



Report of the 46th Meeting of the Codex Contact Points of the Arab and Near East Countries Chaired by the CCNE Coordinator

As part of the preparations for the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling, scheduled to be held from 9 to 13 March 2026 in Budapest, Hungary, a coordination meeting was held on Wednesday, 4 March 2026 for the Codex Contact Points of the Arab countries and the Near East region. The meeting, chaired by the Regional Coordinator and the supporting entities, was conducted virtually and attended by representatives from the following countries:

1. Arab Republic of Egypt
2. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
3. Kingdom of Bahrain
4. Kingdom of Morocco
5. Republic of Iraq
6. Republic of the Sudan
7. Republic of Tunisia
8. Republic of Yemen
9. State of Libya
10. State of Qatar
11. Sultanate of Oman
12. Syrian Arab Republic
13. United Arab Emirates

In addition to representatives of the following organizations:

- The Arab Codex Initiative – Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)
- The Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS)
- The Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO)

Dr. Intisar Al-Gharibi, Regional Coordinator for the Near East, opened the meeting with welcoming remarks, in which she welcomed the participants to the 46th Joint Coordination Meeting for the Near East Region. She wished everyone continued health and well-being and extended her congratulations to the attendees on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. She also expressed her appreciation to all participants for accepting the invitation, as well as to colleagues, technical working groups, and member countries for the efforts exerted during the past period. During her remarks, she noted that the agenda for the meeting included several important topics that would be reviewed and discussed, explaining that the meeting was being held as part of the preparations for the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling.

Dr. Intisar Al-Gharibi then gave the floor to Eng. Ahmed Eddouaicer, Coordinator of the Arab Codex Initiative, who welcomed the participants from the Codex Contact Points of the Arab countries and the Near East region, in addition to experts participating from the Initiative and the Global Food Regulatory Science Society. He noted that the 46th meeting aimed to strengthen coordination and consultation among Arab countries and to unify positions regarding the topics included on the agendas of the Codex Alimentarius Commission committees.

He also highlighted the importance of discussing the outcomes of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils, given the economic, trade, and nutritional importance of these products to the region, particularly in supporting the position of the Syrian Arab Republic in the olive oil sector. In addition, he referred to the review of the work of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling to ensure transparency and strengthen confidence in laboratory results.

At the conclusion of his remarks, Eng. Ahmed Eddouaicer expressed his hope that the participants' contributions and expertise would enrich the discussions and lead to practical recommendations that would strengthen regional coordination and support effective Arab participation in upcoming meetings. He also extended his thanks to all participants and organizers of the meeting.

Eng. Ahmed Al-Basha, Head of the Standards Department at the Gulf Standardization Organization, then delivered his remarks. He began by expressing his appreciation to Dr. Intisar Al-Gharibi and her distinguished team, as well as to Mr. Ahmed Eddouaicer, Coordinator of the Arab Codex Initiative, and all participants from member countries and experts from the Global Food Regulatory Science Society. He expressed his appreciation for organizing the meeting despite the

complex geopolitical circumstances, wishing safety and well-being for all and continued fruitful coordination among Arab countries.

He also emphasized the importance of reviewing the agenda of the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling, as well as the outcomes of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils. He expressed his satisfaction with the broad participation from member countries and stressed the importance of continued good preparation and active engagement to ensure productive discussions and outcomes that align with shared aspirations and objectives.

Following that, the agenda of the meeting was reviewed and its items approved as follows:

