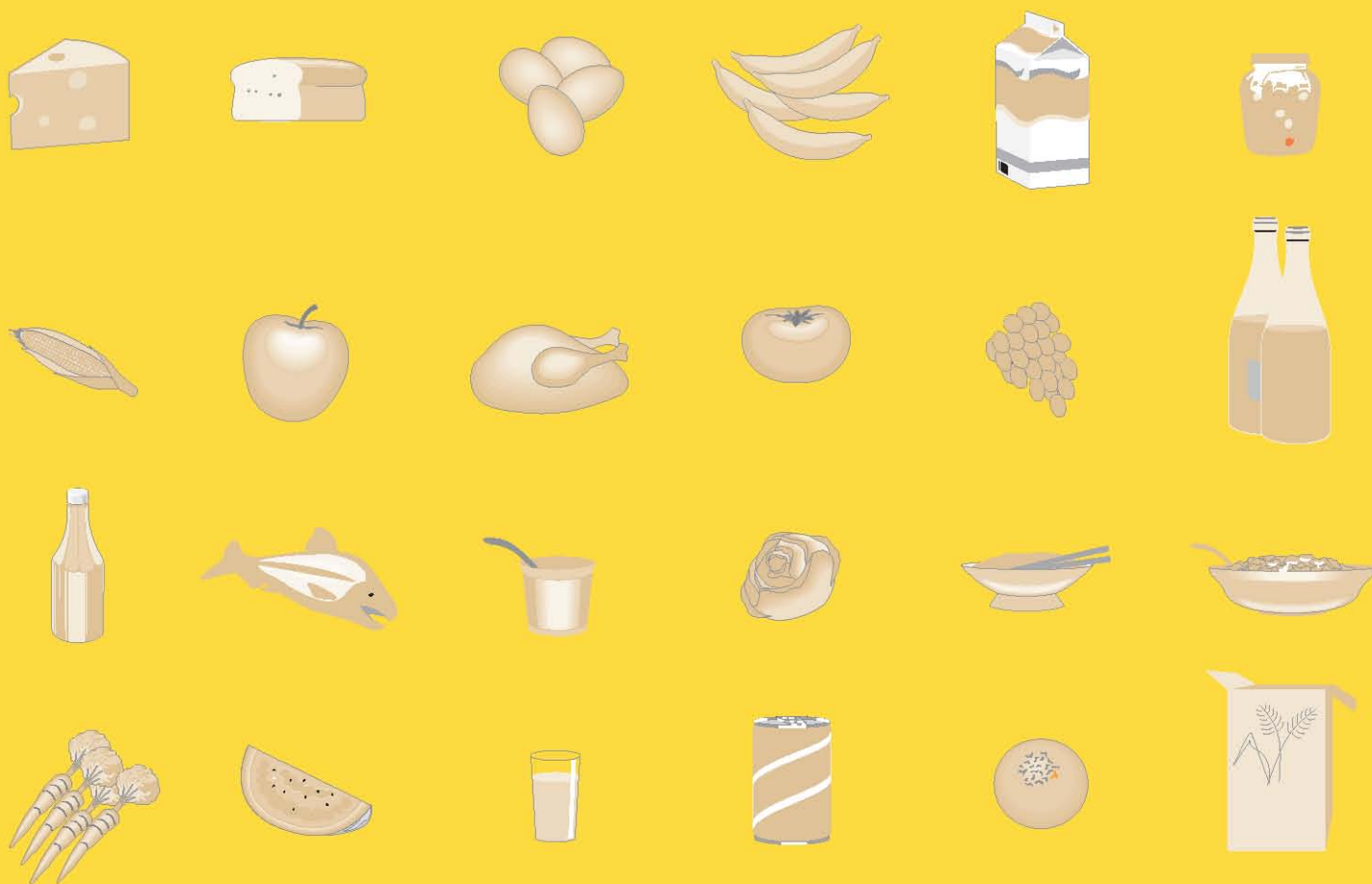


# C O D E X   A L I M E N T A R I U S



Third edition

## UNDERSTANDING THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS



**World Health  
Organization**



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of  
the United Nations**

# UNDERSTANDING **THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS**

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Third edition

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 2006

Produced by the  
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# PREFACE

The Codex Alimentarius, or the food code, has become the global reference point for consumers, food producers and processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade. The code has had an enormous impact on the thinking of food producers and processors as well as on the awareness of the end users – the consumers. Its influence extends to every continent, and its contribution to the protection of public health and fair practices in the food trade is immeasurable.

