

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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Agenda Item 16

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Twenty-seventh Session,

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OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

Prepared by FAO and WHO

PART I: MATTERS RELATED TO SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

A. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FAO/WHO CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE TO CODEX AND MEMBER COUNTRIES

1. A FAO/WHO Workshop on the Provision of Scientific Advice to Codex and Member Countries was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 27-29 January, 2004. The Workshop, as part of a broader consultative process, has been undertaken at the request of the Codex Alimentarius Commission¹ and in response to recommendations of the Codex evaluation².
2. The review of the FAO/WHO programs providing scientific advice to Codex and member countries, encompassing the work of JECFA, JMPR, JEMRA and joint FAO/WHO expert consultations, has now completed two of its three steps. The Workshop resulted in a set of recommendations on 1) essential principles, definitions and scope governing the provision of scientific advice, 2) management issues and 3) procedures and mechanisms. Due regard was given to enhancing the participation of developing countries in the provision of scientific advice.
3. The Workshop benefited from the input obtained through an e-forum among interested stakeholders held in the second half of 2003. The report of the e-forum can be found on this FAO webpage: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/proscad/forum_en.stm. The report of the Workshop is available on the websites of FAO (http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/proscad/index_en.stm) and WHO (<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/>).

¹ 24th Codex Alimentarius Commission, ALINORM 01/41, paras 58-62

² Report of the Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and other FAO and WHO Food Standards Work, Rome, 2002

4. The executive summary and the recommendations were circulated through the Codex Contact Points to member countries and international observer organisations in March 2004 soliciting official comments to be submitted to FAO and WHO. A summary of the comments received and steps undertaken by FAO and WHO since the implementation of the Workshop will be made available to the 27th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

B. REQUESTS FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVICE FROM CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Background

5. The Fifty-Third Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission held in Geneva, Switzerland on 4-6 February 2004, following the request of the 26th Session of the Commission considered the large number of requests for scientific advice originating from Codex Committees with a view of their prioritization.
6. The Committee used the working document CX/EXEC 04/53/4 as a basis of its discussion. The Committee noted that several requests for scientific advice were already being addressed through the implementation or preparation of expert meetings and consultations, and therefore it concentrated on those requests that had not yet been considered. The result of this discussion is available in the Report of the Fifty-Third Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission³.
7. The situation regarding requests for scientific advice from Codex Subsidiary Bodies up to April 2004 is presented in Annex I of this document. The table considers results of the discussions held at the Codex Executive Committee on this matter and expert meetings and consultations implemented by FAO/WHO either alone or in coordination with other international organizations and member countries. A description of the specific outputs of these activities are presented below in Section C.

Future work and budgetary situation

8. The implementation of further activities on the provision of scientific advice would be contingent upon the resources available to FAO and WHO during 2004 and 2005. To date there has been an increase in the FAO regular program budget for the provision of scientific advice. However, efforts to increase regular budget allocation as well as extrabudgetary contributions still need to be undertaken. Notwithstanding present efforts, the FAO and WHO Secretariats will also link further fund-raising efforts to the improvement of the process for the provision of scientific advice.
9. The 27th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is invited to **confirm** the work priorities to be undertaken by FAO and WHO on the provision of scientific advice considering the discussions held at the Fifty-Third Session of the Executive Committee. In addition, **consideration** needs to be given to the discussion of the Executive Committee on criteria for setting priorities on the provision of scientific advice⁴.

C. OUTCOMES OF FAO/WHO EXPERT MEETINGS AND CONSULTATIONS

Risk assessments of food additives and contaminants

10. In response to requests from the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants, the Sixty-first meeting of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) evaluated, in June 2003, twenty-three food additives, 7 of them for specifications only, and revised the levels for arsenic and heavy metals for an additional 39 additives. JECFA also evaluated 144 flavour agents in 7 different groups applying the decision tree approach and prepared specifications for an additional 101 flavours. The Expert Committee also evaluated a water treatment agent (sodium dichloroisocyanurate NaDCC) and a nutritional source of iron (ferrous glycinate). JECFA assessed cadmium and methyl mercury as contaminants. For cadmium, the new data did not provide a sufficient basis for revising the provisional tolerable weekly intake (PTWI), therefore, the PTWI of 7 µg/kg of BW was maintained. In the case of methyl mercury the Expert Committee considered a variety of new data from human studies and derived from them a lower PTWI of 1.6 µg/kg BW, down from 3.3 µg/kg BW. The Summary Report is available at <http://www.fao.org/es/>

³ ALINORM 04/27/3, paras 55-85

⁴ ALINORM 04/27/3, paras 76-83

[ESN/jecfa/works_en.stm](http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/jecfa/works_en.stm); the report is available as WHO Technical Report Series No 922; the specifications were published as Addendum 11 to the Compendium of Food Additives Specifications.

Risk assessments of residues of veterinary drugs

11. In response to requests from the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF), the sixty second meeting of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) evaluated eleven veterinary drugs and their residues in foods in February 2004. In addition the Committee concluded that it is not appropriate to establish an ADI for chloramphenicol and that it was unlikely that chloramphenicol was an environmental contaminant. The Expert Committee also considered several general issues that relate to the risk assessment of residues of veterinary drugs in foods among them a risk assessment policy proposal from CCRVDF. The Summary Report is available at http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/jecfa/works_en.stm; the report and the toxicological monographs will be published by WHO and the residue monographs by FAO.

