for its continuous updating as well as using the document as a tool to identify new work. The Committee noted that a prioritisation mechanism should be developed.
59. One member also noted that some issues to be addressed could be cross cutting issues relating to food safety, fair practices in the food trade and food security.
60. The Representative of the WCO highlighted tools of interest to the Committee including the recent Coordinated Border Management Compendium that included wording about Codex Alimentarius Commission as a standard setting body and urged the Committee and the Codex Secretariat to verify this information (<http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/activities-and-programmes/single-window/single-window-guidelines.aspx>)
61. The Committee supported requests to develop discussion papers on system comparability/equivalence and on electronic certificates in international food trade.

Conclusions

62. The Committee agreed:
- i. That the section on the history of CCFICS was useful information, should be kept current and completed with text explaining how the various CCFICS documents relate to each other;
 - ii. The document should include a new paragraph 14(a)bis as follows: “emerging food safety issues, fair practices in the food trade and nutrition”
 - iii. That consideration should be given on how to deal with the concern of sustainable access to safe food.
 - iv. To keep the strategic horizon scan up to date;
 - v. To develop simple criteria to assist in preliminary assessment and identification of priority areas that the Committee may need to work on in the future. The criteria to undertake a preliminary assessment could include the following: What is the problem? What will be the benefits of the new work? What is the potential for success? What are the potential challenges that could hinder progress of the work? What is the timeline and how does the work relate to current framework of CCFICS texts?
 - vi. Following application of the criteria in (v) above, potential new work of high priority could then lead to discussion papers, project documents and new work in accordance with the Codex Procedural Manual.
 - vii. That there is a need to develop a process to ensure that existing CCFICS texts fulfil their intended purpose and are up to date.
 - viii. To accept the offer by the European Union to take responsibility for the document until the CCFICS22.
 - ix. That discussion of the document would be a standing item on the CCFICS agenda.
63. The Committee also agreed to the development of discussion papers on:
- a) System comparability/equivalence (to be led New Zealand)
 - b) The possibilities of the use of electronic certificates by competent authorities as well as the migration to paperless certification (to be led by the Netherlands)

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 9)

64. The Committee noted that its 22nd Session was scheduled in approximately twelve to eighteen months subject to further discussion between the Codex and Australian Secretariats.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

Subject Matter	Step	Action by:	Document Reference (REP15/FICS)
Draft principles and/or guidelines for the exchange of information (including questionnaires) between countries to support food import and export	1,2,3	38 th CAC eWG (New Zealand / Brazil / Mexico) 22 nd CCFICS	Paras 28 and 29
Draft Guidance for monitoring the performance of National Food Control Systems	1,2,3	38 th CAC eWG (United States of America) 22 nd CCFICS	Paras 36 and 37
Revision of the <i>Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations</i> (CAC/GL 19-1995)	1,2,3	38 th CAC eWG (European Union / Chile) 22 nd CCFICS	Paras 46 and 47
Revision of the <i>Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Food</i> (CAC/GL 25-1997)	1,2,3	38 th CAC eWG (Australia / Canada) 22 nd CCFICS	Paras 54 and 55
Discussion paper on System comparability/ equivalence	-	New Zealand 22 nd CCFICS	Para.63
Discussion paper on the possibilities of the use of electronic certificates by competent authorities as well as the migration to paperless certification	-	Netherlands 22 nd CCFICS	Para.63

Appendix I

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
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Appendix II**RESPONSES OF CCFICS21 TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Response of CCFICS 21 is shown in **Bold and Underlined** font.