The Codex Alimentarius system presents a unique opportunity for all countries to join the international community in formulating and harmonizing food standards and ensuring their global implementation. It also allows them a role in the development of codes governing hygienic processing practices and recommendations relating to compliance with those standards.

The significance of the food code for consumer health protection was underscored in 1985 by the United Nations Resolution 39/248, whereby guidelines were adopted for use in the elaboration and reinforcement of consumer protection policies. The guidelines advise that “When formulating national policies and plans with regard to food, Governments should take into account the need of all consumers for food security and should support and, as far as possible, adopt standards from the ... Codex Alimentarius or, in their absence, other generally accepted international food standards”.

The Codex Alimentarius has relevance to the international food trade. With respect to the ever-increasing global market, in particular, the advantages of having universally uniform food standards for the protection of consumers are self-evident. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) both encourage the international harmonization of food standards. Products of the Uruguay Round of multinational trade negotiations, these Agreements cite international standards, guidelines and recommendations as the preferred measures for facilitating international trade in food. As such, Codex standards have become the benchmarks against which national food measures and regulations are evaluated within the legal parameters of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements.

This booklet was first published in 1999 to foster a wider understanding of the evolving food code and of the activities carried out by the Codex Alimentarius Commission – the body responsible for compiling the standards, codes of practice, guidelines and recommendations that constitute the Codex Alimentarius. Since the first publication there have been many changes to the way in which the Codex works. A new edition of this popular booklet is therefore timely and necessary for understanding the Codex Alimentarius in the twenty-first century.

# The Codex achievement

*Since the first steps were taken in 1961 to establish a Codex Alimentarius, the Codex Alimentarius Commission – the body charged with developing a food code – has drawn world attention to the field of food quality and safety. Now, for almost 50 years, all important aspects of food pertaining to the protection of consumer health and fair practices in the food trade have come under the Commission's scrutiny.*

Codex Alimentarius on the Internet:  
**[www.codexalimentarius.net](http://www.codexalimentarius.net)**

## A SINGLE INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE POINT

The best traditions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have encouraged food-related scientific and technological research as well as discussion. In doing so, they have lifted the world community's awareness of food safety and related issues to unprecedented heights. The Codex Alimentarius Commission, established by the two Organizations in the 1960s, has become the single most



important international reference point for developments associated with food standards.

### GREATER GLOBAL AND NATIONAL AWARENESS

Throughout much of the world, an increasing number of consumers and governments are becoming aware of food quality and safety issues and are realizing the need to be selective about the foods people eat. It is now common for consumers to demand that their governments take legislative action to ensure that only safe food of acceptable quality is sold and that the risk of food-borne health hazards is minimized. It is fair to say that, through its elaboration of Codex standards and its consideration of all related issues, the Codex Alimentarius Commission has helped significantly to put food as an entity on political agendas. In fact, governments are extremely conscious of the political consequences to be expected should they fail to heed consumers' concerns regarding the food they eat.

### INCREASED CONSUMER PROTECTION

The Codex Alimentarius Commission has been supported in its work by the now universally accepted maxim that people have the right to expect their food to be safe, of good quality and suitable for consumption. Food-borne illnesses are at best unpleasant – at worst they can be fatal. But there are other consequences. Outbreaks of food-borne illness can damage trade and tourism and can lead to loss of earnings, unemployment and litigation. Poor-quality food can destroy the commercial credibility of suppliers, both nationally and internationally, while food spoilage is wasteful and costly and can adversely affect trade and consumer confidence.

