## INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) held its 55th session in Nashville, Tennessee, United States of America, from 15 to 19 December 2025, at the kind invitation of the Government of the United States of America (USA). Dr Evelyne Mbandi, Director, Microbiological and Chemical Hazards Staff, Food Safety and Inspection Service, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) chaired the session, which was attended by ** Member Countries, one Member Organization and ** Observer Organizations. The list of participants is contained in Appendix I.

## OPENING

2. Ms Michelle Bekkering, Deputy Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, opened the meeting, and welcomed participants by emphasizing that Codex forms the foundation for safe and fair agricultural and food systems globally. She noted that agriculture served as a bridge connecting nations and driving economic opportunity and reiterated the United States' firm commitment to science-based international standards.

3. Deputy Under Secretary Bekkering stressed that Codex standards were vital not only for consumer protection but also for supporting livelihoods and economic growth. She concluded by expressing gratitude to Codex delegates for their work which contributed to ensuring safer food, securing jobs for food business operators, and showcasing the capabilities of farmers, ranchers, and producers.

4. Dr Allan Azegele, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), through Dr Jing Tian, vice-Chairperson of CAC, and Dr Evelyne Mbandi, Chairperson of CCFH, also addressed the session.

5. In memoriam: CCFH55 observed one minute of silence in memory of the late: Claus Heggum, delegate of Denmark and the International Dairy Federation (IDF), who for many years supported the work of CCFH and directly contributed to the development of its hygiene texts; Lisa Ralph, Codex Senior Policy Analyst, and Codex Contact Point, New Zealand; and Tom Billy, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, 1999-2003, USA.

### Division of competence[1]

6. CCFH55 noted the division of competence between the European Union (EU) and its Member States in accordance with Rule II, paragraph 5, of the CAC Rules of Procedure.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)[2]

7. CCFH55 adopted the provisional agenda.

## MATTERS REFERRED BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND/OR OTHER CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO THE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 2)[3]

8. The Codex Secretariat introduced the item, noting that it included both matters for information and matters for action.

Matters for information

9. CCFH55 noted the information presented and;

   i. encouraged more Members to take leadership roles in committee working groups, noting the availability of the *Codex electronic working groups handbook* to support Members in this role;

   ii. noted the importance of forward planning with regard to scientific advice needs to facilitate resource allocation/mobilization and timely development of standards and agreed to discuss/address this further under item 10; and

   iii. noted the adoption of the Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031, the goals for the next six years and the monitoring framework, which would reflect the activities of, and participation in CCFH.

[1] Division of Competence and voting right between the European Union and its member states (CRD01)
[2] CX/FH 25/55/1 Rev.1
[3] CX/FH 24/54/2; CX/FH 25/55/2 Add.1; CRD05 (Codex Secretariat); CRD07 (Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco and Nigeria); CRD20 (Mali).

Matters for action

*Consequential amendments to the Code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators (CXC 80-2020)*

10. CCFH55 considered the proposal to align CXC 80-2020 with the *General standard for the labelling of prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985), specifically regarding the list of foods and ingredients known to trigger food allergy or coeliac disease or allergenic foods and relevant definitions, and agreed to the consequential amendments proposed in CRD5 with the following modifications:

    - Correction of typographical errors in the cross-referenced section numbers from 4.2.1.4 and 4.1.2.5 to 4.2.1.4 and 4.2.1.5;
    - Deletion of the phrase "on a global basis" in the “Scope” to ensure consistency with the Hazard Characterization section; and
    - Removal of the new definition for "food allergen" at this stage, to avoid any conflict with the existing definition for "allergen" noting that this discussion on the most appropriate definition for the Code of Practice (i.e. allergen or food allergen) could be considered in any future revision of CXC 80-2020.

*Guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL): Annex to CXS 1-1985*

11. CCFH55 noted the progress on PAL in CCFL, and that the work may be completed as soon as 2026, and that as a result a more in-depth revision of CXC 80-2020 may need to be considered by CCFH56.

**Conclusion**

12. CCFH55 agreed to forward the consequential amendments to CXC 80-2020 for adoption by CAC49 (Appendix II), noting that additional work will be required upon completion of the work on precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) by CCFL.

*Sampling plans for histamine*

13. CCFH55 discussed the outstanding work on sampling plans for histamine for 11 fish and fishery product commodity standards, which had previously been suspended pending updates from the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS).

14. Following information provided by the Codex Secretariat, CCFH55 considered two options; i) whether to restart the work within CCFH or ii) request CAC to return it to the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP), noting that CCFFP had been reactivated to work by correspondence. While there was general support for option ii, views were also expressed regarding the challenges of working by correspondence on complex issues. The Codex Secretariat recalled that recent revisions to the *Codex Procedural Manual* by CAC48 included the possibility for committees working by correspondence to hold virtual meetings as deemed necessary to facilitate discussions on specific matters. The Codex Secretariat further noted that the decision on which committee should carry out the work should be based on technical competence rather than the working modality of the committee.

**Conclusion**

15. CCFH55 agreed to request CAC49 to return the work to develop the appropriate sampling plans for histamine for the 11 fish and fishery product commodity standards to CCFFP; and inform CCFFP of this request, as well as the existing work of CCFH and its EWG on this issue.

*Guidelines for the control of* Trichinella *spp. in meat of Suidae (CXG 86-2015)*

16. CCFH55 favorably considered the proposed amendments to the *Guidelines for the control of* Trichinella *spp. in meat of Suidae* (CXG 86-2015), noting these were primarily of an editorial nature, with the exception of the definition of “compartment” which had been recently revised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). It was also highlighted that chapter titles rather than numbers were used when referencing WOAH texts to support the longevity of the references noting that the chapter numbers in the WOAH *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* were subject to change with future updates to the Code.

**Conclusion**

17. CCFH55 agreed on the proposed amendments to CXG 86-2015 and forwarded these for adoption by CAC49 (Appendix V, Part B).

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE WORK OF FAO AND WHO (INCLUDING JEMRA) (Agenda Item 3)[4]**

18. The FAO and WHO Representatives introduced the item and thanked delegates for their support to JEMRA.

19. The FAO Representative recalled the scientific advice provided on foodborne viruses, *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and food allergens. The Representative further informed CCFH55 that a workshop on food allergens was held in the margins of CCASIA23 to aid understanding of related FAO and WHO work and recommendations on this issue. Recalling the discussions on scientific advice at CAC48, the Representative recognized the importance of timely responses to Codex scientific advice requests to support efficient standard setting and encouraged CCFH to identify its upcoming scientific advice needs as early as possible. The Representative also noted that an expert consultation on the use of omics-based technologies in microbiological risk assessment was planned for 2026.

20. The FAO Representative advised CCFH55 that FAO had recently convened expert meetings on foodborne toxigenic clostridia, protozoal parasites, and helminths, for which reports were under development, as well as workshops on water reuse in fisheries, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) co-selection and risk communication. The Representative also informed CCFH55 that "The Good Hygiene Practices and HACCP toolbox" was also available in French on the FAO website.

21. The WHO Representative updated delegates on the web-based listeriosis risk assessment tool, new guidelines for traditional food markets, the Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030, and the 2025 Foodborne Disease Burden Estimates. The Representative encouraged Codex Members and Observers to use and provide feedback on the listeriosis tool.

22. Following the intervention by an Observer on the recent illnesses in infants caused by *Clostridium botulinum* in powdered infant formula (PIF), the FAO Representative indicated that FAO had considered clostridia in PIF in its recent expert meeting on foodborne toxigenic clostridia, the report of which would be published soon. However, the Representative noted that data were limited, and the meeting had been convened prior to the current outbreak, but that JEMRA would provide further advice on *C. botulinum* and other pathogens in PIF if requested by CCFH.

