

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



JOINT OFFICE: Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 ROME Tel: 39 06 57051 www.codexalimentarius.net Email: codex@fao.org Facsimile: 39 06 5705 4593

ALINORM 08/31/22

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Thirty-first Session
Geneva, Switzerland, 30 June – 4 July 2008

REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Ottawa, Canada, 28 April - 2 May 2008

Note: This document incorporates Circular Letter CL 2008/11-FL

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CX 5/15

CL 2008/11-FL
May 2008

TO: - Codex Contact Points
- Interested International Organizations

FROM: - Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: **Distribution of the Report of the 36th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (ALINORM 08/31/22)**

A. MATTERS FOR ADOPTION BY THE 31st SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Proposed Draft Guidelines and Standard at Step 8

1. Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods: Annex 1 (inclusion of ethylene for kiwifruit and bananas) (para. 68, Appendix II)
2. Draft Amendment to the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods: Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients (para. 95, Appendix IV)
3. Draft Definition of Advertising in Relation to Nutrition and Health Claims (Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims) (para. 107, Appendix V)

Governments wishing to propose amendments or comments on the above documents should do so in writing in conformity with the Guide to the Consideration of Standards at Step 8 (see Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission) to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, at the above address **before 15 June 2008**.

B. REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

Draft Guidelines at Step 6 of the Procedure

4. Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods: Annex 1 (inclusion of ethylene for other products) (para. 68, Appendix III)

Proposed Draft Recommendations at Step 3 of the Procedure

5. Proposed Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of GM/GE (para. 93, Appendix VII).

The Proposed Draft Recommendations should be considered in conjunction with the background document in CL 2007/38-FL.

Governments and international organizations wishing to submit comments on points 4. and 5. above should do so in writing to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, at the above address, with a copy to Mr. Ron B. Burke, Director, Bureau of Food Regulatory International and Interagency Affairs, Health Products and Food Branch, Health Canada, Bldg No. 7, Room 2395, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa K1A 0L2, Canada, Fax No. 613.941.3537, E-mail: codex_canada@hc-sc.gc.ca, **before 15 November 2008**.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The summary and conclusions of the 36th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling are as follows:

Matters for adoption by the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission:

The Committee:

- advanced to Step 8 the Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods: Annex 1 (inclusion of ethylene for kiwifruits and bananas) (para. 68, Appendix II);
- advanced to Step 8 the Draft Amendment to the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods: Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients (para. 95, Appendix IV);
- advanced to Step 8 the Draft Definition of Advertising in Relation to Nutrition and Health Claims (Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims) (para. 107, Appendix V);
- agreed to discontinue work on the Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods: Annex 2 – Permitted Substances: Table 3 (para. 61);
- agreed to undertake new work on an amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods (rotenone) (para. 74, Appendix VIII) and on the revision of the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (implementation of the Global Strategy for Diet, Physical Activity and Health) (para. 46, Appendix IX).

Other Matters of Interest to the Commission

The Committee:

- endorsed the labelling provisions in several Draft Standards, thereby allowing their adoption by the Commission (para. 47 to 57);
- returned to Step 6 the Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods: Annex 1 (inclusion of ethylene for other products) (para. 68, Appendix III);
- retained at Step 7 the Draft Amendment to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Foods Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification/Genetic Engineering): Definitions (para. 92, Appendix VI) and returned to Step 3 the Proposed Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Food and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification/Genetic Engineering (para. 93, Appendix VII).

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INTRODUCTION

1) The Codex Committee on Food Labelling held its Thirty-sixth Session in Ottawa, Canada from 28 April to 2 May 2008, at the kind invitation of the Government of Canada. The Session was chaired by Dr. Anne MacKenzie, Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The session was attended by 273 delegates representing 72 Member Countries, one Member Organization, European Community (EC), and 27 international organizations. A complete list of participants is attached as Appendix I to this report.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

2) The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda but noted that the working group on the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health had only met on the Saturday preceding the meeting, and therefore agreed to consider Agenda Item 2b) after Agenda Items 3 and 4.

3) The Delegation of the EC explained to the Committee the division of competence between the European Community and its Member States according to Rule II.5 of the Rules of Procedure.

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE

MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2a)²

Strategic Plan

4) Following the recommendations of the 30th Session of the Commission, the Committee considered the Activities of the Strategic Plan relevant to its work as follows:

Activity 1.3 Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food labelling and nutrition

5) The Delegation of the EC expressed its strong support for the involvement of the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses and the Committee on Food Labelling in the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy in the framework of Codex.

Activity 3.3 Develop committee-specific decision-making and priority-setting criteria

6) The Delegation of the European Community supported the development of specific criteria that would allow the Committee to set priorities when considering proposals for new work, and referred to the mechanisms used in other committees for that purpose. The Chair recalled that the provision in the Strategic Plan referred to criteria that could be developed in addition to the current *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities*, which were of general application.

7) Some delegations, recalling that the number of new items of work proposed on food labelling was limited, expressed the view that the current *Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities* were adequate to take decisions on new work and that it was premature to develop specific criteria in the Committee at this stage, while not objecting to further consideration of relevant proposals for this purpose.

8) The Committee therefore agreed that the Delegation of the European Community in cooperation with Canada would prepare a discussion document on the establishment of criteria for priority setting for consideration at the next session.

9) The Delegation of Argentina pointed out that the development of decision making criteria was related to consensus and therefore should not be considered specifically in the Committee as this was a general question and should be addressed as a general Codex issue in the Committee on General Principles, as it was related to the question of consensus, currently under consideration in that Committee.

¹ CX/FL 08/36/1, CRD 1 (Annotated Agenda and division of competence between the European Community and its Member States)

² CX/FL 08/36/2, CRD 17 (Matters arising from the Committee on Food Additives), CRD 23 (Matters arising from FAO/WHO)

Activity 4.1 Track the activities of other international standard-setting organisations

10) The Delegation of Argentina expressed the view that cooperation with other international organisations should be focused on the organisations referred to under the WTO SPS Agreement.

Activity 5.6 Enhance communication about Codex work at international and national level

11) The Delegation of Canada stressed the importance of communication to promote Codex work and noted it was sometimes difficult to search the website with the current search engine, especially as regards earlier reports or working documents. The Delegation of Ghana expressed the view that the Codex Trust Fund should be used for training at the national level, in order to facilitate the use of Codex information by national Codex Contact Points.

12) The Secretariat indicated that the Codex website would be entirely redesigned and that the search function would be improved in order to allow search through the reports of earlier sessions. All Codex reports since 1963 had been scanned and they were currently being uploaded on to the Codex website. The Committee was also informed that FAO and WHO regularly distributed newsletters on their activities, including expert consultations and other meetings related to food safety, capacity building and Codex meetings.

13) The Secretariat noted that funds from the Trust Fund budget had been used in some cases to provide training at the regional level on improving participation in Codex, on the basis of the Manual developed by FAO and WHO for this purpose, which was also available as an e-learning course. However the purpose of the Trust Fund was to allow participation of developing countries in Codex sessions, while capacity building in the area of Codex or food safety at the national level was carried out by FAO and WHO on the basis of the requests from member countries.

Interval and duration of meetings

14) The Committee agreed to discuss the interval and duration of the sessions of the Committee at the end of the meeting (see Agenda Item 9). The Delegation of Argentina expressed the view that working groups should be preferably convened prior to the session of the Committee rather than between sessions in order to facilitate participation.

Committee on Food Additives

15) The Committee was informed that the Committee on Food Additives had finalised the Revision of the Class Names and International Numbering System, which included the deletion of references to labelling in Section 1 and the revision of the functional classes. However, the Committee recognized that it was not possible to consider the implication of this revision for the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods at the present session as the Committee on Food Additives had met only in the week preceding the CCFL. The Committee therefore agreed that this question would be considered at the next session.

Matters Referred from FAO and WHO

16) The Representative of WHO, speaking on behalf of FAO and WHO, informed the Committee of the following recent and forthcoming activities:

- Scientific update on carbohydrates, published in 2007;
- Scientific update on trans fatty acids, undertaken in 2007, and to be published in a few months;
- Upcoming FAO and WHO expert consultation on fats and fatty acids in human nutrition, planned for November 2008;
- Possible FAO and WHO expert consultation on carbohydrates, tentatively planned for 2009;
- Current work to strengthen the provision of scientific advice in nutrition; and
- WHO's Draft Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non Communicable Diseases (NCD).

17) The information provided was later made available in a conference room document (CRD 23).

MATTERS REFERRED BY FAO AND WHO: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHO GLOBAL STRATEGY ON DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH (Agenda Item 2b)³

18) The Committee recalled that its 35th Session had agreed to establish a physical working group co-chaired by Canada, Argentina and Germany, to be held prior to the 36th Session. Its mandate was to consider the issues identified at the session on several action items related to the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and to identify and recommend work to be undertaken by the CCFL with regard to these action items.

19) The Co-Chair of the working group, Dr Mary L'Abbé (Canada), presented the report on behalf of the three Co-Chairs. The working group had considered the action items identified in the Draft Action Plan proposed by WHO/FAO in CL 2006/44-CAC: 1.2 (application), 1.3 (nutrients to be declared); 1.4 (presentation of nutrition information); 1.5 (Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs)); and 3.1 (quantitative declaration of ingredients); and had made specific recommendations in this respect.

20) The Committee expressed its thanks to the Co-Chairs and to the working group for their excellent work to address the issues related to the implementation of the Global Strategy and to propose specific items of work. The Committee generally supported new work on several of the action items mentioned above and considered specific proposals for further action as follows:

(a) Revision of Section 3.2 of the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* to review the list of nutrients (Proposed Action 1.3)

21) Several delegations and some Observers supported the consideration of the list of nutrients as identified in the Global Strategy and the Draft Action Plan. Some delegations proposed to add dietary fibre to the list and to consider the inclusion of additional nutrients if required. It was pointed out that the review of the list may also result in the deletion of some nutrients.

22) Some delegations expressed the view that the list of nutrients should not be too extensive so as to remain easily understandable by consumers. Some delegations pointed out that the selection of the nutrients to be declared should be based on clear scientific evidence. The Representative of WHO pointed out that the purpose of the work was to implement the Global Strategy and therefore the review should focus on the nutrients proposed in the Draft Action Plan.

23) The Delegation of the EC noted that the physical working group report provided important background information and that additional factors were also relevant. The work would need to progress in stages with the list of nutrients reviewed before mandatory labelling was considered.

24) The Committee agreed to initiate the revision of section 3.2 of the *Guidelines* and that the following questions should be considered in the process:

- (i) which nutrients are appropriate to be considered at an international level, taking into account regional dietary patterns;
- (ii) what other factors should be taken into account in developing the list of nutrients, including the rationale for including or excluding certain nutrients.

25) Following some questions on the role of the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, the Chair recalled that the advice of that Committee could always be requested on nutrition issues. However, the decision on the nutrients to be included in the label was the responsibility of the Committee on Food Labelling.

b) Revision of section 3.1 of the *Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling* (Proposed Action 1.2)

26) Several delegations, while supporting in principle mandatory nutrition labelling, expressed the view that its application should be carefully considered, especially as regards the difficulties of small and medium enterprises which lacked technical capacity and resources to implement such labelling; exemptions for foods that did not contribute significantly to the diet; and practical issues such as the size of the package.

27) Several delegations supported mandatory nutrition labelling and indicated that its application at the national level in their countries had resulted in significant public health benefit. The importance of nutrition labelling in supporting national nutrition or public health programmes was also pointed out.

³ CX/FL 08/36/3, CRD 2 (comments of Canada), CRD 6 (comments of Bolivia), CRD 10 (comments of Indonesia and India), CRD 22 (report of the working group held prior to the session)

28) The Delegation of Thailand, supported by the delegations of Barbados and Indonesia, expressed the view that mandatory nutrient labelling should only apply to those foods that had a significant impact on non communicable diseases and criteria were needed to identify foods that increased or decreased the risk of non communicable diseases.

29) Several delegations did not support mandatory nutrition labelling as it was not possible for them to apply it at the national level, in view of the costs involved and due to the fact that consumers may still lack the capacity to use this information. In this respect, some delegations highlighted the importance of nutrition education programmes for consumers.

30) Several delegations expressed the view that the mandatory labelling should be considered only after the review of the list of nutrients to be declared had been concluded. Other delegations proposed to work in parallel on some of these items.

31) In order to address the issues discussed above on sections 3.2 and 3.1 of the Guidelines, the Committee agreed to establish an electronic working group working in English and chaired by New Zealand, assisted by Australia and Canada. The electronic working group will

- Develop a paper which will examine the list of nutrients that are always declared in the light of the recommendations in the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health;
- Prepare a discussion paper outlining the issues and concerns raised during the discussions of the Committee related to mandatory nutrition labelling, taking into consideration the experience of member countries.

c) Principles and criteria regarding the legibility and readability of nutrition labelling (Proposed Action 1.4)

32) Some delegations, while supporting further work in order to improve legibility and readability of nutrition labelling, expressed the view that at this stage there should be no consideration of issues such as the use of symbols or simplified labelling, while noting that they were used in some countries.

33) The Delegation of Chile pointed out there were two possible approaches to nutrient declaration: per 100g of the product or as a percentage of the recommended daily intake, and that this should be considered in relation to the readability of information.

34) The Committee agreed that the Delegation of the United States would lead an electronic working group working in English to develop general criteria or principles for legibility and readability of nutrition labels. The Committee agreed that the development of these criteria or principles would be part of the new work on the revision of the *Guidelines*.

35) As a result of the above discussion on (a), (b) and (c), the Committee agreed to undertake new work in a phased approach on the revision of the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling and considered a draft project document prepared by the delegations of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and the United States. The Committee made some amendments in order to ensure consistency with the format of Codex project documents and for clarification purposes.

36) Some delegations proposed to insert a reference to cooperation with the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) under point 7 or 8 of the project document. It was however clarified that point 7 referred to scientific advice to be provided by FAO and WHO, while point 8 referred to advice provided by other organisations, especially in the framework of joint expert consultations with FAO and WHO.

37) The Committee agreed that this work would be carried out in close cooperation with the CCNFSDU, which would be kept informed of the work in CCFL, with the understanding that its advice might be required on some of the issues under consideration.

38) In reply to a question on the time frame, the Chair recalled that five years was the standard time frame recommended for the development of Codex texts and that it was always possible for the Committee to finalise its work earlier.

d) Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs) (Proposed Action 1.5)

39) The Committee recalled that the CCNFSDU had agreed to undertake new work on the revision of the NRVs for vitamins and minerals and that there had been no agreement to consider other nutrients. Some

delegations pointed out that the current list also included a NRV for protein but it was recalled that this was not included in the work undertaken by the CCNFSDU.

40) Several delegations expressed the view that the proposal to include new NRVs would depend on the outcome of the consideration of the list of nutrients in Section 3.2 of the Guidelines.

e) Quantitative declaration of ingredients (Proposed Action 1.3)

41) The Committee recalled that the last session had not agreed to the inclusion of a point (e) in section 5.1.1 of the Draft Amendment to Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients (QUID) in the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* with respect to expressed or implied claims about the presence of any fruit, vegetables, whole grains or added sugars. The working group had reached a similar conclusion and had suggested that this question would more appropriately be addressed under Section 8 of the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims.

42) The Delegation of Norway, supported by the Observers from IBFAN and IACFO, stressed the importance of addressing this proposal of the Action Plan and providing information to consumers on the presence of fruits, vegetables, whole grains or added sugars. Other delegations supported the consideration of this question as part of nutrition and health claims, as proposed by the working group, but did not support any reconsideration of quantitative ingredient declaration.

43) After some discussion, the Committee agreed that the Delegation of Norway would lead an electronic working group working in English to develop a discussion paper to:

- Evaluate which revisions are needed to the Codex texts on food labelling in the light of the WHO/FAO Draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (CL 2006/44-CAC);
- Consider the food ingredients identified in the Global Strategy;
- Identify and recommend work to be undertaken by the CCFL with regard to these action items;
- Identify paragraphs in existing Codex texts on food labelling under which the food ingredients identified in the Global Strategy can be addressed.

Conclusion

44) In order to facilitate the discussions at the next session on items agreed to under Agenda Item 2b), the Committee agreed to convene a physical working group with the following mandate:

- Consider papers developed by the electronic working groups established at the 36th Session of the CCFL regarding:
 - (i) revision of the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling concerning the list of nutrients that are always declared on a voluntary or mandatory basis and discussion of issues related to mandatory nutrition labelling;
 - (ii) development of criteria/principles for legibility and readability of nutrition labels;
 - (iii) labelling provisions dealing with the food ingredients identified in the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.
- Provide the 37th Session of CCFL with recommendations to progress work on the implementation of the Global Strategy in these three areas.

45) The Committee agreed that the working group, co-chaired by New Zealand, Norway, and the United States, would be held immediately prior to the 37th Session of CCFL and conducted in English, French and Spanish.

Status of work

46) The Committee agreed to undertake new work on proposed amendments to the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling regarding the list of nutrients and the legibility and readability of information, as presented in the project document (see Appendix IX). Subject to approval as new work by the Commission, the proposed amendments would be circulated at Step 3 for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

CONSIDERATION OF LABELLING PROVISIONS IN DRAFT CODEX STANDARDS

(Agenda Item 3)⁴**FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee For Asia⁵**Draft Standard for Gochujang (at Step 6)

47) The Committee noted the information given by the Republic of Korea on the nature of the product and endorsed the labelling provisions as proposed.

Draft Standard for Ginseng Product (at Step 6)

48) Several delegations did not support the inclusion of mandatory country of origin labelling for the raw material of ginseng products in section 7.2 of the draft standard. They were of the opinion that the provision should be deleted or the phrase from section 4.5.1 of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* should be used. Other delegations recalled that the Coordinating Committee of Asia had discussed this question in detail and had agreed that the indication of the country of origin was important information for consumers in order to prevent deceptive practices and because the characteristics of ginseng varied significantly with the growing region. After some discussion, the Committee decided that the wording from the General Standard should be used.

49) Some delegations were of the opinion that the present wording of section 7.2 was confusing because it mixed provisions on country of origin and labelling of the ginseng species. The Committee decided to include the provisions on the name of the ginseng species used as raw material in a separate paragraph (new 7.2), taking into account that section 7.1 covered only the name of the product, and that the following sections would be renumbered. Following some editorial amendments, the Committee agreed on the following text.

7.2 Name of the Ginseng Species: “All ginseng products shall be labelled with the scientific or common name of the ginseng that is used as raw material. The common names of the ginseng shall be declared in accordance with the law and custom of the country where the product is consumed, in a manner not to mislead the consumer.”

7.3 Country of Origin: “The country of origin of the product and/or raw material shall be declared if its omission is likely to mislead or deceive the consumer.”

50) With the above amendment the Committee endorsed the labelling provisions of the Draft Standard for Ginseng Product.

Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses⁶Draft Revised Standard for Foods for Special Dietary Use for Persons Intolerant to Gluten (at Step 8)

51) The Committee endorsed the labelling provisions as proposed.

Committee on Fish and Fishery Products⁷Draft Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs (at Step 8)Draft Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (at Step 8)

52) The Committee endorsed the labelling provisions as proposed.

⁴ CX/FL 08/36/4, CX/FL 08/36/4-Add.1

⁵ ALINORM 07/30/15, Appendices II and III

⁶ ALINORM 08/31/26, Appendix III

⁷ ALINORM 08/31/18, Appendices II and III

Committee on Natural Mineral Waters⁸

Proposed Draft Amendment to Sections 3.2 and 6.3.2 of the Codex Standard For Natural Mineral Waters (CODEX STAN 108 – 1981) (at Step 5/8)

53) Some delegations proposed to ask the advice of the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses concerning the change of the value triggering the labelling of fluoride in mineral water. Other delegations stated that the task of the Committee on Food Labelling was to endorse the labelling provisions and not the value which had been changed to align it with the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality and endorsed by the Committee on Contaminants in Foods.

