



IDF OBSERVERS' REPORT ON THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 30 JUNE – 4 JULY 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: MAIN OUTCOME OF INTEREST TO THE DAIRY SECTOR AND FOLLOW-UP ACTION BY IDF

Final adoption of Codex standards and other Codex texts

Dairy standards:

- Draft Model Export Certificate for Milk and Milk Products: as forwarded by CCMMP.
- Proposed Draft Amendment to the List of Additives of the Codex Standard for Creams and Prepared Creams (CODEX STAN A-9-1976) : with inclusion of diacetyltartric and fatty esters of glycerol (INS 472e), which had been inadvertently omitted.
- Methods of Analysis in Codex (CCMAS/CCMMP recommended methods): adopted as proposed but with a call to ensure consistency of presentation of the nitrogen-protein conversion factor of 6.38 for milk protein with regard to all analytical methods for dairy product standards. IDF will take-up the issue as part of the ISO/IDF report on up-date of the existing list of methods for the next session of CCMMP.
- Maximum Levels for Annatto Extracts in Codex Standards for Milk and Milk Products, including consequential changes to the provision for beta-carotene (vegetable): adoption of the values that were initially proposed by IDF to CCMMP.
- Food Additive Listings of the Standard for Fermented Milks :with the exception of lycopene (INS 160d), adopted the list as initially proposed by the CCMMP in-session Working Group, based on detailed technical input by IDF, and adopted by the CCMMP plenary.

Horizontal Codex standards and texts of importance to the dairy sector:

- Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Powdered Formulae for Infants and Young Children, Proposed Draft Guideline for the Validation of Food Safety Control Measures, Proposed Draft Annex II on the Guidance on Microbiological Risk Management Metrics to the Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Management : adopted unchanged as forwarded by CCFH.
- Several food additive related texts including provisions of the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA), Revision of the Food Category System of the GSFA (N11-2007, Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings, Revision of the Codex Class Names and International Numbering Systems (CAC/GL 36-1989), Amendments to the International Numbering System for Food Additives (CAC/GL 36-1989)
- Draft Amendment to the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods: Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients and Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (Definition of Advertising) : adopted unchanged.

Preliminary adoption of Codex standards and other Codex texts at Step 5

- Proposed Draft Amendment to the Codex Standard for Fermented Milks (CODEX STAN 243-2003), Pertaining to Drinks Based on Fermented Milk : the figure for minimum of [40] % (m/m) fermented milk remains in square brackets and will be subject to discussion at the next session of CCMMP.

Use of the Lactoperoxidase System for Milk and Milk Products in International Trade

Eleven countries spoke in favour of removing the restriction while three others objected for different reasons. A compromise proposal of New Zealand (“*Any trade in milk treated by the Lactoperoxidase System should only be by mutual agreement between [the] countries concerned and without prejudice to trade with other countries.*”) was largely supported but could not be adopted at the present session. It was agreed that the matter has to be resolved in CAC and not in CCFH. It is recommended that IDF should prepare a document to expand on its oral intervention, on review and revision of the current Guidelines, in preparation for a submission to the next meeting of CAC.

Future Codex work on Animal Feeding

The meeting decided to postpone the decision on starting new work until the next CAC session. Meanwhile, an inter-session electronic working group will flesh out the scope and terms of reference of the new task force to be distributed for comment via Codex Circular Letter (by end-January 2009). IDF will actively participate in the process.

Next session of CAC

FAO Headquarters Rome (IT), 29 June - 4 July 2009.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 31th session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission was attended by a total of delegates from 138 Codex member countries, 1 Member Organisation, and representatives from 44 international governmental and non-governmental organizations including UN agencies were present.

The IDF Observers were M Hickey, Chair of IDF Food Standards Steering Group, C Heggum, Chair of the IDF Science and Programme Coordination Committee, C. Robert, IDF Director General, and J. Seifert, IDF Technical Director. In addition, experts involved in the work of IDF on Codex-related issues were present in the following 7 governmental delegations: (BE, CA, CH, DK, FR, ID, MX).

2. INFORMATION OF GENERAL INTEREST TO IDF

The Commission agreed to discuss the issue of relationship between private food standards and public standards (Codex) under any other business. This request appeared to be linked to the discussion on the same issue held at the most recent session of the 76th General Session of the International Committee of the OIE, Paris/France, 25 – 30 May 2008 (see IDF Observers’ report and its Appendix available from the IDF Intranet, navigate to: *Links with international organizations / OIE / 2008 OIE*).