The positive effect of the Commission's work has also been enhanced by the declarations produced by international conferences and meetings that have,

### Fostering consumer protection worldwide

1985

United Nations General Assembly  
*Guidelines for consumer protection*

*Stated that:*

**"When formulating national policies and plans with regard to food, Governments should take into account the need of all consumers for food security and should support and, as far as possible, adopt standards from the Food and Agriculture Organization's ... and the World Health Organization's Codex Alimentarius ...".**

1991

FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards,  
Chemicals in Food and Food Trade  
(in cooperation with GATT)

*Agreed that:*

**"...The process of harmonizing national food regulations to bring them into line with international standards and recommendations was an urgent one, which needed to be accelerated ..."**

*and that:*

**"Provisions essential for consumer protection (health, safety of food, etc.) should be the focus of emphasis in Codex standards ...".**

1992

FAO/WHO International Conference  
on Nutrition

*Recognized that:*

**"Access to nutritionally adequate and safe food is a right of each individual."**

*and that:*

**"Food regulations ... should fully take into account the recommended international standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission."**

1995

Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and  
Phytosanitary Measures and Agreement on  
Technical Barriers to Trade

*Formally recognized:*

**International standards, guidelines and recommendations, including the Codex Alimentarius, as reference points for facilitating international trade and resolving trade disputes in international law.**



1996

#### FAO World Food Summit

*Committed itself to:*

**"Implement policies aimed at ... improving physical and economic access by all, at all times, to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilization."**

*and to:*

**"Apply measures, in conformity with the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and other relevant international agreements, that ensure the quality and safety of food supply ...".**

2000

#### Fifty-Third World Health Assembly

*Recognized:*

**"The importance of the standards, guidelines and other recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for protecting the health of consumers and assuring fair trading practices ..."**

*and urged Member States to:*

**"Participate actively in activities in the emerging area of food safety risk analysis."**

2002

#### World Food Summit: five years later

*Stated:*

**"We reaffirm the important role of Codex Alimentarius ... to provide effective, science-based, internationally accepted standards of food safety ... as well as to facilitate international food and agricultural trade."**

2004

#### Second FAO/WHO Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators

*Affirmed:*

**"The Codex system provides an important opportunity for countries to work together to develop international standards in a representative manner. ... Developing countries would benefit from greater use of basic Codex texts when building their food control systems."**

themselves, been influenced by the Commission's activities. Over the past 20 years, national representatives to the United Nations General Assembly, the FAO/WHO Conference on Food Standards, Chemicals in Food and Food Trade (held in cooperation with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [GATT]), the FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition, the FAO World Food Summit and the WHO World Health Assembly have either encouraged or committed their countries to adopt measures ensuring the safety and quality of foods. The Global Fora of Food Safety Regulators have noted that the Codex system provides an important opportunity for countries to work together to develop international standards in a representative manner.

### BROAD COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The role of the Codex Alimentarius Commission has evolved with the development of the Codex itself. The task of creating a food code is immense and, because of continuing research and product development, virtually endless. The finalization of food standards and their compilation into a code that is credible and authoritative requires extensive consultation as well as the collection and evaluation of information, followed up by confirmation of final results and sometimes objective compromise to satisfy differing sound, scientifically based views.

Creating standards that at once protect consumers, ensure fair practices in the sale of food and facilitate trade is a process that involves specialists in numerous food-related scientific disciplines, together with consumers' organizations, production and processing industries, food control administrators and traders. As more people become involved in the formulation of standards and as the Codex Alimentarius – including related codes and recommendations – covers further ground, so the Commission's activities are becoming better known and its influence strengthened and widened.

## SCIENTIFICALLY SOUND STANDARDS

While the Codex Alimentarius as it stands is a remarkable achievement, it would be quite wrong to see it as the only product of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, although it is the most important. Resulting from the creation of the Codex, another major accomplishment has been to sensitize the global community to the danger of food hazards as well as to the importance of food quality and hence to the need for food standards.

By providing an international focal point and forum for informed dialogue on issues relevant to food, the Codex Alimentarius Commission fulfils a crucial role. In support of its work on food standards and codes of practice, it generates reputable texts for the management of food safety and consumer protection based on the work of the best-informed individuals and organizations concerned with food and related fields. Countries have responded by introducing long-overdue food legislation and Codex-based standards and by establishing or strengthening food control agencies to monitor compliance with such regulations.