54) After some discussion the Committee endorsed the labelling provisions as proposed.

Codex Committee for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables⁹

Draft Standard for Bitter Cassava (at Step 6)

55) Several delegations were concerned that the Preparation Instructions (peeling and fully cooking) in paragraph 6.1.2 of the draft standard might not sufficiently reduce the level of hydrogen cyanide contained in bitter cassava for the end product to be safe. They were also of the opinion that the risk of consumption of cyanogenic glycosides in different varieties of bitter cassava had not yet been evaluated and more scientific advice was needed. It was also mentioned that instructions concerning proper disposal of the cooking water were missing.

56) Several delegations did not agree to the inclusion of mandatory country of origin labelling in section 6.2.3 and proposed to add the phrase “if its omission would mislead or deceive the consumer” from section 4.5.1 of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*. Another delegation stated that the labelling was meant for non-retail containers and thus not intended for the consumer but for inspection purposes and it would therefore not be appropriate to include the text on country of origin labelling from the *General Standard*. The Secretariat clarified that these provisions were the same as in other standards for fresh fruit and vegetable that had been endorsed.

57) The Committee concluded that it could not endorse the labelling provisions in the draft standard at this time because of concerns of delegations whether the safety of the product had been properly addressed in the Preparation Instructions included in the draft standard.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, LABELLING AND MARKETING OF ORGANICALLY PRODUCED FOODS (Agenda Item 4)

Draft Revised Annex 2: Table 3 (Agenda Item 4(a))¹⁰

58) At its last session the Committee had agreed to return to Step 6 a number of substances in square brackets in Part 2 of the Table: sodium nitrite, potassium nitrate, ascorbate salts and salts of orthophosphate, diphosphate and polyphosphates.

59) Many delegations and some observers expressed the view that sodium nitrite and potassium nitrate should not be used in organic agriculture because alternatives existed to avoid contamination of cured meat products such as good manufacturing practices and HACCP. The Delegation of the European Community stated that these substances were presently used in some member states for some organic meat products but it was planned to discontinue this use in the longer run. The Delegation noted the need for more research and information and suggested that the substances be returned to Step 6, along with ascorbates as their use was linked to the use of nitrates and nitrites. The Observer from NHF mentioned that ascorbates were linked to nitrates because of their protective effect against the formation of nitrosamines and asked the Committee that they be retained.

⁸ ALINORM 08/31/20, Appendix II

⁹ ALINORM 07/30/35, Appendix VI

¹⁰ ALINORM 07/30/22 Appendix III, CL 2007/16-FL, CX/FL 08/36/5 (comments of Brazil, Costa Rica, European Community and Norway), CX/FL 08/36/5-Add.1 (comments of Canada and Kenya), CX/FL 08/36/5-Add.2 (comments of IFOAM), CRD 7 (comments of Bolivia), CRD 11 (comments of India, Indonesia and Thailand), CRD 18 (comments of IDF)

60) Many delegations and the Observer from IFOAM were of the opinion that phosphates were not necessary for use as stabilizers as well as emulsifiers in milk products as alternatives were available. The Observer of the IDF mentioned that they were still used as emulsifier in certain processed cheese products to achieve a consistency which could not be obtained with other emulsifiers.

61) It was pointed out that the list was indicative, which meant that governments could determine whether additional substances could be allowed at the national level.

Status of the Draft Revised Annex 2: Table 3

62) The Committee agreed to propose to the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to discontinue work on the inclusion of sodium nitrite, potassium nitrate, ascorbate salts and salts of orthophosphate, diphosphate and polyphosphates into Table 3 of Annex 2.

Draft Amendment: Addition of Ethylene (Agenda Item 4(b))¹¹

63) The Commission had adopted at Step 5 the Proposed Draft Amendment to include the following sentence at the end of paragraph 82 of Annex 1: “Ethylene may be used for ripening of kiwifruit and bananas”.

64) Several delegations expressed the view that ethylene met the criteria for the use of substances in an organic system and it should thus be possible to extend its use beyond the ripening of kiwifruit and bananas. Several delegations said that in their countries ethylene was used for the ripening of tropical fruit (e.g. durian, mango and papaya), for the degreening of citrus fruit and for flower induction in pineapples.

65) The Delegation of Argentina proposed to create a new substance category “post harvest treatment” to include ethylene but other delegations were of the opinion that this was not appropriate as the use of ethylene could go beyond this category (e.g. flowering induction for pineapples). The Delegation of Canada proposed to include a new section on “other substances” at the end of Annex 2, which may be more convenient if other substances were proposed in the future. The Committee however agreed to retain the provision on ethylene in paragraph 82 at this stage.

66) The Observer from Consumers International said that many consumers equated “organic” with “natural” and therefore Codex should be prudent and endorse new treatments only when necessary. Several delegations pointed out that the commercial production of pineapples was impossible without inducing flowering with ethylene.

67) Other delegations and the Observer from IFOAM indicated that a justification against the criteria in section 5.1 of the *Guidelines* and relevant data had been put forward only for kiwifruit and bananas and that similar data should be provided for other species in order to consider the extension of the use of ethylene.

68) The Committee agreed that, as the required information on the use of ethylene had presently only been provided for the ripening of kiwifruit and bananas, this amendment could be advanced to Step 8 whereas other possible uses of ethylene should remain at Step 6 until further information was available.

Status of the Proposed Draft Amendment: Addition of Ethylene

69) The Committee agreed to advance to Step 8 for adoption by the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission the addition of ethylene for kiwifruit and bananas (see Appendix II) and to return other possible uses of ethylene to Step 6 (see Appendix III).

Proposal for new work: Deletion of Rotenone from Annex 2 (Agenda Item 4(c))¹²

70) The Delegation of Japan had prepared a proposal for new work and a project document concerning the deletion of preparations of rotenone used as an insecticide from Table 2 of Annex 2 of the *Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods* or restricting its use to prevent flowing into waterways because of its toxicity to fish.

¹¹ ALINORM 07/30/22 Appendix IV, CL 2007/34-FL, CX/FL 08/36/6 (comments of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Kenya, Philippines, Thailand and the United States), CX/FL 08/36/6-Add.1 (comments of Canada and Kenya), CX/FL 08/36/6-Add.2 (comments of IFOAM), CRD 7 (comments of Bolivia), CRD 12 (comments of India and Indonesia), CRD 19 (comments of Chile)

¹² CX/FL 08/36/7 (proposal from Japan), CX/FL 08/36/7-Add.1 (comments of Canada), CX/FL 08/36/7-Add.2 (comments of IFOAM), CRD 13 (comments of India and Indonesia)

71) Some delegations supported the deletion of rotenone because of its toxicity to fish. The Delegation of St. Lucia mentioned the possible negative impact of rotenone on biodiversity.

72) The Delegation of Canada further reminded the Committee that, as pointed out in the Guidelines in paragraph 6 of the Foreword: “Organic agricultural practices cannot ensure that products are completely free of residues, due to general environmental pollution. However, methods are used to minimise pollution of air, soil and water.”

73) Other delegations and the Observer from IFOAM pointed out that in some areas no alternatives to the use of rotenone as insecticide in organic production existed. They were of the opinion that restricting its use to prevent it from flowing into waterways was sufficient to manage the risk.

74) After some discussion the Committee agreed to undertake new work on this issue and forwarded the project document as prepared by Japan to the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for approval as new work (see Appendix VIII).

LABELLING OF FOODS AND FOOD INGREDIENTS OBTAINED THROUGH CERTAIN TECHNIQUES OF GENETIC MODIFICATION / GENETIC ENGINEERING:

DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE *GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS* (DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LABELLING OF FOODS OBTAINED THROUGH CERTAIN TECHNIQUES OF GENETIC MODIFICATION / GENETIC ENGINEERING): DEFINITIONS (AT STEP 7) (Agenda Item 5a)¹³

DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE *GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS* (DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LABELLING OF FOODS OBTAINED THROUGH CERTAIN TECHNIQUES OF GENETIC MODIFICATION / GENETIC ENGINEERING): LABELLING PROVISIONS (Agenda Item 5b)

75) The Committee recalled that its last session had agreed to establish a physical working group co-chaired by Argentina, Ghana and Norway to be held in Ghana between the sessions and that the Draft Amendment on the Definitions and the Proposed Draft Labelling Provisions had been held respectively at Steps 7 and 4 pending consideration of the report of the working group.

76) The Delegation of Ghana introduced the report of the working group and expressed its thanks to its co-Chairs, Argentina and Norway, and to all participants for their active contribution to the discussion. The Delegation indicated that the working group had considered the rationale for different approaches to GM/GE labelling adopted by national governments, the communications strategies used in communicating information to the public on GM/GE foods; and an analysis of current Codex texts which may provide guidance on the labelling of GM/GE foods, as presented in a background paper considered by the working group (CL 2007/38-FL). Several key concepts derived from this paper were identified, modified and brought together in a draft document (Appendix III of CX/FL 09/36/8). The working group had discussed the possible title and proposed alternative texts for chapeau statements but had not reached consensus on the text. The Delegation of Argentina, as co-Chair, explained the process that the working group had followed to consider this subject, after identifying three main proposals in the course of its discussions.

77) The Committee expressed its appreciation to Ghana for its kind hospitality in hosting the working group and to the three Co-chairs, Ghana, Argentina and Norway for their chairmanship that had allowed the working group to make substantial progress on complex issues. The Committee considered how to proceed further in the light of the report of the working group.

78) Some delegations referred to their experience at the national level in the development of regulations on GM/GE labelling and noted that the background paper had been useful for this purpose or that they would use it in the future. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the delegations of the United States, Canada and Nigeria for this useful and excellent document.

79) The Delegation of the United States pointed out that the background paper was intended to address the need of member countries, especially developing countries, for guidance on the labelling of GM/GE foods and addressed four key issues: providing consumers with necessary health and safety-related information; providing consumers with information related to the significant differences in composition, characteristics,

¹³ CL 2007/38-FL, CX/FL 08/36/8 (Report of the working group held in Ghana), CRD 8 (comments of Bolivia), CRD 16 (comments of India), CRD 19 (comments of Chile)

nutritional properties, or intended use of the food; protecting consumers from false and misleading labelling information; and ensuring truthful and non-misleading information to meet consumer demand. The Delegation further noted that in the working group held in Norway it was evident that countries had taken different approaches due to the different legal, regulatory and social frameworks. Such differences were an indication that such work should not be continued in Codex. The Delegation indicated that it was not possible to respond to the 1991 request of the Commission and therefore proposed that this document be forwarded to the Commission, as it could be used by governments as guidance regarding labelling of GM/GE foods and that the Committee should discontinue work on the development of a Codex text, as this item had been considered for many sessions and there was no prospect of reaching consensus. The Delegation stated that Appendix III was not an adequate basis for discussion as it was a simplification of the background document and included some areas where the Committee had failed to reach consensus. Several delegations and Observers supported this position.

80) Some delegations pointed out that mandatory labelling would substantially increase the costs of food production for the manufacturers and negatively affect the availability of foods, which would especially affect developing countries and low income consumers, especially in view of the increase in the price of food commodities at the international level.

81) Many other delegations and some observers supported further work on GM/GE food labelling, especially further consideration of Appendix III. These delegations underlined that although the two recent working groups came to the conclusion that no consensus was possible on a recommended approach to label GM/GE foods, they considered it was possible to agree on a list of principles or concepts to be taken into consideration by the countries willing to develop and implement rules on labelling of GM/GE foods. Such a document would address the requests expressed at the 34th and 35th sessions of the Committee by many delegations requesting Codex guidance on the labelling of GM/GE foods.

82) Some delegations and observers expressed the view that the consideration of this document was a first stage and that mandatory labelling of GM/GE foods should be required in order to ensure the right of consumers to be informed. The Observer from IFOAM supported further work and stressed the importance of mandatory labelling to allow consumer choice, and stated that as GM/GE crops are not allowed in the organic system, labelling of GM/GE foods is essential for the purposes of traceability and inspection in order to ensure the integrity of the organic system.

83) Some delegations and the Observer from NHF expressed the view that labelling of GM foods was necessary in order to address health concerns of consumers. Other delegations pointed out that all foods derived from biotechnology were subject to pre-market safety assessment, that unsafe foods should not be present on the market and therefore there was no justification to require mandatory labelling of such foods from the point of view of health protection.

84) The Chair drew the attention of the Committee to the requirements for safety assessment of foods derived from biotechnology prior to marketing in the countries where GM/GE foods were produced and to the work of Codex in this area.

85) The Chair of the *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology, Professor Yoshikura (Japan) informed the Committee that the Task Force had finalised three documents addressing food safety assessment of foods derived from Recombinant-DNA animals, Recombinant-DNA plants modified for nutritional or health benefits, and food safety assessment in situations of low level presence of Recombinant-DNA plant material in food. It had also been agreed that FAO would host a database for data and information sharing for the purpose of the Annex. The Chair of the Task Force also recalled that according to the Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology (CAC/GL 44-2003, para. 19) "Risk management measures may include, as appropriate, food labelling conditions for marketing approvals and post-marketing monitoring".

86) The Delegation of Argentina expressed the view that safety and consumer health protection were priority aspects in the work of Codex; however in the discussion of the agenda items it perceived a contradiction in the fact that various member countries who supported labelling of GM/GE foods, which was not based on safety or health protection, were opposed to mandatory nutrition labelling, which was part of the WHO Global Strategy to reduce non communicable diseases, due to economic reasons, lack of understanding by consumers and excess of information on the labels.

87) As a compromise, some delegations proposed to limit further work to the consideration of Table 1 of Appendix III which provided only the list of relevant Codex texts without additional text, as it would provide

useful guidance to governments and could be acceptable to all delegations. Some delegations, while not objecting to the consideration of Appendix III, indicated that it should be limited to those provisions on which consensus existed and that they would not support any modification beyond these areas of consensus.

88) The Committee recognized that there was large support for proceeding with work on the basis of Appendix III of CX/FL 08/36/8 and agreed that it would replace the text of the Proposed Draft Guidelines held at Step 4 in earlier sessions (ALINORM 04/27/22, Appendix VI). In view of the nature of the text, it was agreed that the title would refer to “Recommendations” instead of “Guidelines”. It was further agreed that Appendix III should be considered in conjunction with the background document in CL 2007/38-FL.

89) The Delegation of the United States did not agree to the proposal for proceeding with work on Appendix III and noted that the areas of disagreement highlighted in Ghana and reiterated during the current session of CCFL were the same issues that had prevented the Committee from reaching consensus for the previous decade.

Definitions

90) The Committee considered how to proceed with the Draft Definitions currently at Step 7 in view of the above discussion.

91) The Delegations of the European Community and Switzerland, supported by other delegations, pointed out that the definitions had been held at Step 7 in earlier sessions pending the finalisation of the Proposed Draft Guidelines, and should be retained as they were essential to define the products under consideration. It was underlined that the fact that the definitions had reached Step 7 reflected a high level of consensus on these. Some other delegations proposed to delete the definitions as similar definitions already existed in the *Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology* (CAC/GL 44-2003). The Committee did not consider the definitions in more detail.

Status of the Draft Amendment to the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Foods Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering): Definitions

92) The Committee agreed to retain the Draft Amendment at Step 7 (see Appendix VI).

Status of the Proposed Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained Through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification/Genetic Engineering

93) The Committee agreed to circulate the Proposed Draft Recommendations at Step 3 for comments and consideration at the next session (see Appendix VII).

DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS: QUANTITATIVE DECLARATION OF INGREDIENTS (Agenda Item 6)¹⁴

94) The Committee, recalling that the Draft Amendment had been adopted at Step 5 by the 30th Session of the Commission, considered the text section by section and made the following amendments and comments.

95) The Delegation of the European Community welcomed the progress that had been made at the last session on this text and proposed two amendments, as presented in CRD 20. The Delegation proposed to delete the final part of the first paragraph in 5.1.2: “as a minimum percentage where emphasis is on the presence of the ingredient and a maximum percentage where emphasis is on the low level of the ingredient”, as it was of the opinion that the application of this provision was complicated. Other delegations were in favour of keeping the text as it had been drafted carefully in a previous session after deleting the notion of “average percentage” and cautioned not to reopen the discussion. The Committee decided to retain the text.

96) The Delegation of the European Community also proposed to add a third paragraph to 5.1.2 reading: “When the quantity of an ingredient or the total quantity of all ingredients expressed on the labelling exceeds 100%, the percentage may be replaced by a declaration of the weight of the ingredient(s) used to prepare

¹⁴ CL 2007/34-FL, ALINORM 07/30/22 Appendix V, CX/FL 08/36/9 (comments of Brazil, Costa Rica, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Thailand and the World Sugar Research Organisation (WSRO)), CX/FL 08/36/9-Add.1 (comments of Canada and Kenya), CRD 3 (comments of Nigeria), CRD 9 (comments of Bolivia), CRD 14 (comments of India and Indonesia), CRD19 (comments of Chile) CRD 20 (comments of the European Community).

100g of finished product.”. The Delegation was of the opinion that percentages that added up to more than 100% were more difficult to understand by consumers than the option they proposed. The Observer of IACFO suggested that the word “may” in the proposed text should be “shall” since with “may” different manufacturers could use different options to portray similar products, making consumers believe the products were different. After some discussion the Committee decided to add the text as proposed by the European Community.

97) The Delegation of Thailand proposed to clarify in a footnote that the ingoing percentage of compound ingredients in section 5.1.1 of the draft text means the ingoing percentage of the compound ingredients as a whole and not of its ingredients. The Committee agreed to add a footnote to “compound ingredient” in 5.1.1 accordingly.

Status of the Draft Amendment to the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods: Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients

98) The Committee agreed to advance the draft amendment to Step 8 for adoption by the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (see Appendix IV).

99) The Committee thanked the United Kingdom, as lead country of earlier working groups, for their leadership and contribution during the years when this item had been considered.

DRAFT DEFINITION OF ADVERTISING IN RELATION TO NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS (Agenda Item 7)¹⁵

100) The Chairperson recalled that the 30th Session of the Commission had adopted the proposed draft definition of advertising in relation to nutrition and health claims at Step 5 and recommended that the Committee on Food Labelling clarify in which text it should be included when finalised.¹⁶

101) The Delegation of the United States, supported by several delegations and some observers, reaffirmed their position that advertising was best regulated at the national level but recognized the work that had been achieved by the Committee on the definition. They were of the opinion that if the definition was to be included, it should be taken into account that the word “advertising” was included in the scope of the *Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997)* and not used further in that text. They recalled that it was not in the scope of the present work to further develop the use of this definition. For these reasons they felt that the most logical place to include it would be as a footnote to the word “advertising” in paragraph 1.1 of CAC/GL 23-1997.

102) Other delegations also welcomed the progress made on the definition, which to them was an important clarification to consumers, and were of the opinion that the definition should logically be included in Section 2: Definitions of CAC/GL 23-1997. It was mentioned that the term “advertising” was also used in paragraph 3.2 of the *General Standard for the Labelling of and Claims for Prepackaged Foods for Special Dietary Uses*.

103) The Delegation of Australia noted that, in their opinion, clarification of the intent of “commercial communication to the public” may be required and requested that this clarification be noted as “Examples of commercial communications to the public would not include: communications in the form of academic papers, news, editorials, articles of public interest, text book information, website, educational material or professional advice from any source including government agencies and professional bodies”. Other delegations and one Observer also identified the need for clarification of the term “commercial communication to the public”.

104) After some discussion and the confirmation by the Codex Secretariat that footnotes were considered as an integral part of Codex texts, those delegations that were in favour of inclusion of the definition under section 2: Definitions, stated that they could accept its inclusion as a footnote.