**Conclusion**

23. CCFH55:

    i. expressed appreciation for the valuable work that had been undertaken by FAO and WHO since CCFH54, noting its importance for progressing the ongoing work in CCFH, and that further details could be provided during the relevant agenda items;

    ii. noted the importance of scheduling new work for JEMRA in a forward-looking manner;

    iii. encouraged Members and Observers to use the "WHO Risk Estimation Tool for *Listeria monocytogenes* in Foods" and liaise directly with WHO regarding the support, interpretation and further development of this tool;

    iv. recalled the importance of using the most up-to-date tools and innovated approaches to provide scientific advice, as recommended by CAC48 and encouraged JEMRA to ensure its methodology was up to date and in this regard welcomed work on the use of omics in microbiological risk assessment; and

    v. welcomed the availability of the Good Hygiene Practices and HACCP toolbox in French.

**MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (Agenda Item 4)[5]**

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

24. The Representative of ISO provided an overview of the activities of ISO Technical Committee 34, Subcommittee 9 (*Microbiology of the food chain*) highlighting that the subcommittee had published over 100 standards. These standards primarily dealt with horizontal reference methods for the detection and enumeration of microorganisms (including bacteria, toxins, viruses, and parasites) applicable across the entire food chain, from primary production to the food production environment. The standards also covered general aspects such as good laboratory practices, method validation, and the use of whole genome sequencing.

25. The Representative emphasized the importance of collaboration between ISO and CCFH, citing Goal 3 of the *Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031*, reaffirmed ISO's objective to develop internationally recognized reference methods that would also meet the needs of CCFH, and welcomed the referencing of ISO methods in CCFH guidelines to ensure a coordinated approach to global food safety challenges.

[4] CX/FH 25/55/3; CRD08 (Kenya and Nigeria), CRD20 (Mali)
[5] CX/FH 25/55/4; CRD09 (Kenya and Nigeria), CRD20 (Mali).

World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

26. The Codex Secretariat presented a statement on behalf of WOAH updating CCFH55 on relevant activities. In this statement, WOAH highlighted the revisions to the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* and the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* regarding infection with *Trichinella*, which were adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates in May 2023 and May 2024, respectively.

27. WOAH also informed CCFH55 of the launch of the WOAH Standards Navigation Tool in April 2025, designed to streamline access to digitized standards, and the publication of the second Observatory monitoring report, which provides insights into the implementation of WOAH standards by its Members.

**Conclusion**

28. CCFH55 noted:

    i. the information provided by ISO and WOAH and recognized the importance of ongoing collaboration between CCFH and relevant international organizations; and

    ii. that this collaboration aligned with Goal 3 of the *Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031*, which aimed to strengthen relationships with relevant international organizations to promote a coordinated approach to addressing global challenges.

***GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFE USE AND REUSE OF WATER IN FOOD PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING* (CXG 100-2023): PROPOSED DRAFT ANNEX II ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS AND ANNEX IV ON WATER FIT-FOR-PURPOSE ASSESSMENT, SAFETY MANAGEMENT, AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR RECOVERY AND TREATMENT OF WATER FOR REUSE (Agenda item 5)[6]**

29. The European Union, as Chair of the EWG and the Physical Working Group (PWG), speaking also on behalf of the co-Chairs Honduras, India, Mauritania, Morocco, and the International Dairy Federation (IDF), introduced the item by providing a brief history of the work. The EWG/PWG chair noted that the EWG had revised Annex II on Fish and Fishery products, taking into consideration the JEMRA scientific advice and its practical implementation, and the extensive comments received over two rounds of consultations. The EWG had further developed Annex IV on water fit-for-purpose assessment, safety management and technologies for recovery and treatment of water for reuse and also proposed amendments to the General Section and other Annexes of CXG 100-2023 to include a cross-reference to Annex IV.

30. The EWG/PWG Chair provided an overview of how the comments had been addressed, noting that the annexes had been further revised to address written comments received in response to CL 2025/58-FH in preparation for the PWG. The EWG/PWG Chair further emphasized that consensus had been reached on the majority of revisions during the PWG as documented in its report (CRD02); however, differences in views remained on Figure 4 and it was agreed that the second option for this figure would be presented as a basis for further discussion in plenary.

31. The EWG/PWG Chair informed the Committee that the updated draft annexes, reflecting the outcomes of the PWG discussions, were presented in CRD02.

**Discussion**

32. CCFH55 agreed to consider the revised Annexes as presented in CRD02.

***Proposed draft Annex II on Fish and Fishery Products***

33. CCFH55 supported the text presented with the following comments and decisions, in addition to editorial corrections, and amendments for clarity and consistency.

1. Introduction

Paragraph 6

34. It was agreed to insert the wording "*and application of control measures as needed*." at the end of the paragraph to clarify that it was not the assessment that made water fit for purpose but the actions taken as a result of that assessment.

5. Water Source: paragraph 11 – bullet point 1

[6] CX/FH 25/55/5; CX/FH 25/55/5 Add.1 (Comment of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, European Union, Honduras, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia, Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) and WHO); CRD02 (Report of the EWG Chairs); CRD10 (India, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania (URT) and United States of America (USA)); CRD16 (El Salvador); CRD17 (Ghana); CRD19 (Senegal); CRD20 (Mali); CRD21 (African Union (AU)); )); CRD24 (Cabo Verde); CRD25 (International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST))

35. "*potable (drinking) water*" was replaced with "*drinking water*" as this was considered to better reflect the content of the paragraph which referred to water sources rather than water quality.

6. Water Use

Paragraph 12

36. This was substantially revised to ensure there was a clear distinction as to when an in-depth water fit-for-purpose assessment was required in contrast to when a simple identification of the water source linked to an analysis of its microbiological quality was sufficient for use of clean water and potable water. The last sentence was also revised to refer to prerequisite programmes as the commonly used and defined term.

Paragraph 16

b) Clean water – bullet point 3

37. CCFH55 agreed to delete *"artificial seawater"* and the associated footnote due to a lack of clarity on the source of such water.

c) Other sources of water

38. Views were expressed on the appropriate heading, including proposals to refer to *"other fit-for-purpose water"* or *"fit-for-purpose water."* Following discussion, recalling the JEMRA recommendations, and taking into account the need for consistency with the categorization of potable water and clean water, CCFH55 agreed to retain the heading *"other sources of water."*

Paragraph 19

39. There were requests for clarity on the use of the term *"in-depth water fit-for-purpose assessment*" compared to a "water *fit-for-purpose assessment*" highlighting the need for consistent terminology across the document. It was clarified that the concept of an "*in-depth water fit-for-purpose assessment*" was introduced, discussed and agreed during the PWG as a means of describing the nature of the risk assessment required when applying a risk-based approach to determine if water was fit for purpose. This had been described in detail in paragraph 36 of the Annex. While a fit-for-purpose assessment of water for a specific use should always be undertaken, this distinction recognized that the nature of the assessment can vary according to water source. For example, water that was already categorized as clean or potable would not require an "*in-depth water fit-for-purpose assessment*" while water from other sources would. Noting this explanation, it was acknowledged that in some places the term "*in-depth water fit-for-purpose assessment*" would be used whereas in others, when the context was more general or specific to clean or potable water, the term "*water fit-for-purpose assessment*" would be the most suitable. A proposal to add "*in-depth water fit-for-purpose assessment*" to the third bullet of this paragraph was not accepted based on the above explanation. Changes were made to paragraph 32, 65, 69 and Figure 2 (Question 6) to clarify the need for an "*in-depth water fit-for-purpose assessment*".

Paragraph 25

40. Acknowledging the distinction between the terms *"offshore"* and *"coastal,"* it was agreed to add *"or coastal"* after *"offshore",* in recognition coastal water might also be of suitable quality, if it met specific conditions.

7. Water Intended for Reuse: Paragraph 30

41. CCFH55 agreed to insert the wording *"that could come in direct or indirect contact with food"* after "fish and fishery products" to clarify that the provision applies only where there is potential food contact.