Risk assessment of pesticides residues

12. In response to requests from the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR), a Joint Meeting of the FAO Panel of Experts on Pesticide Residues in Food and the Environment and the WHO Core Assessment Group (JMPR) was held at WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland in September 2003. The Meeting evaluated 23 pesticides, including four new compounds and nine compounds that were re-evaluated within the periodic review programme of the CCPR for toxicity or residues, or both. The Meeting estimated 179 MRLs and recommended 98 existing MRLs for withdrawals for pesticides under the periodic review programme of the CCPR. There were 26 exceedances of the acute RfD based on estimated short-term intake for acephatate, dimethoate, fenitrothion, methamidophos, methoxyfenozide and phosmet. The Report is available at <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/AGRICULT/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Default.HTM>. Publications of the detailed toxicological evaluations and evaluations of pesticide residues in food will be prepared by WHO and FAO, respectively.
13. The 35th Session of the CCPR requested the JMPR (ALINORM 03/24A) to consider probabilistic approaches for refining the dietary intake estimates when the results of point estimates exceed the acute reference dose (acute RfD). In principle, the 2003 JMPR agreed to adopt a tiered approach to estimating short term dietary intake in which the second tier would be the probabilistic modelling e.g. considering the model that would be developed by the Working Group led by the Netherlands.

Antimicrobial resistance resulting from non-human usage of antimicrobials

14. In response to a recommendation from the 48th Session of the Executive Committee, FAO, WHO and OIE organized a two-step multidisciplinary expert consultation process to advise the Commission on possible directions to be taken on the issue of antimicrobial resistance.
15. The first Workshop on Non-human Antimicrobial Usage, held in December 2003 in Geneva conducted a preliminary scientific assessment considering all non-human uses of antimicrobials in animals (including aquaculture) and plants, and their role in antimicrobial resistance, based on the available scientific information. Based on the outcome, the second Workshop in Oslo considered the broad range of possible risk management options and included the participation of all major stakeholder groups. In particular, it focused on potential directions of future Codex, FAO, OIE and WHO work in this area, in order to prevent and minimize antimicrobial resistance at the global level.
16. The meeting concluded that the risks associated with non-human antimicrobial use and antimicrobial resistance should be part of the human safety assessment and that through implementation of good agricultural practices it is possible to reduce the necessity for antimicrobials. In addition, the concept of "critically important" classes of antimicrobials for people should be further developed by WHO, and FAO, OIE and WHO should take a leading role in capacity building, networking and co-ordination to facilitate implementation of surveillance programmes in various countries.
17. Finally it was suggested that a Codex/OIE Task Force should be established to develop risk management options for antimicrobial resistance related to non-human use of antimicrobials. This proposal is based on the recognition that international standards, with respect to antimicrobial resistant bacteria should be developed through the risk analysis process, and that risk management activities within Codex and OIE needs alignment. The work of the Task Force should therefore also include a risk assessment policy as well as a discussion of

a framework to implement management options on the basis of existing as well as future guidelines as appropriate.

18. The reports of both workshops were published by WHO and are available on the web pages of all three participating organisations (e.g.: <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/micro/en/>).

Residues of veterinary drugs without ADI/MRL

19. In July 2003, the 26th Session the Codex Alimentarius Commission discussed a request from Thailand to assess the issue of “Risk Analysis for Substances with No ADI and/or MRL” and took note of FAO’s proposal to examine, at a technical consultation, the regulatory issues, including zero tolerance and de minimis limits and risks associated with substances at the limit of detection or de minimis levels. The proposed Joint FAO/WHO Technical Workshop on Residues of Substances without ADI/MRL in Foods shall provide FAO, WHO and Codex with a first analysis of the disruptions in food trade that occurred in 2001/2002, identify the scientific, technical and regulatory problems related to them and discuss, if possible, any appropriate follow-up steps. The analysis of several case studies that will be provided by exporting and importing countries shall allow emphasis to be placed on “lessons learned”. The identification of possible gaps within the current framework of JECFA and Codex shall lead to the development of preliminary recommendations for further actions by FAO, WHO and Codex. The final report including working papers and case studies will be submitted to FAO, WHO and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Risk assessment of microbiological hazards in food

Pathogen-commodity risk assessments

20. The risk assessment on *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods, undertaken following the requests of the 32nd and 33rd sessions of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) has now been completed and is in print. An advance copy of the interpretative summary was made available to the 36th session of the CCFH. In response to the requests of the 32nd and 33rd sessions of the CCFH risk assessments of *Vibrio* spp in seafood and *Campylobacter* spp. in broiler chickens have been undertaken. These are currently undergoing a peer-review. A summary of the findings of each of these risk assessments was made available to the last sessions of the CCFH, the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene (CCMH) and the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP). These risk assessments will be finalised by the end of 2004.

FAO/WHO meeting on *Enterobacter sakazakii* and other microorganisms of concern in powdered infant formula

21. In response to the request of the 35th Session of the CCFH, FAO/WHO convened an expert meeting on *Enterobacter sakazakii* and other microorganisms of concern in powdered infant formula on 2 - 5 February 2004. The meeting reviewed the available information and made recommendation on means to reduce the risk associated with microorganisms in powdered infant formula. A preliminary risk assessment was undertaken to provide a basis for the elaboration of recommendations. The report was presented to the 36th session of the CCFH and the committee indicated that it would use this information in the revision of the international code of hygienic practice for foods for infants and children. In addition the expert meeting developed the framework for a more comprehensive risk assessment. Following the interest in this model expressed by the 36th CCFH, FAO/WHO will further develop this in the coming year.