¹⁵ CL 2007/34-FL, ALINORM 07/30/22 Appendix VI, CX/FL 08/36/10 (comments of Argentina, Brazil, European Community, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, United States, International Dairy Federation (IDF) and the World Sugar Research Organisation (WSRO)), CX/FL 08/36/10-Add.1 (comments of Canada and Kenya), CX/FL 08/36/10-Add.2 (comments of the European Food Law Association (EFLA)), CRD 4 (comments of Nigeria), CRD 15 (comments of Indonesia), CRD 19 (comments of Chile).

¹⁶ ALINORM 07/30/REP, para 90.

105) A number of editorial amendments were proposed to the text of the definition by different delegations and one Observer but after some discussion the Committee decided to maintain the original drafting. The Delegation of Mexico supported by other Spanish speaking delegations noted a correction to the Spanish version of the definition.

106) The Committee agreed that the definition as proposed would be included as a footnote to the word “advertising” in paragraph 1.1 of the *Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997).

Status of the Draft Definition of Advertising in Relation to Nutrition and Health Claims

107) The Committee agreed to advance the draft definition to Step 8 for adoption by the 31th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (see Appendix V).

DISCUSSION PAPER ON MODIFIED STANDARDIZED COMMON NAMES (Agenda Item 8)¹⁷

Background

108) The Delegation of Canada, as coordinator of the electronic working group introduced the item presenting its history and the results of the working group. The delegation recalled that at the 30th Session of the Committee a document by the United States on truthful but misleading labeling had been discussed. At the 34th Session, Canada presented a discussion paper on the naming of foods that are similar to a standardized food and where the name of the standardized food is used as part of a modified name. At the 35th Session, Canada presented a revised paper linking the issue to the *Draft Action Plan for Implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health* (CL 2006/44-CAC), which proposed permitting the use of a standardized name established in an identity standard in conjunction with a nutrition claim on the label of a modified standardized food.

109) The objective of the electronic working group was to develop principles for the use of modified names of foods for the purpose of nutritional variation while ensuring that this would not mislead consumers about the nature of the food but assist them in their food choices. Canada clarified that the intention of the proposed new work was to support the implementation of the Global Strategy while protecting consumers from being misled about the composition of the food and was not intended to replace current Codex standards.

110) The report of the working group included a project document on an amendment to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Section 4.1 (the Name of the Food)) to provide conditions for the use of modified standardized names for foods with modifications from a compositional standard for the purpose of Codex defined nutrition claims.

111) The Committee thanked Canada and the working group for their excellent work on this subject.

Discussion

112) The Chairperson invited the Committee to discuss whether it supported new work in this area, which could be requested to the 31st Session of the Commission.

113) The Delegation of Germany, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Community present at the session, did not support horizontal work at the international level on this issue by amending the *General Standard* (CODEX STAN 1-1985). The Delegation stated that existing commodity standards in many cases already allowed some variation but was of the opinion that, if due to a modification a product fell out of the range of the relevant commodity standard, the standardized name should no longer be used unless the standard was changed. The Delegation felt that in order to deal with the complexity of allowing variation while maintaining the essential characteristics of a product, it was necessary to deal with the matter on a case by case basis, especially because acceptable variations could be perceived differently in different countries. This position was supported by other delegations.

114) The work in the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils was mentioned as an example where it had not been possible to combine provisions on modified names even for a relatively small number of products. It was also mentioned that work on the General Standard for Food Additives had shown that it was important to involve the relevant commodity committees at an early stage before undertaking horizontal work that concerned them. It was therefore stressed that CCFL should inform the relevant commodity committees of the work it intended to undertake with regard to modified standardized common names.

¹⁷ CX/FL 08/36/11, CRD 5 (comments of Canada)

115) Other delegations and observers noted the advances made in the food industry in recent years with respect to nutritional modifications. They stated that, as products with modified standardized names were already on the markets, there was a need for horizontal guidance to Codex members on this issue to ensure truthful labelling information for consumers. It was mentioned that food standards should not prevent healthier versions of foods being developed and the importance of this work was emphasised, especially in the light of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

116) It was felt that the background document already adequately recognized the need to consult with other Codex Committees to ensure consistency.

Conclusion

117) The Committee concluded that there was no consensus to move the project document to the Commission and to request new work.

118) Because of the importance of the issue in the light of the implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, and the support by several delegations to continue work in this area, the Committee invited Canada and the working group to continue the work on the document and especially to consider:

- what would be entailed in the scope of the work if it was undertaken;
- what would be the effect on other Codex standards, while keeping in mind that it was important that the identification of the product be kept.

OTHER BUSINESS, FUTURE WORK AND DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 9)¹⁸

Proposal from OIML

119) The Observer from the International Organisation for Legal Metrology (OIML) gave an overview of the structure and activities of the OIML, indicating that OIML is an intergovernmental treaty organization whose membership includes Member States with the right to vote, and corresponding members which have the status of observers and can participate in the activities but cannot vote. The Observer explained the procedures for the development of OIML international recommendations, noting that all documents and draft documents were available on the OIML website, and presented a proposal for further consideration by the Committee.

120) The Committee was informed that OIML had published two recommendations relevant to the labelling of prepackaged foods: OIML R 87: 2004: Quantity of Products in Prepackages and OIML 79:1997: Labelling Requirements for Prepackaged Products, currently under revision. The Observer pointed out that with the new R 87 it would be easier to address the liquid packing medium, as the quantity of product declared would include the liquid medium only if it was intended to be part of the food product.

121) The Observer explained that the following sections of *the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* would be affected: Definition of “container”, “packing material”, “prepackage”, “prepackaged food” (section 2); section 4.2.1.5 on the declaration of added water; and section 4.3 quantity of food in a prepackage, and proposed that the Committee consider these possible amendments as presented in the Annex to CX/FL 08/36/12.

122) Some delegations expressed the following questions and concerns about this proposal: the membership of OIML and the reasons for the distinction between members and observers; procedures of OIML to develop its recommendations; the status of OIML in WTO and Codex; the status of the proposal under consideration; the use of OIML Recommendations in its member states; and whether OIML took into account Codex texts when developing its recommendations

123) The Observer from OIML clarified that OIML was open to all countries but, as it was a treaty organisation, implying specific obligations, some countries did not join because their technical capacities did not allow them to do so; that OIML had membership fees; that OIML was recognised as a standard setting organisation and an observer in WTO; that the development of the recommendations went through technical committees through a transparent process, whereby members and observers could provide their comments. As regards the use of OIML R87 by member countries, he indicated that a survey was underway on the use

¹⁸ CX/FL 08/36/12

of OIML Recommendations and that such information would be placed on the OIML website and could be made available to the next session of the Committee.

124) The Committee recalled that OIML was an international intergovernmental organisation with observer status and participated in other Codex Committees. As regards the status of the proposal, the Secretariat indicated that it was for the Committee to decide whether to examine it further or not, or to consider the need for new work and recalled that any proposal for new work had to follow the Codex Procedure. Some delegations highlighted the need to take account of the workload of the Committee and the prioritisation process to be discussed at the next session.

125) The Chair noted that it would be useful if members could consider the proposal at the national level and provide information to the Committee on the approach they followed at the national level on the definition of the quantity of product in prepackages.

126) The Delegation of Cameroon, while recognizing that this initiative from OIML was in line with Codex procedures especially with regard to the provisions of Articles 5, 6, 7 of the *Guidelines on Cooperation between the CAC and International Intergovernmental Organisations in the Elaboration of Standards and Related Texts*, supported further consideration of the proposal

127) The Delegation of Morocco supported further consideration of this issue since metrological control was essential for the purposes of inspection and certification, especially for exporting countries, and also indicated that they would coordinate at the national level in order to consider how to approach this proposal.

128) Several delegations pointed out that this proposal could substantially affect labelling provisions in the General Standard and possibly in other standards, and that it could also affect regulations and inspection at the national level. These delegations therefore indicated that they needed to consider these proposals in detail, which had not been possible due to the late availability of the document.

129) The Committee thanked the Observer from OIML for its presentation and agreed that this proposal would be considered at the next session as a specific agenda item and that OIML would prepare a revised discussion paper including some additional background information and addressing the questions raised by Committee members.

Date and Place of the Next Session

130) Taking into account the proposals for new work put forward at the present session, the Committee confirmed that the current interval between meetings should be maintained.

131) The Committee was informed that its next session would be held in Calgary, Alberta from 4 to 8 May 2009, the final arrangements to be determined between the host country and Codex Secretariat.

132) The Committee was informed that Dr Anne MacKenzie was chairing the Committee for the last time and that the next session would be chaired by Mr Paul Mayers, Acting Associate Vice President, Programs, Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

133) The Committee expressed its warm thanks and appreciation to Dr Anne MacKenzie on the occasion of her final session as Chair of the Committee, as her excellent chairmanship throughout the years had contributed significantly to the progress made by the Committee to develop labelling texts of great importance and to address many complex issues.

SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

| Subject Matter | Step | Action by | Document Reference in ALINORM 08/31/22 |
|--|-------------|--|---|
| Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for Organically Produced Foods (Ethylene for kiwifruit and bananas) | 8 | Governments 31 st CAC | para.. 68 Appendix II |
| Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for Organically Produced Foods (Ethylene for other uses) | 6 | Governments 37 th CCFL | para. 68 Appendix III |
| Draft Amendment to the <i>General Standard</i> (Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients) | 8 | Governments 31 st CAC | para.. 95 Appendix IV |
| Draft Definition of Advertising in relation to health and nutrition claims | 8 | Governments 31 st CAC | para.. 107 Appendix V |
| Guidelines for Organically Produced Foods: Draft Revised Annex 2 : Table 3 | 7* | Governments 31 st CAC | para. 61 |
| Draft Amendment to the General Standard (Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Foods obtained through certain techniques of GM/GE): Definitions | 7 | 37 th CCFL | para. 92 Appendix VI |
| Proposed Draft Recommendations for the Labelling of Foods obtained through certain techniques of GM/GE | 3 | Governments 37 th CCFL | para. 93 Appendix VII |
| Proposed Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for Organically Produced Foods (rotenone) | 1/2/3 | Governments 31 st CAC 37 th CCFL | para. 74 Appendix VIII |
| Proposed Draft Amendment to the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling | 1/2/3 | Governments 31 st CAC 37 th CCFL | para. 46 Appendix IX |

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS/LISTES DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

| | |
|--|--|
| Chairperson/ Présidente/ Presidenta: | Dr. Anne MacKenzie Canadian Food Inspection Agency 159 Cleopatra Drive Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9, CANADA |
|--|--|

ALGERIA
ALGÉRIE
ARGELIA

Nader Ben Khaled
Manager Assistant (Boarder Control)
Ministry of Trade
Cit  Zerhouni Mokhtarel Mohammadia
Alger 16211, ALG RIE
Tel.: +21321890036
Fax: +21321890251
E-mail: benkhaled.nader@yahoo.fr
E-mail: benkhaled@mincommerce.gov.dz

ANGOLA

Mr. Jo o Pedro Lemos Gaspar
Membre du Codex – Angola
Minist re du Interieur / Direcc on Nacional de
Inspecc on et Investigacion des Activites
Economique
Luanda 527, ANGOLA
Tel.: +244 923 41 48 00
Fax: +244 222 32 37 24
E-mail: lemos.gaspar@yahoo.com.br
E-mail: secretariado_codex@yahoo.com.br

Maria Antonia Sanazenge
Chefe de Division d’Hygi ne Alimentaire
Instituto Nacional du Sant  Publique
Vice President, Codex – Angola
Minist re de la Sant 
Rua Amilcar Cabral
Luanda 527, ANGOLA
Tel.: +244 923 65 36 95 / +244 912 50 38 68
Fax: +244 222 32 37 24
E-mail: sanazenge@hotmail.com
E-mail: secretariado_codex@yahoo.com.br

ARGENTINA
ARGENTINE

Mrs. Gabriela Catalani
Coordinadora T cnica
Pto. Focal Codex Argentina
Secretaria de Agricultura, Ganader a
Pesca y Alimentos
Av. Paseo Col n 922 PB oficina 29
Ciudad Aut noma de Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA
Tel.: +54 11 4349 2549
E-mail: gcatal@mecon.gov.ar

Mr. Arnaldo Nonzioli
Secretaria de Agricultura, Ganader a
Pesca y Alimentos
Av. Paseo Col n 922 2 piso oficina 226
Ciudad Aut noma de Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA
Tel.: +54 11 4349 2175
E-mail: anonzi@mecon.gov.ar

Mrs. Andrea Calzetta Resio
Supervisor T cnico de Aprobaci n de Productos
Alimenticios
Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad
Agroalimentaria (SENASA)
Av. Paseo Col n 439 piso 1 frente
Ciudad Aut noma de Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA
Tel.: +54 11 41215087
E-mail: acalzet@senasa.gov.ar

Mrs. Alicia Men ndez
Instituto Nacional de Alimentos
Estados Unidos 25
Ciudad Aut noma de Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Tel.: +54 11 4340 0800, ext. 3518
E-mail: amenende@anmat.gov.ar

AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIE

Ms. Eva Mehakovic
 Director, Food Regulation Policy Section
 Food and Healthy Living Branch
 Department of Health and Ageing
 MDP15, GPO Box 9848
 Canberra ACT 2601, AUSTRALIA
 Tel.: +61 2 6289 5133
 Fax: +61 2 6289 4235
 E-mail: eva.mehakovic@health.gov.au

Ms. Jane Allen
 Deputy Section Manager – Labelling and
 Information
 Food Standards Australia New Zealand
 P.O. Box 7186
 Canberra BC 2611, AUSTRALIA
 Tel.: +61 2 6271 2678
 Fax: +61 2 6271 2278
 E-mail: jane.allen@foodstandards.gov.au

Dr. Leigh Henderson
 A/g General Manager, Risk Assessment Branch
 Food Standards Australia New Zealand
 108 The Terrace
 Wellington, NEW ZEALAND
 Tel: +64 4 978 5650
 Fax: + 64 4 473 9855
 E-mail: Leigh.Henderson@foodstandards.govt.nz

Ms. Usha Sriram-Prasad
 Manager, Food Regulation and Safety
 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
 GPO Box 858
 Canberra ACT 2601, AUSTRALIA
 Tel.: +61 2 6272 3547
 Fax: +61 2 6272 4367
 E-mail: usha.sp@daff.gov.au

Mr. Andre Leu
 Chairman, Organic Federation of Australia
 P.O. Box 800
 Mossman QLD 4873, AUSTRALIA
 Tel.: +61 7 4098 7610
 E-mail: chair@ofa.org.au

Mrs. Victoria Landells
 Regulatory Strategist Health and Nutrition
 Fonterra
 327 Ferntree Gully Road
 Mt Waverly, Melbourne VIC 3149, AUSTRALIA
 Tel.: +61 3 8541 1327
 Fax: +61 3 8541 1462
 E-mail: victoria.landells@fonterra.com

AUSTRIA
AUTRICHE

Dr. Gertraud Fischinger
 Federal Ministry of Health, Family and Youth
 Department IV/B/7
 Radetzkystraße. 2
 A-1030 Vienna, AUSTRIA
 Tel.: +43 1 71100-4771
 Fax: +43 1 713 44 04-2318
 E-mail: gertraud.fischinger@bmgfj.gv.at

BARBADOS
BARBADE

Ms. Cheryl M. Lewis
 Technical Officer, Barbados National Standards
 Institution
 “Flodden”, Culloden Road
 St. Michael, BARBADOS
 Tel.: +246 426 3870
 Fax: +246 436 1495
 E-mail: clewis@bnsi.com.bb
 E-mail: office@bnsi.com.bb

BELGIUM
BELGIQUE
BÉLGICA

Luc Ogiers
 Director, FPS Economy, SMEs, Independent
 Professions and Energy
 City Atrium C, Vooruitgangstraat 50
 1210 Brussel, BELGIUM
 Tel.: +32 2 277 74 81
 Fax: +32 2 277 53 04
 E-mail: luc.ogiers@economie.fgov.be

Mr. Jean Pottier
 Expert Étiquetage et allégations nutritionnelles et de
 santé
 SPF Santé publique, Sécurité de la Chaîne
 alimentaire et environnement
 Place Victor Horta, 40 bte 10, Blok II – 7^e étage
 Bruxelles 1060, BELGIUM
 Tel.: +32 (0) 2524 73 62
 Fax: +32 (0) 2524 7399
 E-mail: jean.pottier@health.fgov.be

BOLIVIA
BOLIVIE

Ing. Ángela Victoria Flores Vertiz-Blanco
 Responsable Técnico de Control de Alimentos
 Instituto Nacional de Laboratorios de Salud
 Ministerio de Salud y Deportes
 Pasaje Rafael Zubietta
 #1889 – Miraflores, La Paz, BOLIVIA
 Tel.: +591 2 224 0082
 E-mail: avfvb@hotmail.com

BRAZIL
BRÉSIL
BRASIL

Mr. Ernesto Araujo
 Counsellor - Embassy of Brazil
 450 Wilbrod Street
 Ottawa, ON K1N 6M8, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 237-1090
 Fax: (613) 237-6144
 E-mail: ernesto@brasembottawa.org

Ms. Antonia Maria de Aquino
 Manager of Special Products
 National Health Surveillance Agency
 Ministry of Health
 SEPN 511 Bl. A - Ed. Bittar II, Asa Norte
 70750-541 Brasília - DF, BRAZIL
 Tel.: +55 61 3448 6289
 Fax: +55 61 3448 6274
 E-mail: antonia.maria@anvisa.gov.br

Mr. Roberto Guimarães Habib Mattar
 Head of Division of Organic Quality Guarantee
 Agroecology Coordination
 Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply
 MAPA
 Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco D, anexo B sala
 152 – CEP Brasília DF 70043900, BRAZIL
 Tel.: +55 61 3218 2453
 Fax: +55 61 3223 5350
 E-mail: roberto.mattar@agricultura.gov.br

Ms. Andriara Maria Braga Maranhão
 Especialista em Políticas Públicas e Gestão
 Governamental
 Departamento de Proteção e Defesa do Consumidor
 Ministério da Justiça
 Esplanada dos Ministérios, Ministério da Justiça,
 Edifício Sede, 5º andar, sala 518
 Brasília DF 70.064-900, BRAZIL
 Tel. : +61 3429 3636
 Fax: +61 3429 3983
 E-mail: andriara.braga@mj.gov.br

Mrs. Juliana Ribeiro Alexandre
 Federal Inspector / GMO Biosafety Coordination
 Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply
 Esplanada dos Ministérios
 Bloco "D" Anexo "B" Sala 450
 70043-900 Brasília - DF, BRAZIL
 Tel.: +55 61 3218 2320
 Fax: +55 61 3224 3995
 E-mail: juliana.alexandre@agricultura.gov.br

Mr. Rodrigo Martins de Vargas
 Specialist in Health Surveillance
 National Health Surveillance Agency
 Ministry of Health
 SEPN 511 Bl. A Ed. Bittar II Asa Norte
 70750-541 Brasília - DF, BRAZIL
 Tel.: +55 61 3448 6352
 Fax: +55 61 3448 6274
 E-mail : rodrigo.vargas@anvisa.gov.br

Mr. Carlos Alexandre Biella
 Brazilian Association of the Food Industry (ABIA)
 Av. Brigadeiro Faria Lima, 1.478 – 11º Andar
 São Paulo – SP 01451-001, BRAZIL
 Tel.: +55 (11) 5508 5744
 Fax: +55 (11) 5508 7503
 E-mail: alexandre.biella@br.nestle.com

Mr. Majid Abaiian
 Economic Officer
 Embassy of Brazil
 450 Wilbrod Street
 Ottawa, ON K1N 6M8, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 237-1090
 Fax: (613) 237-6144
 E-mail: mabaiian@brasembottawa.org

CAMEROON
CAMEROUN
CAMERÚN

Medi MOUNGUI
 Deputy Permanent Representative to FAO
 Embassy of Cameroon in Italy
 Via Siracusa 4/6
 Rome 00161, ITALY
 Tel.: +39 06 4403644
 Fax: +39 06 4403644
 E-mail: medimoungui@yahoo.fr

