

# Codex work on equivalence

Related to sanitary measures,  
food inspection and certification systems,  
and food control systems

Gracia Brisco

Codex Secretariat

# Codex work on equivalence:

## Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) – Development of

- Principles / guidelines for food import / export inspection / certification systems to harmonize methods and procedures which protect the health of consumers, ensure fair trading practices and facilitate international trade in foodstuffs; [*harmonization*]
- principles / guidelines for the application of measures by the competent authorities of exporting / importing countries to provide assurance where necessary that foodstuffs comply with requirements, especially statutory health requirements; [*equivalence measures*]
- guidelines for the utilization, as and when appropriate, of quality assurance systems to ensure that foodstuffs conform with requirements and to promote the recognition of these systems in facilitating trade in food products under bilateral / multilateral arrangements by countries [*equivalence of systems*]

## CCFICS work on equivalence

- **Guidelines on the judgement of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with food inspection and certification systems (CXG 53-2003)**
  - **Equivalence of sanitary measures:** The state wherein sanitary measures applied in an exporting country, though different from the measures applied in an importing country, achieve, as demonstrated by the exporting country, the importing country's appropriate level of sanitary protection.
- **Guidelines for the development of equivalence agreements regarding food import and export inspection and certification systems (CXG 34-1999)**
  - **Equivalence of inspection / certification systems:** The capability of different inspection and certification systems to meet the same objectives.
- ***Guidelines on recognition and maintenance of equivalence of national food control systems (under development)***
  - ***Equivalence of NFCSs:*** *The capability of different NFCSs or parts of a NFCS to meet the same objectives.*

# CCFICS: Equivalence

Guidelines on the judgement of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with food inspection and certification systems  
(CXG 53-2003)

**Sanitary measures associated with food inspection and certification systems:** Infrastructure; program design, implementation and monitoring; and/or specific requirements.

**Sanitary Measure:** Any measure applied to protect human life or health within the territory of the country from risks arising from additives, contaminants, toxins or disease-causing organisms in food or feedstuffs, or from risks arising from diseases carried by foods which are animals, plants or products thereof or from risks arising from any other hazards in foods.

Note: Sanitary measures include all relevant laws, decrees, regulations, requirements and procedures including, inter alia, end product criteria; processes and production methods; testing, inspection, certification and approval procedures; provisions on relevant statistical methods, sampling procedures and methods of risk assessment; and packaging and labeling requirements directly related to food safety.

# CCFICS: Equivalence

- **Guidelines for the development of equivalence agreements regarding food import and export inspection and certification systems (CXG 34-1999)**
- Certification system -> official and officially recognized certification systems.
- Inspection system -> official and officially recognized inspection systems.
- Official inspection systems and official certification systems -> systems administered by a government agency having jurisdiction empowered to perform a regulatory or enforcement function or both.
- Officially recognized inspection systems and officially recognized certification systems -> systems which have been formally approved or recognized by a government agency having jurisdiction.
- ***Guidelines on recognition and maintenance of equivalence of national food control systems (under development)*** [The policy settings, system design, implementation and monitoring and review of the production, packing, storage, transport, handling and sale of foods within national borders, including import and export control systems, as established and maintained by national governments and their competent authority for the protection of the health consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.] (under discussion)

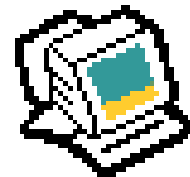
# CCFICS: Equivalence

## Considerations when determining equivalence of measures

- Experience, knowledge and confidence the importing country has with the exporting country's food control system
- history in food trade between the importing and exporting countries;
- level of compliance of the exporting country's food products with the importing country's requirements;
- level of cooperation that exists between the food safety competent authorities of the importing and exporting countries;
- extent to which importing and exporting countries' food control systems are similar ..;
- importing and exporting countries have access to the necessary resources ..;
- relevance of any previous equivalence determinations made by the importing country.

<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/codex-home/en/>

([www.codexalimentarius.org](http://www.codexalimentarius.org))



CODEX ALIMENTARIUS



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

# CCFICS work on equivalence

- Equivalence of sanitary measures -> two different sanitary measures attain the same level of human health protection
- Equivalence of inspection and certification systems
- Equivalence of food control systems (under development)
  - > two different systems attain the same objectives (public health and fair practices)