Strategic Goal	Objective	Activity	Expected Outcome	Measurable Indicators/Outputs
1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues.	1.1: Establish new and review existing Codex standards, based on priorities of the CAC	1.1.1: Consistently apply decision-making and priority-setting criteria across Committees to ensure that the standards and work areas of highest priority are progressed in a timely manner.	New or updated standards are developed in a timely manner	- Priority setting criteria are reviewed, revised as required and applied. - # of standards revised and # of new standards developed based on these criteria.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>YES</u> Does the Committee use any specific criteria for standards development? <u>Yes the committee has agreed to a process for ensuring the currency of the strategic horizon scan document, and forward looking potential work areas. The committee has also commenced work in finalising suitable criteria to ensure the identification of high priority work areas.</u> Does the Committee intend to develop such criteria? <u>Not applicable</u></p>				
	1.2: Proactively identify emerging issues and Member needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards.	1.2.1: Develop a systematic approach to promote identification of emerging issues related to food safety, nutrition, and fair practices in the food trade.	Timely Codex response to emerging issues and to the needs of Members.	- Committees implement systematic approaches for identification of emerging issues. - Regular reports on systematic approach and emerging issues made to the CCEXEC through the Codex Secretariat.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>Yes</u> How does the Committee identify emerging issues and members needs? Is there a systematic approach? Is it necessary to develop such an approach? <u>The committee has responded to members' identification of emerging issues through the development of appropriate guidance (e.g. traceability principles, guidance on judgement of equivalence). In this regard, the committee has taken into account the differing needs and capabilities of members.</u></p>				
		1.2.2: Develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade.	Improved ability of Codex to develop standards relevant to the needs of its Members.	- Input from committees identifying and prioritizing needs of Members. - Report to CCEXEC from committees on how standards developed address the needs of the Members as part of critical review process.
Included in question to 1.2.				
2: Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards.	2.1: Ensure consistent use of risk analysis principles and scientific advice.	2.1.1: Use the scientific advice of the joint FAO/WHO expert bodies to the fullest extent possible in food safety and	Scientific advice consistently taken into account by all relevant committees during	- # of times the need for scientific advice is: - identified, - requested and,

		nutrition standards development based on the "Working Principles of Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius".	the standard setting process.	- utilized in a timely manner.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>Yes because CCFICS develops texts for risk management however their development does not require scientific advice.</u> Does the committee request scientific advice in course of its work, how often does it request such advice. <u>No</u> Does the committee always use the scientific advice, if not, why not?</p>				
		2.1.2: Encourage engagement of scientific and technical expertise of Members and their representatives in the development of Codex standards.	Increase in scientific and technical experts at the national level contributing to the development of Codex standards.	- # of scientists and technical experts as part of Member delegations. - # of scientists and technical experts providing appropriate input to country positions.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>Yes in particular for technical expertise.</u> How do members make sure that the necessary scientific input is given into country positions and that the composition of the national delegation allows to adequately present and discuss this position? What guidance could be given by the Committee or FAO and WHO?</p>				
		2.1.3: Ensure that all relevant factors are fully considered in exploring risk management options in the context of Codex standard development.	Enhanced identification, and documentation of all relevant factors considered by committees during the development of Codex standards.	- # of committee documents identifying all relevant factors guiding risk management recommendations. - # of committee documents clearly reflecting how those relevant factors were considered in the context of standards development.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>Yes, in its capacity in developing risk management principles and guidelines the Committee should ensure that all relevant factors in exploring risk management options are considered, based on Codex mandate.</u> How does the Committee ensure that all relevant factors have been taken into account when developing a standard and how are these documented? Not applicable</p>				
		2.1.4: Communicate the risk management recommendations to all interested parties.	Risk management recommendations are effectively communicated and disseminated to all interested parties.	- # of web publication/communications relaying Codex standards. - # of media releases disseminating Codex standards.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>Yes it is relevant but at the moment the committee does not actively communicate outcomes of its work.</u> When taking a risk management decision, does the committee give guidance to members how to communicate this decision? Would more consideration of this be helpful to members?</p>				
3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members.	3.1: Increase the effective participation of developing countries in	3.1.5: To the extent possible, promote the use of the official languages of the Commission in committees and working	Active participation of Members in committees and working groups.	- Report on number of committees and working groups using the languages of the Commission

