CODEX ALIMENTARIUS – THE WORLD STANDARD FOR FOOD AND FEED SAFETY (FOOD CHAIN)

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS – SVJETSKI STANDARD ZA SIGURNOST HRANE I KRMIVA (HRANIDBENI LANAC)

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SUMMARY

Codex Alimentarius or the food code has become the global reference point for all participants in the food chain (e.g. primary producers, processors and consumers). Its influence extends to every continent playing an important role in the protection of public health and fair practices for almost 50 years. It also allows taking a role in the development of codes governing hygienic processing practices and recommendations relating to compliance with food standards. Right now all over the world, consumers and governments are becoming aware of food safety issues, which requires taking legislative action to ensure that only safe food of acceptable quality is available to each consumer. Codex Alimentarius is a collection of standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations. Some of these documents are very general and some are very specific. Moreover for more food safety Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding elaborated in 2004 takes into account all relevant aspects of animal health and the environment in order to minimize the risk to consumers health. Since feed safety issues are becoming more and more important Codex Alimentarius Commission at the 32nd Session decided to establish an electronic working group to prepare: a proposal for the scope and the terms of reference for the future work on animal feeding, taking into consideration the conclusions and recommendations from FAO/WHO expert meeting on Animal Feeding Impact on Food safety; and a proposal for a suitable mechanism for Codex to carry out this work.

Key words: Codex Alimentarius, feed safety, issues

Codex Alimentarius or the food code has become the global reference point for all participants in the food chain (e.g. primary producers, processors and consumers).Its influence extends to every continent playing an important role in the protection of public health and fair practices for almost 50 years. Codex Alimentarius system presents a unique opportunity for all countries to join the international community in formulating and harmonizing food chain standards and ensuring their global imple-
mentation. It also allows them to take a role in the
development of codes governing hygienic process-
ing practices and recommendations relating to
compliance with those standards. Codex Alimen-
tarius Commission established by FAO/WHO in
1960's, has become the single, most important inter-
national reference point for development associated
with food standards. Right now all over the world,
consumers and governments are becoming aware of
food safety issues, which requires taking legislative
action to ensure that only safe food of acceptable
quality and food borne hazards minimized is
available. Creating standards that at the same time
protect consumers and ensure fair practices in the
sale of food and facilitate trade is a process that
involves specialists in numerous food-related scien-
tific disciplines, production and processing industries,
food chain authorities and traders. Codex Alimen-
tarius is a collection of standards, codes of practice,
guidelines and other recommendations. Some of
these are very general and some are very specific.
Some deal with detailed requirements related to a
do not group of foods; others deal with the operation
and management of production processes or the
operation of government regulatory system for food
safety and consumer protection. Consumer con-
cerns in the wake of the bovine spongiform
encephalopathy (BSE) crisis of the early 1990’s led
Codex to take up the question of the safety of food
for food-producing animals. CAC went even further
than responding to the immediate crisis, and the
resulting Code of Practice on Good Animal Feeding
elaborated in 2004 takes into account all relevant
aspects of animal health and the environment in
order to minimize the risk to consumers health. It
applies to the production and usage of all materials
destined for animals feed and feed materials,
ingredients at all levels, whether produced in-
dustry or on a farm. It also includes grazing in
free-range feeding, forage crop production and
aquaculture. Since feed safety issues are becoming
more and more important Codex Alimentarius
Commission at the 32nd Session established an
electronic working group to prepare: (i) a proposal
for the scope and the terms of reference for future
work on animal feeding, taking into consideration the
conclusions and recommendations from FAO/WHO
expert meeting on Animal Feeding Impact on Food
safety; and (ii) a proposal for a suitable mechanism
for Codex to carry out this work. In March 2010 the
report of WG on Animal Feeding was issued for

As a response to the growing development and
usage of veterinary drugs in food of animal origin
production systems internationally and because of
the potential implication for human health and fair
trading practices, a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consul-
tation on Residues of Veterinary Drugs was con-
vened. Among the major recommendations of this
consultation were the establishment of Codex
Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in
Foods and the periodic convening of an appropriate
expert body to provide independent scientific advice
to this Committee and to member countries of FAO
and WHO.

From the beginning Codex Alimentarius has
been a science-based activity. Experts and spe-
cialists in a wide range of disciplines (food chemistry,
food technology, food microbiology, pesticide and
veterinary drugs residues) have contributed to every
aspect of the code to ensure that its standards
withstand the most demanding scientific scrutiny.
Since the credibility and acceptability of any con-
clusions and recommendations of expert consul-
tation depend significantly on the objectivity, scien-
tific skill and overall competence of the experts,
a great care is taken in the selection process of
experts invited to participate. Those selected must
be eminent in their field, have the highest respect of
their scientific peers, and be impartial and indispu-
tably objective in their judgements. Their input into
the work of Codex Commission is of fundamental
importance, and the publications resulting from their
activities are acclaimed international references.

One of the most essential concerns of Codex
Alimentarius is consumer protection with regard to
food. Both Codex subsidiary bodies and the Com-
mmission give the highest priority to consumers
interests in the formulation of commodity and
general standards. Codex puts a special emphasis
on ensuring that consumers obtain products that are
of a minimum acceptable quality, are safe and do not
present a health hazard. Codex contains wide
ranging guidelines for the protection of consumers,
and codes of practice, most of which are codes of
hygienic practice providing guidance on the pro-
duction of food that is safe and suitable for the
consumption. Since the beginning the participation
of consumers has been welcomed, therefore the
Twentieth Session of the Commission invited go-
vernments to involve consumers more effectively in the decision making process at the national level.

Another subject of priority concern of Codex Alimentarius Commission is ensuring fair practice in the food trade. In the age of globalization a principal importance for national governments is that food imported from other countries is safe and does not affect the health of consumers or pose a threat to the health and safety of their animal and plant population. That is why access to information about food standards and food regulatory requirements is critical in today’s world. Governments and traders need to know the requirements of their trading partners, consumers have the right to have access to safety assessment of potential hazards in the food supply. The international organizations associated with Codex have therefore combined their efforts to provide easy access to authoritative information on food standards and related matters. Consequently Codex Alimentarius Commission in cooperation with OIE, WHO, WTO, IPPC and UN Convention on Biological Portal on food Safety, Animal and Plant Health, where international information has been included.

Codex activities indicate global acceptance of Codex philosophy- embracing harmonization, consumer protection and facilitation of international trade - unfortunately in practice it is difficult for many countries to accept Codex standards in the statutory sense. Different legal formats and administrative systems, varying political systems and sometimes the influence of national attitudes obstruct the process of harmonization and preclude the acceptance and implementation of Codex standards. In spite of these difficulties, the process of harmonization is gaining impetus by the strong international desire to facilitate trade and the desire of consumers to have access to safe and nutritious foods. More and more countries are adjusting their national food standards, or parts of them to those of Codex Alimentarius.

REFERENCES

SAŽETAK


Ključne riječi: Codex Alimentarius, sigurnost hrane, problemi