

CCASIA23's Discussion on Emerging Food Innovation: Functional Ingredients, Claims and the Way Forward

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CCASIA 23

- * 23rd session of FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia
- * Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China (September 22-26, 2025)
- * Focus on:
 - * Regional food safety challenges
 - * Codex Strategic Plan implementation
 - * New and emerging issues (innovation, AI, novel foods)
 - * CRD14 discussed under Other Business (Agenda Item 13)



Why this matters

Topic: Novel functional ingredients and health-related claims

- * Asia = global hub of food innovation
- * Rapid growth in:
 - * Functional ingredients (often from traditional diets)
 - * Novel foods & production systems
 - * Health-related claims
- *  But regulatory fragmentation creates:
 - * Uncertainty for industry
 - * Challenges for regulators
 - * Risks for consumers



Key Problem Identified

Across Asia:

- * Different definitions of “novel”
- * Inconsistent pre-market approval systems
- * Divergent safety data requirements
- * Substantiation of claims

→ Leads to:

- * Trade barriers
- * Duplication of effort
- * Reduced consumer confidence



Role of Codex & CCASIA

- * Codex provides:
 - * Risk analysis principles
 - * Science-based foundation
 - * Transparency and consistency
- * CCASIA positioned to:
 - * Translate Codex principles into regional guidance
 - * Pilot approaches for NFPS (New Food Sources & Production Systems)

Core Proposal Presented in CCASIA23

- * Stepwise regional approach:
 - * Step 1. Develop discussion paper
 - * Step 2. Build regional guidance framework
 - * Step 3. Enable global Codex contribution
- * Focus areas:
 - * Defining “novelty” triggers
 - * Safety assessment requirements
 - * Evidence standards for claims



Proposed CCASIA Actions

CCASIA is suggested to:

- * Develop regional guidance on:
 - * Novelty identification
 - * Safety assessment principles
- * Establish:
 - * Joint/ coordinated reviews
 - * Regional database of approved ingredients
- * Promote:
 - * Information sharing
 - * Mutual confidence among regulators



Link to Asia Codex & Food Regulatory Forum

- * The proposal is informed by the 2025 Asia Codex & Food Regulatory Forum
- * Key convergence:
 - * Need for predictable regulatory pathways
 - * Importance of:
 - * Science-based decisions
 - * Data sharing
 - * Regional collaboration



Key Messages from the Forum

1. Innovation is accelerating

- * Functional ingredients + traditional knowledge
- * Emerging technologies (e.g., precision fermentation)

2. Regulation must keep pace

- * Clear triggers for oversight
- * Transparent approval pathways

3. Harmonization is essential

- * Reduce duplication
- * Facilitate trade
- * Strengthen consumer protection



Cross-Cutting Themes

* From both proposal presented in CCASIA23 & Asia Codex Forum:

* Data

* Need for high-quality, interoperable data

* Shared evidence base

* Capacity building

* Support for SMEs and developing regulators

* Collaboration

* Government–industry–academia–international organizations

Traditional Diets and Food-Health Interface: The Asian Perspective

- * Asia has a long history of foods with dual roles in nutrition and health
- * Many functional ingredients originate from:
 - * traditional diets
 - * long-term consumption experience
- * These ingredients:
 - * blur the boundary between food and medicine
 - * raise questions on:
 - * classification
 - * safety assessment
 - * claims substantiation
- * This is highly relevant to:
 - * functional ingredients
 - * NFPS discussions
 - * future Codex work



Regulatory Thinking: Managing the Food-Health Interface



- * Clarifying regulatory positioning
 - * Food vs medicine vs borderline products
- * Risk-based safety management
 - * history of use
 - * scientific evidence
 - * proportional data requirements
- * Claims governance
 - * alignment between function and evidence
 - * avoiding misleading claims
- * These elements may provide useful reference for broader Codex discussions

Discussion and Outcomes at CCASIA23

- * CRD14 recognized as important emerging issue
- * Reflected in future work under CCASIA
- * Agreement to:
 - * Continue discussion
 - * Explore development of structured work
- * Positioned within:
 - * Codex Strategic Plan 2026–2031
 - * NFPS-related discussions



Strategic Relevance

This work directly supports:

- * Codex Strategic Goals
 - * Relevance to emerging issues
 - * Science-based decision making
 - * Improved accessibility and usability
- * Strengthens:
 - * Codex as global reference
 - * Regional contribution to global standard-setting




Way Forward

- * Potential next steps:
 - * Develop structured discussion paper
 - * Define scope and priorities
- * Engage stakeholders through:
 - * EWGs
 - * Regional consultations
- * Gradually move toward:
 - * Codex-level consideration



Key Takeaway

- * Asia is leading innovation
- * Codex must remain:
 - * Relevant
 - * Science-based
 - * Forward-looking
- *  CCASIA can play a bridging role:
 - * From regional innovation → global Codex guidance



Thank you!