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MANUFACTURING CHEMISTS ASSOCIATION

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December 4, 1972

To: FOOD, DRUG, AND COSMETIC CHEMICALS COMMITTEE

Subject: Report on the Ninth Session of the
Codex Alimentarius Commission

Gentlemen:

This is the report of your secretary on the Ninth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which was held in Rome November 6 through November 17, 1972. It deals only with those aspects of the session judged to be of particular interest to the FDCC Committee, and is based largely on the draft report of this session.

ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS BY GOVERNMENTS

It was reported that over 30 countries have indicated their positions with respect to the acceptance of the 42 Recommended Codex Standards already sent to governments for acceptance at Step 9 of the Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards. Some indicated full acceptance, some target acceptance, and some acceptance with minor deviations.

The chief U.S. delegate, George Grange, drew attention to the Notice of Proposed Rule Making on the subject of Review of Recommended International Food Standards which appeared in the October 5 FEDERAL REGISTER and which was sent to the FDCC Committee. He stated that in cases where the U.S. did not have regulatory standards for products covered by Recommended Codex Standards and where, in addition, it was not the intention of the U.S. to issue standards for such products, the U.S. expected that, as a minimum, it would permit such products which are in conformity with Recommended Codex Standards to move freely in the U.S.

The Commission agreed none of the Recommended Codex Standards should be published at this time, and decided to request the Codex Committee on General Principles to review the acceptance procedure, particularly the concept of acceptance with minor deviations. One delegation considered that the determination

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of whether or not a deviation was "minor" was a matter calling for technical competence in relation to the product and could be judged only by the experts in the Commodity Committee concerned. Another delegation stated that conditions and preferences varied so much from region to region that it was difficult to see how regional differences could be avoided. Thus there would always be deviations in this sense.

REPORT OF CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES

The following matters arose during the discussion of the report of the Eighth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives which was held May 29 - June 2, 1972 in Wageningen, The Netherlands:

Definitions of Food Additive and Contaminant

The Commission considered the definitions adopted by the CCFA which were attached to my June 22, 1972 report to the FDCCC on the Eighth CCFA Session.

It was pointed out that the definition of food additive had been drafted to exclude typical ingredients (such as condiments, spices, and salt) and nutritional substances (such as vitamins, amino acids, and trace elements).

Regarding the definition of contaminant, the Commission noted that it included residues of substances (such as antibiotics, hormones, and pesticides) which are used deliberately during the production of food.

It was pointed out that the definition of food additive, as drafted, would include certain flavoring substances which were considered by many as ingredients, and that this matter should be given special attention by the CCFA.

Noting that the CCFA had considered these definitions in great detail, and that they are working definitions for the purpose of the Codex Alimentarius (not intended for acceptance by governments), the Commission adopted the definitions without any amendment. It was understood that the CCFA would keep the matter of definitions under review.

General Principles for the Use of Additives

The Commission had before it the General Principles as amended by the CCFA which were attached to my June 22, 1972 report to the FDCCC on the Eighth CCFA Session. The Commission adopted the

General Principles without amendment.

Specifications for Food-Grade Salt

At the Eighth CCFA Session, it was decided to send the specifications attached to my June 22, 1972 report to governments for comment, pending the decision of the Commission re elaboration of a Codex standard for salt. At the present session, the Commission requested the CCFA not to proceed with work on the specifications for food-grade salt pending further consideration by the Commission.

It was pointed out to the Commission that there were several commodities in international trade, such as table salt intended for direct consumption and food-grade salt which is used mainly by the food industry which would require the establishment of a standard. There are other products such as curing salts which might have to be considered in this context.

Contaminants Sections of Codex Commodity Standards

The Commission discussed in detail the question of contaminants in cocoa products, fish and fishery products, and fruit juices, and stressed the importance of protecting the health of the consumer by keeping the level of contamination of food products with copper, mercury, tin, and other heavy metals and metalloids as low as practicable. The Commission requested all Codex Commodity Committees to pay full attention to this problem. The need for more data on actual levels of contamination was stressed so as to make it possible for these committees to prepare a section on contaminants in the various draft Codex standards.

Joint FAO/WHO Food Additives and Contaminants Conference

The Commission considered a draft provisional agenda for the conference to be held near the end of 1973, and agreed it should be submitted to governments for comment. Suggested for discussion were a review of the work carried out by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives, general principles regarding the use of food additives, problems of food contamination through environmental pollution and the recommendations made by the U.N. Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm 1972), measures and international action required to determine the levels of contaminants in food (including pesticide residues) and to assess their hazard, report on work done on food additives intake data, etc.

FOOD ADDITIVES PROVISIONS OF CODEX STANDARDS

The Commission considered a number of commodity standards at Steps 8 and 5 of the Procedure for Elaboration of Codex Standards. Following is information from the draft report of the session which deals with the Food Additives sections of these standards:

Draft Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables

As a general remark, several delegations pointed out that some of the additives listed in the Food Additives section of the standards considered were not permitted in the products concerned under their national regulations. It was pointed out, however, that it would be open to those countries which did not permit the use of some of the additives or classes of additives listed to indicate this in their replies when the standards are submitted to them for acceptance.

With respect to the draft standard for canned green peas, a number of delegations thought that the use of colors should not be permitted. Nevertheless, the Commission adopted the standard at Step 8.

With respect to the draft standard for raisins, several delegations considered the level of 1,500 mg/kg of sulphur dioxide too high. The German delegation was opposed to use of mineral oil which, it stated, was being replaced by monodiglycerides. The standard was returned to Step 7.

With respect to the draft standard for canned plums, the Commission accepted the view of the commodity committee that there is no need to provide for use of acidifying agents.

With respect to the draft standard for canned raspberries, the delegations of India and Peru objected to the provisions for colors. Nevertheless, the Commission adopted the standard at Step 8.

With respect to the draft standard for canned pears, several delegations objected to the use of colors. Nevertheless, the Commission adopted the standard at Step 8, but stressed the need for fullest consideration to be given to the technological need for the use of food additives.

With respect to the draft standards for jams and citrus marmalade, the delegations of Spain and Germany stated that careful consideration should be given by the commodity committee to the section on food additives and that only those which were technologically indispensable should be permitted. The Commission agreed that these two standards should be advanced to Step 6.

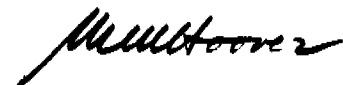
Draft Standards for Fish and Fishery Products

With respect to the draft standard for canned crab meat, several delegations stated that they were against the use of calcium disodium EDTA. There was also some opposition to the use of polyphosphates. The Commission agreed to advance this standard to Step 6, but requested the commodity committee to reconsider carefully the question of additives.

Draft Standards for Cocoa Products and Chocolate

With respect to the draft standard for cocoa beans, nib, mass, press cake, and dust, the delegations of Germany and Portugal objected to the use of phosphoric acid. The Commission agreed to advance this standard to Step 6.

Sincerely yours,


M. M. Hoover, Secretary
Food, Drug, and Cosmetic
Chemicals Committee

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