	Codex.	groups.		
<p>Question to the Committee:</p> <p>Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? <u>Yes</u></p> <p>Is the use of official languages in working groups of the committee sufficient? <u>Yes</u></p> <p>What are the factors determining the choice of languages? Relates to the work that is being done and based on the region(s) of the participants?</p> <p>How could the situation be improved? <u>The committee will consider working in languages other than English, French and Spanish where appropriate (the inclusion of Russian and/or Arabic) to improve the effectiveness in communication and participation of the work being progressed.</u></p>				
	3.2: Promote capacity development programs that assist countries in creating sustainable national Codex structures.	3.2.3: Where practical, the use of Codex meetings as a forum to effectively conduct educational and technical capacity building activities.	Enhancement of the opportunities to conduct concurrent activities to maximize use of the resources of Codex and Members.	- # of activities hosted on the margins of Codex meetings.
<p>Question to the Committee:</p> <p>Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>YES</u></p> <p>Does the Committee organize technical capacity activities or other activities in the margins of Committee sessions? If yes – how many and with which topics have been organized in the past. If no – could this be useful and what topics could be addressed? <u>Yes, in the past we have had seminars on the WTO Agreements conducted by WTO representatives. The Australian Secretariat would be open to facilitating technical capacity building activities in the margins of the Committee relevant to the work of the Committee for example the FAO/WHO may wish to consider activities in relation to risk based imported food controls; the food control system assessment tool; rapid alert systems applicable to food safety; addressing food safety emergencies; food safety risk communication. The Committee has also conducted the number of workshops across a broad number of subject matter, including traceability, equivalence and National Food Control Systems to ensure the clear understanding of issues confronting member countries and identification of suitable solutions to the issues raised. These workshops may be expanded in the future to share experiences in the use of CCFICS guidance.</u></p>				
4: Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices.	4.1: Strive for an effective, efficient, transparent, and consensus based standard setting process.	4.1.4: Ensure timely distribution of all Codex working documents in the working languages of the Committee/Commission.	Codex documents distributed in a more timely manner consistent with timelines in the Procedural Manual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline Ratio (%) established for documents distributed at least 2 months prior to versus less than 2 months prior to a scheduled meeting. - Factors that potentially delay the circulation of documents identified and addressed. - An increase in the ratio (%) of documents circulated 2 months or more prior to meetings.
<p>Question to the Committee:</p> <p>Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. <u>Yes</u></p> <p>Does the Committee have a mechanism in place to ensure timely distribution of documents? What could be done to further improve the situation? <u>The Australian Secretariat ensures that all working groups are aware of the timelines for provision of documents. We ensure when setting these timelines that we have sufficient time for translation of the working documents, circulation for comments and collation of the responses and translation of Add 1 documents. The Codex Secretariat together with host country secretariats should ensure that working groups meet the timelines required to support the timely distribution of documents. Translation of documents into working languages of the committees should be a priority for the FAO, the Codex and host country Secretariats.</u></p>				
		4.1.5: Increase the scheduling of Work Group meetings in conjunction with Committee meetings.	Improved efficiency in use of resources by Codex committees and Members	- # of physical working group meetings in conjunction with committee meetings,

				where appropriate.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. Yes Does the Committee hold physical working groups independent of Committee sessions? If yes – why is this necessary? Yes. The committee now only meets every 18 months, holding physical working group meetings between sessions of the committee facilitates the work of the committee. Holding Pwg in conjunction with the meeting places and additional financial burden on the host country, when these meetings are scheduled between sessions of the committee we work with other countries (often developing countries) to provide a venue and increase the opportunities for attendance, we also share the costs of hosting the Pwg. In some cases holding meetings in conjunction with the meeting also increases the workload of the Secretariats, having to get the report written, translated and distributed for discussion at the meeting. This also doesn't allow members time to consult in their country on the outcome of the Pwg, which can sometimes hold up progress of the work.</p>				
	4.2: Enhance capacity to arrive at consensus in standards setting process.	4.2.1: Improve the understanding of Codex Members and delegates of the importance of and approach to consensus building of Codex work.	Members and delegates awareness of the importance of consensus in the Codex standard setting process improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training material on guidance to achieve consensus developed and made available in the languages of the Commission to delegates. - Regular dissemination of existing material to Members through Codex Contact Points. - Delegate training programs held in association with Codex meetings. - Impediments to consensus being achieved in Codex identified and analyzed and additional guidance developed to address such impediments, if necessary.
<p>Question to the Committee: Is this activity relevant to the work of the Committee? YES/NO. Yes Are there problems with finding consensus in the Committee? If yes – what are the impediments to consensus? What has been attempted and what more could be done? In the past when there have been problems with reaching consensus, the Chair will work with the countries concerned to understand the problem and to seek to find a solution that is acceptable to all concerned. With some issues it may be just a difference in understanding, a concern at the implications of a particular standard for a country or sometimes it can be a lack of flexibility in a country position. The use of workshops has proved effective in allowing more discussion on the particular topic thus supporting the development of consensus.</p>				

Appendix III**PROJECT DOCUMENT****Proposal for new work to develop principles and/or guidelines for the exchange of information (including questionnaires) between countries to support food import and export****1. Purpose**

The objective of the proposed new work is to provide guidance to the competent authorities of importing and exporting countries through principles and guidelines on the exchange and management of information, including the appropriate use of questionnaires, to facilitate the assessment of food control systems and support the acceptance of exports.

