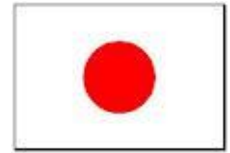




# FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS IN ASEAN COUNTRIES



Issue No.1  
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*Technical Newsletter of the Project*  
*“Support for Capacity Building for International Food Safety Standard  
Development and Implementation in ASEAN Countries”*  
*(GCP/RAS/295/JPN)*

FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), Bangkok

## From Project Team



We are happy to announce that a new FAO regional project **“Support for Capacity Building for International Food Safety Standard Development and Implementation in ASEAN Countries” (GCP/RAS/295/JPN)** was launched in February 2016 as a five-year regional project funded by Japan (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries).

The FAO regional project “Support to Capacity Building and Implementation of International Food Safety Standards in ASEAN Countries” (GCP/RAS/280/JPN) terminated in February 2016 and as the second phase of this, the new regional project GCP/RAS/295/JPN has been initiated. Similar to the project GCP/RAS/280/JPN, the new project also aims to strengthen capacities of ASEAN countries in contributing to Codex standards setting and implementing the adopted Codex standards.

The overall goal of the project is to protect the health of the consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade within ASEAN countries as well as with other countries including Japan. The project also aims to establish a stronger relationship between ASEAN countries and the donor. The outcome is to strengthen the capacities of ASEAN countries in contributing to Codex standards-setting and implementing the adopted Codex standards. Enhanced capacity to develop and harmonize various food safety standards would contribute to facilitating the ASEAN Economic Community. For achieving the above, four main outputs have been identified and each output will be achieved through a series of activities as below.

### **Output 1: Strengthened regional/national capacity for effective contribution to the Codex standard setting processes**

Activity 1.1 – Organize regional workshops which contribute to enhancing ability of countries for contribution to development of Codex standards

## **Output 2: Strengthened manpower/institutional capacity for development of national/regional food safety standards**

Activity 2.1 – Organize practical training courses for manpower/institutional capacity development on data collection, sampling methods and/or inspection system

Activity 2.2 – Develop/support case studies on collecting/formulating data necessary for developing national/regional food safety standards

## **Output 3: Strengthened national capacity/structure for implementing international/national standards**

Activity 3.1 – Organize regional workshops which contribute to enhancing regional/national capacity to implement adopted standards

Activity 3.2 – Organize national training workshops which contribute to strengthening national food safety system including enhancing national legislation structures, particularly in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

## **Output 4: Enhanced information sharing system for food safety standards implemented**

Activity 4.1 – Disseminate/share food safety information including output of project activities by communication methods such as newsletters or through the website

We would appreciate your continued support to the new project!

## **Forthcoming events**

**Workshop on “Implementation of Good Agriculture Practices in SAARC Countries: Sharing Experience SAARC GAP Scheme”:** The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has been implementing a project on ‘Implementation of Good Agriculture Practices in SAARC Countries: SAARC GAP Scheme’ since 2014 and the project is now in its final stages of completion. This project supported the development of a Regional Scheme on GAP which included designing a GAP Scheme complete with a GAP Standard and Certification System and based on the Scheme supporting some pilot countries to develop a National GAP standard and establish an implementation infrastructure including a certification system. Since the Scheme documents are now developed and pilot countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka) have completed or are in the process of completing the establishment of the quality infrastructure in their respective countries, a three-day Regional Workshop is being organised with the objective of learning from the experiences of these countries. Some countries in ASEAN Region are also participating to both learn and share their experiences.

## **National Training Course on capacity development of Codex standard setting and implementation in Lao PDR:**

The project GCP/RAS/295/JPN is now discussing with the national focal point of Lao PDR for organization of a national training course which will focus on capacity development of Codex standard setting and implementation. The concept and agenda of the training is now under discussion by the project authorities and national counterpart in Lao PDR. The training will be held in June 2016 and invitation of participants will be started soon.

