EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMMENTS

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES

Beijing, China, 21-25 April 2008

Agenda Item 7(a)

Discussion Paper on Guidelines and Principles of substances used as Processing Aids

(Codex document CX/FA 08/40/9)

Mixed competence
Member States vote

The EC and its Member States (ECMS) thank the delegation of Indonesia and the participants of the electronic working group for the preparation of the project document and the revised version of the discussion paper on Guidelines and Principles of substances used as Processing aids. The ECMS would like to make the following suggestions:

Comments on the project document in Appendix I

1) Under point 1 'Purpose and scope of the proposed new work' the last words "in order to control at post market level" are not clear and may undermine the comprehension of the guidelines. The ECMS considers that these words should be deleted.

2) Under Point 2 'Its relevance and Timeliness' the ECMS would suggest amending the paragraph to read as follows:

'Processing aids have an important role in food processing as well as food additives. Development of guidelines will provide a tool for Codex to offer information and advice on the safety requirements and criteria for the safe use of substances when used as processing aids. Currently the Inventory of Substances Used as Processing Aids is updated by New Zealand'.

3) It is the view of the ECMS that point 3 'Main Aspects to be covered' refers to detailed principles and requirements which should be discussed and established in the actual guidelines. The following wording is therefore suggested to replace the text under point 3:

"3. Main Aspects to be covered:

The Guidelines would provide principles for the safe use of processing aids; the main aspects to be covered by the proposed guidelines are:

* The principles for the use of processing aids under conditions of good manufacturing practice,

* The general principles for the safe use of processing aids and the safety of their residues in food
* An explanation of the role of the Inventory of Processing Aids and its status. The Inventory is a useful reference document, but is not intended to be a complete or positive list of permitted substances used as processing aids.

* Technical categories of processing aids

4) Point 5 to be modified as follows:

'The proposal is consistent with
- Objective 6 : Promoting maximum application of Codex standards in that the new work will contribute to promoting a global approach to consumer health protection in relation to processing aids'.

Comments on the proposed draft guidelines in Appendix II

The ECMS question the need of appendix II at this stage and consider that the proposed draft guidelines should be discussed in detail once the CAC has accepted the proposal for new work. In the meantime the ECMS would like to make the following initial comments:

1) The ECMS suggests the following wording for point 2.2:

'It should be clear that substances used as processing aids include:
- Substances which may also be used as food additives, and/or
- Substances other than food additives used as processing aids that is not used as foods or food additives.

Additionally foods, including water, although not meeting the definition of processing aid, can be used for the same technological purpose as processing aids'.

2) The third and fourth bullet point under point 3.1 would read clearer as follows:

- They are used to fulfil a technological purpose during treatment or processing and not a technological function in the final food; and
- "The use of the substance may only result in the non-intentional but technically unavoidable presence of residues of the substance or its derivatives in the final food, provided that these residues do not present any health risk".

3) Under point 3.2 it is unclear what is meant by the wording that substances which are used as processing aids and as foods or food additives should be in accordance with the requirements of food or food additives. If this is to mean compliance with the specifications set for the substance as a food additive, the following wording is proposed for point 3.2:

Substances used as processing aids that are also used as foods or food additives should be in accordance with the specifications for the food or food additives).

4) The following wording is proposed for point 3.3:

'For substances which are only used as processing aids, as defined under section 2.1, and it is not functioned as a the specific provisions should be established to ensure that the use of these substances in food is fit and safe for human consumption'.

5) The wording under point 4.1 could create ambiguity with regard to the definitions of processing aids and food additives and therefore we propose changing it as follows:

'The use of processing aids may only result in the non-intentional but technically unavoidable presence of residues of the substance or its derivatives in the final food, provided that these residues do not present any health risk and do not perform a technological function in the final food'.

6) For point 5.1 the following changes are suggested:

'Processing aids have many technological functions in food processing. The use of processing aids is justified only when such use has an advantage does not present an unacceptable health risk to and does not mislead the consumers and assists in the treatment or processing of food. The presence of the substance or any derivative must only be or non intentional or as a technically unavoidable residue of the substance must be non intentional or unavoidable, it must be at the lowest of the low possible level'.

7) Point 4.2 should be changed as follows:

'The safety of each substance should be used demonstrated by the manufacturer of processing aids, before the products are put in on the market. This demonstration may include information on long history of safe use coupled with some adequate analytical demonstrations of the presence of only harmless and technically unavoidable traces of residues'.

8) The technical categories should not be listed yet under point 5.2 as they should be discussed thoroughly when the guidelines are developed. In any case, the ECMS would like to express, already at this stage, its view that "packaging gases" should be deleted from the list of technical categories as these substances are food additives.