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<p>Remarques d'ouverture et adoption de l'ordre du jour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinateur du CCNE • Coordinateur de l'Initiative Arabe du Codex • Organisation de normalisation du Conseil de coopération du Golfe (GSO) 	<p>Opening Remarks and adoption of the Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCNE Coordinator • Arab Codex Initiative Coordinator • Gulf Cooperation Council Standardization Organization (GSO) 	<p>كلمات افتتاحية واعتماد جدول الأعمال</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • المنسق الإقليمي للشرق الأدنى • منسق المبادرة العربية للدستور الغذائي • هيئة التقييس لدول مجلس التعاون الخليجية 	البند الأول
<p>Résultats du Comité du Codex sur les graisses et les huiles (CCFO29)</p> <p>Présenté par:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sultanat d'Oman • République arabe syrienne 	<p>Outputs of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29)</p> <p>Presented by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sultanate of Oman • Syrian Arab Republic 	<p>مخرجات لجنة الدستور الغذائي المعنية بالدهون والزيوت (CCFO29)</p> <p>يقدم من قبل:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • سلطنة عمان • الجمهورية العربية السورية 	البند الثاني
<p>Analyse des points à l'ordre du jour de la 45^e session du Comité du Codex sur les méthodes d'analyse et d'échantillonnage (CCMAS45) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Élément 3.1: Émirats arabes unis • Élément 4.1: Sultanat d'Oman, République tunisienne • Élément 5.1: Royaume de Bahreïn 	<p>Analysis of the agenda items of the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS45)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 3.1: United Arab Emirates • Item 4.1: Sultanate of Oman, Tunisian Republic • Item 5.1: Kingdom of Bahrain 	<p>تحليل بنود جدول اعمال الدورة 45 للجنة الدستور الغذائي المعنية بالاساليب التحليل وأخذ العينات (CCMAS45) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • البند 3.1: الامارات العربية المتحدة • البند 4.1: سلطنة عمان، الجمهورية التونسية • البند 5.1: مملكة البحرين • البند 5.2: الجمهورية التونسية 	البند الثالث

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Élément 5.2: République tunisienne • Élément 5.3: République arabe d'Égypte • Élément 6: État de Libye • Élément 7.1: République arabe d'Égypte • Élément 7.2: République tunisienne, République arabe d'Égypte • Élément 8: État de Libye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 5.2: Tunisian Republic • Item 5.3: Arab Republic of Egypt • Item 6: State of Libya • Item 7.1: Arab Republic of Egypt • Item 7.2: Tunisian Republic, Arab Republic of Egypt • Item 8: State of Libya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • البند 5.3: جمهورية مصر العربية • البند 6: دولة ليبيا • البند 7.1: جمهورية مصر العربية • البند 7.2: الجمهورية التونسية، جمهورية مصر العربية • البند 8: دولة ليبيا 	
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Item 2: Outputs of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO29)

The Sultanate of Oman and the Syrian Arab Republic presented the outcomes of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils. The meeting was attended by representatives from (Arab Republic of Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kingdom of Morocco, Syrian Arab Republic, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, and Republic of Tunisia). Several meetings were held under the leadership of the Regional Coordinator for the Near East, including coordination meetings with the United States of America, the European Union, People's Republic of China, United Mexican States, the African Union, as well as the Secretariats of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Regarding the main outcomes:

- ❖ **Agenda Item 5:** Proposed draft revisions to the Codex Standard for fats and oils to limit trans fatty acids. The Committee agreed to return the draft to Step 2/3 and to establish an electronic working group chaired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with participation from the European Union, to review the definitions and key provisions related to composition and conformity assessment.
- ❖ **Agenda Item 6:** Draft Standard for microbial Omega-3 oils. The draft was advanced for adoption at Step 5, including forwarding the provisions related to food labelling and methods of analysis for adoption. An electronic working group chaired by the United States of America, with participation from People's Republic of China, was established to discuss the outstanding issues

❖ **Agenda Item 8:** Revision of the Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils (CXS 33-1981). Discussions focused on scientific data and information related to compounds and criteria concerning oil quality and authenticity. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was tasked with establishing an expert working group to analyse the data related to DAGs and PPP compounds. In addition, an electronic working group chaired by the Syrian Arab Republic, with participation from Republic of Tunisia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Commonwealth of Australia, was established to develop a framework for data collection related to footnote (c) under paragraph 3.2.3 of the Standard for Olive Oils and Olive Pomace Oils.

Regarding the new work proposals, the following items were discussed:

- Submission of a proposal to revise the standard to include shea butter (CAC/49) for approval.
- Agreement not to initiate the revision of Standard CX-999 to include virgin coconut oil, due to the need for further clarification.
- Amendment of the citric acid content in high oleic sunflower seed oil (CAC/49), as proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Submission of a proposal to include sea buckthorn pulp oil and sea buckthorn seed oil for adoption.

Item 3: Analysis of the agenda items of the 45th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS45)

❖ **Agenda Item 3.1 – Presentation by the United Arab Emirates**

The presentation under Agenda Item 3.1 addressed the adoption of proposed analytical methods and sampling plans in Codex standards, which are referred from various subsidiary committees to the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling for technical review and approval prior to their inclusion in the Codex Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CXS 234). The presentation focused in particular on requests submitted by three main committees: the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods, the Near East Regional Committee (Codex Committee on Near East), and the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs, given the regulatory and trade importance of these matters for Arab countries and the Near East region.