## **Ongoing activities**

**Update the status of national Codex activities in ASEAN countries:** The previous project GCP/RAS/280/JPN consolidated the status of national Codex activities in ASEAN countries and developed a publication ‘Status of National Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries’ (<http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Status-of-National-book.pdf>) in 2012. As one of the project activities, the new project is currently surveying the status of national Codex activities in ASEAN countries and will consolidate the

responses received which would form the baseline to enable further improvements over the period of the project. The project expects to receive responses from each ASEAN national focal point of the project latest by 20 May. The responses will be compiled and validated by country representatives attending a side event which is proposed during the CCASIA 20 to be held in India on 26-30 September 2016.

**A Training Module on “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities”:** Based on a result of the 4<sup>th</sup> training workshop held in Tokyo, Japan from 8 to 11 September 2015, a training module to enhance the participation of Asia and the Pacific region effectively in Codex activities has been developed and will be published soon.

### Report of recent food safety events in FAORAP

**Final report of a survey on edible insects in Thailand:** The project developed a case study for designing of survey and data collection on edible insects in the region as a preliminary survey for the development of a guideline for data collection of edible insects. This survey would be expected to apply for future survey in Thailand and other ASEAN countries to provide data applicable to development of the regional Codex standard on edible insects. The research entitled “House cricket farming and chain of distribution to consumers: Preliminary identification of the quality and safety and critical points of hazard of the produces” was conducted with



support of the Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University in Thailand from February to July 2014. This survey aimed to develop the methodology, sample size and questionnaire available to future survey in Thailand and other ASEAN countries such as Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam to provide data applicable to development of the regional Codex standard on edible insects. This study was conducted in three regions (east, northeast and north) covering ten provinces of Thailand (East: Chachoengsao, Prachin Buri, and Sa Kaeo; Northeast: Nakhon Ratchasima, Maha Sarakham and Khon Kaen; North: Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, and Phrae). This covered basic characteristics of the farmers including motivation to enter this job, farming resources, farming management, harvesting and produce handling, record performance and distribution of the produce. The study employed qualitative and quantitative approach in which in-depth interview was performed in 20 cricket farmers in the east. As a result, key issues from in-depth study were used to formulate the survey questionnaire. This tool was employed to collect the data in 70 cricket farmers and 10 cricket collectors in the northeast and the north. Using SPSS for Windows as a tool for data analysis, descriptive statistics resulted in the description of the results comprising the following nine topics:

- Basic characteristics of the cricket farmers including family size and male-female ratio
- Farming inputs including financial investments and farming spaces
- Farming practices
- Harvesting and yield
- Distributing of produce and return ratio
- Constraints and needs on cricket farming
- Cricket collectors/distributors
- Risks to safe produces synthesized from research findings
- Analysis of production and trade

The final report is available on the project website: <http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/FinalReport-Cricket-Reserach-in-Thailand-INMU-May2015.pdf>

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Regional Training Workshop on “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries”:**

Under the project GCP/RAS/280/JPN, the fourth regional training workshop “Enhancing Effective Participation in Codex Activities in ASEAN Countries” was held in Tokyo, Japan from 8 to 11 September 2015 with 40 participants consisting 17 participants from 8 ASEAN countries, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. There were also 8 participants from Japan. There were also eight participants from Japan. Many resource persons from the European Union (EU), Japan and FAO contributed to the workshop as key presenters and as trainers during the mock training session. The training workshop methodology consisted of lectures, case study, group work (mock training session) and a field trip to a milk processing plant.



The main objectives of the regional training workshop were to provide participants with:

- 1) an enhanced knowledge of the structure and functioning of CAC including its history and objectives, procedures for elaboration of Codex standards, Codex documentations and how to use the online tools;
- 2) an enhanced understanding of the impact of Codex standards on international trade;
- 3) training on development of regional/national positions;
- 4) up-to-date information on the result of the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the CAC; and
- 5) simulated training through mock sessions to enhance the capacity of participants to contribute effectively to Codex work.

