



Codex Alimentary- A Review

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ABSTRACT

Codex Alimentarius is a collection of international standards of foods, codes of practice, methodologies and other recommendations that are related to foods, food production, and safety. Codex Alimentarius originated from the Latin term "Codex Alimentarius", meaning "Food Law" or "Food Code" [1]. It is taken by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and presented uniformly with an aim to maintain international standards of quality and consumer economic interest and to maintain fair trade practices in fairways. There are two goals of the Codex Alimentarius Commission: (1) to protect the health of consumers and (2) to promote fair practices in the food trade. These goals are accomplished by the development of food standards, food guidelines, codes of hygienic practices, and other actions. This paper primarily addresses the various actions that have been taken to achieve the latter goal, which harmonizing the health protection itself results in improving trade opportunities.

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Codex Alimentarius Commission

Codex Alimentarius Commission maintains and developed Codex Alimentarius. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States (FAO) joined by the World Health Organization (WHO) in June 1962 set up this commission in early November 1961 whose first session was held in Rome in October 1963 [2]. The main purpose of this body is to protect the health of consumers and to ensure fair food trade practices [3]. Both the bodies also adopted the set of rules and Procedures for the Commission.

Up to 2012, 186 members were there in the Codex Alimentarius Commission: along with 186 member countries, one member of the organization, from the European Union is also there [4]. There were 230 Codex observers: 52 intergovernmental organizations, 162 non-governmental organizations, and 16 United Nations organizations.

Currently, Codex Alimentarius Commission cover 99 % of the world's population, and over 200 observers such as international governmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and United Nations agencies [5].

Foods under Codex:

The Codex Alimentarius covers all food; it may be a processed or unprocessed food or raw, which is intended for human consumption. It also covers chewing gum, drinks, and any materials, being used in the preparation and treatment of foods. But it does not deal with the tobacco or other substances, which used solely as drugs.

In addition to that, the Codex regulates food hygiene & quality, including microbiological standards, food additives, pesticides and residues of veterinary drugs, contaminants, food labeling, and marketing. Other regulation of Codex includes methods for sampling and hazard analysis, food import and export, a certification system, etc. it also standardized the procedures for knowing the safety of foods produced by using modern biotechnology.

Administration of Codex

Following an open worldwide search for qualified candidates Director Generals of FAO and WHO jointly appoint the secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission [2] The Secretariat is established at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

Food Labeling Requirements under Codex Alimentarius:

Under Codex Alimentarius following information must be labeled on the product.

- Name of the food/product.
- List of ingredients, have to mention in descending order.
- Net content and drained weight of the product.
- Name and address of manufacturer/company.
- Country of origin.
- Lot identification/Number.
- Manufacture date and storage instructions.
- Instructions for use of the product.

The purpose of the name of the standard, the scope, description, weight and labeling is to ensure that the consumers choosing the right product.

General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius

Achievements

A lot of successful work has been achieved in different sectors to protect consumers' health and maintain the food trade in a fair way which as follows [6].

- Commodity standards: 186
- Commodity-related texts: 46
- Food Labelling: 9
- Food Hygiene: 5
- Food safety risk assessment: 3
- Sampling and analysis: 15
- Inspection and certification procedures: 8
- Animal food production: 6
- Contaminants in food: 12
- Food additives texts: 7
- Food additive provisions: 1112, covering 292 food additives
- Maximum residue limits (MRL) for pesticides: 2886, covering 213 pesticides
- The MRL for veterinary drugs in foods: 441, covering 49 veterinary drugs.

Codex objectives:

- To protect consumer health and economic interest.
- To determine consumer priorities.
- Ensure that, all the practices in the food trade are fair.
- To enhance international harmonization of food standards.
- To publish the standard.
- International Food Market.
- To coordinate all work related to food standards.

