codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 2 **CX/FBT 05/5/2**
July 2005

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX *AD HOC* INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON FOOD DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY

Fifth Session
Chiba, Japan, 19-23 September 2005

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE TASK FORCE BY THE COMMISSION AND THE OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

A. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

THE 27TH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

ELABORATION OF NEW STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS

Draft Terms of Reference and the Project Proposal for the New Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology[1]

1. The Commission recalled that at its last Session it discussed the establishment of a new Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology and asked Japan to prepare a project document and draft Terms of Reference. Noting the view of the 54th Session of the Executive Committee, the Commission agreed to establish a new *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods derived from Biotechnology with the understanding that its final report should be submitted to the Commission in 2009. It also agreed that a Circular Letter[2] be issued to solicit specific proposals for new work and to define priorities and that comments received would be distributed as a working document for the consideration by the first session of the Task Force. The Commission adopted the Terms of Reference with a few amendments (attached as Appendix I to this document).

B. MATTERS ARISING FROM OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

CODEX COMMITTEE ON METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING[3]

2. The Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) has been discussing appropriate methods of detection and analysis for the GM foods since its 24th Session in 2002. In view of the absence of precise provisions for GMOs in Codex and of difficulties with the practical application of

1 ALINORM 04/27/41 paras 89-91 and Appendix VIII
2 CL 2005/2-FBT
3 ALINORM 03/23 paras 71-81, ALINORM 04/27/23 paras 107-117, ALINORM 05/28/23 paras 108-116

methodology in this area, the CCMAS proposed to develop recommendations with respect to criteria for methods of analysis and for quality control measures that should be introduced in laboratories offering GM analysis.

3. The Working Group led by Germany and the United Kingdom has been working on the text for "Guidelines for the Validations and Quality Control Requirements for the Analysis of Foods derived from Biotechnology" for consideration at the 27th Session of the CCMAS which will be held in May 2006.

C. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION TO THE TASK FORCE

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING[4]

4. The Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) has been considering for a long time appropriate Codex food labelling provisions for foods derived from biotechnology (the Draft Guidelines for the Labelling of Foods obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification /Genetic Engineering). An amendment to the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods concerning the transfer of allergens in foods derived from biotechnology was adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 2001.

5. However, as regards general labelling requirements, this draft guideline is still in an early stage of discussion with many sections bracketed due to lack of consensus. As the text has become too complicated as a result of the discussions for a long time, the 37th Session of CCFL held in May 2005 agreed to reconstruct the draft guideline for the consideration at its next session. The most controversial point is whether or not mandatory labelling provisions should be established for the case where the difference between original products and genetically modified products is solely the production method (in this case gene modification).

[4] ALINORM 05/28/22 paras 46-64

APPENDIX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON FOODS DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY

Objectives

To develop standards, guidelines or recommendations, as appropriate, for foods derived from modern biotechnology or traits introduced into foods by modern biotechnology, on the basis of scientific evidence, risk analysis and having regard, where appropriate, to other legitimate factors relevant to the health of consumers and the promotion of fair practices in the food trade.

Time frame

The Task Force shall complete its work within four years. The Task Force should submit a full report in 2009.

Terms of Reference

(a) To elaborate standards, guidelines, or other principles, as appropriate, for foods derived from modern biotechnology, taking account, in particular, of the Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods derived from Modern Biotechnology;

(b) To coordinate and closely collaborate, as necessary, with appropriate Codex Committees within their mandate as relates to foods derived from modern biotechnology; and

(c) To take account of existing work carried out by national authorities, FAO, WHO, other international organizations and other relevant international fora.