#### **Opening session**



Ms Shashi Sareen of FAORAP provided the welcome and introductory remarks. She explained the project’s activities, including the results of previous workshops and training courses, as well as the importance of food safety and Codex and the role of FAO with respect to the same. She also expressed her appreciation for the generous contribution of the Government of Japan who funded the project and co-hosted this training workshop in Tokyo. She also expressed her appreciation to the European Commission for its support and to faculty from the Codex Secretariat for organizing the workshop.



Ms Yayoi Tsujiyama, Director for International Affairs, Food Safety and Consumer Policy Division of MAFF Japan and Vice Chair of Codex Alimentarius Commission, delivered the welcome address mentioning that this was the first workshop in which the Government of Japan has collaborated with the EU and expressed her pleasure to have four EU officials present. She looked forward to continuing friendship among EU, Japan and ASEAN countries and cooperation in the implementation of better measures for food safety as well as the adoption of Codex standards across Asia in the future. She also mentioned her expectations with respect to the outcomes of the training workshop.



Mr Jonathan Hatwell, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Japan, gave the opening remarks and thanked both MAFF and FAORAP for their foresight in hosting this workshop. By bringing people together from Japan, the wider ASEAN region and places further afield such as the European Union, he thought that this was an excellent opportunity to share experiences, understandings and viewpoints. He stressed the importance of the really unique four-way collaboration between the European Union, Japan, our multilateral partners (FAO and Codex), and the countries of ASEAN. He also stated two key messages: the first one relating to the importance of Codex

and the work that the participants would undertake during the workshop to strengthen their capacity to participate in Codex, and the second relating to the importance of establishing ever closer ties between Codex member nations.

### Technical session

#### Structure and function of Codex Alimentarius Commission

Ms Shashi Sareen presented the history of Codex and its objectives, Codex Alimentarius Commission statutes, mandate, membership, structure, functions of Codex, Codex structure, committees and subsidiary bodies, principles of Codex elaboration procedure, the scientific basis for Codex, and the Codex strategic plan 2014-2019. She also explained the importance of Codex and how participation in the Codex standards setting process would lead to better public health outcomes, improved access to international markets, and increased confidence in national food safety laws and regulations. She highlighted that Codex standards are international benchmarks and address the food safety needs of all countries and that Codex standards are based on the best available science assisted by independent international risk assessment bodies or ad hoc consultations organized by FAO and WHO.

Ms Annamaria Bruno, Codex Secretariat, informed participants of general principles and procedures, the basis for the establishment of Codex standards, Codex documentation including ALINORMs (most Codex documents are numbered and have the prefix ALINORM), Committee working papers (CXs), Circular Letters (CLs) and Conference room documents (CRDs), and numbering system, development of Codex texts and the process for elaboration of standards. She also reviewed the successes and challenges of Codex as follows:

#### Successes

- i) The Commission's work is member driven with decisions being taken on the consensus principle.



- ii) There is transparency in the Commission's working which involves the continuous updating of its Web site and constant communication with its observers.
- iii) The time taken for elaboration of Codex texts at present is about 4.2 years.
- iv) The procedure for submission of comments on draft texts is now flexible, and there are no restrictions on submitting comments from any source.
- v) The Codex texts on food safety are science/risk-based.

#### Challenges

- i) There is need for further increase in participation of developing countries as increasingly such countries are getting involved in the international food trade.
- ii) The Commission through its members and international organizations participating in the FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, is required to find ways to deal with emerging issues such as the evolution of new diseases, food frauds etc.
- iii) There is need for the timely distribution of documentation to members and organizations in their respective official languages.
- iv) There is need to increase the use of IT in the Codex text elaboration process and to introduce on-line procedures.

She demonstrated how to obtain information from the Codex Web site.

#### Impact of Codex standard on international trade



Ms Ella Strickland of the European Commission explained the impact of Codex standards on international trade, the differences between the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement and the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement, key principles of the SPS Agreement (proportionate, based on science, non-discriminatory between domestic and third country goods), harmonization, appropriate level of protection (ALOP) and dispute settlement process. She stated that the aim of WTO is to facilitate trade through harmonization of sanitary measures, and stressed that members should follow international standards whereas governments can set requirements that are different from international standards if they can justify their higher standards based on sound and scientific evidence. In conclusion, she stated that international standards should be followed and that national standards do not violate the SPS Agreement simply by differing from international norms. Although governments can set requirements that are different from international standards, they could be required to justify their higher standards if challenged. The justification must be based on sound, scientific evidence.