8. Water Use or Reuse Fit-for-Purpose Assessment

Paragraph 34 – bullet point 5

42. In response to a question regarding its deletion, the EWG/PWG Chair explained that the bullet point was removed as it did not align with the introductory sentence and was repetitive of content already addressed elsewhere in the text.

Paragraph 41

43. The second sentence was revised by replacing *"It is impossible"* with *"It may be impossible"* to avoid a categorical statement. Concerns were expressed regarding the ambiguity of the term "undercooked," and the EWG/PWG Chair clarified that the terminology was in line with JEMRA reports, had also been used in other Codex texts and was important to reflect consumption practices where fish may be eaten raw or undercooked. To provide further clarity, the term *"adequately"* was included before *"cooked"* in the subsequent sentence to clarify the degree of cooking being referenced.

***Proposed draft Annex IV on water fit-for-purpose assessment, safety management, and technologies for recovery and treatment of water for reuse***

44. CCFH55 agreed with most of the revisions to Annex IV as presented in CRD02 and in addition to further editorial corrections, and amendments for clarity and consistency, CCFH55 made the following comments and decisions.

6. Water Safety Management

Paragraphs 20 and 21

45. Recalling that there had been some discussion in the PWG regarding these paragraphs and in particular the reference to hazard analysis, a Member was of the view that this could be interpreted to mean that a full HACCP-based water management plan was always needed, but this would not be feasible in all contexts.

46. The EWG/PWG Chair explained that to address this concern, an alternative text to paragraphs 20 and 21 was also presented in the CRD02 for consideration of the plenary.

47. Mixed views were expressed on the alternative wording, with some supporting and others of the view that it still did not address the challenges that had been identified and that the flow of information was less clear than the original.

48. As there was no consensus on the alternative text, it was agreed to review the existing paragraphs 20 and 21 to address concerns. An introductory paragraph was inserted before paragraph 20 on development of a water safety management plan noting that it may comprise prerequisite programmes or a full HACCP-based programme, therefore clarifying that full HACCP was not always needed. It was also clarified that a water safety management plan could be part of an overall food safety management plan. With this new paragraph, the last sentence of paragraph 20 was deleted as redundant. Paragraph 21 was tailored to those situations when a full HACCP-based water safety plan should be developed and shortened to remove content now covered in the previous two paragraphs. With these modifications, consensus was reached on the text.

Paragraph 29

49. It was agreed to replace "*foreseeable hazard*" with "*potential hazards*" and to amend "*potential severity*" to "*severity of associated adverse health effects*" in line with language used in the *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969) and for greater clarity.

Figure 2

50. The question in the second bullet of the left-hand box was revised to "*Which water supply sources are used?*" to ensure it was complete and understandable.

Paragraph 30

51. The term "*high-risk hazards*" was replaced with "*hazards not controlled by prerequisite programmes only*" to better reflect that a full HACCP-based approach applies where prerequisite programmes are insufficient.

Paragraph 31– bullet point 6

52. It was agreed to split the bullet combining the microbiological profile and the use of disinfectant chemicals into separate bullets, and to add a new bullet on "*the presence of nutrients for microorganisms in the water*", noting that particularly in water reuse, nutrients present may represent an important risk factor for the establishment and growth of microorganisms.

***General section and annexes I and III of CXG 100-2023***

53. With the completion of Annex IV, CCFH55 agreed with the proposals of the EWG (see CX/FH 25/55/5 paragraph 17) to make cross-references to Annex IV in Section 1 of the General Section of CXG 100-2023, Sections 7 and 8 of Annex I and Sections 7, 8 and 9 of Annex III.

**Conclusion**

54. CCFH55 noted that all issues had been addressed and that the annexes were ready to advance in the Step procedure.

55. CCFH55 agreed to:

    i. forward Annexes II and IV to CAC49 for adoption at Step 5/8 and inclusion in the *Guidelines for the safe use and re-use of water in food production and processing* (CXG 100-2023); (Appendix III);

    ii. submit the corresponding amendments to include cross-references to Annex IV in the General Section and Annexes I and III of CXG 100-2023 to CAC49 for adoption (Appendix IV);

iii. inform CCFFP of the completion of Annex II and propose that CCFFP may consider whether it was necessary to update the *Code of practice for fish and fishery products* (CXC 52-2003) and other Codex texts under their remit;

iv. inform other relevant committees of the completion of the work on the *Guidelines for the safe use and re-use of water in food production and processing* (CXG 100-2023); and

v. ensure that the texts developed by CCFH would be aligned with the *Guidelines for the safe use and re-use of water in food production and processing* (CXG 100-2023) in relation to water provisions.

**Revision of the *Guidelines on the application of the general principles of food hygiene to the control of pathogenic* Vibrio *species in seafood* (CXG 73-2010)**

56. Following the extensive work on the revision of CXG 73-2010, CCFH54 forwarded the proposed draft revision to CAC47 where it was adopted at Step 5, noting that all references to water remained in square brackets. CCFH54 also agreed to revisit this text as soon as Annex II on Fish and Fishery Products of CXG 100-2023 was completed. With CCFH55 completing work on Annex II, it was agreed to revisit the text related to water in CXG 73-2010 so that the content of Annex II could now be considered in finalizing the revision CXG 73-2010 in a manner that was consistent with CXG 100-2023.

**Conclusion**

57. CCFH55 agreed to establish an EWG chaired by Japan and co-chaired by Honduras, Morocco and New Zealand, working in English and Spanish, to review the text in square brackets in the revision of CXG 73-2010 (REP24/FH Appendix V) taking into account CXC 100-2023 Annex II and prepare a report for consideration by CCFH56, to be submitted no less than 3 months before the session.

**ALIGNMENT OF CODEX TEXTS DEVELOPED BY CCFH WITH THE REVISED *GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE* (CXC 1-1969) (Agenda Item 6)[7]**

58. China, as Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-Chairs, the United Kingdom and the European Union, introduced the item and recalled that CCFH54 had agreed to initiate full structural alignment of existing CCFH texts with the revised *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969), starting with the most recently modified texts. The EWG Chair emphasized that the scope of work had been limited to editorial adjustments, including section numbering, headings, and internal logic, without introducing technical changes.

59. The EWG Chair explained that document CX/FH 25/55/6 had been prepared, presenting three aligned texts: the *Guidelines for the control of* Taenia saginata *in meat of domestic cattle* (CXG 85-2014), the *Guidelines for the control of* Trichinella *spp*. *in meat of Suidae* (CXG 86-2015), and the *Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of foodborne parasites* (CXG 88-2016). The document also identified key issues related to referencing principles and numbering approaches and proposed a workplan for future alignment of CCFH texts with CXC 1-1969. The EWG Chair noted that challenges encountered included differences in structure and terminology between older CCFH texts and CXC 1-1969, apparent jumps in numbering, and the need to verify cross-references.

60. The EWG Chair further reported that, based on comments received, the EWG Chairs had revised the three aligned texts and developed a decision tree intended as a working tool to promote a consistent and transparent approach. The revised document was presented as CRD22, and the EWG Chair proposed that CRD22 be used as the basis for discussion. In addition, the EWG Chair also proposed that CCFH55 consider the workplan for future alignment as presented in CX/FH 25/55/6 Appendix VI.

**Discussion**

61. CCFH55 held a general discussion and subsequently considered the three appendices contained in CRD22.

General discussion

62. Members expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken by the EWG and indicated broad support for the alignment approach and the recommendations proposed.

63. A view was expressed on the need to review other texts to be considered by CCFH55 to ensure that missing sections were appropriately titled and numbered consistently, should the proposed format under this agenda item be agreed upon.