3. ADOPTION OF CODEX STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS

3.1. Draft Standards and Related Texts at Step 8 of the Codex Procedure

The Commission adopted all of the Drafts Standards and Related texts submitted by its subsidiary bodies for final adoption. The following standards and texts are of particular relevance to IDF:

3.1.1. Food Additives

- Food additive provisions of the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA) (CODEX STAN 192-1995)
- Revision of the Food Category System of the GSFA (N11-2007)
- Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings
- Revision of the Codex *Class Names and International Numbering Systems* (CAC/GL 36-1989)
- Amendments to the International Numbering System for Food Additives (CAC/GL 36-1989)

Details on the dairy-related aspects of these new or revised texts can be found in the IDF Observer’s report on the 40th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives, Beijing, China, April 21 - 25,

2008 (see IDF Observers' report of the last session of CCFA available from the IDF Intranet, navigate to: *Links with international organizations / Codex Alimentarius / 2008 Codex / IDF Observers Reports 2008*)

Amendment to Table 3 of the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA)

CCFA had recommended to include a footnote to the Annex to Table 3 of the GSFA in order to ensure that there is no conflict between Table 3 and the *Standard for Fermented Milks* (CODEX STAN 243-2004). CCFA had agreed to the following footnote: "Acidity regulators, packaging gases and preservatives listed in Table 3 are acceptable for use in fermented milks, heat treated after fermentation, as defined in Codex *Standard for Fermented Milks* (CODEX STAN 243-2004) that correspond to food category 01.2.1.2 "Fermented milks (plain), heat treated after fermentation".

India pointed out during the CAC discussion (also included in CAC document CRD/LIM 9) that the use of preservatives, as included in the footnote, is not permitted in plain fermented milks heat-treated after fermentation and hence should be deleted while it was suggested that, "stabilizers and thickeners" be added to the footnote, as these categories were permitted in the relevant food category.

The Chair called on IDF to provide a clarification. IDF confirmed that the two observations by India were correct and agreed with the proposal to delete preservatives from the footnote, however IDF pointed out that CCMMP had reached consensus on a list of specific stabilizers and thickeners, as forwarded to CCFA and the Commission, which, while lengthy, did not include all those contained in Table 3 of the GSFA. Hence IDF proposed to modify the text of the footnote suggested by India by deletion of the added words "stabilizers and thickeners".

China speaking as Chair of CCFA proposed to not adopt the proposed amendment to the footnote contained in the Annex to Table 3 but to refer it back to CCFA. The Commission agreed to refer the issue back to CCFA.

⇒ Action: IDF SCSID and SCFA review the possible implications of replacing the existing list of stabilizers and thickeners in the list as adopted by instead including a reference to those contained in Table and further to consider the most appropriate wording for footnotes to the Appendix of Table 3 to take into account the correct incorporation of the additive lists in the Codex Standard for Fermented Milks (Codex STAN243-2003) as subsequently adopted at this Session of the Commission in preparation for the next session of CCFAC and if necessary the next Session of CCMMP.

Amendment to the provisions for colours of the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA)

The following dairy-product related provisions were adopted:

Butter (Food Category 02.2.1)

- Annatto Extracts, Bixin based, INS: 160b(i), Function: Colour: 20 mg/kg
- Carotenes, beta (Vegetable) INS: 160a(ii), Function: Colour: 600 mg/kg
- CAROTENOIDS: Beta-Carotene (Synthetic) INS: 160a(i) Carotenes, beta (Blakeslea trispora) INS: 160a(iii), Beta-Apo-8'-Carotenal INS: 160e Beta-Apo-8'-Carotenoic Acid, Methyl or Ethyl INS: 160f, Ester, Function: Colour : 25 mg/kg
- PHOSPHATES: various compounds and technological functions: 880 mg/kg
- Sodium Carbonate INS: 500(i), Function: Anticaking Agent, Acidity Regulator, Raising Agent, Stabilizer : GMP
- Sodium Hydrogen Carbonate INS: 500(ii), Function: Anticaking Agent, Acidity Regulator, Raising Agent, Stabilizer : GMP
- Sodium Hydroxide INS: 524 , Function: Acidity Regulator: GMP