#### Development of regional/ national positions

Ms Yayoi Tsujiyama, the Vice Chair of CAC, on behalf of former Regional Coordinator of Asia, explained: 1) the functions of the Regional Coordinator; 2) the functions of the Regional Coordinating Committee; 3) the purpose of the Coordinating Meetings (meetings among delegates from member countries of the respective regions organized just before and during each Committee and Commission meeting to share their views); and 4) participation and role of CCEXEC including critical review. She introduced the new approach that was agreed at the 38<sup>th</sup> CAC that:

- established the generic agenda as a basis for the agendas for the next round of Regional Coordination Committees (RCCs); and
- requested Regional Coordinators to make recommendations on topics for the keynote address on regional issues of priority.

She stressed that the tasks of the Regional Coordinator are to hold RCCs and Coordination meetings, and to attend CCEXEC in the interests of their respective regions, and that RCCs are expected to be the forum on food safety issues in the region.

Ms Eva Zamora Escribano of the European Commission explained how the Codex positions of the European Union (EU) are developed including their internal coordination and preparation. The Directorate-General Health and Food Safety of EU is the EU Codex Contact Point (EUCCP). The activities with respect to Codex work in the EU are coordinated by the EUCCP. The major participating organizations are the European Medicine Agency, the EU's Directorate General of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Directorate General of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the European Food Safety Authority and the Joint Research Centre. The communications are received from the Codex Secretariat by EUCCP. EUCCP coordinates with 28 member states and the European Council. Working party meetings are arranged by the EU Council and are attended by CAC experts. The meetings are chaired by the EU Presidency. The Council provides the secretarial function for the EU Presidency. She also informed the participants of the work of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO) in practice. All information with respect to Codex is shared with members of the region through the CCEURO Web site. Communications are also sent through e-mails to each member state. Physical meetings within the framework of CAC and the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP) are held on a regular basis. CCEURO sessions are organized following the CAC Rules of Procedure. CCEURO does not operate as a "block". It does not develop regional positions but common regulations are available as well as common values on some sensitive issues, such as MRLs of pesticides. Also, she stated the challenges facing CCEURO, which are as follows:



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- need to strengthen capacity building activities focusing on new members of CCEURO;
- language barriers – as a large number of countries make up the EU, there are a number of languages in use making communication difficult; efforts are underway to find solution to the issue;
- actions are in progress for raising awareness within the region about Codex work; and
- strengthening of communication and cooperation with other regions is also in progress.



Mr Hidetaka Kobayashi of MAFF first spoke on how to establish a country position. He stated that studying official documents and other relevant reading material would enable the delegate to prepare the national/regional position. He also stated that the Codex Contact Point in the country or the National Codex Committee could play an important role in the process of establishing a country position. He also mentioned that when it is impossible or difficult to make the country position understood in the meeting by means of an oral presentation, written comments backed up by science-based data/information could be effective. In fact the committee could take into account any such

written comments during the discussion. He explained two major risk management activities of CCCF, namely establishing Codes of Practice (COP), which contain guidance for manufacturers to produce safer foods by preventing and reducing contamination, and standards setting, including establishing maximum levels (MLs) for contaminants. He cautioned that the establishment of MLs will not in itself increase the safety of food. He stated that occurrence data of inorganic arsenic (iAs) in rice from main producers/consumers of rice are most welcome from the Asian region including ASEAN countries.



Mr Jerome Lepeintre, Minister Counsellor, EU Delegation to China and Mongolia, stated that the success of Codex means that the health of consumers is protected and fair trade in safe food is facilitated. In addition, he mentioned that Codex's success also means that Codex members can find solutions by understanding the fundamental needs of other parties in a dispute and then find creative ways to address those needs through negotiation and being willing to show constructive leadership. He stated that the views of all concerned were considered and decisions were finalized through negotiations guided by science-based reasoning and a consensus approach. He went on to illustrate this using two cases studies of Codex discussions that involved considerable controversy: one related to sardines and one related to the labelling of GM products.