[7] CX/FH 25/55/6; CX/FH 25/55/6 Add.1 (Comments of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Egypt, European Union, Kenya, Morocco, Qatar, Thailand, United Arab Emirates); CRD11 (India, Russian Federation and United Republic of Tanzania (URT)), CRD17 (Ghana); CRD19 (Senegal); CRD20 (Mali); CRD22 (Report of the EWG Chairs on alignment); CRD 24 (Cabo Verde)

64. In response to a query regarding the apparent jump in section numbering for example in CRD22 Appendix II from Section 8 to Section 8.5, the Codex Secretariat clarified that, under CXC 1-1969, Section 8 comprised Sections 8.1 to 8.4. The Codex Secretariat explained that the aligned text used the expression "refer to Section 8 of the *General principles of food hygiene* together with the following" to indicate to the user to apply Sections 8.1 to 8.4 together with Section 8.5, thereby avoiding duplication while maintaining structural alignment and readability; and that this approach was also applicable to other sections as appropriate. The Codex Secretariat further clarified that this approach had already been common practice in CCFH texts that followed the structure of CXC 1-1969 prior to its 2022 revision.

Challenges in achieving structural alignment

65. The Chairperson invited CCFH55 to consider situations where full structural alignment was difficult and circumstances that might require additional technical review beyond alignment. The Chairs of other CCFH EWGs shared their experiences with alignment during the conduct of their work.

66. The United States of America, as Chair of the EWGs for the revision of the *Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of* Listeria monocytogenes *in foods* (CXG 61-2007) and the *Guidelines for the control of* Campylobacter *and* Salmonella *in chicken meat* (CXG 78-2011), highlighted that alignment was more manageable when undertaken in parallel with technical revision but remained challenging for texts with complex structures, such as those containing extensive process flow diagrams.

67. Canada, as Chair of the EWG for the revision of the *Guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in food* (CXG 79-2012), also noted that alignment was more straightforward when conducted alongside technical revision and emphasized the need for a strategic and flexible approach to ensure Codex texts continued to provide clear and effective guidance to users.

Consideration of the future alignment workplan

68. The Codex Secretariat noting the lessons learned and the benefit of undertaking alignment together with technical revision of a text, stressed the importance of incorporating alignment activities into CCFH's forward workplan to avoid potential duplication of effort and ensure efficient use of resources.

69. In response to the EWG Chair's suggestion to continue work by aligning three CCFH texts and refining the decision tree within the EWG, the Chairperson emphasized the need for transparency, whether through the decision tree or other means, and proposed that the identification of specific texts and the approach for continuing this work be further considered under the forward workplan (agenda item 10).

70. CCFH55 considered the three appendices included in CRD22, with particular attention to the texts highlighted in yellow, and agreed to all these texts.

**Conclusion**

71. CCFH55 noted the lessons learned in the process of undertaking the alignment, namely that structural alignment should prioritize texts unlikely to be revised in the medium term, and emphasized the importance of integrating the alignment workplan with the forward workplan to ensure consistency in CCFH's work planning.

72. CCFH55 agreed to:

    i. forward the proposed amendments to CXG 85-2014, CXG 86-2015 and CXG 88-2016, resulting from alignment with CXC 1-1969, to CAC49 for adoption (Appendix V);

    ii. establish an EWG, chaired by China and co-chaired by the United Kingdom and Kenya, working in English, to continue the alignment exercise for those texts prioritized in the forward workplan (see Agenda item 10) and clearly document the alignment approach through the decision tree or other means; and

    iii. request that the EWG submit the report to the Codex Secretariat at least three months prior to CCFH56.

**PROPOSED DRAFT REVISION OF THE *GUIDELINES ON THE APPLICATION OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE TO THE CONTROL OF VIRUSES IN FOOD* (CXG 79-2012) (Agenda Item 7)[8]**

73. Canada, as Chair of the EWG, introduced the item also on behalf of the Netherlands as co-Chair. The EWG Chair highlighted that the revision considered the available scientific advice from JEMRA[9] but noted that the full JEMRA report from its second meeting on prevention and intervention measures was still pending. The work to date also included the updating/modification of definitions, alignment with CXC 1-1969, and the addition of Annex 3 on controlling hepatitis E virus (HEV) in pork and wild game meat. Extensive feedback had been gathered over two rounds of consultations.

74. The EWG Chair provided an overview of how comments had been addressed to date but noted that those on prevention and intervention measures would only be addressed once the second JEMRA report was published. The EWG Chair highlighted a number of issues on which feedback was required from CCFH55 including a frozen produce definition, harmonization of water related terminologies, guidance around employees staying out of work when ill, and aspects related to Annex 3 such as product labelling. The EWG Chair recommended that CCFH55 focus its discussion on these aspects and that the guidelines could then be returned to Step 2 for further elaboration, integrating information from the second JEMRA report on viruses, and addressing all comments with the goal of providing clear and consistent guidelines for completion at CCFH56.

75. The FAO Representative confirmed that the second JEMRA report on viruses would be published early 2026. The WHO Representative updated CCFH55 on the review of risk assessment models for foodborne viral disease. Following an extensive literature review, eight models had been identified for in-depth review. While each had advantages, none of the models were suitable for adoption as simplified risk calculators. Nevertheless, data in the related papers, when combined with information in the recent MRA documents and inputs from the JEMRA experts, could be useful in the development of a simplified risk calculator.

76. The FAO Representative presented a conceptual prototype of a commodity-based simplified risk calculator and sought feedback from CCFH55 on whether this was in line with CCFH's expectations. The Representative noted that upon entry of a minimum number of data points, the calculator would provide an assessment of risk, highlight areas of vulnerability (e.g. pre-harvest management, processing, etc.) and provide tips or references on how to address these risk factors.

**Discussion**

General comments

77. Members expressed support and appreciation for the overall direction of the work done by the EWG, noting that good progress had been made and welcomed the opportunity to provide further input at this time. Some concerns were expressed regarding the feasibility of measures at the primary production stage, and for small-scale FBOs or small-holder farmers in particular, and it was requested that there be flexibility that also took into account the capacity of these stakeholders. A concern was expressed that disinfectant options in paragraph 61 were overly prescriptive and suggested that they be included as examples.

78. On the specific issues raised by the EWG Chair, Members shared the following views and CCFH made the following recommendations:

[8] CX/FH 25/55/7; CX/FH 25/55/7 Add.1 (Comments of Argentina, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, European Union, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia and Institute of Food Technologists (IFT)); CRD12 (India, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania (URT)); CRD17 (Ghana); CRD20 (Mali); CRD21 (African Union (AU)); CRD24 (Cabo Verde); CRD25 (International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST))

[9] FAO & WHO. 2024. *Microbiological risk assessment of viruses in foods: Part 1: Food attribution, analytical methods and indicators – Meeting report*. Microbiological Risk Assessment Series, No. 49. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd3396en

Definition of frozen produce

79. Regarding the two options presented in the report of the EWG (CX/FH 25/55/7), there were mixed views on whether a specific freezing temperature (e.g. –18 °C) should be indicated in the definition of frozen produce. Some Members supported its inclusion for clarity, to support enforcement and alignment with existing Codex texts, while others preferred its deletion to avoid prescriptiveness, noting that any freezing temperature below –12 °C was a quality-related rather than a food safety parameter and deletion of the specific temperature could provide flexibility. Members that supported Option 2 noted that competent authorities could establish specific temperatures in their national legislation if concerns existed regarding control during transportation, storage, or the freezing process.

80. Three options emerged from the discussion: (i) Option 1, as presented specifying a defined freezing temperature to be maintained throughout transportation, storage and distribution; (ii) Option 2, as presented focusing on freezing below the freezing point sufficient to preserve product quality without specifying a temperature; and (iii) Option 3 retaining the text of option 1 but without specifying a particular temperature.

81. As there was no agreement and noting that there would be further discussions on freezing or frozen storage temperatures under agenda item 10, CCFH55 agreed that this aspect would need further consideration in the EWG.

Harmonisation of terminology describing water including “clean water”, “water fit-for-purpose” and “potable water

82. CCFH55 agreed with the recommendation of the EWG co-Chairs to review all these terms in light of the completed CXG 100-2023 and to cross-reference CXG 100-2023 as appropriate.