FAO/WHO guidelines on exposure assessment and risk characterization of microbiological hazards in food

22. The above mentioned guidelines will be completed during 2004 and will complement the guidelines on hazard characterization for pathogens in food and water presently available (FAO/WHO Microbiological Risk Assessment Series. No. 3).

Risk assessment on biotoxins in bivalve molluscs.

23. At its 25th Session, the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) asked FAO and WHO to provide scientific advice on biotoxins in conjunction with its work on Proposed Draft Standards for Live and Processed Bivalve Molluscs. The CCFFP, at its 26th Session, specifically requested advice to enable the establishment of maximum levels in shellfish for shellfish toxins (PSP-, DSP-, ASP-, AZP- and NSP-toxins, and YTXs and PTXs), advice on methods of analysis for each toxin group as well as on monitoring of biotoxin-forming phytoplankton and bivalve molluscs, and information on geographical distribution of biotoxin-forming marine phytoplankton.

24. An FAO/WHO/IOC workshop held at the Food Safety Authority of Ireland in Dublin, 22-24 March 2004 established three working groups to address the questions posed by Codex with regard to setting up maximum levels of biotoxins and reference analytical methods for the Draft Standards for Live and Processed Bivalve Molluscs, and to provide scientific information that can be used for Section 7 - Live and [raw] bivalve molluscs - of the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products with respect to hazard identification and to technical guidance for classification and monitoring of growing areas.
25. This request from CCFFP and the approach for addressing this request is relatively simple compared to the risk assessment approach used so far within the framework of the CCFH for microbiological hazards. This simpler and faster approach combines electronic drafting/reviewing activities with physical meetings to finalize the scientific advice requested.
26. In order to provide scientific advice to the next session of CCFFP in February 2005, FAO, WHO and IOC are planning to hold a joint expert consultation from 27 September to 1 October 2004 in Norway. To implement this programme of work, ad hoc expert working groups will evaluate the available information (toxicological studies, completed national risk assessments, relevant epidemiological data, prevalence data, control measures, etc.) and prepare technical working papers for review during the joint FAO/IOC/WHO expert consultation. The call for data has been posted on both WHO (<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/chem/meetings/biotoxin/en>) and FAO websites (http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/risk_mra_risk_biotoxin_en.stm).

Safety assessment of foods derived from genetically modified animals

27. A joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on the safety assessment of foods derived from genetically modified animals (GM animals), including fish, was held at FAO in Rome from 17 to 21 November 2003. The consultation indicated that the food safety assessment of GM animals and derived products can largely be performed along the lines that have already been established for the evaluation of GM plants and derived products on a case-by-case basis. This means that the initial step of the food safety assessment will be a comparative safety assessment of the GM animal with its conventional counterpart, including a food intake assessment, followed where appropriate, by a full risk characterization. The Consultation also concluded that rigorous pre-market safety assessment of foods derived from GM animals should provide sufficient safety assurances.
28. The final report of the expert consultation is now available from: ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/gmanimal_report_en.pdf. The report will also be available in French and Spanish and in print format as an FAO Food and Nutrition Paper in the future. The working papers and executive summary are also available from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/risk_biotech_animal_en.stm

Guidance document on Obstacles to the Application of HACCP, Particularly in Small and Less Developed Business (SLDBs) and Approaches to Overcome them.

29. The 35th session of the CCFH (27 January - 1 February 2003) accepted the offer of FAO/WHO Representatives, to elaborate a guidance document on "Obstacles to the Application of HACCP, Particularly in Small and Less Developed Business (SLDBs) and Approaches to Overcome Them" using as a basis the CCFH discussions, in particular those related to discussion of paper CX/FH 03/4-Add.1 (December 2003). An electronic working group has been established by FAO/WHO to prepare this document which will be available for the next session of the CCFH. FAO has also supported the preparation of four case studies on application of HACCP in Brazil, Chile, India and Thailand. The information obtained will also be considered in the preparation of the guidance document.

D. OTHER FAO AND WHO ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE PROVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

Preparedness for response to nuclear emergencies.

30. FAO has established a network of technical experts on preparedness for response to nuclear emergencies in relation to food and agriculture. This group is charged with implementation of the cooperative arrangements between IAEA and FAO. Ongoing activities include the development of an on-line information system (including data on soil types, nutrition patterns, land use etc.), setting up an internal crisis management team to deal with nuclear emergencies affecting agriculture, and strengthening working relations with IAEA on this issue.

31. WHO's Radiation and Environmental Health Programme (RAD) has established a network of collaborating centers on Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance (RENPAN), that includes 14 institutions. Additionally, 13 more institutions are currently undergoing the WHO Collaborating Centre designation process. According to the Conventions on Early Notification and Assistance, regarding public health aspects of radiation emergency, WHO and IAEA co-operate closely in order to provide any requesting Member State or State Party with verified information on real or perceived risks to public health. Jointly with the IAEA, RAD is developing a document on public health guidance for preparedness and response to radionuclear accidents.

Expert consultation on community based veterinary public health

32. FAO held an Expert Consultation on Community Based Veterinary Public Health (VPH) in Rome on 27-28 October 2003 with OIE and WHO participation. Among the recommendations, the experts suggested that FAO should provide support to countries for identifying and solving problems especially relating to endemic, persistent zoonoses and food borne diseases with specific recommendations for prioritization of such VPH hazards based on risk analysis, burden assessment and socio-economic factors. Zoonoses and other VPH hazards should also be considered in the context of poverty alleviation. Support should include the development of practical guidelines for the delivery of VPH services at the community level to support new or existing human and animal health services.