Ms Viengxay Vansilalom, Lao PDR, explained the scope of the ASEAN Task Force on Codex (ATFC), the joint ASEAN position and examples of the development of a regional position. The ATFC was established to serve as a forum to discuss Codex issues of interest to ASEAN countries and to formulate common ASEAN positions in Codex meetings. It is also a forum for possibly harmonizing standards and regulations in ASEAN by using Codex standards as references. The ATFC meeting is held once a year for briefing the members about Codex related matters including de-briefing about CAC and other Committee meetings. She also stated the composition of the National Codex Committee of Lao PDR, explained the process of developing a

national position, and outlined future work related to Codex in Lao PDR. In order to expedite the process of developing a national position, Codex documents are distributed to members representing related agencies for comments and the WHO food safety adviser is consulted on specific issues. She requested FAO's support to strengthen Codex work in Lao PDR by having a national training course on Codex and a review designed to improve the working of the national codex committee.

Ms Thu To Lien, Viet Nam, explained the basic science for building a Codex standard fish sauce, which is the main sauce used in Vietnamese cuisine. She also presented the contents of the research undertaken by the Research Institute for Marine Fisheries that could be utilized for the elaboration of a Code of Practice. She explained that a survey of fish sauce processing facilities in 15 provinces of the country was carried out. This involved the collection of 900 samples of the product that were subsequently analyzed to determine the chemical characteristics and level of microbiological contamination. The methodologies of chemical analysis were either according to Vietnamese Standards or internationally accepted techniques.





## **Current work in Codex committees: the result of the 38<sup>th</sup> CAC and key issues most relevant to the region**

### **CAC**

Ms Ella Strickland presented the outcomes of the 38<sup>th</sup> CAC, which was held from 6 to 11 July 2015 in Geneva and attended by 400 participants from 140 member states, 1 member organization and 33 observer organizations. Thirty-six Codex Standards were adopted and five standards were adopted at Step 5. She highlighted key topics: i) Codex work management; ii) recombinant bovine somatotropin (rBST); iii) processed cheese, iv) Codex Trust Fund II(CTF II); v) funding for continuation of the Joint Expert Committee to provide science advice; and vi) eighteen accepted proposals for new work.

### **Commodity committees**

As the commodity committees most relevant to the region are the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO) and the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV) these were the focus of a number of presentations.

Ms Eva Zamora Escribano gave general information related to CCFO, and reported on the Codex Code of Practice for the Storage and Transport of Edible Fats and Oils in Bulk and its mention of the causes of their deterioration, namely oxidation, hydrolysis and contamination from different sources (e.g. dirt, residues of previous materials). She also introduced the list of Acceptable Previous Cargoes based on four criteria, and the list of banned Immediate Previous Cargoes. The list of Acceptable Previous Cargoes contained 93 substances, one substance was removed, and 23 (including one new substance) are to be assessed by an ad hoc FAO/WHO expert meeting against the four criteria. This proposal was endorsed by the 38<sup>th</sup> CAC. She introduced the current activities of the Committee, e.g. development of a draft standard for fish oils (adopted at step 5 at the 38<sup>th</sup> CAC, and noted that some issues are still being debated, e.g. inclusion of several named oils within the scope of the standard and labelling provisions (e.g. declaration of the percentage of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), vitamins) and approved new work (Revision of the Standard for Named Vegetable Oils, and Revision of the Standard for Olive Oil and Olive Pomace Oil).



Ms Naoko Takahata of MAFF explained: i) the terms of reference (TOR) of CCFFV; ii) results of the 18th session of CCFFV; iii) the agenda of the 19th session of CCFFV; iv) the proposed draft standard for kiwifruit – she stated that some controversial issues discussed were the definition of the product, maturity requirement, classification, and provisions concerning the size and size tolerance; and v) the proposed layout for Codex standards for FFV – some issues discussed, she stated, related to the proposed layout for Codex standards for FFV, namely how to approach food additives for fresh fruit and vegetables, and the need for a glossary.

