

International Issues in Food Standards: Codex Alimentarius and JECFA

FCC Stakeholders Forum

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Outline of Talk

- Codex Alimentarius
 - Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)
- FAO/WHO Expert Bodies
 - Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)

What is Codex Alimentarius?

- Established in 1962 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations (UN)
- International standard-setting organization
- A collection of standards, guidelines, and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission
- Comprised of Committees
- Decisions are made by **consensus**

– ***Procedural Manual Section I, Rule XII:
Elaboration and Adoption of Standards***

“... shall make every effort to reach agreement on the adoption or amendment of standards by **consensus**. Decisions to adopt or amend standards may be taken by voting only if such efforts to reach consensus have failed.



Participation and Purpose of Codex

- Members and Observers (2018)
 - 189 Codex Members
 - 188 Member Countries
 - 1 Member Organization (EU)
 - 229 Codex Observers
 - 57 International Governmental Organizations (IGOs)
 - 156 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
 - **USP is an Observer**
 - 16 UN Organizations
- Purpose
 - Protect consumer health
 - Ensure fair practices in food trade

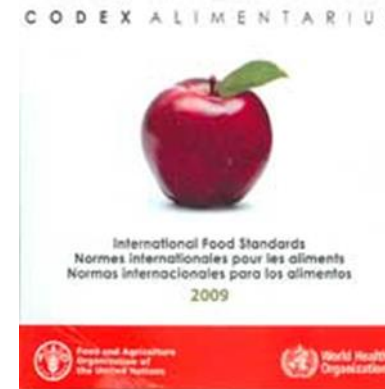
Types of Codex Committees

- **General Subject Committees**
 - Develop General Standards, Guidelines and Codes of Practice which are applied broadly across all products and product categories
 - Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF); **General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed**
 - Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA); **General Standard for Food Additives**
 - Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH)
 - Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS)
 - Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL)
 - Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP)
 - Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS)
 - Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU)
 - Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR)
 - Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF)

- **Commodity Committees**
 - Develop standards that define the physical and chemical characteristics of nearly 200 internationally traded products
 - Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (CCCPL)
 - Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV)
 - Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO)
 - Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV)
 - Codex Committee on Sugars (CCS)
 - Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)

Why are Codex Standards useful?

- Reference points based on sound science
 - Development of national requirements
 - Promote international trade of safe food
 - Relationship to trade agreements
 - World Trade Organization
 - Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreements (SPS)
 - “Desiring to further the use of harmonized sanitary and phytosanitary measures between Members, on the basis of international standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by the relevant international organizations, including the **Codex Alimentarius Commission** . . .”
 - Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
- Codex standards are
 - Recommendations by FAO/WHO
 - Voluntary
 - NOT national legislation



Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)

- CCFA sessions, which are hosted by China, are held annually in March
- Primary responsibilities of the Committee
 - Establish maximum levels for the use of food additives (General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA))
 - Maintain a priority list of food additives for risk assessment by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)
 - Assign functional classes to food additives (International Numbering System (INS))
 - Recommend specifications for identity and purity for food additives for adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)



GENERAL STANDARD FOR FOOD ADDITIVES

TABLE ONE

Additives Permitted for Use Under Specified Conditions in Certain Food Categories or Individual Food Items

ACESULFAME POTASSIUM				
INS	Acacesulfame potassium	Functional Class	Flavour enhancer, Sweetener	
FoodCatNo	FoodCategory	MaxLevel	Notes	Year Adopted
01.1.4	Flavoured fluid milk drinks	350 mg/kg	161 & 188	2007
01.3.2	Beverage whiteners	2000 mg/kg	161 & 188	2008
01.4.4	Cream analogues	1000 mg/kg	161 & 188	2008
01.5.2	Milk and cream powder analogues	1000 mg/kg	161 & 188	2008
01.6.5	Cheese analogues	350 mg/kg	161 & 188	2008

What is the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA)?



