

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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TO: Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission
FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Italy

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON SALMONELLA IN BIVALVE
MOLLUSCS**

DEADLINE: **28 February 2009**

COMMENTS: **To:** **Dr Iddya Karunasagar,**
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Background

The 29th Session of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products advanced to Step 8 the Draft Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products (Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs and Lobsters and relevant Definitions) and the Draft Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs for adoption by the 31st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve includes criteria for *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella* (Section I-6 Hygiene). However, in proposing these criteria, the Committee had a lengthy discussion on the sampling plan for *Salmonella*. Though a two class sampling plan with the following criteria: n=5, c=0, m=0/25g was agreed upon, there was a question related to the adequacy of the sampling plan for areas with different levels of prevalence of *Salmonella*. In this context, the Committee agreed to ask FAO/WHO the following question:

"In the context of harvesting area monitoring for faecal contamination and lot contamination, estimate the risk mitigation for *Salmonella* in bivalve molluscs when different sampling plans and microbiological criteria are applied"

In order to address this question, FAO and WHO have identified a number of data needs. Member countries and interested organisations are requested to review the data need listed below and submit any available data to the FAO/WHO JEMRA Secretariat. Such information is critical to the provision of appropriate and relevant scientific advice to Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products.

Data is requested on the following issues. Specific questions are included under each of the issues, to assist you in responding to this Circular Letter.

1. Prevalence and levels of *Salmonella* in bivalve molluscs

- (a) What is the sampling plan used in your country for monitoring *Salmonella* in bivalve molluscs? Please include details of the point at which the sample is taken, i.e. at harvest, during storage, at retail etc?
- (b) What is the prevalence (percentage of samples positive) and level of *Salmonella* detected?
- (c) Are there any seasonal variations in prevalence and is the same sampling plan used for all seasons?
- (d) Are there any studies comparing different sampling plans and their efficacy in detecting contaminated bivalves?
- (e) If *Salmonella* has been detected, please provide any information available on the serotypes and if possible their (relative) prevalence?
- (f) Do you collect data on the prevalence and/or concentrations of *Salmonella* for any other fish or fishery products? If so please provide details together with any available information on the prevalence and level of *Salmonella* detected.
- (g) Are there any publications on this aspect?

2. Production and consumption of bivalve molluscs

- (a) What are the quantities of bivalves produced in your country? Are they produced for the domestic market or exported?
- (b) Please provide any information on the water temperatures, production (aquaculture) systems and harvesting practices and any seasonal variations that might exist.
- (c) Please provide a description of the marketing practices for bivalves (storage times and temperatures)
- (d) Do you have data on consumption of bivalve meat in your country
- (e) How are bivalves consumed? live/raw/cooked?
- (f) What percentage of the population consumes bivalves?
- (g) How much is consumed per week (among high consumers and low consumers)

3. Epidemiological data linking bivalve molluscs to outbreaks of salmonellosis

- (a) Are there any cases of salmonellosis linked to bivalve molluscs in your country? If so how many cases were involved? Is there information to indicate the annual salmonellosis burden and the contribution of contaminated bivalves to that?
- (b) Do have data on prevalence/levels of *Salmonella* in bivalves consumed?
- (c) Were the bivalves from areas that are monitored for *Salmonella* linked in illness?
- (d) What are the serotypes involved in human cases?
- (e) In the event of an outbreak of Salmonellosis related to bivalves has any specific follow-up action been taken afterwards? Examples include changes to the monitoring plan, an increase in the number of samples tested and if yes, what was the impact of changes on public health outcomes?

5. Contact person for follow-up and further details if needed

Provide name, title and full contact details. If appropriate, one contact name may be provided for each of the 4 areas on which information is requested.