

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - Fax: (+39) 06 5705 4593 - E-mail: codex@fao.org - www.codexalimentarius.org

Agenda Item 5, 8a and 10

ASIA/19 CRD20

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

Nineteenth Session

Tokyo, Japan, 3-7 November 2014

COMMENTS OF PHILIPPINES

Agenda Item 5 Comments and information on national food control systems, consumer participation in food standards setting and the use of Codex standards at the national level (replies to CL 2014/21-ASIA)

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems. These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiatives to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

Food Control Management

The Philippines Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is mandated by laws Republic Act (RA) 3720, RA 7394 to ensure the safety and quality of processed food in the country and the Department of Health Sanitation Code of the Philippines for health protection. This mandate was further strengthened by virtue of Republic Act 9711 known as FDA Act of 2009 where FDA created a sole authority on processed food regulation named as Center for Food Regulation and Research (CFRR) which handles the development of standard, rules and regulations, audit, as well as enforce and monitor compliance of all processed food in the country. To further strengthen the food safety and control systems in the country, another law was passed last year known as the Food Safety Act of 2013 or Republic Act 10611 which links the food safety systems from farm to fork of food supply chain from different government agencies, with the Department of Agriculture handling the primary and post harvest stages, the Department of Health through the FDA handling the food processing stage, and the Local Government Units handling food for immediate consumption including street vended and ambulant vending foods. RA 10611 has a provision for the creation of a Food Safety Coordination Board chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Health and co-Chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture with members coming DOH and FDA and DA regulatory agencies, members include the Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Trade and Industry, Local Government Units, League of provinces, municipalities, cities and barangays.

In the coming months, CFRR-FDA will be having its on-line registration of product registration to ease and facilitate efficient issuance of product authorization both for local and imported products. All food evaluators are being trained for paperless handling of food product registration applications.

Inspection Services

RA 9711 and RA 10611 likewise strengthen FDA inspectorate all over the country thus created the field regulatory offices including regional offices and regional enforcement units. The country has adopted a risk-based approach of inspection focusing on high risk products with history of non-compliance hence intensifying post market surveillance/monitoring of food products to verify sustained compliance in the markets/outlets. Each regional food regulatory officers are continuously trained and regional offices strategically intensified with the creation of cluster Directors for the three major islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Food inspectors in the borders and port of entries are also part of RA 10611 implementation.

Laboratory Services

Apart from the food laboratory in the CFRR, FDA has three major satellite laboratories in three major islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, likewise it accredits private and public food laboratories to assist in testing and analysis for physical, chemical and microbiological parameters including those of monitored and

complaint products. FDA laboratory is ISO certified and its analysts continuously undergo trainings for latest science based testing methods and machines.

Information Dissemination

The FDA website www.fda.gov.ph regularly posts latest developments in the agency and serves as clients first hand information tool. There is also an interactive exchange of information with food industry and clients where they can easily contact FDA for queries and updates on the status of their products applications. FDA also conducts public consultations before enforcing policies affecting the stakeholders. There is a regular training for Qualified Person in Regulatory Affairs (QPIRA) to orient them on how to comply with the requirements and regulations. Consumers or anyone can also file on product complaint in FDA through its established on-line interactive communications systems.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

- i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;
- ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

The Philippines has created the National Codex Organization (NCO) a structure similar to Codex Alimentarius Commission where NCO Sub-Committees parallel to Codex Committees where established to handle specific areas of concern. NCO is a joint undertaking of the DOH and DA with the food industry as members. All Codex Committees has NCO counterpart in the Philippines. To date, the country is self-sufficient and was able to incorporate in the government systems the sustained participation of all NCO Sub-Committees to the Codex Committees and the NCO was incorporated in the Food Safety Act or RA 10611 hence regularly sending delegates to all Codex Subsidiary bodies where the Philippines is an active member.

The stakeholders i.e. food industry actively take part in developing Philippine Position papers as they are permanent members of NCO Sub-Committees, they likewise attend codex sessions through the established protocol of the NCO as contained in its Manual of Operations on effective participation of codex members. NCO Sub-Committee members include the food associations, food organizations, academe, research institutions, consumer groups, and other relevant organizations.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Please describe:

- i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;
- ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and
- iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

Priorities and interests include food additives, food contaminants, pesticide residues, food labeling, nutrition and foods for special dietary uses. The country is developing its Philippine National Standards (PNS) and all codex subsidiary bodies are important reference in formulating standards. The Philippines is using codex standard as reference point in the absence of a particular PNS.

Agenda Item 8a Status of implementation of the Strategic Plan for the CCASIA 2010-2014

Agenda Item 10 Codex issues relevant to the region

Question 1: Codex Issues Relevant to the Region

Q1.1 Please describe the activities, which the Coordinator and/or the member countries need to do, to increase the participation of the informal meetings of CCASIA members prior to the plenary session of Codex Committees.

- ***Discussion of relevant issues of common interest e.g. labeling, ethnic food, within the region which are in the agenda of CCASIA***
- ***Discussion on Harmonization of standards e.g. FOP among member countries***
- ***Discussion on the use of Codex standards, food safety and control systems, common requirements for import and export***

- **More capability building activities on risk analysis, strengthen/establish website linkage and exchange of information on food safety issues, and follow-up workshop on standards development**

Q1.2 Please describe interests and/or concerns that you have related to the Codex work currently undertaken or you would like to discuss in the future. Please use the following table when providing answers:

No	Issue of Interest and/or concern (1)	Subsidiary body (2)	Reason (3)	Status of work (4)	Proposal for actions/collaboration (5)
1	Harmonization of requirements	CCASIA	Facilitate trade and access to international market	-	Conduct electronic and physical meetings
2	Assessment of nutrition and health claims	CCFL	Common substantiation and data requirements	-	Include in CCASIA for discussion
3	Harmonization of labelling e.g. FOP	CCFL	Trade facilitation and movement of single label within the region	-	Conduct electronic and physical meetings

- (1) Identify issue or topic of current Codex work
- (2) Name of subsidiary body that is most relevant to your interest and/or concern,
- (3) Reason for your interest and/or concern,
- (4) Status of work at the subsidiary body, and
- (5) Any actions or collaboration you wish to have in the work of the subsidiary body or in the region in the future.

Question 2: Implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan

Member countries are encouraged to provide information on changes and new initiatives since the last session of CCASIA (November 2012) for following questions. For Q2.1 and 2.2, please indicate the corresponding number of Actions in the Regional Strategic Plan (see Appendix).

Q2.1 Of the Actions listed in the Regional Strategic Plan, what are the priority areas for your country?

Objective 4

4.1 Identify and prioritize food safety and Codex issues that affect the region and where appropriate seek the assistance of FAO/WHO for scientific advice.

4.4 Collate and generate quality data on issues of interest to the region and submit to the Joint FAO/WHO expert bodies and consultation. FAO and WHO to assist countries in this activity in line with the Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

4.5 Promote the consistent application of risk analysis principles at the national level.

4.6. Organize and conduct regional workshops/ training courses with assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations to facilitate the development of the technical capacity of the members of the region including risk analysis.

Objective 5

5.3 Assist member countries in terms of capacity building to harmonize national legislation with that of Codex with assistance of FAO/WHO and other international organizations.

Objective 6

6.2 Identify specific food products of interest to the region that requires standards to be developed in order to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade.

Q2.2 Of the Actions listed in the Regional Strategic Plan, which actions have you taken in your country?

Initially, Objectives 4.5, 4.6 and Objective 6.2

Q2.3 What additional support is required to help its effective implementation?

Latest technology, skills, and knowledge from experienced countries