



Updates on Codex

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) held its 32nd Plenary Session in Rome, Italy, from 29 June to 4 July 2009. At this session, which was attended by 125 member countries and one member organisation, over 30 new standards and codes were adopted. They include new food additive provisions, codes of practice to reduce food contaminants, microbiological criteria for specified foods, model health certificate, maximum residual limits for pesticide residues and veterinary drugs, guidelines for analysis/nutrition and health claims, as well as various commodity standards.

AVA participated at this session as Singapore's National Codex Contact Point, to ensure that Singapore's interests are safeguarded.

CAC is the international food standards body established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the World Health Organisation. The principal role of CAC is to develop food standards that can be recommended to governments for adoption. Its global charter is to protect consumers' health and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

With the adoption of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) agreements by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Codex standards, also known as Codex Alimentarius in Latin, have since 1994 been the benchmark for resolving trade disputes and harmonizing national legislation. WTO would consider it a trade barrier if products, which comply with Codex standards are refused import in any member country. As a member country of Codex and WTO, Singapore is required to adopt recommendations by Codex and allow import of food products, which comply with Codex standards.

The report for the 32nd CAC Plenary Session is now available for downloading at the Codex website:

http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/index_en.jsp.

The list of newly adopted standards and codes is appended as Appendix – of the report. These standards and codes will soon be made available for downloading from the following URL:

http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/standard_list.do?lang=en

Importers and manufacturers are encouraged to download the following newly adopted codes for reference and application

- Code of Practice for Reduction of Acrylamide in Foods
- Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Ochratoxin A Contamination in Coffee
- Code of Practice for the Reduction of Contamination of Food with Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH) from Smoking and Direct Drying Processes

Industry members who are keen to find out more about the latest Codex guidelines relating to use of health claims may refer to the Annex: “Recommendations on the Scientific Substantiation of Health Claims” of the updated version of the “Codex Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims”.

If you require further assistance regarding Codex matters in Singapore, please contact our officers Ms Lim Lee San (email: lim_lee_san@ava.gov.sg), Ms Adelene Yap (email: adelene_yap@ava.gov.sg) or Mr Sean Wong (email: sean_wong@ava.gov.sg).