Codex Purpose

The Codex Alimentarius is an aggregation of internationally accepted standards of foods and texts related to codes of practices and recommendations related to it. These practices and guidelines ensure protection of the health of consumers and their economic interest and aim to achieve trade practices in the food industries in a fair way.

It's publication for guiding and promoting the elaboration and establishment of various definitions and requirements for foods in order to help in their harmonization and to facilitate the international trade [7].

The format for Codex commodity standards:

The Format is intended for use as a guide by the subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in presenting their standards, with the object of achieving, as far as possible, a uniform presentation of commodity standards. The Format also indicates the statements which should , in standards as appropriate under the relevant headings of the standard. The sections of the format require being completed in a standard only insofar as such provisions are appropriate to an international standard for the food in question.

- **Name of the Standard**
- **Scope**
- **Description**
- **Essential Composition and Quality Factors**
- **Food Additives**
- **Contaminants**
- **Hygiene**
- **Weights and Measures**
- **Labelling**

- **Methods of Analysis and Sampling**

Provisions of Codex General Standards, Codes or Guidelines shall only be incorporated into Codex Commodity Standards by reference unless there is a need for doing otherwise.

Codes of Practices:

Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice should serve the primary purpose of providing advice to governments on the application of food hygiene provisions within the framework of national and international requirements. The Revised Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (including the Guidelines for the Application of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) System) and the Revised Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods are the base documents in the field of food hygiene.

All Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice applicable to specific food items or food groups shall refer to the general principles of food hygiene and shall only contain material additional to the General Principles which is necessary to take into account the particular requirements of the specific food item or food group. Provisions in Codex Codes of Hygienic Practice should be drafted in a sufficiently clear and transparent manner such that extended explanatory material is not required for their interpretation. The above considerations should also apply to Codex Codes of Practice which contain provisions relating to food hygiene.

Guidelines and Recommendations:

The Procedural Manual of the Codex Alimentarius Commission describes the legal foundations and practical functioning of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. Knowledge of the contents of this Manual is essential for Codex members and observers to participate effectively in the work of the Commission. The Manual has been organized into seven sections and one appendix as follows:

Section I: Basic Texts and Definitions

Section II: Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts

Section III: Guidelines for Subsidiary Bodies

Section IV: Risk Analysis

Section V: Subsidiary bodies of the Codex Alimentarius

Section VI: Membership,

Section VII: Relations with other Organizations

Appendix: General Decisions of the Commission

Codex Structure:

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) consists of the **Commission**, the **Executive Committee** and the **subsidiary bodies** in its structure [8].

1. The **Commission**: Rome and Geneva are the places of meeting of the commission every year for taking supreme decisions in the body and providing a discussion forum and debating on all issues of interest related to major food standards and safety.
2. The **Executive Committee** of Codex consists of a Chairman, three Vice-Chairpersons and seven Regional Representatives (governments) and six Regional Coordinators (observers).
3. Rules of Procedure of the Codex, two kinds of **the subsidiary body**- *Codex Committees and Coordinating Committees* are authorized for establishing.

Codex Committees are engaged with the draft standards preparation which is to be submitted to the Commission. Either General Subject Committees or Commodity Committees are the classification of the committees.

Coordinating Committees are to organize activities related to food standard in the region or groups of countries, including the development of regional standards.

Codex and its future:

Future activities of Codex will be significantly different from its present activities. The application of biotechnology to the processing and production of food commodities is under control of the Commission, which is regularly looking for new concepts related to food quality, safety and consumer protection against health hazards.

These discussions provide some idea about the direction in which the activities of the commission are likely to be taken in the future. Day by day the Codex system is changing, a lot. We can expect a huge change in the traditional committee structure in which much more involvement of the developing countries will be there. In the newly designed Codex committees the developing countries will serve as host countries.

So, the contribution of codex alimentarius to the benefit of humankind is one of the most important and most extraordinary achievements of the 20th century. And it can be expected more and more fine achievement in the twenty-first.

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