

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(75) 295 final.

Brussels, 19 June 1975

## REPORT

By the Commission to the Council on the coordination between the Member States on the attitude to be adopted at the 8th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and oils.

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The Member States were invited by the FAO/WHO Secretariat to send observations on the items in circular letter CL/1974/27 (May 1974) with a view to their discussion at the forthcoming meeting of the Codex Committee. The original date for final comment was established for the end of 1974 at the time when the meeting of the Codex Committee was fixed for April 1975. The meeting has now been postponed.

The present report follows, as far as possible, the order of the items in the letter CL/1974/27.

1. Fatty Acid composition of fats and oils based on GLC

- a) Member States are invited to provide as much detail as is available to them to facilitate the work of the Codex Secretariat in this matter.

It is not to be excluded that at some point in the future, the Community will find it necessary to include GLC compositions in the Directive on Fats and Oils. The Commission therefore suggests that the acceptability of the different figures should be discussed in more detail by the Member States in relation to the Directive before a final position is taken in the Codex Committee.

- b) The Commission is considering the methods to which reference is made and will report on their acceptability, if possible, before the Codex meeting takes place.

2. Processing solvents

It is not clear whether the Codex Secretariat required comments on all solvents or simply "processing solvents".

The Council has included solvents in its work programme (Council Resolution of 17 December 1973, OJ C 117 of 31/12/73 page 1), and Member States should make it clear in their comments that when this work is completed during the course of 1975/1976 a Community Directive will be the result. This Directive will list solvents to be used in the extraction of fats and oils, and at a later stage include other types of solvent.

3. Scope of the Recommended General Standard for Edible Fats and Oils not covered by individual Codex standards (C.C/RS 19/1969).

The General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius state that the Standards being developed for the Codex are aimed not only at protecting consumers' health but also as a means of ensuring fair practices in the food trade. The Codex Alimentarius is to develop standards for all the principal foods for distribution to the consumers, as well as material for further processing into foods "to the extent necessary to achieve the purpose of the Codex Alimentarius as defined".

There is a significant international trade in fats and oils for further processing (eg into margarine or into bakery goods) as well as for direct consumption (eg as table oils or frying oils), and there is no difficulty in providing the evidence of the usefulness of a standard which applies to all oils and fats for food use no matter what the intermediate steps might be.

Most sections of the standard could be applied to products for further processing and to products for direct consumption, but the inference to be drawn from the extent and type of additives listed in section 4 is that at present drafted the standard is meant to apply to both types of product. The Commission is of the opinion that there is no need to include the long list of emulsifiers (section 4.3) in fats and oils for direct consumption. It also seems likely that the levels and types of antioxidants and colours could also be reduced. (There may be exceptions to these general rules in the case of specialised products such as fats and oils sold directly to the consumer for use in bakery products.)

The most appropriate procedure may be to include within the Scope all fats and oils - both for direct sale to the consumer and for sale to industry -, with the exclusion of these compound products containing a mixture of fats and oils, and other ingredients to an extent that they cease to be "fats" and "oils" as such.

Section 4, as a consequence, would be separated into

1. additives authorized in fats and oils for direct consumption
2. additives authorized in fats and oils for further processing into other foodstuffs.

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It is open for discussion whether for the purposes of Codex the additives in 2 (above) should be listed or whether the restriction should be that of adequate labelling, together with a requirement that any additive used should be acceptable at the limit appearing in the final product.

The Commission proposes that, in the forthcoming meeting, Member States follow this approach which is being applied in the Proposal for a Directive on Fats and Oils currently under discussion in the Community.

It will be necessary at a later stage to intervene in some of the more detailed aspects of the Codex Standard (eg labelling, additives).

#### 4. Method of Analysis for Water Content

The Commission is studying, together with experts of the Member States, the method to which reference is made and will be reporting on the most suitable version. Comments made before the meeting of the Codex Committee should indicate this. It is hoped that the work will be finished before the meeting to allow a definitive answer to be given to the Codex Secretariat.

#### 5. Proposed Draft Standard for low erucic acid rapeseed oil

It has been agreed at Council that a limit should be placed on the amount of erucic acid in fats and oils on the basis of the Report of the Scientific Committee for Food. The Commission is proposing to suggest a suitable limit in its proposal for Directive on Fats and Oils.

Member States are therefore invited to supply information to the Codex Secretariat (as requested under section 5 a) to c)) but to inform the Secretariat that the Community is itself working on the problem.

The limit to be made on the quantity of erucic acid in rapeseed oils in the Community will have an impact on the relative importance of the "high" and "low" erucic acid Standards. The Member States have already agreed that the Codex document should be elaborated without decision at this stage as to the necessity of separate standards or a subdivided standard (doc. R/781 (74) AGRI 210).

The Commission proposes that the Member States maintain the position until the Community's work on fats and Oils is completed.

Item 6 and 7 relate to simple requests for information.