Mme. NDE NINGO Grace
 Chief of Service for Quality Control of Forms
 Department of Health Promotion
 Sub-Department of Food and Nutrition
 Ministry of Public Health
 Yaoundé, CAMEROUN
 Tel: +237 769 31 86
 E-mail: gningo@hotmail.com

CANADA

Ms. Carla Barry
 Director, Consumer Protection Division
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 159 Cleopatra Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 221-7157
 Fax: (613) 221-7295
 E-mail: cbarry@inspection.gc.ca

Mr. Karl Dupuis
 Deputy Director
 Multilateral Technical Trade Issues
 International Trade Policy Directorate
 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
 930 Carling Avenue, Room 10109
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 759-7660
 Fax: (613) 759-7503
 E-mail: dupuisk@agr.gc.ca

Dr. Mary L'Abbé
 Director, Bureau of Nutritional Sciences
 Health Canada
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (2203B)
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 948-8476
 Fax: (613) 948-8470
 E-mail: mary_l'abbe@hc-sc.gc.ca

Ms. Christina Zehaluk
 Head, Special Purpose Foods
 Bureau of Nutritional Sciences
 Health Canada
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (2203E)
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 957-1739
 Fax: (613) 941-6636
 E-mail: christina_zehaluk@hc-sc.gc.ca

Dr. Jaspinder Komal
 Director, Agrifood Division
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 159 Cleopatra Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 221-7178
 E-mail: komaljp@inspection.gc.ca

Ms. Lydia Dumais
 Section Head, Bureau of Nutritional Sciences
 Food Directorate, Health Products and Food Branch
 Health Canada
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway (2203E)
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 954-0632
 Fax: (613) 941-6636
 E-mail: lydia_dumais@hc-sc.gc.ca

Ms. Barbara Buchanan
 Regulatory Policy Officer
 Food Policy Integration
 Health Canada
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 957-3411
 Fax: (613) 946-4590
 E-mail: barbara_buchanan@hc-sc.gc.ca

Ms. Charmaine Kuran
 National Manager, Nutrition and Health Claims
 Consumer Protection Division
 Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 159 Cleopatra Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 221-7200
 Fax: (613) 221-7295
 E-mail: kuranc@inspection.gc.ca

Ms. Kathy Twardek
 Acting National Manager, Fair Labelling Practices
 and Standards - Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 159 Cleopatra Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 221-7205
 Fax: (613) 221-7295
 E-mail: twardekk@inspection.gc.ca

Ms. Angela Bilkhu
 Senior Program Officer, Fair Labelling Practices and
 Standards - Canadian Food Inspection Agency
 159 Cleopatra Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 221-7205
 Fax: (613) 221-7295
 E-mail: bilkhua@inspection.gc.ca

Ms. Sandy Beyko
 Senior Trade Policy Officer
 Technical Barriers and Regulations
 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
 125 Sussex Drive,
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 944-8981
 Fax: (613) 943-0346
 E-mail: sandy.beyko@international.gc.ca

Ms. Balsharan Rakhra
 Trade Policy Officer
 Technical Barriers and Regulations
 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
 125 Sussex Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 996-4819
 Fax: (613) 943-0346
 E-mail: balsharan.rakhra@international.gc.ca

Mr. Brad Wood
 Trade Policy Analyst
 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
 930 Carling Avenue, Room 10109
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 715-5157
 Fax: (613) 759-7503
 E-mail: woodb@agr.gc.ca

Callie Stewart
 Deputy Director, Technical Barriers and Regulations
 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
 125 Sussex Drive,
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 944-8998
 Fax: (613) 943-0346
 E-mail: callie.stewart@international.gc.ca

Torsten Ström
 Senior Counsel and Deputy Director, Trade Law
 Bureau - Government of Canada
 125 Sussex Drive
 Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 944-4957
 Fax: (613) 944-0027
 E-mail: torsten.strom@international.gc.ca

Ms. Jennifer Elliott
Regulatory Affairs Manager
Monsanto Canada
315 - 350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X1, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 234-5121, ext. 234
Fax: (613) 234-2063
E-mail: Jennifer.a.Elliott@monsanto.com

Dr. John Henning
Associate Professor
Program Director, Agricultural Economics
Macdonald Stewart Bldg., Room MS3-38
McGill University, Macdonald Campus
Ste. Anne de Bellevue
Quebec H9X 3V9, CANADA
Tel.: (514) 398-7826/7820
Fax: (514) 398-8130
E-mail: john.henning@mcgill.ca

Mr. Blair Stransky
Account Director, Fleishman-Hillard Canada
100 Queen Street, Suite 1300
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J9, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 688-6670
Fax: (613) 238-9380
E-mail: blair.stransky@fleishman.ca

Ms. Isabelle Neiderer
Director of Nutrition
Dairy Farmers of Canada
1801 McGill College Avenue, Suite 700
Montreal H3A 2N4, CANADA
Tel.: (514) 284-1092, ext. 229
Fax: (514) 284-0449
E-mail: isabelle.neiderer@dfc-plc.ca

Ms. Pat Steele
Regulatory Affairs Advisory Group
Dietitians of Canada
43 Putman Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1M 1Z1
Tel.: (613) 746-2100
E-mail: psteele1108@hotmail.com

Michi Furuya Chang, MHS, RD
Director, Canadian Scientific and Regulatory Affairs
Kraft Canada Inc.
95 Moatfield Drive
Toronto, ON M3B 3L6, CANADA
Tel.: (416) 441-5443
Fax: (416) 441-5043
E-mail: michifuruya.chang@kraft.com

Ms. Margherita Marcone, LL.B.
Assistant Director, Policy and Law
Dairy Farmers of Canada
1101 - 75 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 236-9997, ext. 255
Fax: (613) 236-0905
E-mail: mmarcone@dfc-plc.ca

CHILE CHILI

Ms. Luisa Kipreos
Depto de Alimentos y Nutrición
Ministerio de Salud
Enrique McIver 459-8° piso
Santiago, CHILE
Tel.: +56 2 5740393
E-mail: lkipreos@minsal.cl

CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF

Ms. Shuk Man CHOW
Scientific Officer, Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
43/F, Queensway Government Offices
66 Queensway
Hong Kong, P.R. CHINA
Tel.: +852 28675801
Fax: +852 28933547
E-mail: smchow@fehhd.gov.hk

Han Yi
Deputy Division Director
General Administration of Quality Supervision,
Inspection and Quarantine of P.R. China
Room A1106, No. 9 MaDian DongLu, HaiDian
District
100088, Beijing, P.R. CHINA
Tel.: +86 10 82261895
Fax: +86 10 82260176
E-mail: hanyi@aqsiq.gov.cn

Ling Wentao
Engineer
Standard and Regulation Research Center, AQSIQ
Room 2408, B Tower
No. 9 MaDian DongLu, HaiDian District
100088, Beijing, P.R. CHINA
Tel.: +86 10 82262412
Fax: +86 10 82260617
E-mail: lingwt@163.com

Tian Zhaoying
Engineer
Standardization Administration of P.R. China,
SAC
No. 9 MaDian DongLu, HaiDian District
100088, Beijing, P.R. CHINA
Tel.: +86 10 82262906
Fax: +86 10 82260687
E-mail: tianzy@sac.gov.cn

Wang Houyin
Engineer
China National Institute of Standardization
No. 4 Zhichun Road, Haidian District
100088 Beijing, P.R. CHINA
Tel.: +86 10 58811653
Fax: +86 10 58811642
E-mail: wanghy@cnis.gov.cn

CHUNG Kwok-wah
 Chief Health Inspector (Food Labelling)
 Centre for Food Safety
 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
 43/F, Queensway Government Offices
 66 Queensway, Hong Kong, P.R. CHINA
 Tel.: +852 2867 5581
 Fax: +852 2521 4784
 E-mail: kwchung@fehhd.gov.hk

Li Xiaoyu
 Associate Professor
 National Center for Health Inspection
 Ministry of Histry
 No. 32 Jiadaokon, Beisiantiao
 100007 Beijing, P.R. CHINA
 Tel.: +86 10 64047878-2139
 E-mail: xyL74@yahoo.com

Zhu Li Hua
 Practice Researcher
 Institute of Nutrition and Food Safety, China, CDC
 No. 7 PanJia Yuan Nan Li, Chao Yang District
 100021 Beijing, P.R. CHINA
 Tel.: +86 10 87776914
 Fax: +86 10 67711813
 E-mail: zhulihua2011@yahoo.com

COLOMBIA COLOMBIE

Dr. Javier David Castellanos Pulido
 Coordinador del Laboratorio
 Central Interstitucional de Detección y Monitorio de
 OGM
 Instituto Nacional de Vigilancia de Medicamentos
 y Alimentos INVIMA
 Bogotá, COLOMBIA
 Tel. : +57 3162252270
 Fax : +571 294 8700, ext. 3920
 E-mail : jcastellanos@invima.gov.co

COSTA RICA

Elizabeth Ramírez Sandí
 Jefe Agricultura Orgánica
 Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería
 Servicio Fitosanitario del Estado
 Lagunilla, Barreal de Heredia
 Heredia 10 094-1000 San José, COSTA RICA
 Tel.: +506 2261 0381
 Fax: +506 2261 0381
 E-mail: eramirez@proteconet.go.cr

Badilla Porras Moisés
 Food Technologist
 Costa Rica Codex Committee
 Del Cementerio principal de Goiciechea
 300 Este, 200 Sur y 25 Noreste
 7097-1000 San José, COSTA RICA
 Tel.: +506 234 1127
 Fax: +506 234 6783
 E-mail: mbadilla@cacia.org

CUBA

Mrs. Marileydy Herrera Olmo
 Directora, Dirección de Industrias
 Ministerio de Industria Pesquera
 5ta Avenida y 246, Santa Fé, Playa
 Ciudad de La Habana 10900, CUBA
 Tel.: +537 209 7294
 Fax: +537 209 7294
 E-mail: mholmo@mip.telemar.cu

Mrs. Gwendolyne Spech Abreu
 Especialista, Dirección de Exportaciones
 Ministerio de Comercio Exterior
 Infanta No 16 esquina 23, Vedado, Plaza de la
 Revolución
 Ciudad de La Habana 10400, CUBA
 Tel.: +537 835 74 29
 Fax: +537 835 74 27
 E-mail: gwendolyne.spech@mincex.cu

CZECH REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE REPUBLICA CHECA

Jindrich Fialka
 Director, Food Production Department
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Tesnov 17, Prague 1, CZECH REPUBLIC
 Tel: +420 221 812 465
 Fax: +420 222 314 117
 E-mail: jindrich.fialka@mze.cz

Mr. Martin Stepanek
 Deputy Director, Food Production Department
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Tesnov 17, Prague 1, CZECH REPUBLIC
 Tel: +420 221 812 838
 Fax: +420 222 314 117
 E-mail: martin.stepanek@mze.cz

Mr. Petr Cejka
 Lawyer, Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection
 Authority
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Kvetna 15, Brno 603 00, CZECH REPUBLIC
 Tel: +420 543 540 270
 Fax: +420 543 540 210
 E-mail: petr.cejka@szpi.gov.cz

DENMARK DANEMARK DINAMARCA

Mr. Michael Schmidt
 Head of Section
 The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration
 Mørkhøj Bygade 19
 Søborg 2860, DENMARK
 Tel.: +45 3395 6227
 Fax: +45 3395 6001
 E-mail: MISC@FVST.dk

Jørgen Bender-Pedersen
 Head of Section
 The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration
 Mørkhøj Bygade 19
 Søborg 2860, DENMARK
 Tel.: +45 3395 6274
 Fax: +45 3395 6001
 E-mail: JBEP@FVST.dk

Ms. Linda Jensen
 Chief Consultant, Food Scientist
 Danish Meat Organisation
 Axeltorv 3
 DK-1609 Copenhagen V, DENMARK
 Tel.: +45 3373 2568
 Fax: +45 3393 1023
 E-mail: LMJ@danishmeat.dk

Mr. Jørgen Hald Christensen
 Head of Division - Danish Dairy Board
 Frederiks Alle 22
 Aarhus C 8000, DENMARK
 Tel.: +4587312190
 Fax: +4587312001
 E-mail: jhc@mejeri.dk

EGYPT
ÉGYPTE
EGIPTO

Dr. Hussein Mansour
 Agricultural Minister Plenipotentiary
 Embassy of Egypt
 3521 International Court, NW
 Washington, DC 20008, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 966-2080
 Fax: (202) 895-5493
 E-mail: hmkmansour@aol.com
 E-mail: agegypt@aol.com

Mohamed Fahmy Seddek
 Vice President, Codex Committee
 Cairo, EGYPT
 Tel.: +202 9608697
 Fax: +202 4198140
 E-mail: ils@gega-net

Shahat Selim
 Technical Operation Manager
 Chamber of Food Industries
 1195 Kournish El-Nil
 Cairo 11624, EGYPT
 Tel.: +202 25760534
 Fax: +202 25748312
 E-mail: selim_sh2002@egycofi.org.eg

Atef Labib Eskander
 Meat Inspection Department
 General Organization for Export and Import Control
 Cairo International Airport
 Good Village, Cairo, EGYPT
 Tel.: +202 22669351
 Fax: +202 22669364
 E-mail: atef_labib2000@yahoo.com

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (MEMBER ORGANIZATION)
COMMUNAUTÉ EUROPÉENNE (ORGANISATION MEMBRE)
COMUNIDAD EUROPEA (ORGANIZACIÓN MIEMBRO)

Dr. Jérôme Lepeintre
 Administrator
 Health and Consumers Directorate-General
 European Commission
 Rue Froissart 101 – Office 02/62
 B-1049 Brussels, BELGIUM
 Tel.: +32 2 299 37 01
 Fax: +32 2 299 85 66
 E-mail: jerome.lepeintre@ec.europa.eu

Ms. Helen Lee
 Administrator
 Health and Consumers Directorate-General
 European Commission
 Rue Belliard, 232 – Office 08/48
 B-1040 Brussels, BELGIUM
 Tel.: +322 2998668
 E-mail: helen.lee@ec.europa.eu

Mr. Marco Valletta
 Policy Officer for Biotechnology
 DG Health and Consumers
 European Commission
 Rue Belliard 232 – Office 03/18
 B-1049 Brussels, BELGIUM
 Tel.: +32 2 295 98 54
 Fax: +32 2 295 60 43
 E-mail: marco.valletta@ec.europa.eu

Ms. Ersilia Moliterno
 DG Agriculture, European Commission
 B-1049 Brussels, BELGIUM
 Tel.: +32 2 296 13 49
 Fax : +32 2 292 16 72
 E-mail: consiglia.moliterno@ec.europa.eu

FINLAND
FINLANDE
FINLANDIA

Ms. Anne Haikonen
 Counsellor, Legal Affairs
 Department of Food and Health
 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
 P.O. Box 30
 FI-00023 Government
 Helsinki, FINLAND
 Tel.: +358 9 1605 2786
 Fax: +358 9 1605 3338
 E-mail: anne.haikonen@mmm.fi

FRANCE
FRANCIA

Mme Aline Sancho
Direction Générale de la Concurrence de la
Consommation et de la Répression de Fraudes
Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de
l'Emploi
DGCCRF – Bureau C3
59, boulevard Vincent Auriol
75703 Paris Cedex 13, FRANCE
Tel.: +33 1 44 97 32 24
Fax: +33 1 44 97 30 32
E-mail: aline.sancho@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr

Mme Murielle Clemente
Ministère de la santé, de la jeunesse, des sports et de
la vie associative
D.G.S. – EA3
14 avenue Duquesne
75007 Paris, FRANCE
Tel.: +33 1 40 56 43 32
Fax: +33 1 40 56 54 12
E-mail: murielle.clemente@sante.gouv.fr

M. Nicolas Canivet
Bureau de la réglementation alimentaire et des
biotechnologies
Ministère de l'agriculture et de la pêche DGAL
251, rue de Vaugirard
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel.: +33 1 49 55 50 10
Fax: +33 1 49 55 59 48
E-mail: nicolas.canivet@agriculture.gouv.fr

Mme Annie Loc'h
Directeur des Affaires Réglementaires
Groupe DANONE
17, boulevard Haussmann
75009 Paris, FRANCE
Tel.: +33 1 44 35 24 32
Fax.: +33 1 44 35 26 95
E-mail: annie.loch@danone.fr

Mme Françoise Costes
Association de la Transformation Laitière Française
(ATLA)
42, rue de Châteaudun
75314 Paris Cedex 09, FRANCE
Tel.: +33 1 49 70 72 69
Fax: +33 1 42 80 63 65
E-mail: trs@atla.asso.fr

Mme Karol Oger
SB ALLIANCE –SET Juridique
Direction Droit Alimentaire
42, rue rieuussec
78 223 Viroflay, FRANCE
Tel.: +33 1 34 58 65 33
Fax: +33 1 34 58 54 34
E-mail: karol.oger@lalliance.com

GAMBIA
GAMBIE

M. Seedy Fofana
Senior Food and Nutrition Officer
Food and Nutrition Unit
Department of Technical Services
National Agricultural Development Agency (NADA)
Cape St. Mary, Bakau, THE GAMBIA
Tel.: +220 9825150
Fax: +220 4497677
E-mail: seedyfof@yahoo.co.uk

GERMANY
ALLEMAGNE
ALEMANIA

Mr. Gerhard Bialonski
Head of Unit
Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer
Protection
Rochusstrasse 1
D-53123 Bonn, GERMANY
Tel.: +49 228 99 529 4651
Fax: +49 228 99 529 4947
E-mail: 314@bmelv.bund.de

Dr. Joachim Bollmann
Deputy Head of Unit
Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer
Protection
Rochusstrasse 1
53123 Bonn, GERMANY
Tel.: +49 228 99 529 3784
Fax: +49 228 99 529 3743
E-mail: 222@bmelv.bund.de

Ms. Angelika Mrohs
Managing Director
German Federation of Food Law and Food Science
Godesberger Allee 142-148
D-53175 Bonn, GERMANY
Tel.: +49 228 81993 133
Fax: +49 228 81993 233
E-mail: amrohs@bll.de

Mr. Bernd Kurzai
Südzucker AG
Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.12
D-68165 Mannheim, GERMANY
Tel.: +49 621 421 572
Fax: +49 621 421 574
E-mail: bernd.kurzai@suedzucker.de

Mrs. Pilar Velazquez
Administrator
The General Secretariat of the Council of the
European Union (The Germany Presidency)
Office JL 4040 GM 43
Rue de la Loi 175
B-1048 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel.: +32 2 2816628
Fax: +32 2 281 7928
E-mail: pilar.velazquez@consilium.europa.eu

GHANA

Prof. Josephine Nketsia-Tabiri
 Director of Institute
 Biotechnology and Nuclear Agriculture Res. Institute
 Ghana Atomic Energy Commission
 P.O. Box LG 80, LEGON
 Accra, GHANA
 Tel.: +233 24 4637057
 Fax: +233 21 400807
 E-mail: josephinetabiri@yahoo.co.uk

Mrs. Isabella Mansa Agra
 Head, Food Safety and Nutrition Department
 Food and Drugs Board (FDB)
 P.O. Box CT 2783
 Cantonments, Accra GHANA
 Tel.: +233 21 235100 / +233 21 235200
 Fax: +233 21 229794
 E-mail: isabelmansa@yahoo.com

GREECE
GRÈCE
GRECIA

Mr. Raikos Athanasios
 Officer - Ministry of Development
 Hellenic Food Authority (EFET)
 124 Kifisias Av. & 2 Iatridou St.
 11526 Athens, GREECE
 Tel.: +30 210 6971533
 Fax: +30 210 6971650
 E-mail: araikos@efet.gr

