

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

concerning the coordination of the positions of Member States in relation to the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission's 11th meeting in Rome 1976 in particular in relation to the code of hygienic practice for fresh meat (Alinorm 76/15 Annexes II and III) and the code of hygienic practice for poultry processing (Alinorm 76/13 Annex II)



Report from the Commission to the Council concerning the coordination of the positions of Member States in relation to the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission's 11th meeting in Rome 1976 in particular in relation to the code of hygienic practice for fresh meat (Alinorm 76/15 Annexes II and III) and the code of hygienic practice for poultry processing (Alinorm 76/13 Annex II)

In letters CX 5/25.2. CL 1975/2 and CX 4/20 CL 1974/56 of January and February 1975 the Joint WHO/FAO secretariat has requested comments from governments wishing to propose amendments to draft codes of hygienic practice at step 8 by 30 June 1975.

The codes of hygienic practice where the Community already has legislation are the code of hygienic practice for poultry processing (Alinorm 76/13 Annex II at step 8 and the draft code of hygienic practice for fresh meat, with the draft code of practice for ante- and post-mortem inspection of abattoir animals (Alinorm 76/15 Annexes II and III at step 8).

The Community already has legislation in these fields namely:

1. Council Directive of 15 February 1971 on health problems affecting trade in fresh poultry meat (OJ L 55/22 of 8.3.71 EEC 71/118);
2. Council Directive of 26 June 1964 on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in fresh meat (OJ L 121 29.7.64 as amended)
Council Directive of 12 December 1972 on health problems affecting intra-Community trade in fresh meat (OJ L 302/24 of 31.12.72);
3. Council Directive of 12 December 1972 on health and veterinary inspection problems upon importation of bovine animals and meat from third countries (OJ L 302/28 of 31.12.72).

It follows that it is necessary for Member States to base their comments on existing Community legislation and coordinate their reply accordingly, the Commission being, in principle, the spokesman for the Community.

A study of the codes in question in relation to Community legislation following the last meetings of the codex committees involved indicates a number of areas which are not fully compatible with present Community requirements.

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In these cases it does not appear justified to accept dispositions of the codes which are incompatible with Community legislation. Therefore the Community position should be clearly re-stated and constructive proposals for amendment made, which are based on Community legislation.

In conformity with the 727th meeting of COREPER it is proposed that the annexed observations of the Community are sent by the Commission to the secretariat of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius.

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ANNEX

Proposals by the European Economic Community for amendment of draft codes of hygienic practice at step 8 for consideration by the 11th meeting of the Commission of the Codex Alimentarius in Rome 1976

A. The Code of hygienic practice for poultry processing (Alinorm 76/13 Annex II at step 8)

As indicated by the Community during the meetings of the Codex Committee on food hygiene in Washington, the Community provisions concerning health and hygiene of poultry processing have been under review for modification. Despite this Member States have endeavoured to make constructive contributions to the work of the Committee without being able to associate themselves with the consensus for advancement of the code. The Community modifications are not yet completed, which means that the advice which the Community had hoped to be able to give before the advancement of the code to step 8 can now solely be based on the basic principles of health and hygiene already incorporated into Community provisions. From this basis the Community proposes the following amendments to the text of the existing draft;

1. Section IV.A.3b "Water supply"

The Community considers that "potable water" only should be used in poultry meat processing plants, and that the insertion without qualification of a sentence referring to in-plant chlorination of water is unsuitable. The danger that chlorination is used as a cover for poor hygiene rather than as a hygienic aid in disinfection is possible. It is proposed that the sentence beginning "where in-plant chlorination of water is used", should be preceded by the sentence:

"The appropriate authority may permit in-plant chlorination of water if this is necessary for public health reasons."

2. Section IV.A.3f "Lighting"

The Community considers that the quoting of figures for lighting intensity in the code is unnecessarily specific and that "adequate lighting which does not distort colours" is sufficient. In addition the figures indicated are unnecessarily high. The Community considers that the figures found in the fresh meat code of hygienic practice are more satisfactory and proposes that if they are maintained the code is harmonised to the mode of wording contained in the code of hygienic practice for fresh meat.