Guidelines for Good Agricultural Practices

33. FAO is developing guidelines for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) along the food-chain in the context of Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD). To this effect, an Expert Consultation was held in Rome from 10 to 12 November 2003, to obtain advice on the relevance, validity and next steps of the proposed Good Agricultural Practices Approach. Participants discussed examples of application and methodology of a GAP approach based on stakeholder priorities with a focus particularly on developing country settings. The meeting resulted in initial strategies for implementing the GAP approach and the design of several pilot activities for testing the approach. There has been a joint initiative with Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária (EMBRAPA), Brazil, to define GAPs for a number of animal production systems within selected agro-ecosystems which resulted in a publication.

FAO/WHO worksharing activities with national governments and regional authorities for the evaluation of pesticide residues and toxicology

34. A pilot project on worksharing was initiated in response to the request from the CCPR on ways to improve the timeliness of the recommendations of the JMPR in establishing MRLs. One substance has been identified for this pilot project and will be evaluated at the 2004 JMPR, using national and regional evaluations as a basis. The 36th Session of the CCPR was advised that the purpose of this worksharing pilot project was to investigate the feasibility of using national and regional evaluations to expedite JMPR evaluations and make better use of the resources available, increase the transparency of the evaluation process, facilitate the international acceptance of JMPR evaluations by governments and facilitate the submission of dossiers by the industry. The results and experience of the worksharing pilot project will be summarised in an evaluation report and will be presented to the 37th Session of the CCPR.

Follow-up on the implementation of the York and Zoning reports

35. The 36th Session of the CCPR was informed that the JMPR had already been using the recommendations of the York and Zoning reports whenever possible but that JMPR needs further information from the national governments before their full utilization. The York workshop implemented in 1999 focussed on "Developing minimum data requirements for the estimation of MRLs and import tolerances". The "Zoning meeting" (2001), concluded that the impact of climate on the behaviour of residues of some foliar applied pesticides on certain crops is negligible, and residue trials could be extrapolated from one place to another when good agriculture practices and agronomical factors were similar.
36. Recognizing that practical experience would be necessary to see how recommendations could be implemented, the JMPR agreed to pilot test the practical applicability of the principles with one pesticide scheduled for evaluation by JMPR in 2004. A survey on the issues raised at the York and Zoning meetings, on which consensus was not achieved at that time, have been considered in the survey and distributed to member governments of the CCPR and the OECD for comments by the end of May 2004. The results would be improved transparency of pesticide evaluation at national and international level.

PART II: CAPACITY BUILDING IN FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY

37. In the past year, a number of initiatives have been taken or continued by FAO and WHO, in collaboration with relevant partner organizations and institutions, to (1) further enhance the respective roles of the agriculture and health sectors in ensuring the quality and safety of the food supply, (2) to strengthen FAO and WHO's role as neutral fora for negotiation and for exchange of information and experiences in the field of food safety and quality; (3) to further strengthen cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations and with other partners in the field of food safety and quality; and (4) to upgrade the capacity of developing member countries in food safety and food quality assurance and support their effective participation in Codex work.
38. More detailed information on all these activities is available as an information document (CAC/27 INF.5).

Global and Regional Fora of Food Safety Regulators

39. As a follow-up to the successful first Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators and with the support and approval of the FAO and WHO member countries, FAO and WHO are facilitating the Second Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators (GF-2) in Bangkok, Thailand on 12-14 October 2004, under the main theme of: "Building Effective Food Safety Systems". In order to allow greater focus during discussions, and to promote practical and pragmatic actions, the topics to be discussed will be limited in scope, namely under the two following sub-themes: 1) Strengthening official food control services and 2) Epidemio-surveillance of foodborne diseases and food safety rapid alert systems. Many countries are providing financial and in-kind support to FAO and WHO to assist in the organization of GF-2. A briefing meeting on GF-2 will be held with the G-8 countries on the occasion of the 27th session of the Commission.
40. In an effort to facilitate the discussion of practical actions and capacity building recommendations to promote food safety in the countries of the Asian and Pacific region, FAO and WHO convened a *Regional Conference on Food Safety for Asia and the Pacific* in Seremban, Malaysia from 24 to 27 May 2004. This Conference is the second in a series of regional meetings, the first of which was held in European Region in February 2002, that FAO and WHO are convening at the request of member countries to meet their needs for policy guidance and capacity building in food safety. A full report of the outcome of the Asian and Pacific Conference is available as an informational paper (CAC/27 INF.6).
41. At the request of the countries of each respective region, regional food safety conferences are currently being planned for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and possibly for the Near East. On the occasion of the 27th session of the Commission, a briefing meeting will be held with the delegates of the African region and a preparatory meeting will be held with the delegates from Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the permanent representatives of the countries of the region to WHO.