Paragraph 46: FBOs should consider implementing policies such that employees are not financially adversely affected by staying home

83. A Member clarified that the rationale for including this guidance was to ensure economic concerns of employees did not negatively impact measures to ensure food safety. Nevertheless, Members generally agreed to the deletion of this sentence from paragraph 46, noting that issues related to financial compensation and labour conditions fell outside the scope of CCFH texts and were more appropriately addressed through national labour and employment frameworks.

Paragraph 74: Persons who have had gastroenteritis should only be allowed to return to work after a period (e.g. 48h)

84. There was a proposal to remove the example of 48 hours, citing the differences in the length of illness associated with different enteric pathogens. The WHO Representative clarified that it had no guidelines on this matter.

85. The EWG Chair recalled that there had been requests to provide some guidance in this area and that 48h was only provided as an example. CCFH55 agreed to retain this in the text.

Paragraph 34 on product labelling on Annex III Control of HEV in Pork and Wild Game Meat

86. CCFH55 agreed with the recommendation of the EWG co-Chairs to remove this paragraph noting that consumer education rather than product labelling was a more appropriate way to address any risks and that that product labelling for this purpose had not been used in Codex texts addressing other pathogen-commodity combinations.

Other issues

Definition of ready-to-eat food

87. CCFH55 noted an observation on inconsistencies in the definition of *ready-to-eat foods* in the Guidelines compared to other Codex texts and highlighted the need to harmonize this definition across different Codex texts.

88. In this regard, the Chairperson observed that the matter would also be addressed under agenda item 9, where the harmonization of the definition could be further considered.

**Conclusion**

89. CCFH55:

    i. agreed to return the proposed draft guidelines to Step 2 for further elaboration and to update the prevention and intervention measures based on the JEMRA virus report Part 2, once published, and then for circulation for comments at Step 3;

ii. agreed to re-establish the EWG, chaired by Canada and co-chaired by the Netherlands, working in English (comments in French would also be accepted), to:

a) continue with the revision of the guidelines based on the written comments submitted and the discussions in plenary for further consideration by CCFH56; and

b) prepare a report and a revised text to be submitted to the Codex Secretariat three months before CCFH56 for circulation for comments at Step 3; and

iii. encouraged JEMRA to continue to develop the risk assessment tool in a manner that would support implementation of the revised guidelines.

**PROPOSED DRAFT REVISION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTROL OF CAMPYLOBACTER AND SALMONELLA IN CHICKEN MEAT (CXG 78-2011) (Agenda Item 8)[10]**

90. The United States of America, as Chair of the EWG and PWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-Chairs Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Honduras, and India, introduced the item and explained that the PWG had met prior to the session to consider a revised draft of the guidelines prepared by the co-Chairs. This draft had incorporated comments from CX/FH 25/55/8, Add.1, and various CRDs.

91. The EWG/PWG Chair informed CCFH55 that the PWG discussions had focused on key topics, including alignment, scope, AMR, risk profiles of free-range, controlled-environment chickens, and temperature recommendations for storage and distribution. It was noted that the PWG had agreed on a hybrid alignment approach, which included technical updates, partial structural alignment with CXC 1-1969, revised headings, updated definitions, and a modernized flowchart to facilitate ease of use.

92. On scope, the EWG/PWG Chair explained that the PWG had recommended limiting the guidelines to raw chicken meat from broiler carcasses and parts, with targeted guidance on chicken liver in view of recent reports of foodborne illness. Future annexes might address other preparations. The PWG had also supported inclusion of recommendations for free-range systems where appropriate, recognizing differences in risk profiles.

93. The EWG/PWG Chair further explained that although AMR was outside the scope of the guidelines, the PWG had acknowledged its importance and added text referencing the prudent use of antimicrobials in accordance with CXC 61-2005. Regarding storage temperatures, the PWG had agreed to remove specific values and recommended maintaining less than 5 °C where applicable.

94. The EWG/PWG Chair informed the Committee that a revised version of the Guidelines, reflecting the outcomes of the PWG discussions, had been presented in CRD03.

**Discussion**

95. CCFH55 agreed to use CRD03 as the basis for discussion.

96. CCFH55 held a general discussion and subsequently considered the document section by section based on CRD03.

**General Discussion**

97. Members expressed broad support to advance the revised Guidelines for adoption, noting that the revisions were comprehensive and reflected on the latest scientific advice provided by JEMRA.

**Section-by-Section Discussion**

98. In addition to editorial corrections and amendments aimed at improving clarity (e.g., replacing the word “mitigate” with “minimize or eliminate” in Section 9), reflecting flexibility (e.g., specific control measures for flock management to address *Salmonella*), ensuring consistency, and aligning with other Codex texts (e.g., definitions of water fit-for-purpose and potable water) and WOAH texts (e.g., definition of flock), CCFH55 made the following comments and decisions.

1. Introduction

99. CCFH55 agreed to revise the statement concerning viable but non-culturable (VBNC) states for both *Campylobacter* spp. and *Salmonella* spp., and to also include information highlighting some of the challenges associated with their control. The revised text was as follows:

[10] CX/FH 25/55/8; CX/FH 25/55/8 Add.1 (Comments of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, European Union, Ghana, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia); CRD03 (Report of the PWG Chairs); CRD13 (India, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Singapore, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania (URT)); CRD16 (El Salvador); CRD17 (Ghana); CRD20 (Mali); CRD21 (African Union (AU)); CRD 24 (Cabo Verde); CRD 25 (International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST))

*Both* Campylobacter *spp. and* Salmonella *spp. can survive diverse environmental conditions and can persist in chicken production systems. It should also be emphasized that these microorganisms can exist in viable but non-culturable (VBNC) states, which makes their control and detection difficult by traditional methods. VBNC states induced by some control measures may limit their apparent effectiveness.*

9. Primary production to consumption approach to control measures

*General flock management control measures for* Campylobacter *and* Salmonella*: bullet g*

100. A Member proposed revision of this bullet point, including deletion of the text related to testing, noting that it should not be necessary to test each batch of litter subjected to inactivation treatments as such an approach was neither feasible nor necessary. A concern was expressed that the revision included no reference to testing, which might be necessary to ensure inactivation treatments were effective. Reflecting on the different considerations, CCFH55 agreed to include text to recognize that testing might be carried out now and then for verification purposes and revise the sentence to read as follows:

*Reused litter should be subjected to treatments that inactivate pathogens (e.g., composting, chemical treatments). These control measures should be validated and treated litter tested on occasion for verification purposes.*

*Specific flock management control measures for* Salmonella*: bullet a*

101. A Member expressed the view that the first sentence should be amended to read: "The use of *Salmonella*-infected eggs will most likely result in the flock being infected." The Member further proposed deleting the second sentence, noting that the risk of infection during hatching was high due to conditions such as humidity and temperature. The Member stated that cleaning and sanitizing hatching eggs was not recommended in the JEMRA report (MRA 45), as contradictory opinions existed regarding its effectiveness for *Salmonella* control and because such practices may damage the egg cuticle.

102. The EWG/PWG Chair clarified that the second sentence was consistent with the relevant requirements in the WOAH *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and that its deletion could create potential conflicts with WOAH guidance.

103. CCFH55 agreed to amend the first sentence as proposed and to retain the second sentence, with reference to cleaning and sanitizing measures but with a qualifier to provide flexibility.

9.2 Depopulation and Transport to Slaughterhouse

*General depopulation and transport control measures for* Campylobacter *and* Salmonella: bullet d

104. A Member indicated that when partial depopulation had already occurred, total depopulation should be carried out promptly to mitigate the increased risk associated with prior handling and potential immunosuppressive conditions. The Member explained that handling large numbers of birds could cause stress and increase susceptibility to infection. Partial depopulation might also increase the risk of introducing infection. Therefore, while partial depopulation might be necessary for the reasons outlined in the first part of the bullet point, subsequent handling of the remaining flock should be managed in such a manner to minimize risk of cross contamination or infection from the partially depopulated birds to other birds.