The presentation covered the following points:

- Sampling plans and Numerical Performance Criteria (NPC) for mycotoxins in certain spices such as nutmeg, dried pepper, and paprika. It was noted that the proposals are consistent with Codex principles and provide an appropriate level of accuracy and analytical sensitivity.
- Adoption of analytical methods for the regional standard on ma'amoul, based on internationally recognized methods such as ISO and AOAC. These methods had previously been reviewed within the Near East Regional Committee.
- Updating certain analytical methods in spice standards by replacing sensory evaluation tests with more objective analytical methods based on ISO standards, thereby enhancing the reliability and reproducibility of results.

The presentation concluded with several recommendations, including supporting the adoption of the proposed sampling plans and standards for mycotoxins, endorsing the analytical methods for the ma'amoul standard, and encouraging the use of international standard methods while taking into account the readiness of national laboratories to implement the relevant analytical requirements.

❖ **Agenda Item 4.1 – Presentation by the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Tunisia**

The presentation under Agenda Item 4.1 addressed the review of analytical methods included in several Codex commodity standards, covering fish and fish products, fats and oils, and cereals, pulses and their products. The objective was to ensure consistency of these methods with the General Standard for Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Codex Alimentarius Commission CXS 234-1999) and to enhance scientific reliability and international harmonization in their application.

The presentation outlined the background that led to this review, noting challenges such as the use of outdated analytical methods, duplication of references, and inconsistencies between commodity standards and the general standard. To address these issues, a systematic review was conducted through an electronic working group, resulting in the development of three main annexes.

The first annex included proposed amendments to update certain analytical methods, including the addition of modern methods, deletion of outdated or duplicated methods, and updating references in line with the latest ISO and AOAC standards. This particularly covered parameters such as moisture, protein, and fat determination in fish products, as well as quality indicators in fats and oils such as acidity value and peroxide value.

The second annex confirmed that several existing analytical methods remain valid without the need for revision, while emphasizing the importance of periodically updating references to ensure alignment with the latest international standards.

The third annex identified analytical gaps in certain standards, where regulatory limits exist for products such as peanuts and oats, but no internationally validated analytical methods are available for their measurement. This may lead to implementation challenges and variability in results across countries.

The presentation concluded by emphasizing the importance of adopting the proposed updates, maintaining validated methods that have proven effective, and developing internationally recognized analytical methods to address existing gaps. It also highlighted the need to promote a performance-based approach in selecting analytical methods and to improve their future presentation through an electronic database to facilitate use by regulatory authorities and laboratories.

❖ **Agenda Item 5.1 – Presentation by the Kingdom of Bahrain**

The presentation under Agenda Item 5.1 addressed the review of analytical methods related to fruit juices included in the General Standard for Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Codex Alimentarius Commission CXS 234-1999) and the General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars (CXS 247-2005), as part of ongoing efforts to update these methods and ensure their suitability for practical application.

The presentation noted that, during the 44th session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling, an expert team from the International Federation of Fruit Juice Producers (IFU) was tasked with reviewing the validity of the analytical methods currently listed. The expert team evaluated 56 methods, concluding that 52 methods remain suitable for use and are recommended for retention or transfer to CXS 234-1999, while four methods were proposed for deletion due to obsolescence or lack of suitability.

The presentation also addressed enzyme-based analytical methods using test kits. The expert team noted that some kits used in earlier collaborative studies are no longer commercially available and therefore recommended deferring a decision on these methods to the 46th session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling in 2027 to allow further evaluation. In addition, the team was unable to assess certain ISO methods due to lack of access, highlighting the need for further review before any decision is made regarding their inclusion or retention in the standards.

The presentation concluded with several recommendations, including supporting the updating of analytical methods and the deletion of outdated ones. It emphasized the importance of strengthening methods for authenticity testing of fruit juices and detecting fraud, particularly through the use of advanced techniques such as stable isotope analysis and chromatographic methods. It also stressed the need to consider the capacities of national laboratories, promote capacity-building programs and regional cooperation among laboratories, and ensure access to ISO methods to enable comprehensive scientific evaluation prior to final adoption.