2. Scope

The scope is limited to the exchange of substantiated and appropriate information between the competent authorities of the importing and exporting countries, in order to obtain information about the food control system of an exporting country prior to entry into the market of specific products or groups of products for the first time and when necessary, so as to maintain the existing trade.

3. Relevance and timeliness

Multiple questionnaires with duplication of information that are requested by the competent authorities of the importing countries may impose unnecessary resource burdens on the competent authority of the exporting country. These principles and guidelines should result in more effective ways to collect and assess the relevant information and limit the burden on exporting countries to complete the questionnaires, and limit the time required for importing countries to review submissions.

These principles and guidelines could provide guidance in the establishment of a harmonized approach for the exchange of information that may include the use of questionnaires. This guidance might also be useful in assisting importing countries to identify the type of information that might be required from competent authorities. It could be used by importing countries to gain experience, knowledge and confidence in the food control system of the exporting countries, reducing the need for multiple models of certificates and complex attestations or even the execution of *in-situ* audits.

4. The main aspects to be covered

This new work proposes the establishment of principles and guidelines for the exchange of information, including, but not limited to, the use of questionnaires, in order to provide guidance to the competent authorities of importing countries on the type of information required to assess, where necessary, the food control system or parts thereof of the exporting country.

5. An assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

The following assessment has been made in accordance with the Criteria for Establishment of Work Priorities:

General criterion

The exchange of information between the importing and exporting countries is a necessary component to ensure health, food safety and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. This new work has also taken into account the burden of information exchange including questionnaires on exporting countries, in particular developing countries.

Criteria applicable to general subjects

- a) There is a clear need for international guidance to ensure a consistent approach to support the exchange of information between an importing and exporting country, to minimize duplication and the resource burden imposed on the exporting country, and particularly developing countries.
- b) Refer to paragraph 2, Scope.
- c) The committee will take into account any relevant international work conducted in this area, in particular OIE and/or IPPC when appropriate.
- d) The committee is of the view that principles and guidelines can be developed to address the issues identified.

- e) The committee has assessed that there is currently a significant burden imposed on exporting countries due to clear lack of international guidance in this area.

6. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

The proposed work is directly related to the purpose of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, according to its *statutes*, to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade, as well as to the first Strategic Goal of the Codex Alimentarius Commission's Strategic Plan 2014-2019 "establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues", and is consistent with Objective 1.2 "proactively identify emerging issues and member country needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards". Further, it contributes to Activity 1.2.2 "develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade". It is also consistent with Objective 1.3 "strengthen coordination and cooperation with other international standards-setting organizations seeking to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize opportunities."

7. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

The work will take into consideration the Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems (CAC/GL 82-2013). The finalized guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Guidelines for the Design, Operation, Assessment and Accreditation of Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CAC/GL 26-1997). Also, it should be read in conjunction with the Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems (CAC/GL 47-2003).

8. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Not required.

9. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

Not required at this time.

10. Completion of the new work and other conditions

The proposed timeline for completion of the new work includes the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 3 and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission. The time frame for developing a standard should not exceed a period of five years. This will be dependent on the future schedule of CCFICS meetings as the Committee is currently meeting every 18 months rather than every year.

Subject to the Codex Alimentarius Commission approval at its 38th session in 2015, it is expected that the work can be completed in three to four years with:

- Consideration at Step 3 by CCFICS 22: 2016;
- Consideration at Step 5 by CCFICS 23; and
- Adoption of the proposed Guidelines by the Commission within a period of 4 years.

Appendix IV**PROJECT DOCUMENT****Proposal for new work to develop Guidance for Monitoring the Performance of National Food Control Systems****1. Purpose and scope of the proposed standard**

The purpose and scope of the work is to develop guidance to assist the competent authority(ies) of a National Food Control System (NFCS) to develop appropriate tools (e.g. measurement mechanisms, indicators, analysis and evaluations) which can be used to help monitor, evaluate, and improve its own system.