GUYANA

Dr. Chatterpaul Ramcharran
 Executive Director
 Guyana National Bureau of Standards
 Flat 15, Sophia Exhibition Centre
 Georgetown, GUYANA
 Tel.: +592 225 9041
 Fax: +592 225 7455
 E-mail: gnbs@networksgy.com

INDIA
INDE

Shri Debasish Panda
 Joint Secretary
 Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
 Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi, INDIA
 Tel.: +91 11 23061447
 E-mail: debasish.panda@nic.in

Shri Bejon Misra
 Executive Director
 Voluntary Organisation in Interest of Consumer
 Education (VOICE)
 441, Jangura Mathura Road
 New Delhi 110014, INDIA
 Tel.: +91-98110 44424/9311044424
 Fax.: +91 11 24379081
 E-mail: bejonmisra@consumer-voice.org

Dr. Himanshu Gupta
 CIFTI-FICCI
 New Delhi, INDIA
 Tel.: +91 124 2389300
 E-mail: himanshu77guptaz@yahoo.co.in

INDONESIA
INDONÉSIE

Sri Irawati Susalit
 Director for Food Products Standardization
 National Agency of Drug and Foods Control
 (NADFC)
 Jl. Percetakan Negara No. 23
 Jakarta 10560, INDONESIA
 Tel.: +62 21 42875584
 Fax: +62 21 42875780
 E-mail: iras48@yahoo.com

Tetty Helfery Sihombing
 Head of Sub Directorate for certain Food
 Standardization
 National Agency of Drug and Foods Control
 (NADFC)
 Jl. Percetakan Negara No. 23
 Jakarta 10560, INDONESIA
 Tel.: +62 21 42875584
 Fax: +62 21 42875780
 E-mail: tettyhelfery@yahoo.com

Sigit Sadio
 Counsellor Economic
 Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
 55 Parkdale Avenue
 Ottawa, ON K1Y 1E5, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 724-1100
 Fax: (613) 724-1105
 E-mail: ssadion@yahoo.com

Dian Kusumaningsih
 Second Secretary
 Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
 55 Parkdale Avenue
 Ottawa, ON K1Y 1E5, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 724-1100
 Fax: (613) 724-1105
 E-mail: dyant@hotmail.com

IRELAND
IRLANDE
IRLANDA

Dr. Martin O'Sullivan
 Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer
 Department of Agriculture and Food
 Agriculture House, Kildare Street
 Dublin 2, IRELAND
 Tel.: +353 1 607 2213
 Fax: +353 1 661 0230
 E-mail: martin.osullivan@agriculture.gov.ie

Ms. Clodagh Crehan, MSc.
Acting Senior Technical Executive: Food Hygiene
Food Safety Authority of Ireland
Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street
Dublin 1, IRELAND
Tel.: +353 1 817 1393
Fax: +353 1 817 1293
E-mail: ccrehan@fsai.ie

ITALY
ITALIE
ITALIA

Dr. Ciro Impagnatiello
Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e
Forestali
Via XX Settembre 20 – 00187 Roma
ITALIE
Tel. : +39 06 4665 6046
Fax : +39 06 4880 273
E-mail : c.impagnatiello@politicheagricole.gov.it

Dr. Luca Ragolini
Vice-Director, Italian Association of Biscuits,
Cake, Chocolate, Confectionery and Ice-cream
Industries (A.I.D.I.)
Via Rhodesia, 2
00144 Rome, ITALY
Tel.: +39 6 8091071
Fax: +39 6 8073186
E-mail: aidi@aidi-assodolce.it

Dr. Massimo Liotta
Food Regulatory Affairs – Area Manager
FERRERO
C/o Ferrero S.p.A., Piazzale Pietro Ferrero, 1
12051 Alba (CN), ITALY
Tel.: +39 0173 313050
Fax: +39 0173 313977
E-mail: massimo.liotta@ferrero.com

Dr. Martino Caretto
Food Law Counsel – FERRERO
C/o Ferrero S.p.A., Piazzale Pietro Ferrero, 1
12051 Alba, ITALY
Tel.: +39 0173 3131
Fax: +39 0173 313977
E-mail: martino.caretto@ferrero.com

JAMAICA
JAMAÏQUE
JAMAICA

Ms. Jennifer Aquart
Team Leader – Inspectorate Division
Bureau of Standards Jamaica
6 Winchester Road
Kingston 10, JAMAICA, W.I.
Tel.: +876 926 3140
Fax: +876 929 4736
E-mail: jaquart@bsj.org.jm

Ms. Kadiann Atkinson
Inspectorate, Bureau of Standards Jamaica
6 Winchester Road
Kingston 10, JAMAICA, W.I.
Tel. : +876 926 3140
Fax : +876 929 4736
E-mail: katkinson@bsj.org.jm

JAPAN
JAPON
JAPÓN

Ms. ARAI Yutaka
Director of Labelling and Standards Division
Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of
Japan
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8950, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 3 6744 2414
Fax: +81 3 3502 0594
E-mail: yutaka_arai2@nm.maff.go.jp

Dr. IKEDA Chieko
Director, Office of International Food Safety, Policy
Planning and Communication Division
Department of Food Safety
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8916, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 3 3595 2326
Fax: +81 3 3503 7965
E-mail: codexj@mhlw.go.jp

Dr. NISHIJIMA Yasuhiro
Deputy Director
Standards and Evaluation Division
Department of Food Safety
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8916, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 3 3595 2341
Fax: +81 3 3501 4868
E-mail: codexj@mhlw.go.jp

Mr. CHOSHO Katsuhiko
Deputy Director
Office of Health Policy on Newly Developed Foods,
Standards and Education Division
Department of Food Safety
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8916, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 3 3595 2327
Fax: +81 3 3501 4867
E-mail: codexj@mhlw.go.jp

Dr. YOSHIKURA Hiroshi
 Adviser - Department of Food Safety
 Pharmaceutical and Food Safety Bureau
 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
 1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
 Tokyo 100-8916, JAPAN
 Tel.: +81 3 3595 2326
 Fax: +81 3 3503 7965
 E-mail: codexj@mhlw.go.jp

Mr. KOIDE Jun
 Associate Director of International Affairs Division
 Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau
 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of
 Japan
 1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
 Tokyo 100-8950, JAPAN
 Tel.: +81 3 3502 8732
 Fax: +81 3 3507 4232
 E-mail: jyun_koide@nm.maff.go.jp

Ms. SHINDO Chie
 Associate Director of Labelling and Standards
 Division - Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau
 Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of
 Japan
 1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
 Tokyo 100-8950, JAPAN
 Tel.: +81 3 6744 2097
 Fax: +81 3 6744 2369
 E-mail: chie_shindo@nm.maff.go.jp

KENYA

Mrs. Alice Akoth Okelo Onyango
 Kenya Bureau of Standards Organization
 P.O. Box 54794, Kapiti Rd. (off Mombasa Rd.)
 Nairobi 00200, KENYA
 Tel.: +254 20 605490
 Fax: +254 20 609660
 E-mail: info@kebs.org
 E-mail: akothe@kebs.org

KOREA, REPUBLIC OF CORÉE, RÉPUBLIQUE DE COREA, REPÚBLICA DEL

Won-Tai Park
 Deputy Director - Ministry for Food, Agriculture,
 Forestry and Fisheries
 88 Gwanmunro, Gyeonggi-do
 Gwacheon-city 427-719, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 2 500 2102
 Fax: +82 2 503 0020
 E-mail: parkwt@mifaff.go.kr

Eun-Sun Hwang
 Deputy Director - Ministry for Food, Agriculture,
 Forestry and Fisheries
 88 Gwanmunro, Gyeonggi-do
 Gwacheon-city 427-719, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 2 500 2131
 Fax: +82 2 500 7798
 E-mail: ehwang@mifaff.go.kr

Namkung, Jong-Hwan
 D.V.M. Government Veterinary Official
 National Veterinary Research and Quarantine Service
 (NVRQS)
 Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and
 Fisheries
 480, Anyang 6-dong, Manan-gu, Anyang-city
 Gyeonggi-do 430-824, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 31 467 4388
 Fax: +82 31 467 1974
 E-mail: hwani@nvrqs.go.kr

Mr. SOO CHANG KIM
 Deputy Researcher -
 Korea Food and Drug Administration
 #194 Tongil-ro Eunpyung-gu
 122-704 Seoul, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 2 380 1726
 Fax: +82 2 388 6396
 E-mail: ksc7008@kfda.go.kr

Ms. SUNG MIN LEE
 Senior Researcher
 Korea Food and Drug Administration
 #194 Tongil-ro Eunpyung-gu
 122-704 Seoul, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 2 380 1726
 Fax: +82 2 388 6396
 E-mail: herb928@kfda.go.kr

Yeon Kyung Lee
 Scientific Researcher
 Korea Food and Drug Administration
 #194 Tongil-ro Eunpyung-gu
 Seoul 122-704, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 2 380 1318
 Fax: +82 2 359 0025
 E-mail: yklee@kfda.go.kr

Jeonghae Rho
 Senior Researcher
 Korea Food Research Institute
 #San 46-1, Baekhyeon-dong
 Songnam City, 463-746, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 31780 9060
 Fax: +82 31 780 9333
 E-mail: drno@kfri.re.kr

Do-hyong Choi
 Codex Affairs Specialist
 Korea Food Research Institute
 #San 46-1, Baekhyeon-dong
 Songnam City, 463-746, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +82 31 780 9306
 Fax: +82 31 780 9333
 E-mail: choi0313@kfri.re.kr

YOO, Jae-Hong, Ph.D.
 Microbial & Bio-chemical Engineering
 Rural Development Administration (RDA)
 Organic Farming Technology Division
 249 Seodun-dong, Suwon
 441-707, REPUBLIC OF KOREA
 Tel.: +85 31 290 0555
 Fax: +85 31 290 0507
 E-mail: yj7915@rda.go.kr

LAO, PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Mrs. Sivilay Naphayvong
 Director of Food Control Division
 Food and Drug Department
 Ministry of Health
 Vientiane, LAO PDR
 Tel.: +856 20 5607781
 Fax: +856 21 214015
 E-mail: psivilay@yahoo.com

LESOTHO

Mrs. Leonia 'Mathoriso Monaheng
 Director – Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office
 Cabinet Office
 Private Bag A78, Maseru 100, LESOTHO
 Tel.: +266 22327268
 Fax: +266 22322179
 E-mail: monahengml@yahoo.com

Ms. Palesa Lesoli
 Regional Food and Nutrition Coordinating Officer
 Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office
 Private Bag A78, Maseru 100, LESOTHO
 Tel.: +266 22323716
 Fax: +266 22322179
 E-mail: plesoli@rediffmail.com

MADAGASCAR

Mme. Irénée Nomenjanaharizaka Rasoloniaina
 Chef de Service, Norme et Qualité
 Centre Technique Horticole d'Antananarivo
 Lot Vb 74 Ambatonakanga
 Antananarivo 101, MADAGASCAR
 Tel.: 261 324038005
 E-mail: loc_germain@yahoo.fr

MALAYSIA MALAISIE MALASIA

Ms. Nik Shabnam Nik Mohd. Salleh
 Deputy Director (Standard)
 Food Safety & Quality Division
 Ministry of Health Malaysia
 Level 3, Block E7, Parcel E
 Federal Government Administrative Centre
 62590 Putrajaya, MALAYSIA
 Tel.: +603 8883 3510
 Fax: +603 8889 3815
 E-mail: shabnam@moh.gov.my

Ms. Noraini Mohd Othman
 Director - Food Safety & Quality Division
 Ministry of Health Malaysia
 Level 3, Block E7, Parcel E
 Federal Government Administrative Centre
 62590 Putrajaya, MALAYSIA
 Tel.: +603 8883 3502
 Fax: +603 8889 3815
 E-mail: noraini_othman@moh.gov.my

Dr. Tee E. Siong
 Nutrition Consultant
 Food Safety and Quality Division
 Ministry of Health Malaysia
 Level 3, Block E7, Parcel E
 Federal Government Administrative Centre
 62590 Putrajaya, MALAYSIA
 Tel.: +603 7728 7287
 Fax: +603 7728 7426
 E-mail: president@nutriweb.org.my

Mr. Syamsul Erwin Muhamad Lagis
 Assistant Secretary
 Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
 No. 15, Level 6 – 13, Presint 2
 62654 Putrajaya, MALAYSIA
 Tel.: +603 8880 3430
 Fax: +603 8880 3441
 E-mail: erwin@kppk.gov.my

Mr. Mohd. Muslimin Bin Hashim
 Senior Executive Science and Environment
 Malaysian Palm Oil Council
 2nd Floor, Wisma Sawit
 Lot. 6, SS6, Jalan Perbandaran
 47301 Kelana Jaya, Selangor, MALAYSIA
 Tel.: +603 7806 4097
 Fax: +603 7806 2272
 E-mail: muslimin@mpoc.org.my

Ms. Azareena Binti Yahya
 Assistant Consultant, Biosafety Secretariat
 Conservation and Environmental Management
 Division
 Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
 Level 6, Wisma Sumber Asli
 No. 25, Persiaran Perdana
 Presint 4, 62574 Putrajaya, MALAYSIA
 Tel.: +603 8886 1153
 Fax: +603 8888 4473
 E-mail: azareena@nre.gov.my

MALI MALÍ

Sangare Adama
 Chef de Division - Agence Nationale de la Sécurité
 Sanitaire des Aliments
 Ministère de la Santé
 Quartier du Fleuve, Bamako, MALI
 Tel.: +223 2220754 / 6466240
 E-mail: asangare53@yahoo.fr

MAURITANIA
MAURITANIE
MAURITANIA

Prof. LO BAIDY BOUBOU
 Directeur General
 Institut National de Recherches en Santé Publique
 (INRSP)
 Ministère de la Santé et des Affaires Sociales
 BP 695, Avenue Gamal Abdel Nasser Ex Centre
 National d'Hygiene
 Nouakchott, MAURITANIE
 Tel./Fax: +222 5253134 / +222 5292645
 E-mail: baidylo@yahoo.fr

MEXICO
MEXIQUE
MÉXICO

Mr. Oscar Omar Mendoza Flores
 Subdirector del Sistema Nacional de Normalizacion
 Dirección General de Normas (DGN)
 Secretaria de Economia (SE)
 Av. Puente de Tecamachalco 6, Lomas de
 Tecamachalco
 Naucalpan de Juárez 53950, MÉXICO
 Tel.: +52 55 5729 9300, ext. 43227
 Fax: +52 55 5520 9715
 E-mail: omendoza@economia.gob.mx

Ana Maria Aguilar Olmos
 Jefa del Departamento de Alimentos
 Laboratorio Nacional de Protección al Consumidor
 PROFECO
 Alemania 14 Col Parque San Andrés, Delegación
 Coyoacan
 04040 México D.F., MÉXICO
 Tel. : +52 55442060
 Fax : +52 55441504
 E-mail : amaguilaro@profeco.gob.mx

Q.F.B. María del Pilar Martínez Zepeda
 Dictaminador Especializado
 Comision Federal para la Protección
 Contra Riesgos Sanitarios
 Secretaria de Salud
 Monterrey 33, Col. Roma
 06700 México D.F., MÉXICO
 Tel.: +52 55 5080 5282
 E-mail: pilarmz@salud.gob.mx

Ms. Laura Bonilla Reyes
 Coordinadora SC.8 Etiquetado de los alimentos
 CANACINTRA
 Paseo de Tamarindos No. 150 Col. Bosques de las
 Lomas
 05120 Mexico, D.F., MÉXICO
 Tel.: +52 55 1105 4487
 E-mail: laura.bonilla@unilever.com

Guillermo Maynez Gil
 Director de Relaciones Institucionales
 Grupo LALA
 Norte 45 No. 777 Industrial Vallejo
 02300 México D.F., MÉXICO
 Tel.: +52 55 5078 4030
 E-mail: gmaynezg@grupolala.com

Ms. Jennifer Daniel Chavero
 Gerente de Asuntos Regulatorios
 Danisco Mexico S.A. de C.V.
 Poniente 122 No. 627 Col. Industrial Vallejo
 02300 México D.F., MÉXICO
 Tel.: +52 55 5078 4400, ext. 4672
 E-mail: jennifer.daniel@danisco.com

Ms. Sandra Herrero Cagigas
 Regulatory Affairs Representative
 HECA
 Avenida Paseo de la Reforma 42, Dep A, Piso 1,
 Colonia Centro, Delegación Cuauhtemoc
 06040 México, MÉXICO
 Tel.: +52 55 5752 0043
 Fax: +52 55 5752 0043
 E-mail: sandra.herrero@att.net.mx

Ms. Susana Cohen Cats
 Asesora legal
 ConMéxico
 Ejercito Nacional 904 piso 10 Colonia Polanco
 Chapultepec
 México D.F. 11560, MÉXICO
 Tel.: +52 55 2629 6133
 E-mail: scohen@conmexico.com.mx

MOROCCO
MAROC
MARRUECOS

Mr. Saad Benchakroun
 Directeur General de l'Etablissement Autonome de
 Contrôle et de Coordination des Exportations
 72, rue Mohamed Smiha
 20000 Casablanca, MAROC
 Tel.: +212 22306198
 Fax: +212 22308085
 E-mail: dg@eacce.org.ma

MOZAMBIQUE

Prof. Louis Augusto Mutomene Pelembe
 Professor and Member of Codex Alimentarius
 National Committee
 University of Eduardo Mondlane
 Food Technology Section
 Av. De Moçambique, Maputo, MOZAMBIQUE
 Tel.: +258 82 4864210
 E-mail: louispelembe@uem.mz
 E-mail: louispelemb@yahoo.com

NEPAL
NÉPAL
NEPAL

Dr. Aruna Nanda Mishra
 Deputy Director General
 Department of Food Technology and Quality Control
 Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
 P.O. Box 21265
 Babarmahal, Kathmandu, NEPAL
 Tel.: +977 1 4262739
 Fax : +977 1 4262337
 E-mail : dftqc@mail.com.np

NETHERLANDS
PAYS-BAS
PAISES BAJOS

Ms. Lianne Kersbergen
 Policy Officer
 Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
 P.O. Box 20401, 's Gravenhage
 2500 EK The Hague
 THE NETHERLANDS
 Tel.: +31 70 378 4154
 Fax: +31 70 378 6157
 E-mail: m.c.kersbergen@minlnv.nl

NEW ZEALAND
NOUVELLE-ZELANDE
NUEVA ZELANDIA

Ms. Jenny Reid
 Assistant Director, Joint Food Standards
 New Zealand Food Safety Authority
 P.O. Box 2835
 Wellington, NEW ZEALAND
 Tel.: +64 4 894 2582
 Fax: +64 4 894 2583
 E-mail: jenny.reid@nzfsa.govt.nz

Mr. Philip Fawcett
 Senior Programme Manager, International Standards
 New Zealand Food Safety Authority
 P.O. Box 2835
 Wellington, NEW ZEALAND
 Tel.: +64 4 894 2656
 Fax: +64 4 894 2675
 E-mail: phil.fawcett@nzfsa.govt.nz

Ms. Angela O'Sullivan
 Programme Manager, Labelling
 New Zealand Food Safety Authority
 P.O. Box 2835
 Wellington, NEW ZEALAND
 Tel.: +64 4 894 2448
 Fax: +64 4 894 2583
 E-mail: angela.osullivan@nzfsa.govt.nz

Ms. Beverly Watson
 Head of Nutrition and Regulatory Affairs
 Fonterra Brands
 1 Pickering Street, #06-01 Great Eastern Centre
 Singapore 048659, SINGAPORE
 Tel.: +65 6311 3267
 Fax: +65 6311 3886
 E-mail: beverly.watson@fonterra.com

NICARAGUA

Mr. Salvador E. Guerrero Gutierrez
 Ministerio de Fomento, Industria y Comercio
 Dirección de Tecnología, Normalización y Metrología
 Oficina del Punto Focal del Codex Alimentarius
 Contiguo a Metrocentro, Frente al Chaman
 NICARAGUA
 Tel.: +505 267 0161, ext. 1136
 Fax: +505 270 9956
 E-mail: codex@mific.gob.ni

