

The Attendance Report of the 7th Session on the Codex Ad Hoc Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology

MASAHIKO KARASAWA

Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

< Summary >

The Codex *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology held its Sixth Session in Chiba, Japan, from 24 to 28 September, by courtesy of the Government of Japan. The Session was presided over by Dr. Hiroshi Yoshikura, Adviser, Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Food Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The Session was attended by 196 delegates representing 52 members of the Commission and 4 international intergovernmental and 13 non-governmental observer organizations.

The Task Force agreed that

(1) PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINE FOR THE CONDUCT OF FOOD SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF FOOD DERIVED FROM RECOMBINANT-DNA ANIMALS

The Task Force agreed to forward the proposed draft guideline, as amended above and with some editorial changes, for adoption at Steps 5/8 by the 31st Session of the Commission, with the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7. The proposed draft guideline is as presented in Appendix II to this report.

The Task Force recognized the intensive work done by delegations during the plenary of the Task Force as well as the meeting of the physical working groups in the course of elaborating the proposed draft guideline. The recommendation above to omit Steps 6 and 7 was the reflection of all the efforts and contribution of Codex members and Observers.

(2) PROPOSED DRAFT ANNEX : FOOD SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF FOODS DERIVED FROM RECOMBINANT-DNA PLANTS MODIFIED FOR NUTRITIONAL OR HEALTH BENEFIT

The Task Force, recognizing that the substantial progress had been made to the text at the plenary and the working group of the Task Force and that all outstanding issues had been resolved, agreed to forward the proposed draft annex, as amended above and with some editorial changes, for adoption at Steps 5/8 by the 31st Session of the Commission, with the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7. The proposed draft annex is as presented in Appendix III to this report.

In view of the relatively short time left prior to the 29th Session of CCNFSDU (12-16 November 2007), the Task Force agreed to urge the Task Force's delegates liaise closely with their counterpart delegates to the CCNFSDU, with a view to facilitating review of the proposed draft annex by the CCNFSDU.

(3) PPOPOSED DRAFT ANNEX TO THE GUIDELINE FOR THE CONDUCT OF FOOD SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF FOODS DERIVED FROM RECOMBINANT-DNA PLANTS ON LOW-LEVEL PRESENCE OF RECOMBINANT-DNA PLANT MATERIAL

In view of the progress made and consensus reached, the Task Force agreed to forward the Proposed Draft Annex as amended above for adoption at Steps 5/8 by the 31st Session of the Commission, with the recommendation to omit Steps 6 and 7. The Proposed Draft Annex is as presented in Appendix IV to this report. The Task Force also agreed to request FAO to provide update on the database for data for information sharing at the 31st Session of the Commission.

(4) OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK

The Observer from the OIE informed the Task Force that as a follow-up the FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on the Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA animals (26 February - 2 March 2007), the OIE would convene an expert meeting, jointly with FAO and WHO, probably in 2008, to consider the issues related to the animals with non-heritable recombinant-DNA constructs including recombinant-DNA vaccines.

(5) DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

Given that the three proposed draft documents considered under Items 4, 5 and 6 advanced to Steps 5/8, no further session of the Task Force was foreseen. Should the need for another session of the Task Force arise following the consideration of these proposed drafts by the 31st Session of the Commission in July 2008, the host government would make necessary arrangements in consultation with the Codex Secretariat.