## EVALUATING THE OUTCOME

After 40 years of Codex operations, FAO and WHO decided to undertake a formal evaluation of the Codex programme in 2002. An independent evaluation team conducted over 20 country visits and sought information from an open call for public comment on the Internet. A group of independent experts representing all stakeholders was formed, and detailed questionnaires were sent to all member governments and observer organizations.

The results were enlightening and mostly positive. The evaluation found Codex food standards to be given very high importance by members. Codex standards were considered a vital component in promoting food control systems designed to protect consumer health, including issues related to

international trade and the SPS and TBT Agreements of WTO. The full report of the evaluation can be found on the Codex Web site.

As part of the evaluation, governments were asked in what ways Codex standards were important for their countries. Low- and middle-income countries found them very important in protecting the health of their consumers by ensuring safe food, whether produced domestically or imported, and for trade facilitation domestically and internationally. High-income countries, with better-developed domestic food legislation and control systems, placed more emphasis on the Codex for export facilitation and ensuring the safety of food imports. Producer and consumer non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also rated Codex standards as very important in all their functions.

Nevertheless, the evaluation found that there were four main areas for improvement:

- greater speed in Codex and expert scientific advice;
- increased inclusiveness of developing member countries in the Codex standard development process, including risk assessment;
- greater usefulness of standards to member countries in terms of relevance to their needs and timeliness; and
- more effective capacity-building for development of national food control systems.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, FAO, WHO and their partners are currently implementing the findings of the evaluation.

The evaluation confirmed that the Codex Alimentarius now has such a well-established reputation as an international reference that it has become customary for health authorities, government food control officials, manufacturers, scientists and consumer advocates to ask first of all: What does the Codex Alimentarius have to say? – a notable achievement indeed.

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# Origins of the Codex Alimentarius

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*The Codex Alimentarius is the product of a long evolutionary process involving a wide cross-section of the global community. Many people representing many interests and disciplines have been involved in the process, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that, as long as the need perceived by those people remains, so the Codex Alimentarius will remain.*

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Codex Alimentarius on the Internet:  
**[www.codexalimentarius.net](http://www.codexalimentarius.net)**

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## ANCIENT TIMES

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Evidence from the earliest historical writings indicates that governing authorities were already then concerned with codifying rules to protect consumers from dishonest practices in the sale of food. Assyrian tablets described the method to be used in determining the correct weights and measures for food grains, and Egyptian scrolls prescribed the labelling to be applied to certain foods. In ancient Athens, beer and wines were inspected for purity and soundness, and the Romans had a well-organized state food control system to protect consumers



from fraud or bad produce. In Europe during the Middle Ages, individual countries passed laws concerning the quality and safety of eggs, sausages, cheese, beer, wine and bread. Some of these ancient statutes still exist today.

### A SCIENTIFIC BASE

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the first general food laws adopted and basic food control systems put in place to monitor compliance. During the same period, food chemistry came to be recognized as a reputable discipline, and the determination of the “purity” of a food was primarily based on the chemical parameters of simple food composition. When harmful industrial chemicals were used to disguise the true colour or nature of food, the concept of “adulteration” was extended to include the use of hazardous chemicals in food. Science had begun providing tools with which to disclose dishonest practices in the sale of food and to distinguish between safe and unsafe edible products.

### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire between 1897 and 1911, a collection of standards and product descriptions for

#### Report of the First Meeting of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition, 1950 – *an extract*

“Food regulations in different countries are often conflicting and contradictory. Legislation governing preservation, nomenclature and acceptable food standards often varies widely from country to country. New legislation not based on scientific knowledge is often introduced, and little account may be taken of nutritional principles in formulating regulations.”

