

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



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Agenda Item 4

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

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PROPOSED DRAFT PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF SAMPLING AND TESTING IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE: EXPLANATORY NOTES AND PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

(Comments of EU)

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to thank the Chair and Co-Chairs of the working group for the excellent work done and hope that the document can be finalised at the CCMAS 36th Session.

The electronic working group led by Germany, New Zealand and The Netherlands, created a very comprehensive and instructive document by integrating the explanatory notes into the body of the already existing CAC/GL 83-2013 (Principles for the Use of Sampling and Testing in International Food Trade). The document will be useful for governments and other interested parties to understand better the requirements related to sampling and testing for product control and assessment of compliance with provisions given in Codex Standards.

The EUMS would like to make the following general comment and a number of specific comments:

The concept of measurement uncertainty as used in CAC/GL 83-2013 is not fully in line with CAC/GL 50-2004, which could potentially lead to conflicting accept/reject decisions depending on which concept is used.

SECTION 3 - DEFINITIONS

The definitions of the terms listed in Section 3 should be included in the text indicating the reference to the source. This would make the understanding of the principles and explanatory notes easier, as the reader would not need to keep at hand a number of related documents.

SECTION 4 – PRINCIPLES

Principle 3: Probability of incorrect decisions

Explanatory Notes

The variation expressed by the uncertainty of measurement (as well as for the measurement error) can include systematic variations in addition to random variations. It is therefore suggested to remove the word "random" before the word "variation".

Therefore, the EUMS propose the following changes in the 1st paragraph of the explanatory notes to Principle 3:

"Probabilities of wrongly accepting or wrongly rejecting a lot or consignment can never be entirely eliminated because ~~both the samples taken and the measurement errors associated with the analysis are subject to random variation~~ of the uncertainty of measurement due to both the sampling and testing procedure. This leads to ~~random~~ a variation in the calculated quantity that is to be compared to a limit for compliance assessment. This means that if the same lot were assessed twice using the same procedure, there is a possibility that it may pass one assessment and fail the other."

Principle 5 - Analytical measurement uncertainty

Explanatory Notes

Analytical measurement uncertainty should be defined as it may be interpreted differently by parties having experience in different areas.

The EUMS recommend inserting a new 1st paragraph under the Explanatory notes:

The analytical measurement uncertainty includes the contribution of all steps of the determination of the measurand in the sample delivered to the laboratory for testing compliance with the relevant specification. The steps of the determination procedure depend on the nature of the sample material and the mass of the sample. They may include sample size reduction, selection of portion of the commodity to which the corresponding specification refers to [for instance portion of commodities to which Codex Maximum Residue Limits apply and which is analysed, (CAC/GL 41-1993)], homogenization of the sample material, extraction, removal of interfering materials, qualitative and quantitative determination, etc.

ANNEX ON PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

The EUMS acknowledge the good intention of the list of practical examples presented in the Annex. Several examples have been taken over from the previous version of the document and complemented with further examples. However, the EUMS consider that the information is presented in a rather condensed form which may make the Annex difficult to use and might not achieve the intended aim. For example, more specific guidance should be provided as to why for a given problem a certain plan has been selected.