Dairy-based drinks, flavoured and/or fermented (e.g., chocolate milk, cocoa, eggnog, drinking yoghurt, whey-based drinks), Food category 01.1.2:

- Brilliant Blue FCF INS, Function: Colour : 50 mg/kg
- Caramel III - Ammonia Process INS: 150c, Function: Colour : 150 mg/kg
- Carmines INS: 120, Function: Colour: 150 mg/kg
- Carotenes, beta (Vegetable) INS: 160a(ii), Function: Colour: 1000 mg/kg
- Fast Green FCF INS: 143, Function: Colour : 100 mg/kg

- Iron Oxide, Black INS: 172(i) Iron Oxide, Red INS: 172(ii), Iron Oxide, Yellow INS: 172(iii), Function: Colour : 20 mg/kg
- RIBOFLAVINS: Riboflavin INS: 101(i) Riboflavin 5'-Phosphate Sodium INS: 101(ii), Function: Colour: 300 mg/kg

3.1.2. Food Hygiene

Proposed Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Powdered Formulae for Infants and Young Children

Indonesia requested development of method of analysis that are less costly compared to the methods that are currently referenced in the Code, including ISO 22964|IDF 210:2006 - Milk and milk products - *Detection of Enterobacter sakazakii* .

⇒ **Action: IDF/ISO MSSG to take note of the comment.**

It was agreed to introduce throughout the document the new species name “*Cronobacter*” in place of the out-dated terminology “*Enterobacter*”. Singapore pointed out that there might be a conflict between the Codex standard and WHO recommendations. The WHO Food Safety Director clarified that there was no such conflict and supported adoption of the Code.

IBFAN requested inclusion of a statement referring to making the FAO/WHO Guidelines mandatory. The Chair of CCFH clarified that the concern and suggestion expressed had been given due consideration in the course of CCFH deliberations and that CCFH had not supported this change.

The Codex was adopted without any modification.

Proposed Draft Guideline for the Validation of Food Safety Control Measures

Proposed Draft Annex II on the Guidance on Microbiological Risk Management Metrics to the Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Management

These two texts were adopted unchanged.

3.1.3. Food Labelling

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

Draft Amendment to the Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims (Definition of Advertising

These two texts were adopted unchanged. (see IDF Observers’ report of the last session of CCFL available from the IDF Intranet, navigate to: *Links with international organizations / Codex Alimentarius / 2008 Codex / IDF Observers Reports 2008*)

3.1.4. Milk and Milk Products

Draft Model Export Certificate for Milk and Milk Products

Costa Rica commented that it felt that there was a lack of clarity in the text of the draft model certificate. Terminology was not standardized with regard to different “net weight” designations used. In Section 2 “Origin of milk and milk products” there should be information on the country of dispatch, which may be different from the country of origin. Regarding destination, a point of destination should be added to the country of destination in order to facilitate traceability / trace-back.

The CCMMP Chairman clarified that the certificate was the product of CCMMP work during many sessions including due consideration being given to harmonization issues and that it was endorsed by CCFICS. The Codex Secretariat did not raise any inconsistency of units used throughout the text.

The meeting adopted the text as forwarded by CCMMP.

Proposed Draft Amendment to the List of Additives of the Codex Standard for Creams and Prepared Creams (CODEX STAN A-9-1976)

The EC delegation referred to the request of the Codex Executive Committee regarding additive 472e. The inclusion of diacetyltartric and fatty esters of glycerol had been inadvertently omitted. The meeting agreed to re-insert these provisions and to adopt the amendment.

Methods of Analysis in Codex (CCMAS/CCMMP recommended methods)

India proposed to ensure consistency of presentation of the nitrogen-protein conversion factor of 6.38 for milk protein with regard to all analytical methods for dairy product standards (ref. CCMAS ALINORM 08/31/23, APPENDIX III, Part D. COMMITTEE ON MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS).

⇒ **Action: IDF/ISO MSSG to take note of the comment. IDF should take-up the issue as part of the ISO/IDF report on up-date of the existing list of methods for the next session of CCMMP.**

Maximum Levels for Annatto Extracts in Codex Standards for Milk and Milk Products, including consequential changes to the provision for beta-carotene (vegetable)

The Commission adopted the values that were initially proposed by IDF to CCMMP (ref. ALINORM 08/31/11 Appendix II).

