

The Relationship between the OIE and Codex

Dr Stuart A. Slorach

Chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission 2003-2005
Chairman, OIE Animal Production Food Safety Working Group

SPS Agreement requirements

The World Trade Organisation's Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures ("SPS Agreement") requires Members to

- play a full part in the work of the relevant international organisations, in particular Codex, OIE and IPPC and
- base their sanitary and phytosanitary measures on international standards, guidelines and recommendations, where they exist (and more specifically Codex, OIE and IPPC standards, guidelines and recommendations).

OIE and Codex standards and the SPS Agreement

- For **animal health** and **zoonoses**, the SPS Agreement specifically recognizes the standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by the **OIE**.
- For **food safety**, the SPS Agreement specifically recognizes the standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by the **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)**.
- Cooperation between the OIE and CAC is important to avoid duplication, gaps and inconsistencies in standards, etc. falling within the scope of both organizations

Coordination OIE – Codex



OIE

- ✓ Farm level
 - ✓ Measures relating to **animal health + food safety**
- = for any events that can have an impact on the subsequent safety of food products

Informal agreement (2002)



CAC

Production conditions & quality of products during and more especially after the primary processing stage.

Codex Alimentarius Commission

- FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) established in 1961/1963 (OIE established 1924)
- Dual objective:
 - Protecting the health of consumers
 - Facilitating fair practices in the food trade
- Current membership: 184 countries and the European Union
- CAC is an intergovernmental standard-setting body which produces the **Codex Alimentarius** or "Food Code".

Codex Alimentarius

- **Codex Alimentarius** - a collection of international standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations, including:
 - Food commodity standards, e.g. for cheeses
 - Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for residues of veterinary drugs and pesticides in foods
 - General standards, e.g. for contaminants and toxins
 - Codes of Practice, e.g. on food hygiene, meat hygiene and animal feeding
 - Guidelines, e.g. for food import control systems

Scientific basis for Codex standards

- Risk assessments provided mainly by independent scientific expert groups convened by FAO/WHO
- **Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)** - additives, contaminants and veterinary drug residues
- **Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)**
- **Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA)**
- Other FAO/WHO expert consultations, etc

Risk analysis in Codex

During the 1990s there was a series of FAO/WHO Expert Consultations on the application of risk analysis to food safety issues. These provided the basis of Codex work on food safety risk analysis

CAC has adopted

- *Working Principles for risk analysis for application in the framework of the Codex Alimentarius*
- *Working Principles for risk analysis for food safety for application by governments*

Development of Codex standards

- Codex secretariat arranges for preparation of proposed draft standard, which is then developed through a 5/8 step procedure
- Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces prepare draft standards for submission to the CAC for adoption
- Circulation to governments and other interested parties for comments. High level of transparency: documents on open website. Over 150 NGOs in observer status.
- Standards are adopted by the CAC and then added to the **Codex Alimentarius**

Organizational Chart

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION					
Executive Committee		Secretariat			
General Subject Committees		Commodity Committees		<i>ad hoc</i> Intergovernmental Task Forces	
General Principles (France)	Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Hungary)	active		active	
Food Additives (China)	Pesticide Residues (China)	Fish and Fishery Products (Norway)	Processed Fruits and Vegetables (USA)	Antimicrobial Resistance (Republic of Korea)	Animal Feeding (Switzerland)
Contaminants in Foods (Netherlands)	Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (USA)	Fats and Oils (Malaysia)	Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (Mexico)	dissolved	
Food Hygiene (USA)	Food Labelling (Canada)	adjourned		Biotechnology (Japan)	Fruit and Vegetable Juices (Brazil)
-Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (Australia)	Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (Germany)	Sugars (United Kingdom)	Meat Hygiene (New Zealand)	Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods (Thailand)	
		Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (USA)	Vegetable Proteins (Canada)	Regional Coordinating Committees	
		Natural Mineral Waters (Switzerland)	Cocoa Products and Chocolate (Switzerland)	Africa (Ghana)	Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico)
		Milk and Milk Products (New Zealand)		Asia (Indonesia)	North America and the Southwest Pacific (Tonga)
				Europe (Poland)	Near East (Tunisia)

Contaminants

- Covers chemical contaminants such as metals (Cd, Pb, Hg, etc), mycotoxins (aflatoxins, patulin, ochratoxin A, etc.) and organochlorine compounds (dioxins, PCBs, etc).
- Toxicological evaluations by JECFA, resulting in recommendations for Tolerable Daily or Weekly Intakes
- Maximum levels for contaminants in food commodities and Codes of practice for reducing contamination with various chemical contaminants, e.g. dioxins, aflatoxins.