### Milestones in the evolution of food standards

#### ANCIENT TIMES

- Attempts are made by early civilizations to codify foods

#### EARLY 1800s

- Canning is invented

#### MID-1800s

- Bananas are first shipped to Europe from the tropics

#### 1800s

- The first general food laws are adopted and enforcement agencies established
- Food chemistry gains credibility, and reliable methods are developed to test for food adulteration

#### LATE 1800s

- A new era of long-distance food transportation is ushered in by the first international shipments of frozen meat from Australia and New Zealand to the United Kingdom

#### EARLY 1900s

- Food trade associations attempt to facilitate world trade through the use of harmonized standards

#### 1903

- The International Dairy Federation (IDF) develops international standards for milk and milk products. (IDF was later to be an important catalyst in the conception of the Codex Alimentarius Commission)

#### 1945

- FAO is founded, with responsibilities covering nutrition and associated international food standards

#### 1948

- WHO is founded, with responsibilities covering human health and, in

particular, a mandate to establish food standards

1949

- Argentina proposes a regional Latin American food code, *Código Latinoamericano de Alimentos*

1950

- Joint FAO/WHO expert meetings begin on nutrition, food additives and related areas

1953

- WHO's highest governing body, the World Health Assembly, states that the widening use of chemicals in the food industry presents a new public health problem that needs attention

1954–1958

- Austria actively pursues the creation of a regional food code, the *Codex Alimentarius Europaeus*, or European Codex Alimentarius

1960

- The first FAO Regional Conference for Europe endorses the desirability of international – as distinct from regional – agreement on minimum food standards and invites the Organization's Director-General to submit proposals for a joint FAO/WHO programme on food standards to the FAO Conference

1961

- The Council of the Codex Alimentarius Europaeus adopts a resolution proposing that its work on food standards be taken over by FAO and WHO

1961

- With the support of WHO, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Council of the Codex Alimentarius Europaeus, the FAO Conference establishes the Codex Alimentarius and resolves to

create an international food standards programme

1961

- The FAO Conference decides to establish a Codex Alimentarius Commission and requests an early endorsement by WHO of a joint FAO/WHO food standards programme

1962

- The Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Conference requests that the Codex Alimentarius Commission implement a joint FAO/WHO food standards programme and create the Codex Alimentarius

1963

- Recognizing the importance of WHO's role in all health aspects of food and considering its mandate to establish food standards, the World Health Assembly approves establishment of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and adopts the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

a wide variety of foods was developed as the *Codex Alimentarius Austriacus*. Although lacking legal force, it was used as a reference by the courts to determine standards of identity for specific foods. The present-day Codex Alimentarius draws its name from the Austrian code.

## TRADE CONCERNS

The different sets of standards arising from the spontaneous and independent development of food laws and standards by different countries inevitably gave rise to trade barriers that were of increasing concern to food traders in the early twentieth century. Trade associations that were formed as a reaction to such barriers pressured governments to harmonize their various food standards so as to facilitate



trade in safe foods of a defined quality. The International Dairy Federation (IDF), founded in 1903, was one such association. Its work on standards for milk and milk products later provided a catalyst in the establishment of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and in the setting of its procedures for elaborating standards.

When FAO and WHO were founded in the late 1940s, there was heightened international concern about the direction being taken in the field of food regulation. Countries were acting independently and there was little, if any, consultation among them with a view to harmonization. This situation is reflected in the observations of international meetings of the time.

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## CONSUMERS' CONCERNS

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In the 1940s, rapid progress was made in food science and technology. With the advent of more sensitive analytical tools, knowledge about the nature of food, its quality and associated health hazards also grew quickly. There was intense interest in food microbiology, food chemistry and associated disciplines, and new discoveries were considered newsworthy. Articles about food at all levels flourished,

and consumers were bombarded with messages in popular magazines, in the tabloid press and on the radio. Some were correct, some incorrect – but all were intended to absorb interest, and many were overly sensational.

Despite the questionable quality of some of the information disseminated, however, the outcome was an increase in the public's food consciousness and, consequently, knowledge about food safety gradually grew.