### **General subject committees**

As the general subject committees most relevant to the region, the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF), the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH), the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) and Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) were the focus of a number of presentations.

Ms Annamaria Bruno explained the TOR of CCRVDF, its main achievements, the development of Codex Maximum Residues Limits (MRLs), and the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of CCRVDF – main outcomes and ongoing work and future work. CCRVDF developed MRLs for 74 veterinary drugs or combinations of veterinary drugs in different tissues of different species of food-producing animals. It also developed Risk Management Recommendations

(RMRS) – a major recommendation is not to use those veterinary drugs in food-producing animals for which a safe level of residues has not been established. She also highlighted the main achievements of the Committee, including Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of National Regulatory Food Safety Assurance Programmes Associated with the Use of Veterinary Drugs in Food Producing Animals (CAC/GL 71-2009), the Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Antimicrobial Resistance (CAC/RCP 61-2005) and Risk Analysis Principles applied by CCRVDF and Risk Assessment Policy for Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (which is included in the Codex Procedural Manual). Furthermore, she introduced the main outcomes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee and the ongoing and future work of the Committee.

Mr Hajime Toyofuku, Yamaguchi University, Japan, explained the TOR of CCFH, its main achievements, the relationship between CCFH and JEMRA, outcomes of the 46<sup>th</sup> session, and main agenda items of the 47<sup>th</sup> session. A large number of Codex texts have been brought out by the committee since its inception, he stated. The texts are on recommended international codes of practice on general principles of hygiene, principles and guidelines of microbiological risk assessment in foods, codes of hygienic practices for commodities, such as milk and milk products, fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, guidelines on the general applications of general principles for food hygiene for control of specific bacterial pathogens, viruses in food and others. He referred to two very widely used Codex texts pertaining to the committee, namely CAC/RCP 1-1969 Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene and CAC/GL 69 – 2008 Guidelines for the Validation of Food Safety Control Measures. During the discussion, the collaboration between OIE and CCFH was also highlighted.



Mr Hidetaka Kobayashi explained the TOR of CCCF, the risk analysis applied in CCCF, and the interaction between CCCF and the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA). CCCF carries out the risk management function, whereas JECFA carries out the risk assessment function. JECFA, he noted, is independent from Codex. He talked about three basic functions of risk management: i) preliminary risk management activities; ii) evaluation of risk management options; and iii) monitoring and review of the decision taken. He also presented on the principles to establish MLs for contaminants in Codex, and MLs under development in CCCF.



Mr Kazuhiro Sakamoto, MAFF Japan, presented on the following: i) an overview of CCFA; ii) General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA); and iii) the relationship between the GSFA and commodity standards. In 1989 CCFA established Class Names and the International Numbering System for Food Additives (INS) (CAC/GL 36-1989). In the INS list, food additives are listed with their identification number, functional class and technological purpose. This INS list is continuously revised on the basis of comments provided to the committee. In 1995, CCFA elaborated a General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA), which covers all foods (CODEX STAN 192-1995). This general standard is also revised continuously. It means GSFA covers not only standardized food but also non-standardized foods. On the other hand, commodity standards cover specific foods defined in each commodity standard. For example, the regional standard for tempe covers tempe but not other fermented soybean products. In the case of tempe, this is categorized in food category 06.8.6 “Fermented soybeans” in the GSFA. Food category 06.8.6 also covers other fermented soybean products, for example dou chi and natto. He

also explained that GSFA should be the single authoritative reference point for food additives. When food additive provisions of a commodity standard are discussed, the Commodity Committee shall examine if the general reference to the GSFA serves its purpose. If food additive provisions in the corresponding food category of the GSFA already cover the usage of food additives, the commodity committee incorporate a general reference to the corresponding food category of the GSFA.

