

Codex/SPS Updates (April 2019 – September 2019)

The number of correspondence items between 01 April 2019 and 30 September 2019 from the monitored Codex Committees was 23, and 5 of those were relevant to the seafood industry. An overview is shown in Figure 1. In addition, Korea updated some maximum residue limits and issued a Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) notification of relevance to seafood trade.

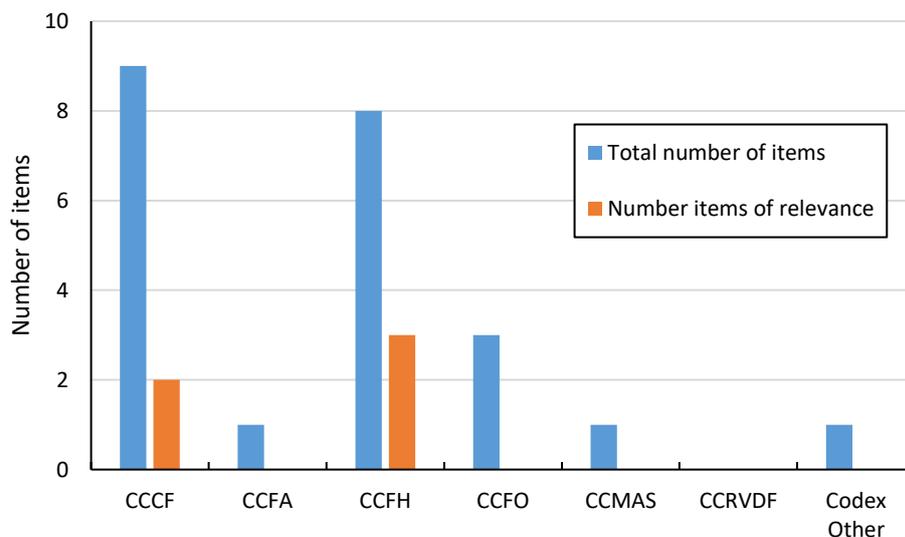


Figure 1 Codex correspondence: 01 April 2019 – 30 September 2019

The pertinent Codex/SPS activities that relate to seafood include:

- [Travel Report – Dr Hazel Farrell – 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods](#)
- [Methylmercury – Sampling plans and maximum levels in other fish species](#)
- [Ciguatera – Ah-hoc FAO/WHO Expert Meeting](#)
- [Histamine - Update on sampling plans and harmonisation of control guidance](#)
- [Draft Code of Practice on Food Allergen Management for Food Business Operators](#)
- [Guidance on the Management of Biological Foodborne Outbreaks](#)
- [Korean SPS –New maximum levels \(MLs\)](#)
- [Korea updated MRL for ethoxyquin in fish](#)
- [Upcoming Codex Meetings](#)

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Travel Report – Dr Hazel Farrell – 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods

SafeFish sponsored Dr Hazel Farrell to join the Australian delegation as a technical expert at the 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF13) that was held over 29 April – 3 May 2019. A travel report has been tabled separately. Relevant topics discussed during the meeting include:

- Establishment of MLs for methylmercury in additional fish species and sampling plans for methylmercury in fish.
- Revision of the priority list of contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants for evaluation by JECFA. Ciguatoxins were removed from the priority list as their evaluation is ongoing. The priority list was updated to include an exploratory study on any potential negative health impacts from organic arsenic. Other topics on the priority list include assessment of inorganic arsenic (for non-cancerous effect), and a full evaluation to update the 2001 JECFA assessment of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs to incorporate data on developmental effects from in utero exposure.
- Development of a discussion paper to consider the radioactivity in food and drinking water from both human-made and natural origin (under normal circumstances) and identify and issues.
- Establishment of new maximum levels for lead in commodities according to a prioritisation approach. Seafood and processed fish (excluding frozen and sliced) had originally been included in the priority listing but based on workload of the committee the priority is to focus on foods for infants and young children, spices and aromatic herbs, eggs, sugar and confectionary (excluding cocoa).

Methylmercury – Sampling plans and maximum levels in other fish species

In April/May 2019 the 13th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF13) agreed to re-establish an **Electronic Working Group (EWG) to revise the discussion paper based on any new data submitted to GEMS/Food to consider whether it is feasible to proceed with the establishment of maximum levels (MLs) for additional fish species. The EWG will also consider issues related to sampling plans for methylmercury in fish.** The findings of the paper will be considered by CCCF14 in 2020. The proposed work program based on a list of pre-identified species whereby the average total mercury in the GEMS/Food database exceeds a 0.3mg/kg selection criteria is below:

Grouping (identified species)	Timeframe
Snake mackerel (Escolar)	2019-2020
Toothfish (Patagonian toothfish)	
Ling (Cusk, Blue ling)	
Cusk-eel (Pink Cusk-eel, Kingklip)	
Sablefish	
Anglerfish	2020-2021
Barracuda	
Catfish (Channel catfish)	
Orange roughy	
Cutlassfish (Scabbardfish)	
Snapper (Russell's snapper, unspecified)	2021-2022
Cardinalfish	
Hapuku	
Short nosed chimera (Rat fish)	

In July 2019 JECFA issued a call for new data on methylmercury and total mercury in all fish species which have not previously been submitted. The submitted data should cover approximately the last 12 years. Data should be submitted by November 10, 2019. **SafeFish website was updated in August 2019 to reflect the call for data and involvement in the EWG. SafeFish has also advised Austral and Australian Longline on the call for data.**

[Ciguatera – Ah-hoc FAO/WHO Expert Meeting](#)

On 19-23 November 2018, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) held an expert meeting to develop scientific advice in response to a request from the 11th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF11). In particular, the requested scientific advice to FAO/WHO entailed a full evaluation of known ciguatoxins (toxicological assessment and exposure assessment), including geographic distribution and rate of illness; congeners; methods of detection; and based on this, guidance for the development of risk management options. **The release date of this report has been delayed, FAO/WHO is currently aiming to release the meeting report by end of 2019.**

[Histamine - Update on sampling plans and harmonisation of control guidance](#)

In May 2019 SafeFish made a formal submission to Codex Australia suggesting corrections to several minor grammatical changes and highlighting some inconsistencies in terminology in regards to histamine or scombrototoxin, and prevent or minimise histamine/scombrototoxin formation.

In July 2019 the 42nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC42) adopted the amendments made by the 50th Session of the Codex Commission on Food Hygiene (CCFH50) to the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (CXC 52-2003) to align with the Guidance for Histamine Control. The histamine control guidance (which was adopted by CAC41) will be published as a new Section 10 of the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (CXC 52-2003). SafeFish website was updated on 1 August 2019 to reflect this decision.

[Draft Code of Practice on Food Allergen Management for Food Business Operators](#)

In November 2017 the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) agreed to begin developing a Code of Practice for Food Allergen Management for Food Business Operators. A working group chaired by Australia, and co-chaired by USA and UK, was established. Poor allergen management (including insufficient or inaccurate labelling) can result in the presence of varying levels of undeclared and/or unintended allergens in food, which may pose a risk if consumed by an allergic individual. **SafeFish has been maintaining a watching brief on the developments and there are no major issues.**

The draft Code of Practice provides guidance to FBOs, including primary producers, to develop policies and procedures to identify allergens in all areas of food production, preparation and service, and then implement allergen management practices. The draft Code of Practice will be tabled during the upcoming CCFH meeting (November 2019) where it may be agreed to send it to Codex Alimentarius Commission for adoption.

[Guidance on the Management of Biological Foodborne Outbreaks](#)

In November 2017 the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) agreed to begin developing guidance material on the management of biological foodborne outbreaks. The current draft guidance remains in the early stages of development and will be tabled during the upcoming CCFH meeting (November 2019). (step 3). **SafeFish had been maintaining a watching brief on the developments.**

Korean SPS –New maximum levels (MLs)

In May 2019 South Korea issued a SPS notification (KOR639) to change the Korean Standard for Food Additives, including the standards for the use of sodium metabisulfite, potassium metabisulfite, sulfur dioxide, sodium bisulfite, sodium sulfite, sodium hydrosulfite. **SafeFish reviewed export data to Korea and sought to see if the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources would get it translated into English.** Only very small volumes of dried or frozen abalone were exported to Korea in 2018.

Korea updated MRL for ethoxyquin in fish

The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) of the Republic of Korea released Notice No 2019-57 stipulating new testing methods of residue limits for aquatic products, to come into effect the 3rd of July 2019. **SafeFish advised STAG of the announcement and also updated the SafeFish website with the revised maximum residue limits (MRLs) and comparison to the prescribed MRL in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.**

Upcoming Codex Meetings

Date	Committee	Location	SafeFish sponsored representation
4 – 8 November 2019	CCFH51 – 51 st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene	Cleveland, Ohio, USA	-
2 - 6 March 2020	CCFA52 – 52 nd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives	China (TBA)	-
20 – 24 April 2020	CCCF14 – 14 th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminates in Foods	Utrecht, Netherlands	To be decided
11 – 15 May 2020	CCMAS41 – 41 st Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling	Hungary (TBA)	-
25 – 29 May 2020	CCRVDF25 – 25 th Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods	USA (TBA)	-
6 – 11 July 2020	CAC43 – 43 rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission	Rome, Italy	-
22 – 26 February 2021	CCFO27 – 27 th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils	Malaysia (TBC)	-