105. The EWG/PWG Chair agreed with this view and further clarified that, when partial depopulation had occurred in one house, total depopulation should first be completed in other houses before returning to finish the partially depopulated house. This approach was considered important to reduce the risk associated with repeated handling.

106. CCFH55 agreed to add the following sentence at the end of this bullet:

*Considering that partial depopulation increases the risk of infection, it is advisable to complete the depopulation of these birds after depopulation of flocks less likely to be infected.*

11. Validation, implementation, and verification of control measures

*Verification: competent body*

107. An Observer reiterated that in their view, trade associations should not be included among the options for competent bodies to undertake specific verification activities in relation to the industry's process control systems as this could result in industry verifying its own compliance. It was emphasized that verification should be conducted by independent entities, such as academia or professional societies, to ensure credibility and impartiality.

**Conclusion**

108. CCFH55 noted that all issues had been addressed and that the guidelines were ready to advance in the Step procedure and agreed to forward the revised guidelines to CAC49 for adoption at Step 5/8 (Appendix VI).

**PROPOSED DRAFT REVISION OF THE *GUIDELINES ON THE APPLICATION OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD HYGIENE TO THE CONTROL OF* LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES *IN FOODS* (CXG 61-2007) (CXG 78-2011) (Agenda Item 9)[11]**

109. The United States of America, Chair of the EWG, speaking also on behalf of the co-Chairs, Canada, China and France, introduced the item and provided a background to the work undertaken by the EWG. The EWG Chair explained that the revised guidelines had incorporated the advice and recommendations from JEMRA as found in MRA 38, 47 and 48 and aimed to build consistency with other Codex texts such as CXC 1-1969 and the *Principles for guidelines for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria related to food* (CXG 21-1997). It was further explained that the EWG Chairs had prepared a revised version of the Guidelines based on comments received in response to CL 2025/62-FH (CRD06).

110. In particular, the EWG Chair highlighted some of the key issues addressed in the revised guidelines, namely that the definition for ready-to-eat (RTE) food had been updated to include the concept of "reasonably foreseeable" which was not new terminology in the Guideline and, in general, was a risk-based concept. Other major issues addressed included a structural alignment with CXC 1-1969, full revision of annex I, reversal of the order for annexes II and III for better logical flow, clarity and usability by the reader, and addition of recommendations for characterizing isolates and text on microbiological studies to determine if RTE foods support growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

**Discussion**

111. CCFH55 agreed to use CRD06 as the basis for discussion.

**General Discussion**

112. There was general support for the revised Guidelines acknowledging that they took into account the latest scientific developments and recommendations of JEMRA.

113. However, CCFH55 noted some concerns regarding the updated definition for RTE food with respect to the introduction of the "reasonably foreseeable" concept as well as the need for a more harmonized RTE definition across Codex texts. Further concerns were raised about Annex I and the limited resources for small holder farmers, fishers and others small operators involved in primary production to implement environmental monitoring programmes. In this regard, it was proposed that CCFH55 should consider providing more flexibility in this Annex, especially if the food is handled and packed on farm.

**Section-by-Section Discussion**

114. In addition to editorial corrections and amendments for purposes of clarity and consistency, CCFH55 made the following comments and decisions:

Introduction

Paragraph 3

115. CCFH55 considered changes to paragraph 3 to avoid specific mention of the age with regard to older adults. However, it was agreed to retain the current text as the stipulation of the age group was in line with recommendations of JEMRA that indicated adults 65 years and older were at higher risk to listeriosis.

Paragraph 12

116. CCFH55 agreed to change the temperature of refrigeration from 6 °C to 5 °C for consistency with other hygiene texts and also in line with WHO recommendations, while acknowledging that predictive modelling demonstrated that *Listeria monocytogenes* growth was significantly reduced at temperatures below 6 °C. This change was applied throughout the text where applicable.

[11] CX/FH 25/55/9; CX/FH 25/55/9 Add.1 (Comments of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, European Union, Ghana, Honduras, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia and IDF/FIL); CRD06 (Report of the EWG Chairs); CRD14 (India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Singapore, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania (URT)); CRD16 (El Salvador); CRD17 (Ghana); CRD19 (Senegal); CRD20 (Mali); CRD21 (African Union (AU)); CRD24 (Cabo Verde)

Paragraph 16

117. CCFH55 agreed to delete the microbiological limits from this paragraph acknowledging that limits were part of microbiological criteria which should be accompanied by sampling plans and agreed to refer only to Annex III as more appropriate.

Definitions: ready-to-eat (RTE) food

118. CCFH55 had lengthy discussion on the updated definition for RTE. Taking into account the need for a more general definition that could be applicable to other hygiene texts and/or hazards, and incorporated into CXC 1-1969, CCFH55 agreed to replace “listericidal treatment” with a more general statement referencing “validated treatments sufficient to achieve food safety” together with other amendments to improve clarity of the definition.

119. Discussion was held on the inclusion of “reasonably foreseeable” and the difficulty to understand and implement this concept.

120. Views were expressed that reference to “reasonably foreseeable” should be deleted as it was unusual to include non-RTE foods in a definition for RTE since the two food categories were not the same; this terminology was ambiguous and difficult to interpret and would place a burden on FBOs producing non-RTE food, who might be required to implement the hygiene control programmes or to comply with microbiological criteria in Annex III which could lead to barriers to international food trade. It was therefore proposed to instead expand the scope of the guidelines to include certain non-RTE food which could be consumed without listericidal treatment by consumers and provide necessary guidance tailored for this specific category.

121. The EWG Chair clarified that “reasonably foreseeable” was explained in the footnote (footnote 7) to the definition and as explained in the introduction was a concept already used in hygiene texts.

122. In a spirit of compromise, CCFH55 agreed to retain the concept of “reasonably foreseeable” with the clarification on its meaning as per the original proposed wording slightly amended as more appropriate as the updated footnote reference to CXC 1-1969 was not specific to the context of RTE foods.

123. CCFH55 agreed to the amended more general footnote to read as follows:

> *Any food (raw or processed) for which it is normally eaten without further validated treatment sufficient to achieve food safety, or for which it is reasonably foreseeable* based on evidence of consumer habits or practices that it will be eaten without such treatment.*
>
> ** Reasonably foreseeable means a frequency that can be anticipated as likely to occur because of data or other information showing habits within a population, supply chain, or region (even though such habits may not be intended for the food). Instructions for storage and preparation on the product label can inform the expected use of the product. Reasonably foreseeable does not mean any conceivable use (or misuse) of the food.*

124. CCFH55 agreed to align footnote 20 in Annex III with the footnote to the definition.

9.3.2 Food control and monitoring equipment

Paragraph 66

125. Noting that this paragraph only addressed the maintenance of cooling and refrigeration equipment, while other equipment such as those for heating and washing were also important for control of *Listeria monocytogenes*, CCFH55 agreed to add an additional paragraph (paragraph 66 bis) to address this aspect.

13.1.1 Product description

Paragraph 104

126. CCFH55 agreed to replace the example of “soup mixes” with “frozen peas” and “enoki mushrooms” as soup mixes were not associated with listeriosis outbreaks and the new examples were more appropriate for the purposes of illustration in these guidelines.

Other general changes

127. CCFH55 agreed that: (i) in instances where there was cross-referencing to CXC 1-1969, it would refer to the appropriate corresponding section in CXC 1-1969 for better readability and use, and to avoid repetition; and (ii). the term "marketing” was changed to “retail” to align with the terms used in CXC 1-1969 and other Codex texts.

128. CCFH55 also noted that French and Spanish translation errors in the guidelines would be corrected.

**Annexes**

129. CCFH generally agreed with the revised annexes and in addition to editorial corrections and amendments for clarification, made the following comments and decisions.

**Annex I**

Title

130. CCFH55 agreed to revert to the original title of the Annex to better reflect the flow of the food chain process, i.e. primary production followed by processing and to make this change throughout the guidelines where applicable.