- Intended to be Codex's single authoritative reference point for food additives
 - Currently contains over 4100 adopted provisions for the use of more than 300 food additives in over 250 food categories
- Intended to promote international harmonization for the use of food additives
 - Serves as a reference for developing countries
 - Can be cited in Sanitary Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barrier to Trade (TBT) disagreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO)

Current Issues at CCFA

- Use of Note 161
 - References National Legislation
 - “Subject to national legislation of the importing country aimed, in particular, at consistency with Section 3.2 of the Preamble.”*
- Alignment of all commodity standards with the GSFA
 - Making the GSFA the sole reference for food additives
- Adoption of remaining provisions in step process
 - Colors and Sweeteners
- Nitrates and Nitrites
 - Reporting basis (ingoing or residue)
- New provisions and revision of adopted provisions
 - Response to Circular Letter CL 2019/40-FA due by 1/15/2020

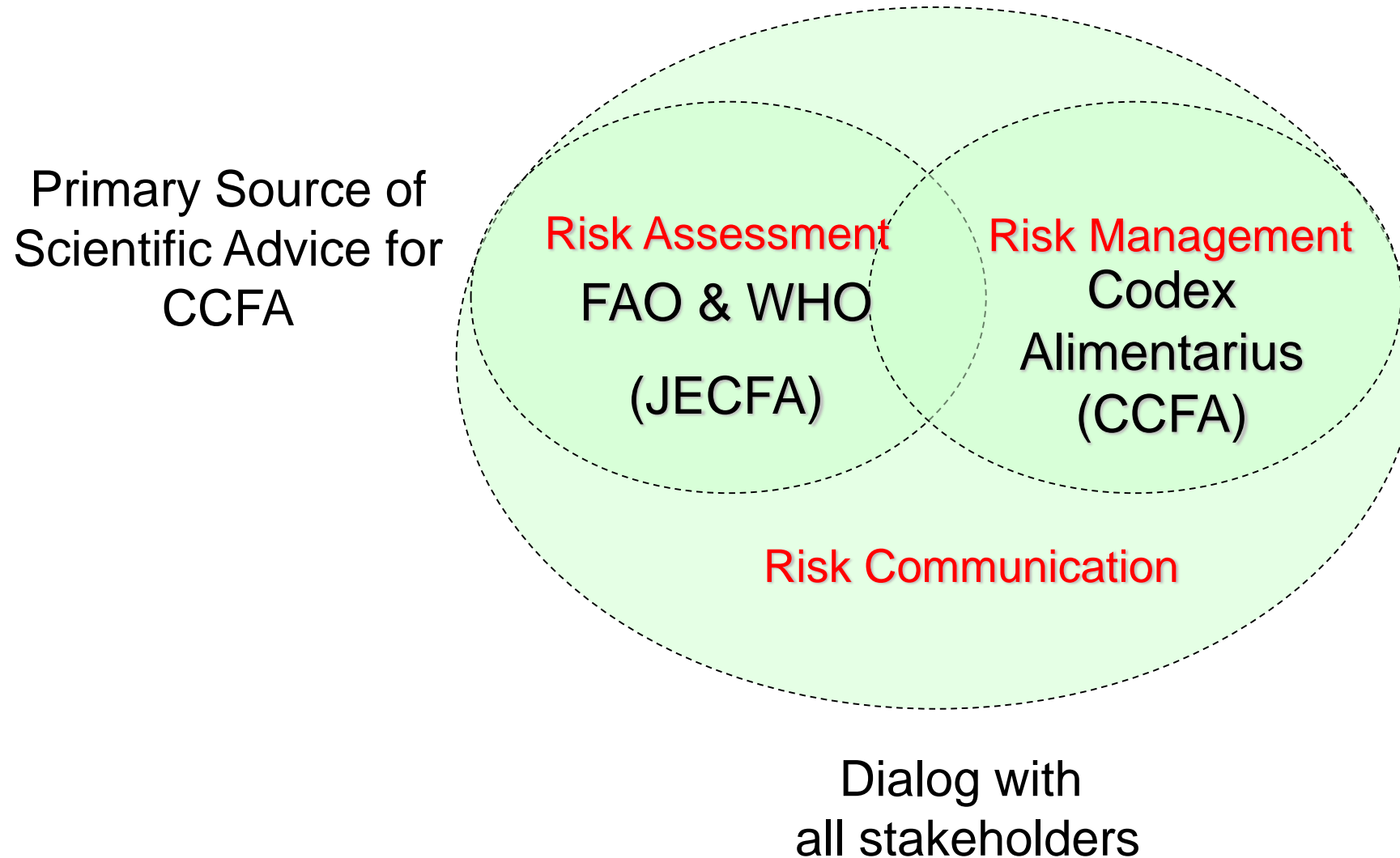
CCFA Issues of Interest to USP/FCC

- Revision of International Numbering System
- Adoption of JECFA food additive specifications as Codex specifications
- Additions to the JECFA Priority List