NIGERIA
NIGÉRIA
NIGERIA

Dr. Y.A.O. Olaniran
 Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of
 Nigeria to FAO
 c/o Embassy of Nigeria
 Via Orazio, 14-18
 00193 Rome, ITALY
 Tel.: +39 06 6896093
 Fax: +39 06 6877840
 E-mail: nigeriapermrep@email.com

Mr. Fred Nduka Chiazor
 Technical Adviser
 Association of Food Beverage and Tobacco
 Employees (AFBTE)
 16 Gerrard Road
 P.O. Box 13681, Ikeja
 Ikoyi, Lagos, NIGERIA
 Tel.: +234 8035352226
 Fax: +234 1 2709411
 E-mail: fchiazor@afr.ko.com

NORWAY
NORVEGE
NORUEGA

Mrs. Anita Utheim Nesbakken
 Adviser
 Norwegian Food Safety Authority
 Head Office, P.O. Box 383
 N-2381 Brumunddal, NORWAY
 Tel.: +47 23 21 68 00
 Fax: +47 23 21 68 01
 E-mail: anune@mattilsynet.no

Dr. Hanne Marit Gran
Senior Advisor
Section for Plants, Organic Production and GMs
Norwegian Food Safety Authority
Head Office, P.O. Box 383
N-2381 Brumunddal, NORWAY
Tel.: +47 64 94 43 54
Fax: +47 64 94 44 10
E-mail: hamgr@mattilsynet.no

Mr. Joachim Nilsen
Adviser
Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services
P.O. Box 8011 Dep.
NO-0030 Oslo, NORWAY
Tel.: +47 22 24 84 27
Fax: +47 22 24 86 56
E-mail: jon@hod.dep.no

Mr. Paul Aitkenhead
Norwegian Food Federation
N-0506 Oslo, NORWAY
Tel.: +47 90524607
E-mail: paul.aitkenhead@mills.no

PARAGUAY

Dra. Juana Zaracho de Irazusta
Asesora Técnica
Inst. Nacional Alimentación y Nutrición
Ministerio de Salud
Av. Santísima Trinidad Itapua
Asunción, PARAGUAY
Tel.: +595 21 206 874
E-mail: inanpy@hotmail.com
E-mail: jcz_irazusta@hotmail.com

PHILIPPINES FILIPINAS

Ms. Charina May T. Tandás
Food Drug Regulation Officer III
Bureau of Food and Drugs
Department of Health
Civic Drive Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang
Muntinlupa City 1770, PHILIPPINES
Tel.: +6 (32) 8424538
Fax: +6 (32) 807 07 00 / 807 07 51
E-mail: cttandas@bfad.gov.ph
E-mail: charimay@mailcity.com

Ms. Daisy E. Tañanfra
Supervising Science Research Specialist
Packaging Research and Development Center
Industrial Technology Development Institute
Department of Science and Technology
Post Compound
Taguig, Bicutan, PHILIPPINES

Dr. Elias E. Escueta
Director, Philippine Chamber of Food
Manufacturers, Inc. (PCFMI)
Makati City, PHILIPPINES

POLAND POLOGNE POLONIA

Ms. Dorota Balińska-Hajduk
Main Specialist
Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection
30, Wspólna Street
00-930 Warsaw, POLAND
Tel.: +48 22 623 29 15
Fax: +48 22 623 29 96
E-mail: dbalinska@ijhars.gov.pl

ROMANIA ROUMANIE RUMANIA

Dr. Virgil Marcel Eftimie
Director, National Veterinary and Food Safety
Authority
Str. Negustori nr. 1 Bis, sect.2
Bucharest 023951, ROMANIA
Tel.: +402 1 3 15 78 75 / 3078567
Fax: +402 1 3 12 49 6 / 3078683
E-mail: eftimie@ansv.ro

Dr. Marius Zeno Popa
Counsellor - Director of Cabinet
National Veterinary and Food Safety Authority
Str. Negustori nr. 1 Bis, sect.2
Bucharest 023951, ROMANIA
Tel.: +402 1 3 15 78 75 / 3078567
Fax: +402 1 3 12 49 6 / 3078683
E-mail: office@ansv.ro

RUSSIAN FEDERATION FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE FEDERACIÓN DE RUSIA

Potapova Nadezhda
Senior Researcher
Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary
Surveillance
1/11 Orlikov per
Moscow 101000, RUSSIA
Tel.: +7 495 6076461
Fax: +7 495 6076461
E-mail: nad0910@list.ru

Olga Pruntova
Head of Laboratory
FGI "ARRIAH"
Yur'evets, Vladimir
Vladimir 600901, RUSSIA
Tel.: +7 4922 26 19 88
E-mail: pruntova@arriah.ru

**SAINT LUCIA
SAINTE LUCIE
SANTA LUCÍA**

Dr. Xanthe Dubuison
Standards Officer - Certification
Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards
Bisee Industrial Estate
P.O. Box CP 5412
Castries, SAINT LUCIA
Tel.: +758 456 0102
Fax: +758 452 3561
E-mail: x.dubuison@slbs.org

SAMOA

Ms. Iulia Petelo
Assistant Chief Executive Officer & Codex Contact
Point for Samoa
Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Labour
P.O. Box 862, Level IV ACC Building
Apia, SAMOA
Tel: +685 20441
Fax: +685 20443
E-mail: codex.samoa@mcil.gov.ws
E-mail: iulia.petelo@mcil.gov.ws

**SERBIA, REPUBLIC OF
SERBIA, REPUBLIQUE
SERBIA, REPUBLICA**

Mr. Aleksandar Milojevic
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water
Management
St. Nemanjina 22-26
11000 Belgrade, REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Tel.: +381 11 311 74 73
Fax: +381 11 311 74 73
E-mail: a.milojevic@minpolj.sr.gov.yu

Mr. Nebojsa Ristic
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water
Management
St. Nemanjina 22-26
11000 Belgrade, REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Tel.: +381 11 311 74 19
Fax: +381 11 311 74 19
E-mail: polj.ins@sezampro.yu

Mr. Nenad Vujovic
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water
Management
St. Nemanjina 22-26
11000 Belgrade, REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
Tel.: +381 11 311 74 19
Fax: +381 11 311 74 19
E-mail: nevujovic@minpolj.sr.gov.yu

**SINGAPORE
SINGAPOUR
SINGAPUR**

Mr. Sivakant TIWARI
Special Consultant
International Affairs Division (IAD)
Attorney-General's Office
Attorney-General's Chambers
1 Coleman Street, #10-00 The Adelphi
SINGAPORE 179803
Tel.: +65 6332 5914
Fax: +65 6332 5984
E-mail: sivakant_tiwari@agc.gov.sg

Ms. TAN Kim Ping
Senior Officer
Secretariat, Genetic Modification Advisory
Committee
20 Biopolis Way, #08-01 Centros
SINGAPORE 138668
Tel.: +65 68266355
Fax: +65 64789581
E-mail: tan_kim_ping@a-star.edu.sg

**SLOVENIA
SLOVÉNIE
ESLOVENIA**

Blaža Nahtigal
Codex Contact Point
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
Dunajska 58, 1000 Ljubljana, SLOVENIA
Tel.: +386 1 4789398
Fax: +386 1 4789055
E-mail: blaza.nahtigal@gov.si

**SOUTH AFRICA
AFRIQUE DU SUD
SUDÁFRICA**

Mrs. Antoinette Booyzen
Assistant Director, Regulatory Nutrition and
Labelling, Food Control
Department of Health
Private Bag X828, 0001 Pretoria, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel.: +27 12 312 0163
Fax: +27 12 312 3180
E-mail: booyza@health.gov.za

**SPAIN
ESPAGNE
ESPAÑA**

D. Miguel Ysa Valle
Jefe de Sección, Centro de Investigación y Control de
la Calidad (CICC)
Instituto Nacional del Consumo
Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo
Avda. De Cantabria, S/N
28042 Madrid, ESPAÑA
Tel.: +34 91 822 47 34
Fax: +34 91 747 95 17
E-mail: miguel.ysa@consumo-inc.es

D^a Elisa Revilla García
Subdirectora Adjunta de la Subdirección
General de Planificación y Control Agroalimentario
Ministerio de Agricultura
Pesca y Alimentación
P^o Infanta Isabel, 1
28071 Madrid, ESPAÑA
Tel.: +34 91 347 45 96
Fax: +34 91 347 57 28
E-mail: erevilla@mapya.es

D^a Almudena Rollán Gordo
Jefe de Sección, Servicio de Riesgos Nutricionales
Subdirección General de Gestión de Riesgos
Alimentarios
Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo
Alcalá, 56
28071 Madrid, ESPAÑA
Tel.: +34 91 338 07 10
Fax: +34 91 338 01 69
E-mail: arollan@wanadoo.es

SUDAN
SOUDAN
SUDÁN

Mr. Mahgoub Ahmed Abdelmaged Elamin
Sudanese Standards and Metrology Organization
(SSMO)
P.O. Box 13571
Khartoum, SUDAN
Tel: +249 183775247
Fax: + 249 1 83774852
E-mail: ssmo@sudanmail.net

Miss Hind Eldirdiri Mohmed Ahmed
Sudanese Standards and Metrology Organization
(SSMO)
P.O. Box 13571
Khartoum, SUDAN
Tel: +249 183775247
Fax: + 249 1 83774852
E-mail: ssmo@sudanmail.net

Mr. Aldo Upiou Juady Ukol
Sudanese Standards and Metrology Organization
(SSMO)
P.O. Box 13571
Khartoum, SUDAN
Tel: +249 183775247
Fax: + 249 1 83774852
E-mail: ssmo@sudanmail.net

Mrs. Kawthar Ismail Mahmoud Elmubark
Manager Assistant
Ministry of Foreign Trade
P.O. Box 194
Khartoum 00249, SUDAN
Tel.: +249912974645 / +249122568417
Fax: +249183770703
E-mail: kawtharimm@hotmail.com

Dr. Elfadol Elobeid Mohamed Ali
Director of Environmental Health and Food
Control/FMOH/Sudan
Sudan-Khartoum 303, SUDAN
Tel: +24 915595636
E-mail: fadolobeid@yahoo.com

Abdel Azeem Salih
Official, Sudanese Standard and Metrology
Organization
Khartoum, SUDAN
Tel.: +24 0912251615
E-mail: mohgoubedelmagid@yahoo.com

SWAZILAND
SWAZILAND
SWAZILANDIA

Ms. Dudu E. Dube
Environmental Health
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
Swaziland Government
P.O. Box 5
Mbabane 9999 , SWAZILAND
Tel.: +268 4042431/2 ext. 245/246
Fax: +268 4047420
E-mail: duduzdube@yahoo.co.uk

Mr. Funwako E. Dlamini
Environmental Health
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
Swaziland Government
P.O. Box 5
Mbabane 9999 , SWAZILAND
Tel.: +268 4042431/2 ext. 245/246
Fax: +268 4047420
E-mail: fedlamin@yahoo.com

SWEDEN
SUEDE
SUECIA

Mrs. Kerstin Jansson
Deputy Director
Ministry of Agriculture
Fredsgatan 8
SE-10333 Stockholm, SWEDEN
Tel.: +46 8 405 1168
Fax: +46 8 206496
E-mail: kerstin.jansson@agriculture.ministry.se

Mrs. Birgitta Lund
Principal Administrative Officer
National Food Administration
Box 622
SE-751 26 Uppsala, SWEDEN
Tel.: +46 18 17 56 76
Fax: +46 18 10 58 48
E-mail: bilu@slv.se

SWITZERLAND
SUISSE
SUIZA

Mrs. Elisabeth Nellen-Regli
 Food Safety Division
 Consumer Protection Directorate
 Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
 CH-3003 Bern, SWITZERLAND
 Tel.: +41 (0) 31 322 95 60
 Fax: +41 (0) 31 322 95 74
 E-mail: elisabeth.nellen@bag.admin.ch

Mrs. Awilo Ochieng Pernet
 Codex Alimentarius, International Nutrition and
 Food Safety Issues
 Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
 CH-3003 Bern, SWITZERLAND
 Tel.: +41 (0) 31 322 00 41
 Fax: +41 (0) 31 322 95 74
 E-mail: awilo.ochieng@bag.admin.ch

Dr. Philippe Pittet
 Assistant Vice President Regulatory Affairs
 Nestec Ltd.
 Avenue Nestlé 55
 CH-1800 Vevey, SWITZERLAND
 Tel.: +41 (0) 21 924 42 64
 Fax: +41 (0) 21 924 45 47
 E-mail : philippe.pittet@nestle.com

THAILAND
THAILANDE
TAILANDIA

Dr. Songsak Srianjata
 Advisor, Institute of Nutrition
 Mahidol University
 Salaya, Putthamonthon
 Nakhornpathom 73170, THAILAND
 Tel.: +66 2 800 2380, ext. 311
 Fax: +66 2 441 0344
 E-mail: rassn@mahidol.ac.th

Dr. Chanin Charoenpong
 Scientific Advisor on Standard of Health Products
 Food and Drug Administration
 Ministry of Public Health
 Tiwanon Rd., Nonthaburi 11000, THAILAND
 Tel.: +662 591 8447
 Fax: +662 591 8446
 E-mail: chanin@fda.moph.go.th

Mr. Charoen Kaowsuksai
 Deputy Secretary General of Food Processing
 Industry Club
 The Federation of Thai Industries
 Queen Sirikit National Convention Center
 Zone C, 4th Floor, 60 New Rachadapisek Rd.
 Klongtoey, Bangkok 10110, THAILAND
 Tel.: +66 2 976 3088
 Fax: +66 2 976 2265
 E-mail: charoen@cpram.co.th

Mr. Poonkeite Thangsombat
 Vice President, Thai Food Processors Association
 (On behalf of Board of Trade of Thailand)
 150 Rajbopit Road, Pranakhon District
 Bangkok 10200, THAILAND
 Tel.: +662 261 2684
 Fax: +662 261 2996-7
 E-mail: thaifood@thaifood.org

Mr. Udom Chariyavilaskul
 Vice President, Thai Frozen Food Association
 (On behalf of Board of Trade of Thailand)
 150 Rajbopit Road, Pranakhon District
 Bangkok 10200, THAILAND
 Tel.: +662 235 5622-4
 Fax: +662 235 5625
 E-mail: thai-frozen@thai-frozen.or.th

Ms. Panpilad Saikaew
 Standards Officer, Office of Commodity and System
 Standards
 National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and
 Food Standards
 Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
 50 Phahonyothin Road, Ladyao, Chathuchak
 Bangkok 10900, THAILAND
 Tel.: +66 2 561 2277, ext. 1476
 Fax: +66 2 561 3373
 E-mail: panpilad@acfs.go.th

TUNISIA
TUNISIE
TÚNEZ

Mr. Zakaria H'MAD
 Directeur Général des Industries Alimentaires
 Ministère de l'Industrie, de l'Énergie et des Petites et
 Moyennes Entreprises
 Immeuble Innozha, Rue 8011 Montplaisir
 1002, Tunis, TUNISIE
 Tel.: +216 71 289 562
 Fax: +216 71 789 159
 E-mail: zakaria.hmad@industrie.gov.tn

UNITED KINGDOM
ROYAUME-UNI
REINO UNIDO

Mr. Stephen Pugh
 Head of Food Labelling & Marketing Terms Branch
 The Food Standards Agency
 Room 127B, Aviation House
 125 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6NH, UNITED KINGDOM
 Tel.: +44 20 7276 8088
 Fax: +44 20 7276 8193
 E-mail: Stephen.Pugh@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Miss Claire Boville
 Head of Labelling, Promotions & Dietetic Foods
 The Food Standards Agency
 Room 125, Aviation House
 125 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6NH, UNITED KINGDOM
 Tel.: +44 20 7276 8168
 Fax: +44 20 7276 8193
 E-mail: Claire.Boville@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 ETATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE
 ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMÉRICA**

Dr. Barbara Schneeman
 Director, Office of Nutrition, Labeling and Dietary
 Supplements
 Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (HFS-800)
 5100 Paint Branch Parkway
 College Park, MD 20740, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (301) 436-2373
 Fax: (301) 436-2639
 E-mail: barbara.schneeman@fda.hhs.gov

Dr. Heejeong Latimer
 Food Safety and Inspection Service
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 1400 Independence Ave. SW
 Washington, DC 20250, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 690-0823
 E-mail: heejeong.latimer@fsis.usda.gov

Mr. Jack Bobo
 Deputy Chief, Biotechnology Trade Division
 U.S. Department of State
 2201 C Street NW
 Washington, DC 20520, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 647-1647
 E-mail: boboja@state.gov

Dr. Karen Hulebak
 Acting U.S. Codex Manager
 United States Codex Office
 Food Safety and Inspection Service
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Room 4861, South Building
 1400 Independence Ave. SW
 Washington, DC 20250, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 205-7760
 Fax: (202) 720-3157
 E-mail: Karen.hulebak@fsis.usda.gov

Ms. Melissa Clarkson
 Director, Agricultural Affairs
 Office of the United States Trade Representative
 600 17th St. NW
 Washington, DC 20508
 Tel.: (202) 395-9629
 E-mail: melissa_clarkson@ustr.eop.gov

Ms. Krista Dickson
 Office of Scientific and Technical Affairs
 Processed Products and Technical Regulations
 Foreign Agriculture Service/Trade Policy
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 1400 Independence Ave. SW
 Washington, DC 20250, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 690-1341
 Fax: (202) 690-0677
 E-mail: krista.dickson@fas.usda.gov

Mr. Michael T. Henney
 Branch Chief, New Technologies and Production
 Methods Branch
 Office of Scientific and Technical Affairs
 Foreign Agricultural Service
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 1400 Independence Ave. SW
 Washington, DC 20250, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 720-2502
 Fax: (202) 690-3316
 E-mail: michael.henney@fas.usda.gov

Mr. Bryan O'Byrne
 International Trade Specialist
 U.S. Department of Commerce
 14th and Constitution Ave. NW
 Washington, DC 20230, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 482-0705
 E-mail: bryan_obyrne@ita.doc.gov

Mr. Jonathan Melvin
 National Organic Program
 Agricultural Marketing Specialist
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 1400 Independence Ave. SW
 Room 4008, South Building
 Washington, DC 20250, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 720-3252
 Fax: (202) 205-7808
 E-mail: jonathan.melvin@usda.gov

Dr. Ritu Nalubola
 Office of Nutrition, Labeling and Dietary
 Supplements
 Centre for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
 Food and Drug Administration (HFS-820)
 5100 Paint Branch Parkway
 College Park, MD 20740, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (301) 436-1432
 Fax: (301) 436-2636
 E-mail: ritu.nalubola@fda.hhs.gov

Ms. Audrey Talley
 Deputy Director, Processed Products and Technical
 Regulations Division
 Foreign Agriculture Service/OSTA
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 1400 Independence Ave. SW
 Washington, DC 20250, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 720-9408
 Fax: (202) 690-0677
 E-mail: Audrey.Talley@fas.usda.gov

Dr. Michael Wehr
Codex Program Coordinator
Centre for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5100 Paint Branch Parkway, Room 1B-002
College Park, MD 20740, U.S.A.
Tel.: (301) 436-1724
Fax: (301) 436-2618
E-mail: michael.wehr@fda.hhs.gov

Ms. Barbara McNiff
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Office of International Affairs
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 690-4719
Fax: (202) 368-5608
E-mail: barbara.mcniff@fsis.usda.gov

Mr. William L. Busis
Associate General Counsel
Office of the United States Trade Representative
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20508, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 395-3150
Fax: (202) 395-3639

Dr. Mary Hager
Director, Regulatory Affairs
The American Dietetic Association
1120 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 480
Washington, DC 20036, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 775-8277
E-mail: mhager@eatright.org