Coordination of Capacity Building Activities

42. Urgent actions must be taken to develop national capacity, in particular in developing countries, to assure the safety and quality of national food supplies. In order to enhance the effectiveness of capacity building activities, all stakeholders in food control must work together to improve information exchange, communication, consultation, and consumer involvement.
43. In an effort to improve the coordination of these important activities, FAO, WHO, and the World Bank are facilitating an expert consultation in the fall of 2004 on food control capacity building to address the needs of developing countries for capacity building in the various disciplines of food control as they relate to food safety and food trade; The consultation will also involve all the major donors active in the area of food control capacity building and will also include the following aspects:
- To review the methodologies/tools used to assess the capacity building needs in food control and advise on their appropriateness for the purpose and ways and means of improving the same;
 - To discuss "best practices" in the provision of capacity building in food control-related disciplines and advise on their suitability for the purpose;
 - To recommend new approaches in the implementation of capacity building activities/programmes taking into account the actual needs of countries and the technological means available nowadays.

Funding Mechanisms to Improve Food Safety and Quality

44. FAO, WHO, OIE, WTO, and the World Bank have recently established a Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) to coordinate the capacity building efforts of these organizations in the areas of food safety, plant, and animal health and to provide a funding mechanism for countries and stakeholders to improve in these areas. An FAO/WHO project to assist the low income countries of Asia and the Pacific in Developing Food Standards within a Risk Analysis Framework has recently been approved for funding from this Facility and will be implemented in the upcoming months. Interested countries and stakeholders are encouraged to propose projects and submit them to the STDF for consideration.
45. FAO and WHO have implemented a Trust Fund for Participation in Codex to increase the participation of developing countries and countries in transition in the vital work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The fund provides financial support to increase their ability to participate in the establishment of global food safety and quality standards, as well as improve their capacity to implement those standards in their own countries (see ALINORM 04/27/10F).

Technical Assistance

46. FAO and WHO are currently separately implementing a large programme of direct technical assistance to member countries in the area of food safety and quality and are working to develop a common vision for food safety and quality capacity building and to actually implement joint activities at the national level. While the activities and strategies of each current and planned initiative differ and are tailored to specific regions and countries, the overall objective is to assist developing countries in strengthening their food safety and quality control systems with the specific aim of facilitating participation in standard-setting activities and compliance with international food safety and quality standards.
47. This is accomplished by providing technical assistance in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the institutional framework and formulating proposals for the establishment of technically sound food control systems which are harmonized with current international standards. Specific capacity building activities include: training of food control officials and technical staff (food control managers, food inspectors, food analysts) through seminars, workshops and study tours; enhancement of food control laboratory capabilities; preparation of training manuals and guidelines; support in establishing and strengthening National Codex Committees; policy advice; and establishment of regulatory frameworks.
48. FAO and WHO, sometimes jointly and other times independently or with other partners, have implemented a large number of international, regional, sub-regional and national workshops in food safety and quality. In addition to general food safety and quality issues, subjects covered include participation in Codex, risk analysis, microbiological risk assessment, modernising food control systems, understanding WTO Agreements and implications for food safety and quality, fish inspection, feed safety, dairy and meat hygiene, and Good Agricultural Practices related to the production of food-producing animals.
49. FAO implements a large field programme at the global, regional and national level to assist developing member countries to improve their food control systems and activities. FAO has recently conducted a series of sub-regional training courses in Latin America and the Caribbean to improve the safety and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables. Through this project, a training manual and database of resources available in the area have been prepared and are now freely available on the FAO web pages or as a CD-ROM, in English, French, and Spanish. FAO is also implementing a large global project to enhance coffee quality through prevention of mould formation. This project is being carried out in Brazil, Colombia, Ivory Coast, India, Indonesia, Kenya, and Uganda, with collaboration from the Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) and the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC) and the University of Surrey, United Kingdom. The project has received funding from the Common Fund for Commodities and the Government of the Netherlands.
50. Other subjects addressed in FAO's national technical assistance projects include areas such as: development of food reference laboratories, pesticide and drug residues in foodstuffs, mycotoxins, strengthening food control programmes, food import control, strengthening the national Codex committees, export inspection and certification, food legislation, improving quarantine services, assistance in controlling diseases such as BSE, improving opportunities for exports of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables.
51. WHO's technical assistance projects are managed by its six regional offices, and directly at country level. Only the major capacity building activities which are taking place at global level are described here. In

response to resolutions of the World Health Assembly calling for enhanced communication between WHO and its Member States on matters of food safety, WHO, in collaboration with FAO, is now establishing an official International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) to be used for targeted and rapid distribution of various information for the protection of public health. One part of INFOSAN will be dedicated to food safety emergency situations (INFOSAN EMERGENCY) where imminent risk of serious injury or death is present.

52. Despite the effort of authorities around the globe, food-borne diseases continue to be a major health problem, both in developed and developing countries. In recent years WHO has elaborated rules to promote the production and handling of safe food, the *Five Keys to Safer Food*: keep clean, separate raw and cooked food, cook food thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures and use safe water and raw material.
53. Other activities include the management of a global network of laboratories and individuals involved in surveillance, isolation, identification and antimicrobial resistance testing of *Salmonella* (Global Salm-Surv). The network, which links around 800 members from nearly 500 institutions in 138 countries, is currently being extended to include other major foodborne pathogens, e.g. *Campylobacter*. The Global Environment Monitoring System/Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme (GEMS/Food) has now been introduced to 13 francophone countries, mainly from Africa, through the Third International Total Diet Study Workshop and Training Course held in May 2004. The workshop presented the latest developments in methods and technology which continue to make total diet studies the most cost-effective exposure assessment tool available for assessing human exposure to chemicals in food.