FAO/WHO Scientific Bodies

- Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)
- Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)
- Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA)
- Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Nutrition (JEMNU)

Relationship Between JECFA and CCFA



What is JECFA?

- Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives administered jointly by World Health Organization (WHO) and Food Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- International expert scientific committee in existence since 1956
- Performs risk assessments and provides scientific advice (to Codex and others)
- Evaluates the safety of food additives, contaminants, naturally occurring toxicants and residues of veterinary drugs in food
- Experts are invited
- Develops principles for the safety evaluation of chemicals in food (e.g., EHC 240)
- Secretariats
 - Kim Petersen, WHO Secretary JECFA
 - Markus Lipp, FAO Secretary JECFA



JECFA Process: Start to Finish



- Selection of additives from JECFA Priority List (developed by CCFA)
- Call for data
- Selection of experts/declaration of interests
- Experts receive data and information 4-6 months before the meeting
- Teleconferences in advance of the JECFA meeting are coordinated by FAO/WHO Secretariats as needed
- JECFA meeting site alternates between the WHO Headquarters in Geneva and the FAO Headquarters in Rome
- Adoption of final report
- Publishing of JECFA summary
- Publishing of final report and monographs

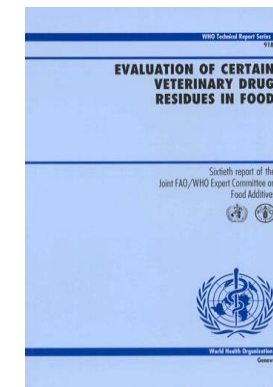


6 or more months



JECFA Publications

- Summary
 - Published weeks after the meeting
- WHO Technical Report Series
 - Detailed conclusions of JECFA meetings
- WHO Food Additive Series (FAS)
 - Toxicological and intake monographs published after the meetings
- Compendium of Food Additive Specifications (FAO Food and Nutrition Paper (FNP) Series No. 52 and Addenda)
 - Specifications for the identity and purity of food additives developed at JECFA
- WHO and FAO have their databases and other information available online



How Does CCFA Request Scientific Advice from JECFA?



- CCFA maintains a priority list of additives for review by JECFA
 - Current list contains 24 additives, 29 processing aids (enzymes) and 60 flavoring substances
- CCFA JECFA Priority List Process
 - Circular letter calling for proposals for addition to the JECFA Priority List
 - Proposals published prior to meeting
 - In session working group (led by Canada) recommends to CCFA additives for inclusion on the list
 - Proposals must be supported by a member country
 - Information is typically provided by industry
 - Availability of data is predominant determinant of addition to list
- The FAO and WHO JECFA Secretariats select from the JECFA Priority List to determine what additives will be reviewed at the next JECFA meeting (JECFA call for data)

Why Does the FDA Participate in Codex and JECFA?

- Enhances FDA's ability to achieve an outcome favorable to FDA's public health mission
- Ensures that the safety of the US food supply is not compromised by inadequate international standards
- Promotes the safety of foods in international trade
- Meets FDA's FDAMA obligations to reduce regulatory burdens by harmonizing with other countries
- Reduces likelihood of SPS/WTO challenges to FDA's regulations
- Combats measures that could adversely affect US trade

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Further Information Sources

Codex Alimentarius <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/en/>

U.S. Codex Office: <https://www.usda.gov/codex>

U.S. Delegate Reports: <https://www.usda.gov/topics/trade/international-food-standards/codex-delegation-reports>

GSFA Online <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/codex-texts/dbs/gsfa/en/>

JECFA Reports <https://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/jecfa-reports/en/>

JECFA Specifications <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/scientific-advice/jecfa/jecfa-additives/en/>

Any additional questions – feel free to contact me

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Thank You