Paragraph 5

131. CCFH55 agreed to an additional bullet point that the need for and extent of Environmental Monitoring Programmes (EMPs) at primary products should also consider whether RTE food is grown, harvested, handled and packed at primary production to address the concerns raised with regard to the need for flexibility for implementation of EMPs especially for small operators (see Appendix VII, Annex I, paragraph 5).

**Annex II**

Paragraph 10

132. CCFH55 agreed to provide flexibility for accreditation of laboratories carrying out *Listeria* testing recognizing that laboratories should use appropriate laboratory practices, but that laboratory accreditation was not compulsory.

Paragraph 12

133. CCFH55 agreed to amend paragraph 12 to indicate that competent authorities should request FBOs to undertake process control testing instead of requesting that competent authorities should use process control to detect changing patterns of contamination. Process control testing was undertaken over an extended period of time and determined deviations from normal operations and would not be feasible for competent authorities to undertake, but that it was rather the role of competent authorities to oversee process control by FBOs. However, it was acknowledged that competent authorities conducting period testing and analysis remained important and useful and that this was sufficiently addressed in paragraphs 2 and 11 which covered the roles of competent authorities.

**Annex III**

Paragraph 9

134. With regard to a question for clarification on the meaning of the last bullet point in paragraph 9, the EWG Chair clarified that the bullet point was inserted to recognize that there were categories of RTE foods that might be defined by a competent authority based on the nature of those foods, such as low moisture foods, that would not require *Listeria* testing.

Paragraph 14

135. CCFH55 considered a proposal to include in paragraph 14, an indication that a short shelf-life of less than 5 days should be considered as an additional measure to control *L. monocytogenes* and there was no need for additional measures in such instance, or alternatively to make this addition to paragraph 9 as an additional bullet point.

136. However, it was clarified that paragraph 14 related to parameters of the food that prevent growth and not parameters outside of the food itself. In addition, there was debate as to what defined a short shelf-life and whether 5 days was appropriate for all foods. Even if some foods had a short shelf-life, testing would still be required.

137. CCFH55 therefore did not agree with the proposal.

Paragraph 20

138. This paragraph was amended to clarify that in addition to evaluating results from challenge studies, competent authorities should also verify the results of these studies as part of their overall oversight of FBOs. It was clarified that protocols for the challenge studies themselves need not be validated by competent authorities as most competent authorities would not have the capacity to do so and that it was the role of competent authorities to provide guidance to FBOs so that they can conduct appropriate challenge studies. Other roles of competent authorities were clarified in a new paragraph (Appendix VII, Annex III, paragraph 21).

Paragraph 30 (2nd bullet point)

139. CCFH55 considered a proposal to delete the type of packaging system that affect oxygen content as it did not align with the JEMRA risk assessment, viz. MRA47, which indicated that *L. monocytogenes* can survive under vacuum packaging and modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) conditions and reduced oxygen did not guarantee inhibition of *Listeria monocytogenes* growth, therefore this point would be misleading.

140. The EWG Chair clarified that the paragraph discussed the effect on growth rate and that the type of packaging system and oxygen content could affect the growth rate of *L. monocytogenes*.

141. CCFH55 agreed to retain the bullet point but amended it to indicate that oxygen content was an example of the effect of packaging systems, since there were advances in packaging systems e.g. inclusion of antimicrobials in packaging, which might also impact the growth rate of *L. monocytogenes*.

Paragraph 31

142. CCFH55 agreed to delete the last bullet point relating to durability studies and to amend paragraph 31 bis for purposes of clarity to indicate that once the shelf-life of an RTE food was established and validated, FBOs should consider ongoing verification activities such as durability studies to confirm the presence and growth of *L. monocytogenes* remained within established safety limits throughout the expected shelf-life.

**Conclusion**

143. CCFH55 noted that all issues had been addressed and agreed:

(i) to forward the revised guidelines to CAC49 for adoption at Step 5/8 (Appendix VII); and

(ii) that CCFH56 would consider using a harmonized definition for RTE foods across its hygiene texts as well as its potential inclusion in CXC 1-1969 in view of the concerns raised on different definitions for RTE foods across Codex hygiene texts; and

(iii) to request the Codex Secretariat to prepare a background document on definitions of RTE foods in food hygiene texts to support the above discussion at CCFH56.

**OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 10)[12]**

144. The United States of America, as the Chair of the PWG, presented the recommendations of the PWG (CRD04), and noted some of the factors that had been considered in reviewing the forward work plan, including the availability of scientific advice and the management of work, as well as the information in the relevant discussion papers and project documents. The PWG Chair recalled that the PWG did not have time to review the forward workplan or priorities for alignment but that some follow-up discussions had taken place to further inform consideration of these aspects.

145. CCFH55 considered the recommendations of the PWG, and additional proposals relevant to the forward workplan, noted the considerations included in CRD04 and made the following comments and decisions.

Proposed texts for structural alignment with *General principles for food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969)

146. CCFH55 considered a proposal by the Codex Secretariat, supported by the EWG Chairs on alignment, which took into consideration lessons learned in the alignment efforts to date, structure of the texts, available information on scientific information or interest in technical revisions in the medium term as well as comments from Members.

**Conclusion**

147. CCFH55 agreed to request the EWG on the alignment of Codex texts developed by CCFH with the revised *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969), to prioritize the work on the:

- *Code of hygienic practice for the transport of food in bulk and semi-packed food* (CXC 47-2001);
- *Code of hygienic practice for bottled/packaged drinking waters (other than natural mineral waters)* (CXC 48-2001); and
- *Code of hygienic practice for collecting, processing and marketing of natural mineral waters* (CXC 33-1985). (see also agenda item 6, paragraph 72. i)

[12] CX/FH 25/55/10; CRD04 (Report of the PWG); CRD15 (India, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Thailand and IBFAN); CRD18 (Brazil, supported by Uruguay); CRD23 (Singapore).

Revision of the *Guidelines on the application of the general principles of food hygiene to the control of pathogenic* Vibrio *species in seafood* (CXG 73-2010)

148. CCFH55 noted that work would restart on the revision of CXG 73-2010 following the completion of Annex II (Fish and Fishery Products) of the *Guidelines on the safe use and re-use of water in food production* (CXG 100-2023) and that an EWG to complete the work on CXG 73-2010 had already been established. (see agenda item 5, paragraph 57)

*Revision of the Code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators* (CXC 80-2020)

149. CCFH55 recalled that based on the completion of the revision to the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985), it had agreed to forward consequential amendments to the *Code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators* (CXC 80-2020) to ensure alignment with updated CXS 1- 1985 on the list of allergenic foods (see agenda item 2, paragraph 13). However, noting that the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) was expected to complete its work on *Guidelines on the use of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL):* as an annex to CXS 1-1985 at its next meeting in May 2026, and that this was expected to have implications for CXC 80-2020, it was timely to start preparing for a revision of CXC 80-2020.

**Conclusion**

150. CCFH55 agreed on the importance of being ready to review CXC 80-2020, once CCFL had completed its work on PAL, and noted that China, in collaboration with Australia and Ghana, would prepare a discussion paper and a project document for the revision of CXC 80-2020 for consideration at CCFH56, subject to the completion of work by CCFL on PAL.

New work proposal on the code of hygienic practice for manufacturing of cell-based foods

151. CCFH55 discussed a proposal for new work on a code of hygienic practice for the manufacturing of cell-based foods, introduced by Singapore in collaboration with China, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom.

152. Members in favour of the new work noted that it represented a unique opportunity for Codex to provide timely, science-based guidance for an emerging technology before significant regulatory divergence occurred. These Members also noted that the 2023 FAO/WHO report on cell-based foods already offered actionable guidance on mitigating hazards and that sufficient scientific information existed to develop a flexible, broad framework based on CXC 1-1969. These Members also emphasized that international guidance would facilitate safe trade and support jurisdictions currently developing regulatory frameworks and promote harmonization in that regard.