2. Relevance and Timeliness

This proposed new work provides a link between the identification of the elements and characteristics of NFCS, as described in (CAC/GL 82-2013) 2013, and the self-evaluation of the system to ensure it is functioning as designed and is continuously improved and is effectively achieving its objectives. This will help countries to ensure that finite resources invested in food safety and fair practices in the food trade are producing desired results and assist with stakeholder communication.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The work would develop guidance to assist competent authorities in monitoring effective implementation and support continuous improvement of their NFCS.

Development of agreed key definitions relating to the terminology of self-assessment and monitoring of a NFCS will also assist in consistency of understanding and interpretation.

Additionally the new work would, in guideline form, delineate those components of a NFCS that should be considered and evaluated to identify any specific areas in need of improvement. These components should reflect the Principles upon which a NFCS should be based, as listed in the Codex *Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems* (CAC/GL 82-2013 section 3).

The guidance would take into account and be sufficiently flexible to provide for different countries having different systems which may also be at different stages of development, depending on their national circumstances.

Whether the proposed work is developed as a stand-alone document or as an annex to an existing Codex text is an open question with a decision to be made at a later date.

4. Assessment against the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*

Assessment with respect to the General Criterion: *Consumer protection from the view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.*

This work will provide useful guidance to countries to self-evaluate the capability of their NFCS thus contributing to consumer protection. The guidance will also assist with continuous improvement. The needs of developing countries will be taken into account by recognising that NFCSs in different countries may be different and at different stages of development.

- a) While the purpose and scope of the new work focuses on the self-evaluation and improvement of national food control systems within a country, it can also provide competent authorities with additional tools to use in documenting their food import and export control systems and thus, provide means to build confidence in their food safety controls.
- b) See paragraph 1, Purpose and Scope above.
- c) The Committee will take into account any relevant international work in this area that is identified during the course of the work.
- d) The Committee is of the view that guidance can be developed in this area.
- e) The issue is applicable on a global basis and will be of assistance to all members, in particular developing countries.

5. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

The proposed work directly relates to Codex Strategic Goal 1: Promoting sound regulatory frameworks. The proposed work provides the basis for countries to undertake systematic self-evaluation of the functioning of

their NFCS to determine whether desired public health outcomes are being met and to identify mechanisms to strengthen their overall NFCS.

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

This proposal relates to the Codex document *Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems* (CAC/GL 82-2013), and other relevant Codex texts.

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Any relevant expert advice will be taken into account i.e. FAO technical consultation on monitoring systems for national food control systems.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

It is anticipated that the committee will seek to collaborate with a range of external bodies including OIE, IPPC, FAO and WHO in the development of guidance in this area.

9. Proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the timeframe for developing a standard should normally not exceed five years

It is proposed that the work will extend over three (3) sessions of CCFICS. An initial draft of the document will be prepared for consideration by CCFICS at its 22nd Session (likely to be scheduled for 2016). The document would be anticipated to be ready for Step 5 approval following the 23rd Session of the Committee (2017) and ready for Step 8 adoption following the 24th Session of the Committee (2018). It would be anticipated that adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission would occur at the Commission's 2019 Session. Electronic and/or physical working groups are likely to be needed, as well as Regional workshops.

In summary:

Agreement to undertake work: 2014

Approval by the Commission as New Work: 2015

Adoption by the Commission at Step 5: 2018

Adoption by the Commission at Step 8: 2019

Appendix V**PROJECT DOCUMENT****Proposal for new work to revise *Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations (CAC/GL 19-1995)*****1. Purpose and scope of the proposed standard**

The purpose of the new work will be to revise the existing Codex *Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations (CAC/GL 19-1995)* to include information relating to the roles of various parties (government, industry, consumers) involved in food safety emergency situations and to include guidance on the process of managing food safety emergency situations. Updating and/or expansion of existing guidance will also be done.

