

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

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

K. Kwiatek, Ewelina Kowalczyk

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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-

Krzysztof Kwiatek, Ewelina Kowalczyk, Department of Hygiene of Animal Feedingstuffs, National Veterinary Research Institute, Al. Partyzantow 57, 24-100 Pulawy, Poland.

mentation. It also allows them to take a role in the development of codes governing hygienic processing practices and recommendations relating to compliance with those standards. Codex Alimentarius Commission established by FAO/WHO in 1960's, has become the single, most important international 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 minimalized 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 scientific disciplines, production and processing industries, food chain authorities and traders. Codex Alimentarius 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 food or 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 concerns 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 industrially 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

further discussion and consideration during 33rd Session of CAC in Genva in July, 2010.

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 Consultation on Residues of Veterinary Drugs was convened. 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 specialists 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 conclusions and recommendations of expert consultation depend significantly on the objectivity, scientific 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 indisputably 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 Commission 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 production 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 Diversity has established an International 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.

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SAŽETAK

Codex Alimentarius ili zbirka pravila o hrani postalo je globalno mjesto za nalaženje informacija svim sudionicima u prehranbenom lancu (npr. izvornim proizvođačima, prerađivačima i potrošačima). Njegov utjecaj proteže se na sve kontinente te igra važnu ulogu u zaštiti javnog zdravlja i ispravnog postupanja već skoro 50 godina. On također pruža priliku za preuzimanje uloge u stvaranju pravila važnih za higijenske postupke u preradi i preporuka za udovoljavanje standardima o hrani. Danas u čitavom svijetu potrošači i vlade postaju svjesni problema sigurnosti hrane, što zahtijeva poduzimanje zakonodavnih mjera da se osigura da samo neškodljiva hrana prihvatljive kakvoće bude dostupna svakom potrošaču. Codex Alimentarius je zbirka standarda, pravila u praksi, smjernica i drugih preporuka. Neki od tih dokumenata vrlo su općeniti, dok su neki vrlo specifični. Osim toga, radi još veće sigurnosti hrane zbirka pravila o pravilnoj hranidbi životinja razrađena 2004. godine uzima u obzir sve važne aspekte zdravlja životinja i njihove okoline kako bi se što više smanjio rizik za zdravlje potrošača. Budući da pitanja sigurnosti hrane postaju sve važnija, komisija za Codex Alimentarius na 32. sastanku odlučila je osnovati elektroničku radnu skupinu koja treba pripremiti prijedlog za opseg i uvjete budućeg rada na hranidbi životinja uzimajući u obzir zaključke i preporuke FAO/WHO stručnjaka o utjecaju hranidbe životinja na sigurnost hrane i prijedlog primjerenog mehanizma za Codex radi provođenja tog rada.

Ključne riječi: Codex Alimentarius, sigurnost hrane, problemi