FAO/WHO Supporting Material for Capacity Building

54. In support of capacity building activities, FAO and WHO are currently or have recently been engaged in the development of a number of manuals, guidelines and training materials that should facilitate the capacity building effort. Most of these materials are developed jointly except for a few which are prepared under specific field projects operated either by FAO or WHO. These materials include:
- Food Safety and Quality – Guidelines for Strengthening National Food Control Systems (a joint FAO/WHO publication- available in En, Es, Fr and Ar- in printed or electronic copy)
 - Street Foods – A Training of Trainers Manual (an FAO publication- in preparation)
 - Food Safety Risk Analysis – A framework manual and CD-ROM training pack (a joint FAO/WHO publication – undergoing finalization)
 - Evaluation of Capacity Building Needs for Food Control (a joint FAO/WHO publication – in preparation)
 - Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetable training manual and resource database (available from FAO web pages or as a CD-ROM in English, Spanish, and French - see further description above)
 - Improving Participation in the Work of Codex- A Training Pack (in preparation- see further details below).
55. One project of particular interest is FAO/WHO's development of a training manual on Codex Alimentarius, designed to strengthen national food safety and quality systems through enhanced participation in the Codex process. It has been field-tested in Africa and the Pacific and it is expected to be available in final form in September 2004. The manual provides information on the Codex process and development of national Codex programmes. It should serve both as a reference document for those involved in national Codex activities and as a useful tool for national/regional training courses on Codex.
56. In addition, the manual is an important capacity building tool within the ongoing FAO and WHO programmes to increase effective participation in Codex activities, and it is anticipated that it will be of great support when used in conjunction with direct participation in Codex meetings of increasing numbers of countries through the funds of the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund.
57. WHO is now developing a food safety training manual based on the *Five Keys to Safer Food*. The purpose of this manual is to facilitate implementation of the *Five Keys* at country level. The manual will provide relevant food safety information for a large audience across the food chain and will ensure consistency in food safety messages when disseminated.

58. All these materials, once finalized, will be issued in multi-lingual form for wider use by member countries. In addition to and in summary of the other initiatives mentioned, FAO distributes a monthly electronic newsletter to over 2,500 subscribers to provide information on recent developments and upcoming activities of FAO and Codex that are related to food safety and quality. Other parties interested in receiving the newsletter can also subscribe by following the simple instructions listed in the newsletter itself. WHO also periodically sends an electronic newsletter to interested parties regarding the activities of WHO in food safety.

PART III: OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

A. THE INTERNATIONAL PORTAL FOR FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH

59. All national authorities involved in addressing sanitary and phytosanitary issues have a need for current, accurate and complete information on international standards, national regulations, scientific evaluations, and other supporting official information. This information also plays an important role in facilitating safe trade in agricultural products and food., both as the basis for decisions in the private sector and to meet the transparency conditions of trade under the WTO SPS Agreement. In an effort to allow users to access this material from a single source, FAO is leading an interagency initiative to develop and maintain an internet-based portal - *the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health* . This portal allows users to by-pass secondary (interpreted) information, as well as material which may be out of date – both of which can be found using typical internet search tools - and focus on the definitive official sources across the three main disciplines of food safety, animal health and plant health.
60. As a portal, this system provides a view of resources gathered from partner official websites (where it is maintained), described using a set of keywords supported by a powerful free text search facility. The portal currently (June 2004) contains references to over 13,000 items, drawn from the three SPS-recognized standard setting bodies, as well as from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), FAO, WHO, and WTO. It also includes demonstration ‘nodes’ of nearly 400 items each from the United States of America and the European Union, and smaller data sets from selected developing countries.
61. Version 1.0 of the portal was formally launched on 25 May 2004, on the occasion of the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Asia and the Pacific (Seremban, Malaysia). It is now freely accessible from the FAO Biosecurity PAIA webpage (www.fao.org/biosecurity) or directly from www.ipfsaph.org. Interested users are invited to utilise the portal, share the link with other users, and provide feedback to the FAO project team on the portal content and usability.
62. Work is now underway to include more detailed information from the current sources, including from Codex, JECFA and JMPR, as well as data from additional countries. A capacity building programme related to the portal is also planned. More information on the portal project is available in CAC/27 INF.4.

B. AGREEMENTS BETWEEN FAO AND OIE AND BETWEEN OIE AND WHO

63. The Office International des Epizooties (OIE), which is the World Organization for Animal Health, is an intergovernmental organization established in 1924. OIE, which has 166 Member Countries as in March 2004, maintains permanent relations with more than 20 international organizations, including FAO and WHO.

Agreement between FAO and OIE

64. The long-standing cooperation between FAO and OIE dates back to 1947, when an informal arrangement was concluded between the two organizations. Subsequent to that, in 1953, an interim Agreement had been concluded and confirmed by the FAO Conference.
65. Over the years, cooperation has expanded and covers now a wide range of areas in animal health involving, in particular, exchange of information, consultation and exchange of experience on studies and projects and, as a result, there is a need to coordinate better their efforts in control of animal diseases and food safety within the framework of their respective mandates through a new Agreement.
66. The proposed Agreement was endorsed by FAO Council at its 125th Session in November 2003 and was confirmed by the FAO Conference at its 32nd session in December 2003. The Agreement will be considered

for endorsement by the 72nd General Session of the International Committee of OIE, to be held from 23 to 28 May 2004.