Food Additive Listings of the Standard for Fermented Milks (CODEX STAN 243-2003)

With the exception of the provisions related to lycopene (INS 160d), the amendment was adopted as initially proposed by the CCMMP in-session Working Group, based on detailed technical input by IDF, and adopted by the CCMMP plenary (ref. ALINORM 08/31/11 Appendix VI).

3.2. Draft Standards and Related Texts at Step 5 of the Codex Procedure

Establishment and Application of Risk Analysis Principles by the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses

WHO pointed out that FAO/WHO will provide input to the further development of the document to be aligned with existing Codex risk analysis texts. The document was adopted at Step 5.

Proposed Draft Amendment to the Codex Standard for Fermented Milks (CODEX STAN 243-2003), Pertaining to Drinks Based on Fermented Milk

Cuba pointed out that Potassium Sorbate should be allowed as an additive for the purpose of conservation of the fruit content. It was agreed that CCMMP will review the comment in the process of further deliberations.

Argentina stressed its opposition to the proposed amendment of the *Standard for Fermented Milks* (CODEX STAN 243-2003) while proposing to establish a separate standard. The minimum should be 50% fermented milk.

Indonesia informed the meeting that a physical working group will meet prior to CCMMP to advance the drafting process.

Singapore supported adoption and proposed to replace the minimum percentage figure by expression of percentage in terms of solids non-fat. Japan underlined the need for a minimum of [40] % (m/m) fermented milk to reflect the current market situation.

The standard was adopted at Step 5.

3.3. Amendments to the Codex Standards and Related Texts

General up-date of Codex reference numbers

The item will be discussed in full at the next session of CCGP.

Harmonization of numbering of standards – disappearance of “C” and “A” numbering of dairy product standards and to be replaced by generally used Codex numbering system for food standards.

IDF pointed out that there were a number of cross-references in Codex standards for milk and milk products. The Codex Secretariat confirmed that all standards will be carefully scrutinized and cross-references be up-dated accordingly.

The Codex Secretariat will issue a Circular Letter asking for comments on texts in terms of possible need for revision and revocation, including *CAC/GL 15-1991: Use of Non-Meat Protein Products in Processed*

Meat and Poultry Products, which contains references to texts that no longer exist (e.g. Code of Principle concerning Milk and Milk Products) and the protein conversion factor of 6,25 without distinction according to source.

⇒ **Action: IDF should respond to the Circular Letter with justification of stipulation the factor of 6,38 for milk protein.**

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION, CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

4.1. Food Hygiene – the Use of the Lactoperoxidase System for Milk and Milk Products in International Trade

(doc.ref. Alinorm 08/31/9D – paras 5 – 10)

The representative of FAO stated there was a need for the Commission to take a decision on this matter. The FAO/WHO expert consultation in 2005, involving identified experts from 5 regions, had considered the economic, nutritional, as well as the health benefits of the use the LPS. This had indicated that there were no safety concerns relating to the components or metabolites of the LPS when used according to the Guidelines. The Chair invited Members to give input on whether the restrictions to the use of the Lactoperoxidase System for Milk and Milk Products in International Trade should be retained or removed.

11 Countries spoke in favour of removing the restriction (CU, ML, MY, CL, MX, UY, CR, CO, BR, CN and SV) – the main basis for their position being that the decision should be science-based and no new evidence had been produced to show its use was unsafe. Among the countries supporting, CL and CR specifically indicated that they do not use the LPS in their countries. 3 Countries spoke against removing the restriction (IN, AU, SG) – the bases for their position being:

- the risks of the guidelines on its use would not be properly and fully implemented and the consequent adverse effects (IN);
- that some concerns remained that the thiocyanate ion could have a toxicological effect where iodine was deficient (IN);
- that pasteurization did not eliminate the thiocyanate ion (IN, AU);
- that the LPS inhibited the growth of pathogens but did not eliminate them and this could have implications in the event of delays (AU);
- that the addition of chemicals to milk could constitute adulteration (SG).

The representative of WHO reiterated that the report of the expert consultation of 1995 referred to in many interventions was a joint FAO/WHO report, not just an FAO report. Following debate at CCFH and in the Commission the same points were raised again and again for and against. He stated

- whether or not we have international standards, countries can do whatever they like at national level – international standards apply only to international trade;
- the effectiveness of LPS was limited to short periods, therefore its applicability to products in international trade was limited because of longer transportation periods involved;
- LPS in no way competes with refrigeration or pasteurization;
- the matter has to be resolved in CAC and not in CCFH.

