

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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REPORT BY THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

on the coordination between the Member States
on the attitude to be adopted at the 10th
Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives

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Introduction

The 10th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives is to take place in the Netherlands 2 - 7 June 1975 and the FAO/WHO Secretariat has drawn up a provisional agenda (doc. CX/FA 75/1). Not all the documents referred to on the agenda are available and it may therefore be necessary for the Member States to coordinate their views on specific items during the meeting.

The Commission proposes that, in the light of comments received from the Member States, in view of the existence of Community Directives relating to certain items on the agenda and the inclusion on the agenda of topics relating to the work programme of the Community, the Member States coordinate their views on the topics, indicated below

1. Potential Daily Intake of Food Additives

Document CX/FA 75/5 prepared by the Codex Secretariat presents some disturbing facts, while at the same time pointing out in paragraph 2 that the actual exposure of man to chemicals may be less than the theoretical calculations presented.

The Commission, in view of the late distribution of the document, has received no comments from Member States. It would appear necessary to consider the common attitude to be taken to this report.

2. Council of Europe publication on Flavours

Observations on the Council of Europe publication on natural flavouring substances and artificial flavouring substances were requested by the Codex secretariat (CL 1974/51) on a certain number of points.

The Commission proposes that the Committee be informed: (1) that the Member States of the Community agree with the Codex decision to

separate flavours into the three classes (natural, nature-identical and artificial) but that the treatment to be given to the three classes has not finally been agreed at Community level. The Commission will be making a proposal for Directive to the Council following the programme agreed by the Council (Resolution 17/12/1973 OJ/C117 page 7)

(ii) that while the Member States of the Community believe that as an objective it is desirable to examine the feasibility of including all classes of flavours on a positive list, they place differing emphasis on the practical difficulties of elaborating such a list for natural flavours in the present state of knowledge.

(iii) that the Member States are in agreement that artificial flavours should be included in a positive list.

The treatment to be given to nature-identical flavours depends to some extent on the approach made in respect of natural flavours. It is difficult to justify a substantially increased use of a product which appears in limited quantities in nature, by synthesizing its equivalent, unless adequate toxicological data are available. On the other hand use at similar levels to those found in nature, would not appear to create any added problems of safety to consumers, and the products could be treated in the same way.

The Commission also believes that a multilingual approach to what is actually involved in the term "natural flavour" and similar terms would help to overcome misunderstandings as to the scope of the term.

3. Significance to be given to the maximum levels of food additives

The Commission suggests that Member States entirely support the approach put forward by the Netherlands secretariat in document CX/FA 75/14. Member States may also wish to consider the practicability of including in a footnote, or in the Report of the meeting, an observation to the effect that the change to "maximum level in the final product" does not mean that additives which are completely removed during processing

can be permitted without approval.

4. General Standard on Labelling of Food Additives sold as such
(doc CX/FA 75/9)

The representative of the Commission will inform the Committee of the Directives on colours, preservatives, antioxidants and emulsifiers (etc) and will be prepared to give details as required.

The differences in the Community Directives indicates that in certain cases there could be fundamental reasons why a common system is not possible.

In addition, it appears from the comments received that the Member States are not yet convinced that a general standard can be applied to all additives. The Commission therefore suggests that the Codex Committee be again encouraged to discuss the principle and necessity for the standard, particularly in view of the potential overlap between this standard and other proposals or standards developed or in the process of being developed by the Codex Committee on Labelling.

5. Carry over principle

This has been subject of an earlier report by the Commission and Member States have agreed the position to be taken (Council R/814/75 (AGRI 253)).

6. Consultative list of additives in soft drinks

The document prepared by Canada is extremely comprehensive. Member States should bear in mind in their comments that the Community is working on a proposal for Directive in this area.

7. Specifications for Antioxidants (doc CX/FA 75/7)

The Commission is to submit proposals for specifications for anti-oxidants included on the Community list in the near future.