Agreement between OIE and WHO

67. A previous agreement establishing relations between OIE and WHO was approved by resolution WHA14.50 in 1961.
68. The agreement was revised in 2003 to take into account a number of recent developments of shared concern. Animal Production Food Safety became a formal area of OIE activity in 2001. The emergence of such zoonotic diseases as bovine spongiform encephalopathy and the related variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, severe acute respiratory syndrome, and avian influenza, has drawn renewed attention to the animal health component of consequential new diseases in humans. These developments have underscored the need for closer cooperation between the two organizations in the surveillance, prevention and control of zoonotic diseases.
69. A revised agreement reflecting these developments was endorsed by the OIE International Committee at its 71st session in May 2003. By virtue of Article 6 of the agreement, its entry into force is subject to the approval of the World Health Assembly. The agreement will be considered for approval by the 57th session of the World Health Assembly to be held from 17 to 22 May 2004.

Annex I*Codex Requests to FAO and WHO on Scientific Advice (implementation status until April 2004)*

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Expected Output
1	Safety evaluation of 14 food additives and 173 flavouring agents	CCFAC 35 th Session	ALINORM 03/12A Para. 183 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	In preparation. 63rd JECFA meeting (8-17 June 2004)	200,000	Acceptable intakes/ specifications
2	Safety evaluation of eight contaminants (e.g. acrylamide, arsenic, ethyl carbamate)	CCFAC 35 th Session	ALINORM 03/12A Para. 183 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	In preparation. 64th meeting of JECFA (February 2005)	200,000	Tolerable intakes
3	Safety evaluation of residues for four new and three existing veterinary drugs	CCRVDF 14 th Session	ALINORM 03/31A Para. 110 ff	Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)	Done. 62nd meeting of JECFA (4-12 February 2004)	120,000	Acceptable intakes / Maximum residue limits
4	What to do with veterinary drugs with no ADI and/or MRL	CCRVDF 14 th Session (Delegation of Thailand) CAC 26 th Session	ALINORM 03/31A Para. 90 ALINORM 03/41 Paras. 245 - 249	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	Expert consultation scheduled for 24-26 August 2004. Visiting Scientist from Thailand working in FAO for implementation of this activity	140,000	Analysis of case studies
5	To provide scientific advice on biotoxins, especially as it related to their levels in bivalve molluscs	CCFFP 25 th Session	ALINORM 03/18 Para. 92	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	First technical meeting implemented from 22-24 March 2004 with the support of the government of Ireland. Second meeting to be implemented from 27 Sept - 1 Oct 2004.	100,000	Risk management options for inclusion in the Proposed Draft Standard on Bivalve Molluscs (including limits) and the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Expected Output
6	Safety and regulatory problems related to functional food	CCASIA 13 th Session	ALINORM 03/15 Para. 93	FAO/WHO Ad Hoc Expert Consultation	Decision to cancel this activity to be taken by CAC based on discussion at CCEXEC	100,000	Guidance on the need for future Codex work
7	Safety of active chlorine used in and on foods	CCFAC 35 th Session	ALINORM 03/12A Para. 65	Evaluation on the risk and health benefits of the use of active chlorine in food processing when reviewing the WHO Guidelines on Drinking Water Quality.	Decision to cancel this request to be taken by CAC based on discussion at CCEXEC	80,000	Proposed Draft Code of Practice for the Use of Active Chlorine (Step 2/3)
8	Antimicrobial resistance: FAO/WHO to advise the Commission on possible directions to be taken including the establishment of a new task force if necessary	CCEXEC 48 th Session	ALINORM 01/4 Para. 37	Technical meetings to consider all uses of antimicrobials in agriculture and veterinary use (including aquaculture) and take into account the role played by antimicrobials as essential human and veterinary medicines.	Done. First FAO/OIE/WHO Expert Workshop was held from 1-5 December 2003. Second Workshop implemented in Oslo, 16-18 March 2004 with support of the government of Norway.	200,000	Risk management options for antimicrobials by different Codex Committees (CCPR, CCFH, CCRVDF, CTAF)
9	FAO/WHO to extend their current work on Reference recommended nutrient intakes to include ULs for vitamins and minerals	CCNFSDU 23 rd Session	ALINORM 03/26 Para. 138ff		Decision on priority to be taken by CAC based on discussion at CCEXEC	160,000	Proposed Draft Guidelines for Vitamins and Mineral Supplements (Step 5)
10	The risk associated with <i>Enterobacter</i> genus, including <i>E. sakazakii</i> , and <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> in powdered infant formula	CCFH 35 th Session CCFH 36 th Session	ALINORM03/13A Para. 169 ALINORM 04/27/13 Paras 145 - 150	FAO/WHO expert workshop Further development of a risk assessment model as a decision support tool	Done. Workshop held from 2-5 February 2004. Advice provided to last session CCFH To be undertaken in the second half of 2004	160,000	Risk management options/guidance in the revision of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Foods for Infants and Children

