
International

Codex fats and oils compendium to be published

The Codex Alimentarius Committee on fats and oils plans to publish a loose-leaf compendium of fats and oils standards developed by the committee. The standards previously have been available as separate booklets for each standard. The loose-leaf format will permit easy inclusion of supplements, revisions and additions as they become available.

A.W. Hubbard, who has served as chairman for the committee for a number of years, retired at the end of the committee's June 1980 meeting. The committee approved a resolution offered by the U.S. delegation commending Hubbard and thanking him for his service.

The following report on the meeting was prepared by Dr. R.J. Sims, the AOCS Representative to the Codex Fats and Oils Committee.

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FATS AND OILS, ELEVENTH SESSION, LONDON, JUNE 23-27, 1980

Delegates from 30 countries and observers from 13 international organizations attended the session. This committee's function is to develop standards for edible fats and oils which will insure their identity and quality to the consumer. These standards also should facilitate international trade in vegetable oils and margarine.

General Standard for Fats and Oils

Most oils moving in world trade require further processing to make them suitable for human consumption. But the standard as presently written covers only edible oil which does not require additional processing. The U.S. delegation suggested that, since the identity characteristics (especially fatty acid ranges by GLC) of the individual oils were also applicable to crude oils, the general standard be extended to include these crude articles of commerce. This identity characteristic, but not quality criteria, would apply to bulk shipments which required further processing before consumption. There was a consensus that such an extension was desirable but the committee was divided on how the change should be incorporated into the Codex standards. Governments will be asked to comment on the proposals.

Reduced-fat Margarine

The committee agreed that two standards are needed for reduced-fat margarine. The more restricted one applies to Minarine containing 39-41% fat which is marketed widely in Europe. The Minarine standard was advanced to step 8 of the 10-step Codex procedure. It may be designated by some name other than Minarine in accordance with the laws and customs of the individual countries. One unsettled issue is the list of permitted additives which must first be reviewed by the Codex Food Additives Committee.

A second standard to cover products other than "Mina-

rine" provoked considerable discussion. There was no general agreement on what ranges of fat content should be covered. The U.S. delegation favors an upper limit of 60% but no lower limit. It was agreed to advance the standard to step 5 so that it could be considered by the commission at its meeting in 1981.

GLC Identification Based on Fatty Acid Ranges

A collaborative study carried out by Dr. W.H. Tallent of USDA, Peoria, IL, and Dr. J.P. Wolff of ITERG, Paris, demonstrated that there is a compatibility between the fatty acid ranges based on GLC and iodine values, refractive indices and saponification values. European laboratories favor use of classical methods of identification since they regard GLC as less than completely satisfactory for detection of adulteration in many cases. The olive-growing countries particularly are concerned with this problem and are attempting to introduce identity characteristics based on sterol ranges for all oils. Additional developments in analytical methods for sterols are needed before such ranges can be defined. The GLC graphic procedure was published in this journal (*JAOCs* 56:972).

Commercial Processing of Fats and Oils and Processing Aids

There was general agreement that a code of practice for processing fats and oils and the list of processing aids should not be mandatory since otherwise technological development would be inhibited. There appeared to be little enthusiasm for developing such a code of practice, but there was some concern about establishing residual levels of processing aids and any toxicological problems which might result. Data on residual levels are often lacking but generally levels are very low so that the problem should be minimal. If the residual level of the material is below that required to perform a technological function, then it need not be listed as a food additive. The list of processing aids is purely advisory and an open one at this stage. It will contain a summary of information on typical residual levels received from each government and the acceptable daily intake, if available.

The committee also considered the development of standards for vegetable and animal ghees and mixtures thereof. There was a discussion relating to amending the standard for rapeseed oil. These standards (ghee and rapeseed oil) were advanced to step 3 of the Codex procedure.

The secretariat will prepare a compendium of fats and oils standards developed by the committee to be included in a single book. This will be of loose-leaf type so that supplements, revisions and additions can be included when they become available.

The committee will meet again in London in 1982 or 1983. □