

## CODEX ALIMENTARIUS STANDARDS, ONGOING WORK AND COOPERATION WITH THE OIE

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The main purpose of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, which is implemented by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, is to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade. The Joint Programme also promotes coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non governmental organizations. To this end, the Commission, with 179 members and over 200 observer organizations, produces and updates the Codex Alimentarius or “food code”, comprising standards, guidelines and recommendations.

Work on traceability/product tracing has been carried out mainly by the Codex Committees on General Principles (CCGP) and on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). The first has developed a definition, which was included in the Codex Procedural Manual in 2004 and the latter the Principles for Traceability/Product Tracing as a Tool within a Food Inspection and Certification System (CAC/GL 60-2006). The principles aim at assisting competent authorities in utilising traceability/product tracing as a tool within their food inspection and certification system, when and where appropriate, in order to contribute to the protection of consumers against food-borne hazards and deceptive marketing practices as well as the facilitation of trade on the basis of accurate product description.

In addition to this specific work, traceability/product tracing is explicitly or implicitly recognised in a number of other texts adopted earlier, in relation to product identification and recall procedures.

Currently there is no specific work ongoing within the Commission on traceability/products tracing. The Commission may consider the need for further work in the near future in the light of the experience of Codex members in the use of traceability/product.

Cooperation between Codex and the OIE is important in order to avoid duplication, gaps and inconsistencies in international standards that cover the areas of common interest. To ensure that OIE and Codex texts are consistent and that traceability/product tracing can be applied throughout the entire food chain, the experts with Codex background have participated in the relevant activities of the OIE including the ad hoc group on identification and traceability of live animals while the OIE has participated in the work of CCFICS and CCGP.

**Key words:** Codex – Traceability/product tracing – Food safety.

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