### Mock session

Following some lectures on the current work of Codex committees, a mock session was held simulating a real session of a Commodity Codex Committee meeting. Before starting the mock training session, Ms Eva Zamora Escribano and Ms Bernadette Klink Khachan of the European Commission highlighted the objectives of a mock session, which are to improve effective participation in Codex activities and to reinforce links and cooperation through: a) better knowledge and understanding of Codex documentation and working procedures; b) enhanced knowledge of how to prepare, present and promote national positions in Codex Committees; and c) enhanced negotiation skills. All the participants were divided into five hypothetical member countries and two NGOs representing manufacturers and consumers, as in a real Commodity Committee.



Each group discussed and prepared their delegation's position for a hypothetical proposed draft Codex standard for a daily food item and a proposal for new work based on the guidance and necessary documents provided by the European Commission. They developed their positions and written comments where appropriate for participation in the plenary meeting. Before initiating the plenary session, each delegation also exchanged their views with other delegations face-to-face.

Ms Yayoi Tsujiyama, Ms Annamaria Bruno and Mr Atish Kumar Sen, FAO international consultant, played the roles of chairperson, secretariat and assistant chairperson for the plenary session, respectively. The agenda was conducted actively and constructively as it would be in a real Codex meetings with appropriate interventions by participants.







After the plenary session, a debriefing session was held to summarize lessons learned from the mock session. Some key lessons were as follows:

- Preparation is essential but there is also a need to be prepared for the unexpected.
- An intervention needs to be clear in terms of content and justification for the intervention.
- The timing of an intervention is important.
- Delegations need to look for a win-win situation.
- Roles of chairperson and secretariat are important and delegations can interact with them to explain their views, seek

solutions and find consensus.

- The most knowledgeable person on the topic under discussion should be able to intervene, not only the head of the delegation.
- The report needs to reflect the decision correctly and delegations should intervene if it is not.

#### 2.4 Field trip

On the final day, a field trip to Megmilk Snow Brand Co., Ltd. Ebina plant located in a suburb of Tokyo was organized to see the milk processing plant. At the factory, milk, yogurts and creams are produced. The plant manager gave a brief introduction to the factory and explained details of the products manufactured there, after which participants visited the plant and inspected the facility environment, processing lines, pre-production control such as sterilization and quality control sensory tests. Participants also learned how hygienic control is handled throughout the manufacturing process. Finally, they sought clarifications in relation to domestic food safety standards and their implementation.



#### 2.5 Closing session



Mr Atish Kumar Sen on behalf of FAO, presented the participants' evaluation of the training course, including the faculty. Participants generally rated each specific topic of the programme either as "excellent" or "very good". Some participants pointed out that more time should be given to the mock session and that a follow-up training programme can be prepared for further enhancement of skills of the participants in developing national positions on Codex works. Participants from ASEAN countries were given certificates of participation in the training workshop. Thereafter there were closing addresses by Ms Yayoi Tsujiyama and Ms Shashi Sareen from the host country and FAO, respectively. Ms Yayoi Tsujiyama from the host country in her concluding remarks

thanked FAO for organizing the programme and mentioned that the highlights of the training workshop were the lectures as well as the mock training session with technical support by resource persons of the European Commission. She hoped that the participants would practice what they learned during the training programme as this would help to enhance their effective participation in the Codex activities in the region. Ms Shashi Sareen from FAO briefly described the outcomes of the training workshop and hoped that countries would be able to



utilize the lessons learned for strengthening their participation in Codex. She thanked the Government of Japan for the support provided in organizing the training course, the resource persons for delivering lectures and the participants for their enthusiastic participation in the programme.



The report is now available on the project website:

<http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Report-of-Tokyo-workshop.pdf>

## From Project Team

To strengthen the capacities of ASEAN countries in contributing to Codex-setting and implementing the adopted Codex standards, we would appreciate your suggestions for future activities of the project. The project also welcomes all of you visit our webpage <http://foodsafetyasiapacific.net/>

Project Team

*Your feedback on the newsletter is highly appreciated and will help us to improve our ability to serve you and other users of our newsletters.*

*Please contact Project Coordinator; Makoto Sakashita (Mr.) e-mail: [makoto.sakashita@fao.org](mailto:makoto.sakashita@fao.org)*