

**21st Session of the Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables held
in Monterrey, Mexico
(7th -11th October, 2019)**



The session was attended by 38 Member countries and one Member organisation and one observer organisation.

The Committee had 10 agenda items for discussion, out of which agenda no. 5 relating to Draft standard on ware potatoes originally proposed by India was forwarded for adoption at Step 8 at the 43rd Session of CAC. The agenda of the session is available at <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/meetings/detail/en/?meeting=CCFFV&session=21>.

Decisions on the important agenda items concerning India are as follows:

Agenda Item 5 Draft Standard for Ware Potatoes: The outcome of the EWG and In-Session working group led by India was discussed by the Committee.

The major concerns which were raised by other member countries were, with respect to allowances of green colouration, potato scabs and sprout in the quality requirement for the ware potatoes. It was clarified by the India that all these are the major issues in this crop. Hence, need to be addressed by fixing their limit in the standard.

Based on the discussion held in the in-session working group, the committee agreed to:

- Retain practically unsprouted and its limit under provisions for quality tolerances, as ware potatoes are susceptible to sprouting if stored for a period of more than 3 months, therefore, it is important to set a limit beyond which the quality of ware potatoes would not be acceptable. Hence, agreed to increase the maximum length of the sprout(s), to 3 mm;

- Insert the reference of IPPC note for powdery potato scab also, as ware potatoes with this disease are not acceptable in some countries;
- separate the limits given under quality tolerances for soil from extraneous matter, as the presence of soil in fresh agricultural produce was highly regulated due to phytosanitary risks associated with it, and assigned soil a value of 0.25% for all classes;

The Committee agreed to forward the draft Standard for ware potatoes to CAC43 for adoption at Step 8 with above changes along with other changes w.r.t alignment of defects and its limits.

Agenda Item 6 Proposed draft Standard for Fresh dates: India as a Chair of the EWG, presented a revised version of the standard prepared based on comments submitted by the member countries, for consideration by the Committee. The Committee held a general discussion focusing on how to best differentiate products to be covered by the proposed draft with those already covered by CXS 143-1985(dry dates); and how to ensure that there would be no overlap between the two standards

Other delegations pointed out that the fact that dates were classified as either fresh dates and/or dried dates was well supported by scientific studies; and that fresh dates and dried dates could be easily distinguished by using scientific method e.g. moisture determination, brix determination and etc.

Countries like Algeria, Morocco and Saudi Arabia highlighted that there were remarkable trade volumes of fresh date in the international market and emphasized the necessity to speed up the development of a standard for this produce. They also expressed the need to replace the terms used in the proposed standard with simple and understandable terms such as colour, ripeness/sweetness; etc.

The Committee noted the development of a standard for fresh dates and suggested to seek clarification from CCPFV to clarify the scope of CXS 143-1985 that whether existing standards covers all stages of fresh dates (Khalal stage, rutab stage and tamer stage). Therefore, committee agreed to re-establish EWG chaired by India and Co-chaired by Saudi Arabia to revise the document and seek comments at step 3.

Agenda Item 8: Proposed draft Standard for Onion and Shallots

India as a co-chair for this proposal presented the revised version of the proposed standards in the plenary, prepared based on the comments submitted by the member countries in response to the Circular letter.

India's main concern in the proposed standard was as follows:

- Inclusion of other colour varieties like pink, red and purple of shallots in the proposed draft: These colored varieties of the Indian shallots are very small having minimum diameter 10.4mm and being traded in the current international market.

In this respect, Committee agreed to insert descriptive characteristics (shapes and colours) of onions and shallots, to accommodate all varieties available worldwide i.e “Onions and shallots may be of the following skin colours: white, purple, pink, red, grey or yellow, and brown”.

- Inclusion of Extra Class in the proposed draft: As per the prevailing trade practices, India have also proposed to include Extra Class in the proposed draft. The Committee agreed to introduce an “Extra Class” with the descriptor that this class must be of superior quality.

There were various issues which have not been considered and addressed. Accordingly, the Committee noted that the proposed draft standard still required further review and established a EWG chaired by Iran and co-chaired by India for redrafting the proposed standards for seeking comments at step 3.