Ms. Regina Hildwine
Senior Director, Food Labeling and Standards
GMA
1350 I Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 639-5926
E-mail: rhildwine@gmaonline.org

Ms. Wanda Kelker
Scientific and Regulatory Affairs
The Coca Cola Company
P.O. Box 1734
Atlanta, GA 30301, U.S.A.
Tel.: (404) 676-6968
E-mail: wkelker@na.ko.com

Mr. C.W. McMillan
President
C.W. McMillan Company
P.O. Box 10009
Alexandria, VA 22310, U.S.A.
Tel.: (703) 960-1982
Fax: (703) 960-4976
E-mail: cwmco@aol.com

Ms. Jane Earley
Earley & White Consulting Group, LLC
1737 King Street, Suite 330
Alexandria, VA 22314, U.S.A.
Tel.: (703) 739-9090, ext. 121
E-mail: jearley@eandwconsulting.com

Dr. Lisa Craig
Director, Regulatory Affairs, Abbott Nutrition
625 Cleveland Ave., Dept. 06NG, Bldg. RP3-2
Columbus 43215, Ohio, U.S.A.
Tel.: (614) 624-3696
Fax: (614) 727-3696
E-mail: lisa.craig@abbott.com

VANUATU

Mr. Akuma Thomas Malas
Senior Compliance Officer
Vanuatu Government
Department of Customs and Inland Revenue
PM Bag 9012
Port Vila, VANUATU
Tel.: +678 22862 / 24544
Fax: +678 22597
E-mail: amalas@vanuatu.gov.vu

VIETNAM

Vu Ngoc Quynh
Director, Vietnam National Codex Committee
70 Tran Hung Dao St.
Hanoi, VIETNAM
Tel.: 84 4 9426605
Fax: 84 4 8222520
E-mail: vnquynhcodex@tcvn.gov.vn

ZAMBIA ZAMBIE

Ms. Bernadette M. Mumba
Environmental Health Specialist (Ministry of Health)
P.O. Box 32573
Lusaka 10101, ZAMBIA
Tel.: +260 1 256815
Fax: +260 1 256814
E-mail: bmmumba@yahoo.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF LEGAL METROLOGY / ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE MÉTROLOGIE LÉGALE (OIML)

Mr. Willem Kool
BIML Assistant Director
International Organization of Legal Metrology
(OIML)
11, rue Turgot
Paris 75009, FRANCE
Tel.: +33 1 48 78 57 82
Fax: +33 1 42 82 17 27
E-mail: willem.kool@oiml.org

**INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
ORGANISATIONS
NONGOUVERNEMENTALES
INTERNATIONALES
ORGANIZACIONES INTERNACIONALES NO GUBERNAMENTALES**

ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN COELIAC SOCIETIES (AOECS)

Ms. Hertha Deutsch
Chair of Codex and Labelling Affairs
Association of European Coeliac Societies (AOECS)
Anton-Baumgartner-Straße 44/C5/2302
A-1230 Vienna, AUSTRIA
Tel.: +43 1 66 71 887
Fax: +43 1 66 71 887
E-mail: hertha.deutsch@utanet.at

BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION (BIO)

Dr. Janet E. Collins
Global Biotechnology Manager
DuPont
601 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 325 N
Washington, D.C. 20004, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 728-3622
Fax: (202) 728-3649
E-mail: janet.e.collins@usa.dupont.com

Mr. Michael Wach
Managing Director, Science and Regulatory Affairs
Biotechnology Industry Organization
1201 Maryland Ave. SW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20024, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 962-6645
Fax: (202) 488-6301
E-mail: mwach@bio.org

COMITE EUROPEEN DES FABRICANTS DE SUCRE (CEFS) / EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SUGAR PRODUCERS

Ms. Camille Perrin
Scientific and Regulatory Affairs Manager
CEFS (Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre)
182 avenue de Tervuren
1150 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel.: +32 2 774 51 06
Fax: +32 2 771 00 26
E-mail: camille.perrin@cefs.org

CONFEDERATION OF THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRIES OF THE EU/CONFÉDÉRATION DES INDUSTRIES AGRO-ALIMENTAIRES DE L'UE (CIAA)

Ms. Elena Cogalniceanu
Manager, Consumer Information, Diet and Health
Department - CIAA
43 Avenue des Arts
B-1040 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel.: +32 2 514 11 11
Fax: +32 2 511 29 05
E-mail: e.cogalniceanu@ciaa.be

CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL

Mr. Samuel J. Ochieng
President, Consumers International
c/o Consumer Information Network
P.O. Box 7569
Nairobi 00300, KENYA
Tel.: +254 20 555774
Fax: +254 20 555784
E-mail: cin@swiftkenya.com
E-mail: cinfkenya@yahoo.com

Ms. Jean Halloran
Director, Food Policy Initiatives
Consumers Union, 101 Truman Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10703, U.S.A.
Tel.: (914) 378-2457
Fax: (914) 378-2928
E-mail: hallje@consumer.org

Dr. Michael Hansen
Senior Scientist, Consumers Union
101 Truman Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10701, U.S.A.
Tel.: (914) 378-2452
Fax: (914) 378-2928
E-mail: hansmi@consumer.org

COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE NUTRITION (CRN) / CONSEJO PARA UNA NUTRICIÓN RESPONSABLE

Mr. Mark Mansour
Partner, Foley & Lardner, LLP
3000 K Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20007, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 672-5585
Fax: (202) 672-5399
E-mail: mmansour@foley.com

CROP LIFE INTERNATIONAL

Ms. Lucyna K. Kurtyka
Global Lead, International Organizations
Monsanto Company
1300 I St., NW, Suite 450 East
Washington, DC 20005, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 383-2861
Fax: (202) 789-1748
E-mail: lucyna.k.kurtyka@monsanto.com

**EUROPEAN FOOD LAW ASSOCIATION
(EFLA) / ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE POUR
LE DROIT DE L'ALIMENTATION (AEDA)**

M. Matias Cortes
EFLA / AEDA
235, rue de la Loi
1040 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel.: +32 2 230 48 45
Fax: +32 2 230 82 06
E-mail: efla_aeda@hotmail.com

Mrs. Jie Hu
EFLA / AEDA
235, rue de la Loi
1040 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel.: +32 2 230 48 45
Fax: +32 2 230 82 06
E-mail: efla_aeda@hotmail.com

**INSTITUTE OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS
(IFT)**

Mr. Robert V. Conover, J.D.
Director
Kikkoman Foods, Inc.
P.O. Box 69
Walworth, WI 53184, U.S.A.
Tel: (262) 275-1651
Fax: (262) 275-1451
E-mail: rconover@kikkoman.com

Ms. Sarah F. Davis, MS, RD
Staff Scientist
Institute of Food Technologists (IFT)
1025 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 503
Washington, DC 20036, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 330-4976
Fax: (202) 466-5988
E-mail: sfdavis@ift.org

Ms. Gloria Brooks-Ray
Advisor, Codex and International Regulatory Affairs
Exponent, Inc.
P.O. Box 97
Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046, U.S.A.
Tel: (973) 334-4652
E-mail: gbrooksray@exponent.com

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CONSUMER FOOD ORGANIZATIONS
(IACFO)**

Mr. Bill Jeffery
National Coordinator
Centre for Science in the Public Interest
Suite 2701, CTTC Building
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5R1, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 244-7337
Fax: (613) 244-1559
E-mail: jefferyb@istar.ca

**INTERNATIONAL BABY FOOD ACTION
NETWORK (IBFAN)**

Ms. Elisabeth Sterken
Director, INFACT Canada
6 Trinity Square
Toronto, ON M5G 1B1, CANADA
Tel.: (416) 595-9819
Fax: (416) 591-9355
E-mail: esterken@infectcanada.ca

**INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE (ICC)**

Mr. Christopher G. Martin
Manager, Marketing and Advertising Policy
ICT, Banking
1212 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036-1689, U.S.A.
Tel.: (212) 703-5061
Fax: (212) 575-0327
E-mail: cgmartin@uscib.org

**INTERNATIONAL CHEWING GUM
ASSOCIATION (ICGA)**

Mr. David R. Joy
Counsel - International Chewing Gum Association
c/o Keller and Heckman
Avenue Louise 523
B-1050 Brussels, BELGIUM
Tel.: +32 2 645 5000
Fax: +32 2 645 5050
E-mail: joy@khlaw.com

Ms. Edith Di Michele-Ranalli
Regulatory Affairs Manager
Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company
1132 W. Blackhawk Street
Chicago, IL 60610, U.S.A.
Tel.: (312) 794-6033
Fax: (312) 794-6162
E-mail: edimichele-ranalli@wrigley.com

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF
BEVERAGES ASSOCIATIONS (ICBA)**

Ms. Helen Falco
Adviser - International Council of Beverages
Associations (ICBA)
3-3-3 Nihonbashi-Muromachi Chuo-Ku
103-0022 Tokyo, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 3 3270 7300
Fax: +81 3 3270 7306
E-mail : icba@j-sda.or.jp

Dr. Shuji Iwata
Technical Adviser
Japan Soft Drinks Association
3-3-3 Nihonbashi-Muromachi Chuo-Ku
103-0022 Tokyo, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 3 3270 7300
Fax: +81 3 3270 7306
E-mail: shuji_iwata@suntory.co.jp

Mr. Hiromi Ohta
 Technical Adviser
 Japan Soft Drinks Association
 3-3-3 Nihonbashi-Muromachi Chuo-Ku
 103-0022 Tokyo, JAPAN
 Tel : +81 3 3270 7300
 Fax: +81 3 3270 7306
 E-mail: hiromi_ohta@suntory.co.jp

Mr. Soichi Yamamoto
 Technical Adviser
 Japan Soft Drinks Association
 3-3-3 Nihonbashi-Muromachi Chuo-Ku
 103-0022 Tokyo, JAPAN
 Tel.: +81 3 3270 7300
 Fax: +81 3 3270 7306
 E-mail: soichi_yamamoto@suntory.co.jp

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF GROCERY
 MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATIONS
 (ICGMA)/CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES
 ASSOCIATIONS DE FABRICANTS DE
 PRODUITS D'EPICERIE / CONSEJO
 INTERNACIONAL DE ASOCIACIONES DE
 FABRICANTES DE COMESTIBLES**

Ms. Phyllis Tanaka
 Vice-President, Scientific and Regulatory Affairs –
 Food Policy
 Food and Consumer Products of Canada
 885 Don Mills Road, Suite 301
 Toronto, ON M3C 1V9
 Tel.: (416) 510-8024, ext. 2246
 Fax: (416) 510-8043
 E-mail: phyllist@fcpc.ca

Ms. Peggy Rochette
 Sr. Director, International Affairs
 Grocery Manufacturers Association
 1350 I Street NW
 Washington, DC 20005, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 639-5921
 Fax: (202) 639-5991
 E-mail: Prochette@gmaonline.org

**INTERNATIONAL DAIRY FEDERATION
 (IDF) / FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE
 LAITERIE / FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL
 DE LECHERIA**

Ms. Cary Frye
 Vice President of Regulatory Affairs
 International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA)
 1250 H Street, NW, Suite 900
 Washington, DC 20005, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (202) 220-3543
 Fax: (202) 331-7820
 E-mail: cfrye@idfa.org

Mr. Claus Heggum
 Chief Consultant
 Danish Dairy Board
 Frederiks Allé 22
 DK-8000 Aarhus C, DENMARK
 Tel.: +45 87 31 21 98
 Fax: +45 87 31 20 01
 E-mail: ch@mejeri.dk

Dr. Réjean Bouchard
 Assistant Director, Policy and Dairy Production
 Dairy Farmers of Canada
 75 Albert Street, Suite 1101
 Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7, CANADA
 Tel.: (613) 236-9997
 Fax: (613) 236-0905
 E-mail: rejeanb@dfc-plc.ca

Mr. Jörg Seifert
 Technical Director
 International Dairy Federation
 Diamant Building,
 Boulevard Auguste Reyers, 80
 1030 Brussels, BELGIUM
 Tel.: +32 2 706 86 43
 Fax: +32 2 733 04 13
 E-mail : JSeifert@fil-idf.org

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
 ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS
 (IFOAM)
 FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES
 MOUVEMENTS D'AGRICULTURE
 BIOLOGIQUE (IFOAM)
 FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL DE LOS
 MOVIMIENTOS DE AGRICULTURA
 BIOLOGICA (IFOAM)**

Mr. Otto Schmid
 Senior Researcher, Standards Officer
 Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL)
 Ackerstrasse
 CH-5070 Frick, SWITZERLAND
 Tel.: +41 62 865 7272
 Fax: +41 62 865 7273
 E-mail: otto.schmid@fibl.ch

**INTERNATIONAL FROZEN FOOD
 ASSOCIATION (IFFA)**

Mr. John T. Allan
 Manager of Regulatory and International Affairs
 International Frozen Food Association (IFFA)
 2000 Corporate Ridge, Suite 1000
 McLean, Virginia 22102, U.S.A.
 Tel.: (703) 821-0770
 Fax: (703) 821-1350
 E-mail: jallan@affi.com

**INTERNATIONAL GLUTAMATE
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (IGTC)
COMITE INTERNATIONAL TECHNIQUE DE
L'ACIDE GLUTAMIQUE (IGTC)**

Robert G. Bursey, Ph.D.
President, Ajinomoto Corporate Services, LLC.
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1010
Washington, DC 20036-3953, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 457-0284
Fax: (202) 457-0107
E-mail: burseyb@ajiusa.com

Mrs. Yoko Ogiwara
Scientific Adviser
Ajinomoto Co., Inc.
Hatchobori 3-9-5, Chuo-ku
Toyko 104-0032, JAPAN
Tel. : +81 (0) 80 3258 1900
Fax : +81 (0) 3 5250 8403
E-mail : yoko_ogiwara@ajinomoto.com

Eyassu G. Abegaz, Ph.D.
Manager, Regulatory and Scientific Affairs
Ajinomoto Corporate Services, LLC
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1010
Washington, DC 20036-3953, U.S.A.
Tel.: (202) 457-0284, ext. 306
Fax: (202) 457-0107
E-mail: abegaze@ajiusa.com

**INTERNATIONAL LACTATION
CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION (ILCA)**

Ms. Joan M. Fisher
Liaison, International Lactation Consultants
Association (ILCA)
76 Leopolds Drive
Ottawa, ON K1V 7E3, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 736-0997
Fax: (613) 736-1795 (please phone first)
E-mail: jfisher@ca.inter.net

**INTERNATIONAL LIFE SCIENCE
INSTITUTE (ILSI)**

Dr. Shigenori Suzuki
Research Institute
Kagome Company, Ltd.
17 Nishitomiya
Nasushiobara 329-2762, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 287 36 2935
Fax: +81 287 39 1038
E-mail: shigenori_suzuki@kagome.co.jp

Mr. Hiroshi Iwamoto
Nutritional Science Institute
Morinaga Milk Industry Co., Ltd.
1-83, 5-Chome, Higashihara, Zama-City
Kanagawa-Prefecture 228-8583, JAPAN
Tel.: +81 46 252 3048
Fax: +81 46 252 3055
E-mail: h_iwamot@morinagamilk.co.jp

INTERNATIONAL SEED FEDERATION (ISF)

Dr. Bill Leask
Executive Vice-President
Canadian Seed Trade Association
505 - 39 Robertson Road
Ottawa, ON K0A 3P0, CANADA
Tel: (613) 829-9527
Fax: (613) 829-3530
E-mail: bleask@cdnseed.org

NATIONAL HEALTH FEDERATION (NHF)

Mr. Scott C. Tips
President & General Counsel
National Health Federation
P.O. Box 688
Monrovia, CA 91017, U.S.A.
Tel.: (626) 357-2181
Fax: (626) 303-0642
E-mail: sct@thenhf.com

**WORLD FEDERATION OF ADVERTISERS
(WFA)**

Mr. Bob Reaume
Vice President, Policy and Research
Association of Canadian Advertisers
95 St. Clair Avenue West, Suite 1103
Toronto, ON M4V 1N6, CANADA
Tel.: (416) 964-3805
Fax: (416) 964-0771
E-mail: breaume@acaweb.ca

**WORLD SELF-MEDICATION INDUSTRY
(WSMI)**

Mr. Adam Kingsley
Senior Manager of Scientific and Regulatory Affairs
World Self-Medication Industry (WSMI)
406 - 1111 Prince of Wales Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3T2, CANADA
Tel: (613) 723 0777
Fax: (613) 723 0779
E-mail: adam.kingsley@ndmac.ca

**WORLD SUGAR RESEARCH
ORGANISATION (WSRO)**

Ms. Jenny Gusba
Director, Nutrition and Scientific Affairs
Canadian Sugar Institute
10 Bay Street, Suite 620
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2R8, CANADA
Tel.: (416) 368-8091
Fax: (416) 368-6426
E-mail: jgusba@sugar.ca

**JOINT FAO/WHO SECRETARIAT
SECRETARIAT MIXTE FAO/OMS
SECRETARIADO CONJUNTO FAO/OMS**

Ms. Selma H. Doyran
Senior Food Standards Officer
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, ITALY
Tel.: +39 06 570 55826
Fax: +39 06 570 54593
E-mail: selma.doyran@fao.org

Mr. Tom Heilandt
Senior Food Standards Officer
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, ITALY
Tel.: +39 06 570 54384
Fax: +39 06 570 54593
E-mail: tom.heilandt@fao.org

Mr. Ym Shik, Lee
Food Standards Officer
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, ITALY
Tel.: +39 06 570 55854
Fax: +39 06 570 54593
E-mail: ymshik.lee@fao.org

**FAO PERSONNEL
PERSONNEL DE LA FAO
PERSONAL DE LA FAO**

Ms. Janice Albert
Nutrition Officer
Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, ITALY
Tel.: +39 06 570 53552
Fax: +39 06 570 54593
E-mail: Janice.Albert@fao.org

**WHO PERSONNEL
PERSONNEL DE L'OMS
PERSONAL DE LA OMS**

Ms. Janine Lewis
Technical Officer
Department of Nutrition for Health and Development
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva, SWITZERLAND
Tel.: +41 22 791 1637
Fax: +41 22 791 4156
E-mail: lewisj@who.int

Dr. Margaret Cheney
WHO Temporary Advisor
Box 9123, Station T
Ottawa, ON K1G 3T8, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 737-4884
E-mail: marcon@cyberus.ca

**CANADIAN SECRETARIAT
SECRETARIAT CANADIENS
SECRETARIADO CANADIENSE**

Mr. Ron Burke
Codex Contact Point for Canada
Food Directorate
Health Products and Food Branch
Health Canada
Room 2395, 200 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
(0702C1)
Ottawa, ON K1A 0L2, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 957-1748
Fax: (613) 941-3537
E-mail: ronald_burke@hc-sc.gc.ca

Mr. Allan McCarville
Senior Advisor, Codex
Food Directorate
Health Products and Food Branch
Health Canada
Room 2394, 200 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
(0702C1)
Ottawa, ON K1A 0L2, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 957-0189
Fax: (613) 941-3537
E-mail: allan_mccarville@hc-sc.gc.ca

Mr. Paul Mayers
Acting Associate Vice President, Programs
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
59 Camelot Drive, Room 342W
Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 221-3775
Fax: (613) 228-6631
E-mail: mayersp@inspection.gc.ca

Mr. Bertrand Gagnon
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
49 Camelot Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A0Y9, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 221-1344
Fax: (613) 221-1384
E-mail: bgagnon@inspection.gc.ca

Dr. Reem Barakat
International Senior Policy Analyst
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
49 Camelot Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A0Y9, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 221-1345
Fax: (613) 221-1384
E-mail: barakatr@inspection.gc.ca

Mrs. Santina Scalzo
Manager, Codex Program Services
Food Directorate
Health Products and Food Branch
Health Canada
Room 2392, 200 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
(0702C1)
Ottawa, ON K1A 0L2, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 957-1749
Fax: (613) 941-3537
E-mail: santina_scalzo@hc-sc.gc.ca

Ms. Soad Sabbagh
Conference and Process Coordinator
Codex Program Services
Food Directorate
Health Products and Food Branch
Health Canada
Room 2391, 200 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
(0702C1)
Ottawa, ON K1A 0L2, CANADA
Tel.: (613) 952-7354
Fax: (613) 941-3537
E-mail: codex_canada@hc-sc.gc.ca

**DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GUIDELINES FOR THE PRODUCTION, PROCESSING,
LABELLING AND MARKETING OF ORGANICALLY PRODUCED FOODS
(N10-2006)
(At Step 8 of the Procedure)**

Annex 1 - Principles of Organic Production

C. HANDLING, STORAGE, TRANSPORTATION, PROCESSING AND PACKAGING

82. The integrity of the organic product must be maintained throughout the processing phase. This is achieved by the use of techniques appropriate to the specifics of the ingredients with careful processing methods limiting refining and the use of additives and processing aids. Ionizing radiation should not be used on organic products for the purpose of pest control, food preservation, elimination of pathogens or sanitation.