ANNEX3. Section IV.B.1 "Equipment and utensils"

The use of wood for surfaces in contact with meat is not considered to be hygienically satisfactory. The Community proposes that, in addition to reference to the general principles, the text be harmonised in the mode of presentation with the text found in the section dealing with materials and equipment in the code of hygienic practice for fresh meat, and that the phrase "wood and similar materials should not be used" is added to the end of the paragraph.

4. Section IV.C.4 "Health of personnel"

It is proposed that this section be harmonised in the mode of presentation with the text of the first three paragraphs of the relevant provisions found in the code of hygienic practice for fresh meat. The Community considers that examination of personnel is epidemiologically advisable at least annually and proposes that the following phrase be added to the second sentence of the relevant text (36.b of the code of hygienic practice for fresh meat- Alinorm 76/15 Annex II) "and when otherwise required by the competent authority".

5. Section IV.D.3b "Temperatures and cooling and freezing procedures"

At present the Community requires that after chilling fresh poultry meat must be kept at a temperature which may not at any time exceed $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$. It is proposed that to make the section on temperatures more generally acceptable, Section IV.D.3b.1 is amended by the addition of the words "in as far as this temperature is approved by the official agency having jurisdiction".

6. Section IV.E - Sanitation control programme

The Community considers it necessary that the supervision of hygiene and meat inspection should be performed by an official veterinarian. It is proposed that the text of section IV.E is harmonised in the mode of presentation with that found in the code of hygienic practice for fresh meat. (Alinorm 76/16 Annex II Section E.43 and 44)

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ANNEX

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B. The code of hygienic practice for fresh meat (Alinorm 76/15 Annex II)

The advice of the Community Member States in respect of this code has been clearly formulated during the meetings of the Codex Committee on meat hygiene. Despite prolonged discussions, the Community considers that amendment of some items of the present draft is required and proposes the following amendments to the text:

1. Section V.A.23.e and f - Separate places for emptying and rinsing and further treatment of digestive organs

To give a wider application of section 23e, the word "rinsing" should be deleted and replaced by the word "cleansing".

The Community considers that the footnote related to paragraph 23 e. and f. serves no purpose in the code and should therefore be deleted.

2. Section V.A.23.g. and h. - "Rooms for preparation of edible fat and storage of skins etc"

To avoid misunderstanding, the phrasing of these two paragraphs concerning fat should be amended, particularly in relation to the use of the word "preparation". It is proposed that the text should read:

g. Special installations for the storage of fats, if these are not removed daily from the abattoir or establishment.

h. The mention of "inedible fats" in this paragraph should be deleted as the handling of products unfit for consumption is covered elsewhere in the code.

3. Section V.A.24.c - "Boning and cutting premises"

The reports of the meetings of the Meat Hygiene Committee record the extensive discussions which have taken place in an effort to obtain a suitable wording for this sub-paragraph. The Community considers that the present wording does not give sound advice and proposes that it should be amended to read:

"Rooms, under temperature control, for boning and cutting, physically separated from other rooms.

Boning, cutting and primary wrapping should be separated from packaging operations."

4. Section V.B.29 - "Materials and utensils"

The use of wood for surfaces in contact with meat is considered to be hygienically unsatisfactory. The Community proposes that the text be amended by the addition of the following phrase to the end of paragraph 29.

"Wood and similar materials should not be used."

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5. Section V.B.32 "materials and utensils"

The form of wording of this paragraph is at present ambiguous and confusing. The Community proposes that the text be clarified by the following amended wording:

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"No containers, wooden crates, wooden boxes or cartons should be assembled in any part of an abattoir or establishment where animals are slaughtered, or dressed, or where meat is cut up or boned, prepared, handled packed or stored. No containers, equipment or utensils should be stored in any part of an abattoir or establishment where animals are slaughtered, or dressed, or where meat is cut up or boned, prepared, handled, packed or stored unless required for immediate use in that place.

6. Section V.C.36.b

The Community considers that the examination of personnel is epidemiologically advisable at least annually and proposes that the following phrase be added to the second sentence of the text:

..... "and when otherwise required by the competent authority".