At the same time, as more and more information about food and related matters became available, there was greater apprehension on the part of consumers. Whereas, previously, consumers' concerns had extended only as far as the "visibles" – underweight contents, size variations, misleading labelling and poor quality – they now embraced a fear of the "invisibles", i.e. health hazards that could not be seen, smelled or tasted, such as micro-organisms, pesticide residues, environmental contaminants and food additives. With the blossoming of well-organized and informed consumers' groups, both internationally and nationally, there was growing pressure on governments worldwide to protect communities from poor-quality and hazardous foods.

## The problem of food additives

In 1955, the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Nutrition recorded that:

"... the increasing, and sometimes insufficiently controlled, use of food additives has become a matter of public and administrative concern."

The Committee also noted that the means of solving problems arising from the use of food additives may differ from country to country and stated that this fact:

"... must in itself occasion concern, since the existence of widely differing control measures may well form an undesirable deterrent to international trade."

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## A DESIRE FOR LEADERSHIP

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Food regulators, traders, consumers and experts were looking increasingly to FAO and WHO for leadership in unravelling the skein of food regulations that were impeding trade and providing mostly inadequate protection for consumers. In 1953, the governing body of WHO, the World Health Assembly, stated that the widening use of chemicals in food presented a new public health problem, and it was proposed that the two Organizations should conduct relevant studies. One such study identified the use of food additives as a critical factor.

As a result, FAO and WHO convened the first joint FAO/WHO Conference on Food Additives in 1955. That Conference led to the creation of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), which, after more than 50 years, still meets regularly. JECFA's work continues to be of fundamental importance to the Codex Commission's deliberations on standards and guidelines for food additives, contaminants and residues of veterinary drugs in foods. It has served as a model for many other FAO and WHO expert bodies, and for similar scientific advisory bodies at the national level or where countries have joined together in regional economic groupings.

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### INTEGRATING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES

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While FAO and WHO furthered their involvement in food-related matters, a variety of committees set up by international NGOs also began working in earnest on standards for food commodities. In time, the work of those NGO committees was either assumed by, or continued jointly with, the appropriate Codex Alimentarius Commodity Committees and, in some cases, the non-governmental committees themselves became Codex committees.

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### INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION

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Two landmark years in the foundation of the Codex Alimentarius were 1960 and 1961. In October 1960, the first FAO Regional Conference for Europe crystallized a widely held view when it recognized:

*"[t]he desirability of international agreement on minimum food standards and related questions (including labelling requirements, methods of analysis, etc.) ... as an important means of protecting the consumer's health,*

*of ensuring quality and of reducing trade barriers, particularly in the rapidly integrating market of Europe".*

The Conference also felt that:

*"... coordination of the growing number of food standards programmes undertaken by many organizations presented a particular problem".*

Within four months of the regional conference, FAO entered into discussions with WHO, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Council of the Codex Alimentarius Europaeus with proposals that would lead to the establishment of an international food standards programme.

In November 1961, the Eleventh Session of the FAO Conference passed a resolution to set up the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

In May 1963, the Sixteenth World Health Assembly approved the establishment of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and adopted the Statutes of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

# What is the Codex Alimentarius?

*Simply stated, the Codex Alimentarius is a collection of standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations. Some of these texts are very general, and some are very specific. Some deal with detailed requirements related to a food or group of foods; others deal with the operation and management of production processes or the operation of government regulatory systems for food safety and consumer protection.*

Codex Alimentarius on the Internet:  
**[www.codexalimentarius.net](http://www.codexalimentarius.net)**

## STANDARDS, CODES OF PRACTICE, GUIDELINES AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

*Codex standards* usually relate to product characteristics and may deal with all government-regulated characteristics appropriate to the commodity, or only one characteristic. Maximum residue limits (MRLs) for residues of pesticides or veterinary drugs in foods are examples of standards dealing with only one characteristic. There are *Codex general standards* for food additives and contaminants and toxins in foods that contain both general and commodity-





specific provisions. The Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods covers all foods in this category. Because standards relate to product characteristics, they can be applied wherever the products are traded.

*Codex methods of analysis and sampling*, including those for contaminants and residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs in foods, are also considered Codex standards.