Ethylene may be used for ripening of kiwifruit and bananas.

**DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GUIDELINES FOR THE PRODUCTION, PROCESSING,
LABELLING AND MARKETING OF ORGANICALLY PRODUCED FOODS
(N10-2006)
(At Step 6 of the Procedure)**

Annex 1 - Principles of Organic Production

C. HANDLING, STORAGE, TRANSPORTATION, PROCESSING AND PACKAGING

82. The integrity of the organic product must be maintained throughout the processing phase. This is achieved by the use of techniques appropriate to the specifics of the ingredients with careful processing methods limiting refining and the use of additives and processing aids. Ionizing radiation should not be used on organic products for the purpose of pest control, food preservation, elimination of pathogens or sanitation.

Ethylene may be used for ripening of kiwifruit, bananas, [other products to be determined].

**DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF
PREPACKAGED FOODS:
Quantitative Ingredient Declaration Labelling
(At Step 8 of the Procedure)**

5. ADDITIONAL MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Quantitative Ingredient Declarations

5.1.1 The ingoing percentage of an ingredient (including compound ingredients⁶ or categories of ingredients⁷), by weight or volume as appropriate, at the time of manufacture, shall be disclosed for foods sold as a mixture or combination where the ingredient:

- (a) is emphasised as present on the label through words or pictures or graphics; or
- (b) is not within the name of the food, is essential to characterise the food and is expected to be present in the food by consumers in the country where the food is sold if the omission of the quantitative ingredient declaration would mislead or deceive the consumer.

Such disclosure is not required:

- (c) where the ingredient is used in small quantities for the purpose of flavouring; or
- (d) where commodity specific standards of Codex Alimentarius conflict with the requirements described here.

With respect to 5.1.1(a):

- (e) a reference in the name of the food to an ingredient or category of ingredients shall not of itself require quantitative ingredient declaration if:
 - that reference would not mislead or deceive or would not be likely to create an erroneous impression to the consumer regarding the character of the food in the country of marketing because the variation in quantity of the ingredient(s) between products is not necessary to characterise the food or distinguish it from similar foods.

5.1.2 The information required in Section 5.1.1 shall be declared on the product label as a numerical percentage.

The ingoing percentage, by weight or volume as appropriate, of each such ingredient shall be given on the label in close proximity to the words or pictures or graphics emphasising the particular ingredient, or beside the name of the food, or adjacent to each appropriate ingredient listed in the ingredient list as a minimum percentage where emphasis is on the presence of the ingredient and a maximum percentage where emphasis is on the low level of the ingredient.

For foodstuffs which have lost moisture following heat or other treatment, the percentage (by weight or by volume) shall correspond to the quantity of the ingredient(s) used, related to the finished product.

When the quantity of an ingredient or the total quantity of all ingredients expressed on the labelling exceeds 100%, the percentage may be replaced by the declaration of the weight of the ingredient(s) used to prepare 100g of finished product.

⁶ For compound ingredients the ingoing percentage means the ingoing percentage of the compound ingredient as a whole.

⁷ For the purposes of Quantitative Ingredient Declaration, “category of ingredients” means the generic term which refers to the class name of an ingredient and/or any similar common term(s) which are used in reference to the name of a food.

**DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GUIDELINES FOR USE
OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS
(At Step 8 of the Procedure)**

In section 1.1 add the following footnote to the word “advertising”:

“Advertising means any commercial communication to the public, by any means other than labelling, in order to promote directly or indirectly, the sale or intake of a food through the use of nutrition and health claims in relation to the food and its ingredients.”

**DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF
PREPACKAGED FOODS
(DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LABELLING OF FOODS OBTAINED THROUGH
CERTAIN TECHNIQUES OF GENETIC MODIFICATION/GENETIC ENGINEERING)
DEFINITIONS
(At Step 7 of the Procedure)**

SECTION 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS⁸

For the purpose of the General Standard:

“Food and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification / genetic engineering” means food and food ingredients composed of or containing genetically modified / engineered organisms obtained through modern biotechnology, or food and food ingredients produced from, but not containing genetically modified / engineered organisms obtained through modern biotechnology.

“Organism” means any biological entity capable of replication, reproduction or of transferring genetic material.

“Genetically modified / engineered organism” means an organism in which the genetic material has been changed through modern biotechnology in a way that does not occur naturally by multiplication and/or natural recombination.

“Modern biotechnology” means the application of:

- a. In vitro nucleic acid techniques⁹, including recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and direct injection of nucleic acid into cells or organelles, or
- b. Fusion of cells¹⁰ beyond the taxonomic family,

that overcome natural physiological, reproductive or recombination barriers and that are not techniques used in traditional breeding and selection

⁸ The terminology used in this section on definitions should not determine the terminology which is appropriate for use on food labels

⁹ These include but are not limited to: recombinant DNA techniques that use vector systems and techniques involving the direct introduction into the organism of hereditary materials prepared outside the organism such as micro-injection, macro-injection, chemoporation, electroporation, micro-encapsulation and liposome fusion

¹⁰ Fusion of cells (including protoplast fusion) or hybridization techniques that overcome natural physiological, reproductive, or recombination barriers, where the donor cells/protoplasts do not fall within the same taxonomic family

**PROPOSED DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LABELLING OF FOODS AND FOOD
INGREDIENTS OBTAINED THROUGH CERTAIN TECHNIQUES OF GENETIC
MODIFICATION/GENETIC ENGINEERING**

(At Step 3 of the Procedure)

[*Chapeau 1*

“Food labelling is the primary means of communications between the seller on the one hand and the purchaser and consumer on the other. Labelling of a food is considered only after the food has undergone appropriate safety assessments to deem it safe for human consumption. For additional assurance on safe and appropriate use of food, food labelling can be employed to provide consumers with essential information. It is recognized that consumers’ expressed needs may vary in different regions of the world. These differences might lead to various levels of approaches regarding labelling of foods obtained by GM/GE modifications.

The purpose of this document is to recall and assemble in a single document some important elements of guidance from Codex texts which are relevant for the labelling of foods obtained by GM/GE techniques.”

Chapeau 2

“The purpose of this document is to recall and assemble in a single document some important elements from Codex texts which are relevant for the labelling of foods obtained by GM/GE techniques.”]

1. The following Codex standards and related texts contain provisions applicable to the labelling of food products and may be applied to foods obtained by GM/GE:
 - The Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, (Codex Stan 1-1985)
 - The Codex General Guidelines on Claims (CAC/GL 1-1979)
 - The Codex Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997)
 - Principles for Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology (CAC/GL 44-2003);
 - Guidelines for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessments of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA plants (CAC/GL 45-2003)
 - Guidelines for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessments of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA microorganisms
 - Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Food Safety for Application by Governments
2. Codex labelling and other texts apply to foods sold in unpackaged/non-retail containers including those foods obtained through GM-GE techniques and sold in such manner. Labelling means “any written, printed or graphic matter that is present on the label, accompanies the food, or is displayed near the food, including that for the purpose of promoting its sale or disposal.”
3. Labelling of a food is considered only after the food has undergone appropriate assessments to deem it safe for human consumption. Codex has adopted several texts which address the safety aspects of GM/GE foods and are available to Member Countries for this purpose¹¹.
4. The Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants (CAC/GL 45-2003) states that the “transfer of genes from commonly allergenic foods . . . should be avoided unless it is documented that the transferred gene does not code for an allergen . . .”.
5. The presence in any food or food ingredients obtained through biotechnology of an allergen transferred from any of the products listed in section 4.2.1.4 shall be declared. When it is not possible to provide adequate information on the presence of an allergen through labelling, the food containing the allergen should not be marketed (section 4.2.2, GSLPF).

¹¹ Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants (CAC/GL 45-2003); Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Produced Using Recombinant-DNA Microorganisms (CAC/GL 46-2003).

6. When the physical, chemical, or functional characteristics of a food are significantly altered through any means (production or processing), the labelling of such food be appropriately modified from its traditional labelling to ensure that the food is described or presented in a manner that is truthful and not misleading and not likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect. The traditional name of such food may need to be changed or qualified with additional words or phrases to describe the true nature of the food and to avoid misleading or confusing the consumer.
7. In cases where GM/GE modifications result in a claim related to the nutritional properties of the food, the claim language should be consistent with the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims.
8. The provisions in existing Codex texts can be applied to labelling statements related to GM/GE foods.
9. Codex labelling texts apply to representation used to provide information to enable consumer choice about the food they purchase and/or when used by marketers to indicate that a food meets certain consumer preferences.
10. Any representations made on the label or in the labelling of GM/GE foods should be consistent with the GSLPF (Codex Stan 1-1985) and the General Guidelines on Claims (CAC/GL 1-1979).

Table 1. Provisions in existing Codex labelling texts that apply to the labeling of GM/GE foods

| Section | Mandatory Labelling Provisions |
|--|---|
| <i>General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods</i> | |
| 3.1 | Prepackaged food shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labelling in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect. |
| 3.2 | Prepackaged food shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labelling by words, pictorial or other devices which refer to or are suggestive either directly or indirectly, of any other product with which such food might be confused, or in such a manner as to lead the purchaser or consumer to suppose that the food is connected with such other product. |
| 4.1.1 | The name [of the food] shall indicate the true nature of the food and normally be specific and not generic. |
| 4.1.2 | There shall appear on the label either in conjunction with, or in close proximity to, the name of the food, such additional words or phrases as necessary to avoid misleading or confusing the consumer in regard to the true nature and physical condition of the food including but not limited to the type of packaging medium, style, and the condition or type of treatment it has undergone; for example, dried, concentrated, reconstituted, smoked. |
| 4.2.2 | The presence in any food or food ingredients obtained through biotechnology of an allergen transferred from any of the products listed in section 4.2.1.4 shall be declared. When it is not possible to provide adequate information on the presence of an allergen through labelling, the food containing the allergen should not be marketed. |

| Section | Voluntary Labelling Provisions |
|---|---|
| <i>General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods</i> | |
| 7.1 | Optional labelling – Any information or pictorial device written, printed, or graphic matter may be displayed in labelling provided that it is not in conflict with the mandatory requirements of this standard and those relating to claims and deception given in section 3 – General Principles. |
| <i>General Guidelines on Claims</i> | |
| 1.2 | The principle on which the guidelines are based is that no food should be described or presented in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive or is likely to create an erroneous impression regarding its character in any respect. |
| 1.3 | The person marketing the food should be able to justify the claims made. |
| 2 | Definition – For the purpose of these guidelines, a claim is any representation which states, suggests, or implies that a food has particular characteristics relating to its origin, nutritional properties, nature, production, processing, composition or any other quality. |
| 3.3 | Prohibited claims – Claims which cannot be substantiated. |
| 3.5 | Prohibited claims – Claims which could give rise to doubt about the safety of similar food or which could arouse or exploit fear in the consumer. |
| 4.1 | Potentially misleading claims – Meaningless claims including incomplete comparatives and superlatives. |
| 5.1(iii) | Conditional claims – Terms such as “natural,” “pure,” “fresh,” “home made,” “organically grown,” and “biologically grown” when they are used, should be in accordance with the national practices in the country where the food is sold. The use of these terms should be consistent with the prohibitions set out in Section 3. |
| 5.1(v) | Conditional claims – Claims that a food has special characteristics when all such foods have the same characteristics, if this fact is apparent in the claim. |
| 5.1 (vi) | Conditional claims – Claims which highlight the absence or non-addition of particular substances to food may be used provided that they are not misleading and provided that the substance: (b) is one which consumers would normally expect to find in the food; (d) is one whose presence or addition is permitted in the food. |
| <i>Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims</i> | |

PROJECT DOCUMENT
PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK
**PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE GUIDELINES FOR THE PRODUCTION, PROCESSING,
LABELLING AND MARKETING OF ORGANICALLY PRODUCED FOODS**

Purposes and scope of the proposed standard.

The purpose is to delete “preparations of Rotenone from *Derris elliptica*, *Lonchocarpus*, *Thephrosia* spp.” from Table 2 of Annex 2 or include “the substance should be used in such a way as to prevent its flowing into waterways” in conditions for use.

Its relevance and timeliness.

Rotenone is obtained from the roots of several tropical and subtropical plant species belonging to the genus *Lochancarpus* or *Derris*. The substance is very toxic to aquatic organisms.

Removing Rotenone from Table 2 of Annex 2 or regulating the condition for use is in line with the primary objective of an organic production system to enhance biological diversity within the whole system.

The main aspects to be covered.

Japan proposes to delete “preparations of Rotenone from *Derris elliptica*, *Lonchocarpus*, *Thephrosia* spp.” from Table 2 of Annex 2 or to restrict its use to prevent its flowing into waterways.

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

The proposal is consistent with the general criterion as follows:

Ensuring fair practices in the food trade: Some national standards for organically produced foods allow the use of Rotenone, but some do not. There are different regulations on the use of Rotenone, which may cause international disputes.

Relevance to Codex Strategic Objectives.

The proposal is consistent with:

- a. Promoting sound regulatory framework; and
- b. Promoting maximum application of Codex standards.

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

The proposal is an amendment to the *Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Food*. It does not affect existing Codex documents.

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

New Zealand Department of Conservation published a report on the toxicity and use of Rotenone in 2003.¹² The International Programme on Chemical Safety published an evaluation on Rotenone as “the Poisons Information Monograph 474.”

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

none

¹² Ling, N. “Rotenone – a review of its toxicity and use for fisheries management,” Science for Conservation 211, January 2003, New Zealand Department of Conservation

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.

If accepted by the 36th CCFL and agreed to undertake through Accelerated Procedure by the 31st CAC, it is expected that a proposed draft will be discussed at Step 4 at the 37th CCFL and adopted at Step 5 of the Accelerated Procedure by the 32nd CAC in 2009.

PROJECT DOCUMENT**PROPOSAL FOR NEW WORK ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHO GLOBAL STRATEGY
ON DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH (WHA, 2004)****Purpose and the scope of the project****A. Undertake a revision of Section 3.2 and a review of Section 3.1 on the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling using a phased approach.**

Part a - The Committee will undertake work to revise the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling and will examine the list of nutrients that are always declared on a mandatory or voluntary basis in light of the recommendations in the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

To assist deliberations the following questions will be addressed:

- (i) which nutrients are appropriate to be considered at an international level, taking into account, regional dietary patterns; and
- (ii) what other factors should be taken into account in developing the list of nutrients, including the rationale for including or excluding certain nutrients.

The Committee will also prepare a discussion paper outlining the issues and concerns raised during the discussions of the Committee related to mandatory nutrition labelling, taking into consideration the experiences of member countries.

Part b - Once a revised list of nutrients has been identified, consideration of the requirements for mandatory nutrition labelling, will be undertaken, including consideration of appropriate nutrients and products and taking into account the issues raised in the discussion paper and the flexibility needed to address the issues surrounding the implementation of mandatory nutrition labelling.

B. Develop criteria or principles for legibility and readability of nutrition labelling.

CCFL proposes to undertake new work to develop general criteria or principles to be included in the Guidelines for Nutrition Labelling that would be applicable to both mandatory and voluntary nutrition labelling to enhance the legibility and readability of the information. In developing this work, the Committee recognizes that universal symbols or simplified labelling is not a part of the scope or mandate of this work.

To assist deliberations, the following questions will be asked:

- (i) what general principles or criteria should be considered regarding the legibility and readability of nutrition labelling?
- (ii) what specific elements should be considered with respect to the legibility and readability of nutrition labelling? For example, the format, order of information, contrast between text and background, and clarity may be some aspects of the presentation to be considered.

The comments will be summarized and general criteria or principles will be proposed for discussion by the Committee.

Its relevance and timeliness

The work is in line with the Terms of Reference for the CCFL, specifically (a) to draft provisions on labeling applicable to all foods.

The work is timely since it is in response to the proposed action items for the implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health contained in the FAO/WHO Draft Action Plan for Implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (CL 2006/44-CAC).

Food is recognized as an important environmental influence on nutritional health and well-being; appropriate food choices aid in reducing the risk of developing non-communicable diseases. Food label information, its availability, and consumer understanding all contribute to the individual's capacity to adopt eating habits that reduce health risks.

Food label information has to be sufficient and understandable. In particular, as stated in Article 40 of the Global Strategy, "*information for consumers should be sensitive to literacy levels, communication barriers and local culture, and understood by all segments of the population*". Item (4) of Article 40 states with regard to labelling, "*Consumers require accurate, standardized and comprehensible information on the content of food items in order to make healthy food choices*".

Importantly, nutrition labelling has been demonstrated to provide an incentive for the reformulation of processed foods to improve their nutritional quality, in particular with respect to the nutrients that are required to always appear on the label.

The main aspects to be covered

The work would involve:

- A. Undertaking a revision of Section 3.2 and a review of Section 3.1 on the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling using a phased approach;
- B. Developing criteria or principles for legibility and readability of nutrition labelling.

An assessment against the criteria for the establishment of work priorities

The proposed new work would assist governments in protecting consumers from health hazard due to consumers' lack of knowledge regarding the nutrient content of foods, particularly with respect to nutrients of public health significance. Consumers require accurate, standardized and comprehensible information on the content of food items in order to make healthy food choices.

The new work would also lessen impediments to international trade by providing clear guidance on considerations that need to be addressed when dealing with any of the above.

Relevance to the codex strategic objectives

The proposed new work is consistent with the Strategic Plan 2008–2013 for the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It would contribute to: Goal 1 - Promoting sound regulatory frameworks, specifically Activity 1.3 "Review and develop Codex standards and related texts for food labeling and nutrition".

Information on the relation between the proposal and other existing codex documents

None foreseen.

Identification of any requirement for and availability of expert scientific advice

None foreseen.

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

None foreseen.

The proposed time-line for completion of the new work, including the start date, the proposed date for Step 5 and the proposed date for adoption by the commission: the time frame for developing guideline should not normally exceed five years

Subject to approval, the new work could commence following the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting (2008).

Proposed amendments to the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling regarding the list of nutrients and legibility of information could be circulated for government comments at Step 3 for consideration by the 37th Session of the CCFL (2009). It is anticipated that the 38th or 39th Sessions of the CCFL (2010; 2011) could advance the document to Step 5, and the 40th or 41st Sessions of the CCFL (2012; 2013) could advance the document to Step 8.

Pending the outcome of the revisions to the list of nutrients, proposed amendments to the Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling regarding the requirements for mandatory nutrition labelling could be circulated for government comments at Step 3 in 2012 following the 39th Session of the CCFL (2011). It is anticipated that the 40th or 41st Sessions of the CCFL (2012; 2013) could advance the document to Step 5, and the 42nd or 43rd Sessions of the CCFL (2014; 2015) could advance the document to Step 8.