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Expected Output
11	Evaluation of pre-harvest control measures, post-harvest treatment technologies, how <i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i> causes illness and methods for analysis of toxin producing gene	CCFFP 25 th Session	ALINORM 03/18 Para. 91 Possible additional work on this matter pending decision of CCFH 2005	Consideration of these issues in the ongoing risk assessment of <i>Vibrio</i> spp in seafood and in an expert consultation on <i>Vibrio</i>	Considered at an expert consultation in Bangkok in August 2002 Being incorporated into the Vibrio Risk Assessment Decision on priority to be taken by CAC based on CCFH discussions	Done	Risk management measures for inclusion in the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (bivalve molluscs, aquaculture) and possibly in the Proposed Draft Standard for Bivalve Molluscs
12	Final risk assessments on Listeria, Vibrio & Campylobacter	CCFH 34 th & 35 th Sessions	ALINORM 03/13 & 03/13A	Completion of the risk assessments	<i>Salmonella</i> published; <i>Listeria</i> in print. <i>Vibrio</i> in peer review <i>Campylobacter</i> going to peer review	185,000	Risk management options in the revision of relevant Codes of Practice
13	Expert consultation to assist the committee integrate risk assessment results in the development of standards and related text	CCFH 34 th Session	ALINORM 03/13 Para. 83	Finalisation of the draft guidelines that were already developed at a consultation held in Kiel Germany in 2003	Decision to be taken by CAC on new work proposals by CCFH	150,000	General guidance on how to integrate risk assessment results into risk management decisions
14	Risk assessment based advice on a range of 32 pathogen-commodity combinations	CCFH 32 nd Session	ALINORM 01/13 Paras. 12 – 20	<i>E.coli</i> in 2004 2 more planned for 2005	Decision to be taken by CAC on new work proposals by CCFH on <i>E.coli</i>, <i>vibrio</i> and <i>virus</i> in food.	480,000	Risk management options in the revision of relevant Codes of Practice

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Expected Output
15	Request to convene a consultation to review the status and procedures of the expert bodies on additional ways to improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of scientific advice to the Commission	CAC 24 th Session CAC 25 th Session CCEXEC 54 th Session	ALINORM 01/41 Para. 61 ALINORM 03/25/5 Para. 23 ALINORM 04/27/3 Para 84 and 85	Identify additional resources to complete the consultative process and to initiate implementation of recommendations.	First planning meeting of FAO/WHO held on 29-30 May 2003 Electronic Forum held from 1 October to 14 November 2003 FAO/WHO Workshop held from 27-29 January 2004 FAO/WHO Final Expert Consultation to be organised if resources available	425,000	Recommendations for FAO and WHO Directors General
16	Establishment of criteria for the evaluation of safety of acceptable previous cargoes (transport of fats and oils in bulk) and evaluation of specific substances on that basis	CCFO 18 th Session	ALINORM 03/17 Para. 78-79	Proposed at 26 th CAC to convene a FAO/WHO Expert Consultation	Decision to cancel this request to be taken by CAC based on discussion at CCEXEC	160,000	Criteria for the elaboration and revision of the list
17	Food Safety Risk Assessment of GM Animals, including fish	-	ALINORM 03/34 ALINORM 03/34A	FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on GM animals	Done. November 2003.		Risk assessment policy guidance (guidelines for food safety assessment)

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Expected Output
18	Evaluation of residues and toxicology of 19 pesticides for the establishment of MRLs	CCPR 35 th Session	ALINORM 03/24A	Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues	Done. Meeting of the FAO Panel of Experts on Pesticide Residues in Food and the Environment and the Core Assessment Group-15-24 Sept 2003 with pre-meeting on 10-14 Sept 2003 Decision to keep this request in the framework of Codex needs to be taken by CAC based on discussion at CCEXEC		Acceptable intakes/ Proposed Draft Maximum Residues Limits for Pesticides
19	Work sharing of pesticide residue and toxicology evaluation at national and international level	CCPR 35 th Session	ALINORM 03/24A Para. 19	Joint FAO/WHO pilot project in collaboration with OECD countries	First meeting on 9 June 2003, pilot project started on one compound to be evaluated at 2004 JMPR Evaluation report on pilot project to be presented at 37 th CCPR	In progress	Decreased Workload for JMPR
20	Interim MRLs	CCPR 35 th and 36 th Sessions	ALINORM 03/24A ALINORM 04/27/24	CCPR-Writing group	Pilot project stage	By Email	Established MRLs for spices based on monitoring data
21	MRLs for Spices based on monitoring data	34 th CCPR	ALINORM 03/24	2002 and 2003 JMPR	For evaluation by 2004 JMPR	10,000	Established MRLs for spices based on monitoring data

#	Request for Advice	Originator	Reference	Required Activity by FAO/WHO	Status of implementation	Estimated Cost (US\$)	Expected Output
22	Improving the methodology for point estimates on dietary exposure assessment in relation to MRL setting	CCPR 35 th Session	ALINORM 03/24A Paras. 20-31	Working Group	Working paper presented at the 36 th Session of CCPR Training courses for developing country participants planned	50,000	Improvement in MRL setting
23	York meeting and Zoning Report on minimum data requirements for establishing MRLs and Import Tolerances	CCPR 35 th Session CCEXEC 53 rd Session	ALINORM 03/24A Para.11 ALINORM 04/27/3 Para. 74	Expert Consultation	Proposal stage Progress report at 36 th Session of CCPR Decision to be taken by CAC based on discussion at CCEXEC	150,000	Better Coordination and Decreased Workload of JMPR
24	Revised data requirements on environmental fate	CCPR 35 th and 36 th Sessions	ALINORM 03/24A ALINORM 04/27/24	JMPR	Started 2003 JMPR	none	Decreased workload of the JMPR
25	Guidance document on Obstacles to the Application of HACCP, Particularly in Small and Less Developed Business and Approaches to Overcome them	CCFH 35 th session	ALINORM 03/13A	Preparation guidance document and pilot training	Electronic working group established	185,000	Guidance for member countries