❖ **Agenda Item 5.3 – Presentation by the Arab Republic of Egypt**

The presentation under Agenda Item 5.3 addressed the review of analytical methods for honey and sugars included in the General Standard for Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Codex Alimentarius Commission CXS 234-1999), as part of the ongoing systematic update of these methods.

It was noted that, during the 44th session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling, an electronic working group chaired by Oriental Republic of Uruguay was established to review the analytical methods included in the standards for sugars (CXS 212-1999) and honey (CXS 12-1981). The objective of this work was to eliminate inconsistencies, ensure alignment with the Procedural Manual, confirm the continued suitability of the methods, and clarify their classification according to method types (Type I–IV).

The presentation explained that the working group reviewed the consistency of methods listed in CXS 234 with the relevant commodity standards, identified missing or non-aligned methods, updated outdated references, and streamlined the presentation of methods. Several technical issues were identified, including methods for invert sugar determination, the suitability of sulphur dioxide testing methods, replacement of outdated AOAC methods, and particularly methods related to honey authenticity verification using stable carbon isotope ratio analysis (SCIRA).

The presentation also outlined proposed amendments aimed at updating the list of analytical methods for honey and sugars, including replacing outdated methods with more modern and internationally recognized ones, improving consistency in how methods are presented, and linking them more clearly to provisions in commodity standards. It was also noted that some practical limitations were encountered, as the working group was unable to access certain references or fully evaluate some methods, requiring further work.

The presentation concluded with several recommendations, including supporting the adoption of the working group's proposals on retaining, modifying, adding, or deleting methods, and not including certain methods in CXS 234-1999 at this stage. It also recommended replacing AOAC 991.41 with AOAC 998.12 for carbon isotope ratio analysis for honey authenticity verification and deleting the outdated method from the honey standard. Furthermore, it recommended re-establishing the electronic working group to complete the review of outstanding technical issues and to further assess methods that have not yet been fully evaluated.

❖ **Agenda Item 6 – Presentation by the State of Libya**

The presentation under Agenda Item 6 reviewed analytical methods used for the detection of allergens following the update of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (Codex Alimentarius Commission CXS 1-1985). These allergens include gluten-containing cereals, crustaceans, eggs, fish, peanuts, milk, sesame, and certain tree nuts.

The Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling was tasked with collecting and evaluating relevant analytical methods, and an electronic working group was established to assess their adoption in accordance with international standards such as AOAC and EN, with particular focus on their suitability for established action levels.

Technical observations highlighted the widespread reliance on ELISA-based methods, alongside variability in validation quality across laboratories. It was also noted that food matrix composition and processing methods significantly affect analytical performance. Emphasis was placed on the need to report results in terms of total protein from the allergenic source to ensure consistency in reporting. It was further clarified that inclusion of methods in the lists is for informational purposes only and does not imply automatic endorsement.

The methods were categorized into two groups: strongly validated methods characterized by high sensitivity and low limits of detection, such as ELISA methods for peanuts, eggs, milk, gluten, and crustaceans; and methods with limited validation, which rely mainly on internal validation with insufficient inter-laboratory studies, resulting in higher uncertainty.

The presentation concluded with several recommendations, including supporting the submission of the draft to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, emphasizing the informational nature of the methods, ensuring that detection limits are well below established action levels, and promoting harmonization of reporting units and validation of methods in local food matrices. It also stressed the importance of considering matrix and processing effects, improving regional accessibility to methods, and remaining open to the development of performance-based criteria for analytical methods when required.

❖ **Agenda Item 7.1 – Presentation by the Arab Republic of Egypt**

The presentation under Agenda Item 7.1 addressed the review of sampling plan information included in (CXS 234-1999), as part of ongoing efforts by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling to improve the harmonization of information related to analytical methods and sampling plans.

The presentation noted that the current information on sampling plans is limited and inconsistent and is often confused with physical sampling procedures. It further highlighted that most other Codex commodity standards do not contain comprehensive information on sampling plans, which creates challenges for consistent implementation.

The presentation reviewed the work of the electronic working group (EWG), chaired by New Zealand and Germany, which proposed several options for structuring and integrating sampling plan information within the Codex system. These included either incorporating all sampling plan information into CXS 234-1999 as a single reference document or developing commodity-specific standards while maintaining detailed information in a centralized database. The EWG expressed a preference for the first option, as it provides ease of use and maintains CXS 234 as a unified reference.