Pesticide Residues

- Toxicological evaluations, Acceptable Daily Intakes (ADIs) and Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides in different food commodities recommended by Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues (JMPR)
- Over 3000 MRLs covering more than 200 pesticides adopted by CAC

Veterinary Drugs and Antimicrobial Resistance: Codex (1)

- CAC has adopted more than Codex 480 MRLs covering over 50 veterinary drugs or groups of veterinary drugs
- Codex MRLs for veterinary drugs can be found on the Codex web site (www.codexalimentarius.net).
- CAC has also adopted *Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of National Regulatory Food Safety Assurance Programmes Associated with the Use of Veterinary Drugs in Food Producing Animals*
- Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food has developed a *Compendium of methods of analysis identified as suitable to support Codex MRLs* (not a Codex text)

Veterinary Drugs and Antimicrobial Resistance: Codex (2)

- Codex *Code of Practice to Minimize and Contain Antimicrobial Resistance*
- Codex ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance has developed *draft Guidelines for risk analysis of foodborne antimicrobial resistance*, which will be considered for adoption by Codex Alimentarius Commission in 2011

OIE texts on veterinary drugs and antimicrobial resistance

Section 6 of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code 2010*

- Ch. 6.6 Introduction to the recommendations for controlling antimicrobial resistance
- Ch. 6.7 Harmonisation of national antimicrobial resistance surveillance and monitoring programmes
- Ch. 6.8 Monitoring of the quantities of antimicrobials use in veterinary medicine
- Ch. 6.9 Responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine
- Ch. 6.10 Risk assessment for antimicrobial resistance arising from the use of antimicrobials in animals

Food Hygiene

The following are some examples of Codex texts on food hygiene:

- Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene, including an annex on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Egg Products
- Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods.

Meat Hygiene (1)

- A **Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat** was developed by the Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene and adopted by the CAC in July 2005
- The Code constitutes the primary international standard for meat hygiene and incorporates a risk-based approach to application of sanitary measures throughout the meat production chain.
- The Code specifically recognises the dual objectives that slaughterhouse inspection activities deliver in terms of animal and public health

Meat Hygiene (2)

- The Codex Code does not provide inspection measures for specific hazards, which remains the responsibility of the national competent authorities.
- Chapter 6.2 of the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Control of biological hazards of animal health and public health importance through ante- and post-mortem meat inspection)* refers to the Codex Code and describes the role of the **Veterinary Services** in meat inspection.

Animal Feeding

- In 2004 the CAC adopted a *Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding* developed by an *ad hoc* Task Force. The Code applies in addition to the principles of food hygiene already established by the CAC.
- OIE *ad hoc* Group drafted a Chapter on *Control of hazards of animal health and public health importance in animal feed* which, after going through the usual OIE process, was adopted in 2009 as Chapter 6.3 of the *Terrestrial Code*. Chapter takes into account Codex Code
- In 2010 CAC established a new *ad hoc* Task Force on Animal Feeding, chaired by Switzerland

Inspection and certification systems

Some examples of Codex texts:

- Principles for food import and export certification and inspection
- Guidelines for design, production, issuance and use of generic official certificates
- Guidelines for food import control systems
- Principles for traceability/product tracing as a tool within a food inspection and certification system
- Guidelines for the validation of food safety control measures

Cooperation between OIE and Codex

- The OIE Director General presents a report of relevant OIE activities at the annual meeting of the CAC.
- The Chairperson of the CAC presents a report on relevant Codex activities to the annual meeting of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates
- OIE submits written comments on Codex issues and OIE representatives have participated and participate actively in the work of the CAC and its subsidiary bodies, e.g. those working on meat hygiene, animal feeding, food import and export inspection and certification systems, food hygiene, antimicrobial resistance and general principles.

Cooperation between OIE and Codex

- Codex Secretariat participates in the work of OIE *ad hoc* Groups in drafting texts for inclusion in the OIE *Terrestrial Code*, etc. and in other OIE meetings, e.g. OIE Conference on Animal Identification and Traceability.
- In 2002 the OIE established an Animal Production Food Safety Working Group with participation of experts from OIE, Codex, FAO, and WHO.
- The Working Group coordinates OIE activities related to animal production food safety and provides advice to OIE's Director-General and the OIE Specialist Commissions. It also seeks to further develop collaboration with the CAC.

Common OIE-Codex standards?

- So far, OIE and Codex have not developed any joint standards, but both organisations take account of each others existing standards and standards in preparation when developing their own standards.
- In May 2010 the World Health Assembly approved an amendment to the official OIE/WHO Agreement providing a legal basis for the joint development of common OIE/Codex standards.
- Codex Committee on General Principles will consider a proposal for the development of such standards when it meets in April 2012.

National and regional cooperation

- At the international level, OIE and Codex cooperate and coordinate their activities, e.g. via the APFSWG
- It is also important that there is cooperation and coordination between OIE and Codex at the regional and national levels, especially since in some countries the contact points for OIE and Codex are in different ministries/organisations.
- Contact details of the national Codex Contact points can be found on the Codex website

Further information

- Further information on Codex and its relation to OIE can be obtained via:
- Codex web site: www.codexalimentarius.net
- Codex Contact Point in each Member State
- OIE web site. www.oie.int