153. Members expressing concerns about approving the new work noted that the proposal was premature, citing a lack of agreed terminology and international food trade, insufficient data on food safety and consumer health risks, and that the industry was in its nascent stage in most countries. These Members highlighted that only a few countries had national regulatory experience or technical infrastructure to contribute to standard-setting. Concerns were also raised about potential claims for this product and the need to first establish a risk analysis framework for new food production systems before developing product-specific hygiene standards.

154. The FAO Representative informed CCFH55 that FAO and WHO maintained several programs dedicated to monitoring emerging trends, diseases, and food production practices. Specifically, within the FAO Division of Agrifood Systems and Food Safety, a dedicated foresight group was tasked with looking at new trends and tracking potential emerging threats, including in the area of biotechnology. The Representative noted that they would continue these monitoring activities regardless of the CCFH decision on new work and offered to provide an update to CCFH next year, or to informal working groups as needed, regarding any new trends or concerns that arise to help the committee crystallize its future discussions.

**Conclusion**

155. CCFH55:

i. noted the different views expressed and a lack of sufficient support to send this new work proposal for approval at this session;

ii. noted some interest in continuing to collect data and learn from experiences with this topic before guidelines were developed;

iii. welcomed ongoing updates from FAO and WHO on trends and/or concerns related to cell-based food to CCFH; and

iv. agreed that the proposal would remain in the Forward Workplan and that it could be reconsidered at a future session of CCFH.

Revision of the *Code of practice for the processing and handling of quick frozen foods* (CXC 8-1976)

156. CCFH55 discussed a proposal for new work to revise CXC 8-1976 to allow poultry, pork, offal, and by-products to be frozen, stored, transported, and sold at a temperature equal to or below -15°C, instead of the current -18°C, provided effective cold chain control is ensured. There was general interest in this work and it was noted that during the PWG, participants discussed expanding the scope of this proposal to include a broader range of products (including other terrestrial animal meat, fish and fishery products and produce) and discussed whether CCFH should consider impacts on product quality alongside food safety.

157. Members supporting the proposal noted that -15°C was scientifically recognized as sufficient to inhibit the growth of foodborne pathogens and that allowing this flexibility could reduce energy consumption and facilitate trade without compromising safety. However, other Members raised concerns regarding the scope and the potential for temperature abuse if the baseline were raised, suggesting that JEMRA could evaluate the temperature threshold required to guarantee food safety (inhibiting metabolic activity), noting that -12°C and -15°C were suggested for evaluation. It was further noted that certain national jurisdictions already used -12°C as a safe holding temperature and it was suggested that scientific advice should evaluate the safety implications of both -12°C and -15°C.

158. Furthermore, it was noted that the issue of frozen temperature was relevant to a number of food hygiene texts and it would be useful to have a harmonized science-based approach to addressing this issue.

159. In response to a request for clarification on whether the quality related aspects were beyond the remit of the ToRs of CCFH, the Codex Secretariat noted that the task force that undertook the work on CXC 8-1976 had been dissolved. The Secretariat further clarified that there were no strict limitations on what CCFH could request in terms of scientific advice to support its decision-making. If safety and quality issues were interlinked, it might be difficult to separate them, and the Secretariat noted that the committee had the flexibility to move forward if the membership was agreeable to do so and engaged the necessary expertise in their delegations.

**Conclusion**

160. CCFH55 agreed to:

    i. request FAO and WHO to provide scientific advice on the holding frozen temperature threshold to guarantee food safety for a range of different food commodities as indicated in CXC 8-1976, also considering the related impact on quality and for products that had been both quick frozen or subject to normal freezing processes, noting that this might require a stepwise approach and that products of terrestrial and aquatic animal origin could be addressed as the first priority; and

    ii. request Chile, in collaboration with Australia and Brazil, to revise the proposal on the revision of the *Code of practice for the processing and handling of quick frozen foods* (CXC 8-1976) to broaden the scope in line with those commodities covered CXC 8-1976 and other relevant aspects and submit a revised proposal for consideration by CCFH56.

*Revision of the Code of hygienic practice for powdered formulae for infants and young children* (CXC 66-2008)

161. CCFH55 discussed the need for scientific advice to inform a potential revision of the *Code of hygienic practice for powdered formulae for infants and young children* (CXC 66-2008). Members noted that CXC 66-2008 was developed concurrently with several other hygiene texts that had since been updated, leaving the sections on cleaning and environmental monitoring in need of review. The importance of updating these sections to align with recently revised food hygiene texts, such as the guidelines for the control of *Listeria monocytogenes*, was also noted.

162. The discussion was further informed by the ongoing investigation into recent infant botulism outbreaks. While Members acknowledged that historical data had not always categorized *Clostridium botulinum* as a major risk in these products, the importance of investigating whether current gaps in CXC 66-2008 contributed to the risk of such organisms was underlined. It was also noted that since CXC 66-2008 had been revised, there continued to be problems with pathogens such as *Cronobacter* spp. and that it was almost two decades since the committee had received scientific advice on this topic.

163. In this context, CCFH55 supported a comprehensive request for scientific advice from JEMRA.

164. Observers raised concerns regarding the global implications of contaminated infant formula, noting that these product linked to the ongoing infant botulism outbreak were distributed in over 20 countries, thereby extending the potential disease burden beyond the initial site of an outbreak, and highlighted the related challenges in accessing treatment modalities required for conditions like infant botulism. Furthermore, these Observers addressed the role of risk communication, pointing out the risks of misleading marketing and social media promotion regarding product safety, while noting that future update to the text should include measures to protect breastfeeding.

165. The FAO Representative noted that a summary report from the recent expert group on clostridial diseases was currently available, with the full report expected by mid-2026, and their willingness to provide further scientific advice in this area as needed.

166. CCFH55 noted that this scientific output would be important for interested parties to consider preparing a robust discussion paper and project document for consideration at the next session.

**Conclusion**

167. CCFH55 requested JEMRA to:

i. conduct a risk assessment on spore-forming pathogens, including *Clostridium botulinum* and *Bacillus cereus*, in powdered infant formula;

ii. update the existing risk assessment and scientific advice on *Cronobacter* and *Salmonella*; and

iii. provide other relevant scientific advice that would inform recommendations on strengthened control measures across the production environment, covering all stages from primary production and packaging through to the reconstitution of the product, and including environmental monitoring programmes.

**Other matters**

168. In response to a Member's question regarding the need to update CCFH texts related to foodborne parasites, the Codex Secretariat explained that while expert meetings had occurred, the full reports might not be available until mid-2026. It was hence suggested that CCFH56 would have a clearer understanding of whether those outcomes necessitate a technical revision of existing parasite-related texts.

**Forward Workplan**

169. CCFH55 noted that there had not been sufficient time to fully review the forward workplan and also noted the limitations on its work prioritization process with regard to assessment of proposed work in the area of new and emerging issues**.** It was noted that the forward workplan would be updated to reflect the decisions above and availability of scientific advice and attached to the report for consideration by CCFH56. The PWG Chair also indicated his willingness to review the workplan and the process based on the experience at this session and potentially present some recommendations for consideration by CCFH56.

**Conclusion**

170. CCFH55 agreed to:

i. establish a PWG on CCFH Work Priorities, chaired by the United States of America, to be held in conjunction with CCFH56, working in English, French and Spanish;

ii. request the Codex Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter (CL) for new work proposals with a deadline of 1 September 2026, for consideration at CCFH56; and

iii. attach the forward workplan with updates from this session, as an ongoing reference for this process (Appendix VIII) and noted the willingness of the PWG Chair to review the forward workplan and work prioritization process.

**DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 11)**

171. CCFH55 was informed that CCFH56 would be held on 16 to 20 November 2026 in the United States of America with the final arrangements subject to confirmation by the host Government in consultation with the Codex Secretariat.