2. Its relevance and timeliness

The original Codex guidance on the exchange of information in food safety emergency situations, developed by CCFICS, and adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1995, has provided useful information to governments. The document was originally developed to contain guidance on: what constitutes a food safety emergency; the role of the competent authority in a food safety emergency situation; what information ought to be exchanged between competent authorities in the case of a food safety emergency; the need for a plan that provides procedures to handle a food safety emergency; and information on certain aspects of risk communication. However, the document is basically silent on the roles of other parties that have a significant role in dealing with a food safety emergency situation, including the food industry (producers, processors, distributors, sellers) and the consumer. Additionally, the document contains no guidance relating to the process of managing a food safety emergency situation. Since the adoption of CAC/GL 19-1995, significant development has occurred in procedures to manage and investigate food safety emergency situations. Additionally, while the original document contained references to the involvement of FAO and WHO in food safety emergency situations, the document was developed prior to the implementation of both FAO/WHO's International Food Safety Authority Network (INFOSAN) and FAO Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES food safety). Further, the revision of WHO's International Health Regulations (2005)(IHR) had not yet been revised to include provisions relating to the reporting of certain food safety emergency situations that have a global impact. A revision of CAC/GL 19-1995 should incorporate all of these areas. These aspects, coupled with the increase in global trade for food, and the potential for increased incidents relating to the control of food safety emergency situations, speaks to the relevance and timeliness of revising the existing CAC/GL 19-1995 document.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The existing CAC/GL 19-1995 would be revised to include the following aspects:

- a) The roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved in responding to food safety emergency situations;
- b) The processes involved in preparing for, and, responding to a food safety emergency situation(s);
- c) Communications associated with food safety emergency situations; and
- d) Appropriate references to: FAO/WHO's International Food Safety Authority Network (INFOSAN); FAO Emergency Prevention Systems (EMPRES Food Safety); and, the revision of WHO's International Health Regulations (2005)(IHR).

4. An assessment against the *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*

The proposal is consistent with the criteria as follows:

General Criterion: Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety, ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.

The proposed new work will provide substantially more guidance to countries to manage food safety emergency situations. This should be of direct benefit to public health and food safety. The guidance will be developed to take into account the different capabilities of countries, providing flexibility to the extent possible, recognizing the critical nature of a food safety emergency situation.

Criteria Applicable to General Subjects:

- a) ***Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade:***

The revision to the existing CAC/GL 19-1995 will provide additional guidance to competent authorities that should allow for a more consistent process for the management of food safety emergency situations.

b) Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of work:

Refer to Scope above.

c) Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies):

The Committee will take into account any relevant international work in this area that is identified during the course of the work, including INFOSAN and EMPRESS.

d) Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardisation:

This work is a revision of a current Codex text (CAC/GL 19/1995).

e) Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue:

Food safety emergency situations often present a significant public health threat to large numbers of individuals, often impact on more than one country and can, upon occasion, be global in nature. The guidance to be provided in the revision to CAC/GL 19-1995 can be very important in helping to manage and control food safety emergency situations and thus have a significant impact, both with respect to individual countries and globally.

5. Relevance to the 2014-2019 Codex Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

The proposal is consistent with Goal 1 (Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues) and to both Objective 1.1 (Establish new and review existing Codex standards, based on priorities of the CAC) and Objective 1.2 (Proactively identify emerging issues and Member needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards). More specifically, the work is consistent with Activity 1.2.2 (Develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade).

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

This proposal revises the existing Codex *Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations* (CAC/GL 19-1995) and will take into account other relevant Codex texts.

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Any relevant expert advice will be taken into account.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

It is anticipated that the committee will seek to collaborate with a range of external bodies including OIE, IPPC, FAO and WHO in the development of guidance in this area.

9. The proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the time frame for developing a standard should not normally exceed five years

Subject to Commission approval at its 38th session in 2015, it is expected that the work can be completed in 3 - 4 years, as follows:

- Commencement of work and development of an initial draft text for circulation at Step 3 and consideration by CCFICS at Step 4 at the Committee's 22nd Session in 2016.
- Consideration of the text at Step 5 by CCFICS at its 23rd Session in 2017 depending upon the final schedule of Codex committee meetings.
- Consideration of the text at Step 8 by CCFICS at its 24th Session in 2018 depending upon the schedule of Codex committee meetings.
- Adoption by the Commission at the Commission's 2018 -2019 Sessions depending upon the schedule of Codex committee meetings.

Appendix VI**PROJECT DOCUMENT****Proposal for new work to revise the *Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Food (CAC/GL 25-1997)*****1. Purpose and Scope**

The objective of the proposed new work is to revise the existing guidelines to ensure adequate guidance is provided to the competent authorities of importing and exporting countries, as well as other relevant parties on the exchange of information and the subsequent interactions on rejections of imported food and where relevant feed.