The presentation further included recommendations supporting the development of a searchable electronic database that clearly links each analytical method to its corresponding sampling plan. It emphasized the need to define the respective roles of commodity committees and the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling in providing technical and statistical support. It further proposed establishing a new electronic working group to follow up on the development of the database structure and ensure its ongoing maintenance.

❖ **Agenda Item 7.2 – Presentation by the Republic of Tunisia**

The presentation under Agenda Item 7.2 addressed the review of sampling plans for bulk commodities and heterogeneous samples, with a particular focus on mycotoxins. It highlighted key technical limitations of current sampling approaches, which often assume a homogeneous distribution of contamination, whereas practical evidence shows significant variability. It was further noted that localized contamination may be masked when composite sampling is applied, thereby increasing the risk of inaccurate decision-making.

The presentation recommended the development of general guidance on sampling acceptance for such commodities as an annex to the (CXG 50-2004), in collaboration with the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods. with emphasis on

collecting reliable and generalizable data, protecting consumer health, ensuring transparent trade practices, and reducing food waste. It also stressed the importance of coordination between CCMAS and CCCF in defining sampling design and risk levels, and in applying a benefit-based approach to balance health risks and economic costs, while taking into account data gaps and improving analytical tools.

Recommendations:

1. Adoption of the proposed guidance as an annex to CXG 50-2004.
2. Initiation of new work to develop sampling acceptance plans for bulk and heterogeneous commodities, with emphasis on mycotoxins.
3. Support for the involvement of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods in defining risk levels based on toxicological considerations.
4. Ensure that the work includes the development of a risk assessment methodology, a practical guidance document, electronic tools, and clear mechanisms for collecting and analyzing globally representative data.

❖ **Agenda Item 8 – Presentation by the State of Libya**

A presentation was delivered addressing the need to harmonize the names and formats of analytical method principles listed in CXS 234-1999. The presentation explained the establishment of an electronic working group chaired by Brazil and Chile to continue the work, and the conduct of consultations between July 2025 and January 2026 to develop improvements and a unified structure for provisions and analytical principles, including Annexes A–D, which covered analytical method principles, abbreviations, standard references, and the harmonization of provisions.

It is recommended to support the harmonization of terminology and formats to enhance clarity and consistency without altering the scientific requirements, through the adoption of unified wording for analytical principles and abbreviations, the standardization of clause titles, the treatment of merged clauses, and the deletion of “sample preparation” where it does not affect the requirements. Any substantive changes should be referred to the relevant Commodity Committee in order to ensure consistency with international scientific terminology (IUPAC, ISO, VIM, ASTM) and to facilitate the use of standards across all committees and member states.

Closing Remarks

At the conclusion of the meeting, Eng. Walid Al-Maamari, Codex Contact Point of the Sultanate of Oman and acting facilitator of the meeting on behalf of the Regional Coordinator for the Near East, expressed his sincere appreciation—both personally and on behalf of all participants—for the productive and enriching discussions held during the meeting. He extended special thanks to Eng. Ahmed Eddouaicer, Dr. Amin Kassouf, and Eng. Ahmed Al-Basha, as well as to all Codex Contact Points and presenters for their valuable contributions and efforts.

The floor was then given to Eng. Asmaa Al-Hashimi, the Secretariat of the Near East Coordination Committee, who highlighted the efforts of GFORSS in preparing the CRDs documents summarizing the working group's recommendations. She also explained the role of the electronic working group, chaired by the Sultanate of Oman and co-chaired by the State of Qatar, which is responsible for reviewing analytical methods in regional standards for the Near East and reporting outcomes to the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling, while also inviting members of the scientific and technical advisory committee to participate. She further expressed her appreciation for the strong spirit of cooperation and commitment demonstrated by the regional expert working team over the past two weeks, as well as for the valuable presentations delivered, thanking Codex Contact Points for their prompt responsiveness and acknowledging the continued support of GFORSS in strengthening regional coordination and participation of member countries in Codex work.

Finally, appreciation was extended to the representatives of the (United Arab Emirates, Sultanate of Oman, Arab Republic of Egypt, Republic of Tunisia, Kingdom of Bahrain, and State of Libya) for their valuable efforts and effective contributions to the success of the meeting.

