

23rd Meeting of the Codex Contact Points in the Arab Region

ANALYSIS OF AGENDA ITEMS IN PREPARATION FOR THE 17th SESSION OF THE
CODEX COMMITTEE ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD
(CCCF17)

April 4, 2024

07

Agenda Item 7:

DEFINITION FOR READY-TO-EAT PEANUTS FOR
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MAXIMUM LEVEL
FOR TOTAL AFLATOXINS IN THIS PRODUCT

CX/CF 24/17/7



Background

Since 2013, the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) has been discussing the establishment of a ML for total aflatoxins (AFT) in ready-to-eat (RTE) peanuts.

JECFA83 concluded that enforcing an ML of 10, 8 or 4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ in RTE peanuts **would have little further impact on reducing dietary exposure to aflatoxins** for the general population, compared with setting an ML of 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$.

CCCF11 (2017) and CCCF15 (2022)- the data underlying JECFA's impact assessment might have included a bias, as the **GEMS/Food database did not differentiate between peanuts for further processing and RTE peanuts.**

CCCF16 (2023): to prepare a proposal on a **clear definition for RTE peanuts** for the establishment of an ML for AFT in RTE peanuts and categorization of the occurrence data for consideration by CCCF17.

Analysis

The current definition as stated in the GENERAL STANDARD FOR CONTAMINANTS AND TOXINS IN FOOD AND FEED / CXS 193-1995 amended in 2023 is:

“**ready-to-eat**” means “not intended to undergo an additional processing/treatment that has proven to reduce levels of aflatoxins before being used as ingredient in foodstuffs, otherwise processed or offered for human consumption.

The new definition suggested by the EWG is the following:

Ready-to-Eat Peanut is a product intended for direct human consumption, not intended to undergo an additional processing/treatment that has proven to reduce levels of aflatoxins, before being used as ingredients in foodstuffs, otherwise processed, packed in all types of packaging such as consumer or bulk, labeled as ‘RTE Peanuts’. It includes but is not restricted to (i) raw shelled peanuts, (ii) raw in-shell peanuts, (iii) roasted in-shell peanuts, (iv) roasted/blanched shelled peanuts, (v) fried shelled peanuts with or without skin, (vi) coated peanuts, (vii) seasoned peanuts, (viii) smoked peanuts, (ix) salted and cooked peanuts, (x) peanut butter.

- ❖ The definition of Ready-to-Eat Peanuts is crucial in the process of ML setting, where data needs to be well segregated.
- ❖ As indicated in the working document, the EWG is recommending a new “Call for Data” from both (i) producer and (ii) importing countries on the occurrence of AFT for the clearly defined RTE Peanuts.



- ❖ The proposed definition for ready-to-eat (RTE) peanuts is well aligned with the one previously adopted for RTE tree nuts, along with providing examples of products that could be classified as RTE peanuts, thus bringing an additional level of clarification that would help data providers and data handlers to ensure a clear segregation.
- ❖ The Arab Codex delegations may support the new proposed definition as it may enable to move forward with the establishment of an ML for AFT in RTE-peanuts, which constitute an important commodity for several Arab producing countries.