2. Relevance and timeliness

Shortcomings with the guideline (CAC/GL 25-1997) were identified in the process of amending the text to address animal feed. A holistic review is required to ensure the usefulness of the document. Currently there is a number of international initiatives seeking to address the regional and country concerns in relation to the reporting and transparency associated with rejections.

3. The main aspects to be covered

The main aspects to be covered are as follows:

- a) Exchange of information (including its format) on rejected consignments and the respective roles and responsibilities of the relevant parties in this regard;
- b) Any relevant processes and procedures relating to subsequent interactions (i.e. review) on rejections of imported food;
- c) Where appropriate the role of the competent authority of the exporting country in investigating the non-compliance with the importing country requirements;
- d) The appropriate inclusion of feed in this document.

4. An assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

The following assessment has been made in accordance with the Criteria for Establishment of Work Priorities:

General criterion

Consumer protection from the point of view of health, food safety and ensuring fair practices in the food trade and taking into account the identified needs of developing countries.

The proposed work seeks to address shortcomings in CAC/GL 25-1997 regarding transparency and communication about rejected food/feed. Clear, transparent and timely communication with relevant parties provides useful information to national food control systems. Such communication is necessary to ensure appropriate information feedback to export food inspection and certification systems and national food control systems and to support the efficient management of detected non-compliances. Therefore this proposed new work will contribute to the protection of consumers' health and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

Criteria applicable to general subject

- a) *Diversification of national legislations and apparent resultant or potential impediments to international trade*

The current lack of clear and timely information about the reasons for the rejection of consignments of imported food/feed is a potential impediment to international trade.

- b) *Scope of work and establishment of priorities between the various sections of the work.*

Refer to Purpose and Scope above.

- c) *Work already undertaken by other international organizations in this field and/or suggested by the relevant international intergovernmental body(ies).*

The committee will take into account any relevant international work in this area.

- d) *Amenability of the subject of the proposal to standardization.*

The committee is of the view that these guidelines can be revised to address the issues identified in this new work proposal.

e) *Consideration of the global magnitude of the problem or issue*

The committee is of the view that there is substantial international interest in ensuring clear and transparent process associated with the rejection of imported food/feed.

5. Relevance to Codex strategic objectives

The proposed work is directly related to the purpose of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, according to its *statutes*, to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade, as well as to the first Strategic Goal of the Codex Alimentarius Commission's Strategic Plan 2014-2019 "establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues", and is consistent with Objective 1.2 "proactively identify emerging issues and member country needs and, where appropriate, develop relevant food standards". Further, it contributes to Activity 1.2.2 "develop and revise international and regional standards as needed, in response to needs identified by Members and in response to factors that affect food safety, nutrition and fair practices in the food trade". It is also consistent with Objective 1.3 "strengthen coordination and cooperation with other international standards-setting organizations seeking to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize opportunities."

6. Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing Codex documents

The work will take into account work already done in relation to the addition of feed to these guidelines and the work on the revision to the Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations (CAC/GL 19-1995) and other relevant Codex texts, in particular Guidelines for Food Import Control Systems CAC/GL 47-2003, for instances the section on Decisions paragraphs 27 - 29.

7. Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

Any relevant expert advice will be taken into account.

8. Identification of any need for technical input to the standard from external bodies so that this can be planned for

It is anticipated that the committee will seek to collaborate with a range of external bodies including OIE, IPPC, FAO and WHO in the development of guidance in this area.

9. The proposed timeline for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for adoption at Step 5, and the proposed date for adoption by the Commission; the time frame for developing a standard should not normally exceed five years

Subject to Commission approval at its 38th session in 2015, it is expected that the work can be completed in 3-4 years, as follows:

- Commencement of work and development of an initial draft text for circulation at Step 3 and consideration by CCFICS at Step 4 at the Committee's 22nd Session in 2016.
- Consideration of the text at Step 5 by CCFICS at its 23rd Session in 2017 depending upon the final schedule of Codex committee meetings.
- Consideration of the text at Step 8 by CCFICS at its 24th Session in 2018 depending upon the schedule of Codex committee meetings.
- Adoption by the Commission at the Commission's 2018 -2019 Sessions depending upon the schedule of Codex committee meetings.