*Codex codes of practice* – including codes of hygienic practice – define the production, processing, manufacturing, transport and storage practices for individual foods or groups of foods that are considered essential to ensure the safety and suitability of food for consumption. For food hygiene, the basic text is the Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene, which introduces the use of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety management system. A code of practice on the control of the use of veterinary drugs provides general guidance in this area.

*Codex guidelines* fall into two categories:

- principles that set out policy in certain key areas; and
- guidelines for the interpretation of these principles or for the interpretation of the provisions of the Codex general standards.

In the cases of food additives, contaminants, food hygiene and meat hygiene, the basic principles governing the regulation of these matters are built into the relevant standards and codes of practice.

There are free-standing *Codex principles* covering:

- addition of essential nutrients to foods;
- food import and export inspection and certification;
- establishment and application of microbiological criteria for foods;
- conduct of microbiological risk assessment;
- risk analysis of foods derived from modern biotechnology.

## The Codex scorecard

This table gives the number of Codex standards, guidelines and codes of practice by subject matter as of July 2006 after the decisions of the 29th Codex Alimentarius Commission

- Commodity standards – 186
- Commodity related texts – 46
- Food Labelling – 9
- Food Hygiene – 5
- Food safety risk assessment – 3
- Sampling and analysis – 15
- Inspection and certification procedures – 8
- Animal food production – 6
- Contaminants in foods (maximum levels, detection and prevention) – 12
- Food additives provisions – 1 112, covering 292 food additives
- Food additives related texts – 7
- Maximum limits for pesticide residues – 2 930, covering 218 pesticides
- Maximum limits for veterinary drugs in foods – 441, covering 49 veterinary drugs
- Regional Guidelines – 3

*Interpretative Codex guidelines* include those for food labelling, especially the regulation of claims made on the label. This group includes guidelines for nutrition and health claims; conditions for production, marketing and labelling of organic foods; and foods claimed to be “halal”. There are several guidelines that interpret the provisions of the Codex Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification, and guidelines on the conduct of safety assessments of foods from DNA-modified plants and micro-organisms.

## COMMODITY STANDARDS

By far the largest number of specific standards in the Codex Alimentarius is the group called “commodity standards”. The major commodities included in the Codex are:

- cereals, pulses (legumes) and derived products including vegetable proteins
- fats and oils and related products
- fish and fishery products
- fresh fruits and vegetables
- processed and quick-frozen fruits and vegetables
- fruit juices
- meat and meat products; soups and broths
- milk and milk products
- sugars, cocoa products and chocolate and other miscellaneous products

Commodity standards tend to follow a fixed format set out in the *Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*. The format consists of the following categories of information:

- *Scope* includes the name of the food to which the standard applies and, in most cases, the purpose for which the commodity will be used.
- *Description* includes a definition of the product or products covered with an indication, where appropriate, of the raw materials from which they are derived.
- *Essential composition* includes information on the composition and identity characteristics of the commodity, as well as any compulsory and optional ingredients.
- *Food additives* contains the names of the additives and the maximum amount permitted to be added to the food. Food additives must be cleared by FAO and WHO for their safety, and the use of food additives must be consistent with the Codex General Standard for Food Additives.
- *Contaminants* contains limits for contaminants that may occur in the product(s) covered by the standard. These limits are based on the scientific advice of FAO and WHO and must be consistent with the Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Foods. Where appropriate, reference is also made to the Codex Maximum Limits

for pesticide residues and for residues of veterinary drugs in foods.

- *Hygiene* makes reference to relevant Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice for the commodity concerned. In almost all cases it is required that the product shall be free from pathogenic micro-organisms or any toxins or other poisonous or deleterious substances in amounts that represent a hazard to health.
- *Weights and measures* contains provisions such as fill of the container and the drained weight of the commodity.
- *Labelling* includes provisions on the name of the food and any special requirements to ensure that the consumer is not deceived or misled about the nature of the food. These provisions must be consistent with the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods. Requirements for the listing of ingredients and date-marking are specified.
- *Methods of analysis and sampling* contains a list of the test methods needed to ensure that the commodity conforms to the requirements of the standard. References are made to internationally recognized test methods that meet the Commission's criteria for accuracy, precision, etc.