At this point the Chair quoted from para 216 of the 22nd Session of CAC Alinorm (Al 99/37e) in 1999:-
“The Commission confirmed: (a) that the most preferred method of the preservation of raw milk was refrigeration; (b) its approval of the use of the enzymatic activators of the lactoperoxidase system in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preservation of Raw Milk by Use of the Lactoperoxidase System and based on the advice of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives, where refrigeration was not possible; and (c) that the lactoperoxidase system should not be used for products intended for international trade”

He then stated that the majority of countries, which spoke, favoured the removal of the 3rd element of this and proposed this course of action. At this point many members and IDF indicated they wished to respond.

IN repeated their opposition. NZ then intervened to say that there were a number of aspects as regards the use LPS. It has limited use, due to the provisions of the Milk Hygiene Code (e.g. validated control measures). The Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products (CAC/RCP 57-2004) indicated that microbiostatic and microbiocidal controls were subject to validation. They also stated that this point

was emphasized in the Guidelines for the Validation of Food Safety Control Measures, adopted earlier in this Session, provided that control measures required validation on a case-by-case basis. The use of the LPS was a last resort and should never replace the use of GMP. This indicated the possibility of limiting trade to situations caused by the lack of infrastructure and validation in each specific situation. Consequently they proposed the insertion of a revised third element to the footnote as follows:

“Any trade in milk treated by the Lactoperoxidase System should only be by mutual agreement between [the] countries concerned and without prejudice to trade with other countries.”

The Chair then asked members to restrict their responses to support or opposition to his proposal.

Many members indicated their support for the NZ compromise proposal – these included the EU and US. TU opposed removal of the restriction and if allowed should only be on a provisional basis until they have other means of infrastructural control. CA stated they did not oppose the proposal of the Chair wanted their reservation recorded.

IDF intervened by stating that, since the major concerns regarding the removal of the restriction of products relates to the consequences of unintended (mis)use of the LPS, then if the restriction were to be removed there would be a need to review and revise the current Guidelines to address these concerns.

In conclusion, in view of the lack time to resolve the issues (i.e. the lifting of the restriction in paragraph 19; or the lifting of the restrictions, subject to the provisions contained in the New Zealand proposal), the Commission agreed to postpone further discussion on this issue until its next session.

⇒ Action: IDF SCMH should work to prepare a document to expand on its intervention, on review and revision of the current Guidelines, in preparation for a submission to the next meeting of CAC.

4.2. Future work on Animal Feeding

The previous Ad-Hoc TF on Animal Feeding had produced the Codex Code of Practice for Good Animal Feeding and this was well received by members, which had commenced its implementation at national level. An FAO Guidance document to implement the Code has also been published. When the Commission dissolved the TF there were requests that it be reconvened to cover new additional subjects. It was agreed a few sessions ago to issue a Circular Letter seeking comments on any such new areas of work. The responses were discussed at CAC 2 years ago when it was decided to come back to it at this session.

OIE has also started work on this subject and is prepared to participate with Codex on this subject. The Chair proposed the establishment of an Inter Session e-WG to flesh out the scope and terms of reference of the new task force to use the time between now and the next session to have a circular letter outline these in advance.

This was supported by the members who spoke (incl. NZ, FR [speaking for EU MS], US, EG, AR, CL, CM). France proposed DK for Chair, US proposed MX as Co-Chair. Working languages of the e-WG would be English, Spanish and French. NZ asked that remit be to establish the scope of the work and the terms of reference on how to advance the work, rather than only for a TF.

There are no rules for WGs established by the Commission but the Secretariat proposed following the Guidelines for Subsidiary Committees and Task Forces. The Chair proposed that DK with full support of MX as Co-Chair to prepare a short kick-off message by end July 2008 inviting members and observers to participate in the e-WG. The charge to the e-WG to be to have a report containing proposals for draft terms of reference to allow issue of a Circular Letter by end-January 2009 and providing adequate time for comments from members and observers in advance of the next session where the matter would be reconsidered.

⇒ Action: IDF should avail of the opportunity to join the e-WG as this is best means to monitor inter-session progress. Proposed responsible IDF bodies: SCMH, SCRCC, SCFM.

5. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Relations between Codex and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

The Observer of OIE referred to two main points (in their written submission INF/4)

- (a) Progress on cooperation between OIE and Codex;
- (b) The implications of private standards in OIE standard setting activities.

He indicated that in 2008-09 OIE would actively contribute to Codex work on Codex standards particularly through CCFICS, CCFH and CCGP. On work on the possibility of developing joint standards, he mentioned further guidance on food safety of animals treated with recombinant DNA vaccines. He also encouraged all Codex members to participate in the OIE International Conference on Animal Identification and Traceability (“From Farm to Fork”) to be held in Buenos Aires AR 17 – 19 March 2009 promoting seamless application of both OIE and Codex standards in this field.

On private standards, he mentioned the great concern among OIE members and they had adopted a resolution requesting their DG to work with relevant public and private international organisations to ensure private standards are consistent with OIE standards.

The Commission noted that collaboration with OIE had been enhanced over the years and that such collaboration should continue to grow, particularly in the area of microbiological control in animal products.

6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRIVATE FOOD STANDARDS AND PUBLIC STANDARDS (CODEX)

The Codex Secretary reported that issue of private standards have been being discussed in the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO/SPS Committee) and also some other international fora more recently. At the recent CCEXEC meeting, just prior to the current session of CAC, it was agreed not to make any decisions or recommendations at this time but invited FAO and WHO to present a paper on such private standards at its next meeting.

The representative of WTO was then invited to report on the subject to the Committee (ref doc CAC/31 INF/5). She indicated that this subject was under discussion within WTO SPS Committee since 2005. In October 2006 and June 2007 informal sessions were held in the margins of the SPS Committee meetings. A number of international organizations such as OECD and UNCTAD, as well as private standardizing groups (e.g. GlobalGAP) provided information on such private standards. Examples of such standards were given as those of British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the EurepGAP (now called Global GAP). These were broader in scope than food safety, including aspect of quality, social and environmental aspects. Discussions within WTO focused on their effects on market access (e.g. product quality, negative impacts, additional business costs, entry barriers and small businesses), development and legal implications (Art 13 of SPS Agreement) with regard to the WTO (e.g. they represented private sector activity and thus SPS did not apply; some of their requirements were not did not have an adequate scientific base but were rather based on consumer perceptions. During the April 2008 Meeting of the WTO Committee there were discussions on establishing a WG to discuss the way forward on this subject, it was agreed that such a WG should be small. The proposal received much support and was again discussed at a formal meeting prior to the most recent SPS Committee meeting w/c 23 June 2008 –where all members wanted to participate in the proposed WG. The Chair of the WTO Committee is to circulate specific questions on private standards to members by end next week (w/c 7 July), with a deadline for response of end July. The informal WG shall be limited to members who reply to the questions. The WTO SPS Committee held an Information Session on 28 June 2008 on private standards and including topics such as concerns of developing countries, equivalence, costs of certification etc. The programme, presentations and mp3 recordings of the 2 sessions are available on the following link:- http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/private_standards_june08_e/private_standards_june08_e.htm It was indicated that some of the private setting bodies were already taking steps to address the concerns raised at this information session.

Reference was also made to the paper from the OIE General Assembly on this subject.

In response the representative of FAO stated that they had discussed this matter with WHO and a paper on the subject will be tabled at the next session of the CCEXEC (Note: this is not scheduled until late June 2009 just prior to the next CAC session).

⇒ **Action:** *IDF should consider how it can best monitor this activity within the informal WG of the WTO SPS Committee, especially as regards the legal implications on private standards vis-à-vis international standards.*

7. OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO (NUTRITION ACTIVITIES)

The representative of the WHO made brief reference to the following recent and forthcoming meetings:

- (a) Scientific Update on Carbohydrates 2006-7;
- (b) Scientific Update on Trans Fatty Acids 2007;
- (c) Upcoming FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Fats and Fatty Acids in Human Nutrition – Meeting Date 10-14 November 2008, Geneva

There was no discussion on any of the above items.

8. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION OF CAC

The 32nd Session of CAC will be held at the FAO Headquarters Rome (IT) from 29 June to 4 July 2009, subject to confirmation.

The official report of the 31th Session of the CAC will soon be available from the Codex Internet homepage at:

<http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/reports.jsp?lang=en>