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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(73) 1652 final

Brussels, 4 October 1973

R E P O R T

from the Commission to the Council on the coordination of the
attitude to be adopted by the Member States with regard to
the standards being drafted in the Codex Committee
on processed meat products

I. General

At the 165th meeting of the Council on 20 and 21 September 1971 a joint statement was worked out relating to the procedure for coordination by Member States with regard to the Codex Alimentarius.

After notifying the Member States in accordance with this procedure¹⁾ and as a result of a first coordination meeting in Brussels on 14 June 1973 at which further comments were made, the Commission drew up this report in the light of information obtained. The Commission has deliberately confined itself to points of some importance, as the purely technical questions can be freely discussed by experts. It is on the basis of these discussions that it will be possible to adopt a common attitude at the next coordination meeting.

II. Draft standard for cooked hams

Point 2 of the draft standard. Definition

Broadly, there are three types of prepacked ham in international trade :

- (a) traditional tinned ham
- (b) ham in open packing
- (c) sliced ham

Analysis of the detailed discussions which took place at the sixth session of the Committee in Copenhagen suggests a procedure which might produce a solution.

It is proposed that at first the definition as contained in the draft standard for tinned ham be maintained, worded to indicate that smoked ham in open packing and sliced cooked ham are not covered by the standard.

Standards for those products would be drawn up later, however.

.../...

(1) Telex to the Permanent Representatives N° 7350/10 G ref. 73.2916

The last sentence of the subsidiary definitions heading could be summarized as follows :

" The thermal treatment, called cooking, combined with salting and the type of packing, must be sufficient to guarantee the wholesomeness of the product and its preservation in normal conditions of storage, transport and sale".

It would be advisable to specify clearly that packaging materials must be such as will not transmit to the product any substance of a kind which would deteriorate it.

3. Essential factors of composition and quality

3.2 Optional ingredients

There is need to ensure that enhancers of flavour are not employed in a proportion such as to mask any defects of the ham.

Their use is not wholly justified, and it is therefore proposed to delete the words " Hydrolysed proteins used as enhancers of flavour".

Furthermore, without the use of very considerable resources chemical analysis does not allow a distinction to be made between the proteins of the meat and the added protein hydrolysate. There would be the same risk if any kind of foodstuff likely to give the ham certain organoleptic characteristics were permitted. These foodstuffs should be identified.

3.4 Meat content

Analysis of the figures given in paragraph 23 (doc. 72/16) shows that the minimum arithmetic mean suggested is questionable. Information resulting from the study of the sampling plan of the batch was not yet available. The following study carried out by the Dutch delegation is referred to the delegations.

.../...

"Provided the PFF value is adopted by the Committee as the expression of the meat content, and bearing in mind the fact that in any case the values and the sampling plans are connected with each other, we would like to suggest by way of experiment the following values and plans for tinned ham.

1. Take at random a single unit (sample). If the PFF value is 16.5% or higher the batch will be approved.
2. Should the PFF value not be reached in this sample there are two alternatives:
 - (a) If the value is less than 15.0%, the batch will be rejected without any other sample being taken and without analysis.
 - (b) If the value is between 16.5% and 15.0%, two other samples will be taken in the same batch. They must both be 16.5% or higher, or the batch will be rejected (the figures are calculated on the total contents of the tin without correction for any gelatin).
 - (i) For tinned shoulder of pork the values should be respectively 16% and 14.5%, sampling conditions being the same as for ham.
 - (ii) If it appeared desirable to adopt identical PFF values for ham and shoulder, they might be 16% and 14.5%, sampling conditions being described above".

.../...

4. Food additives

- (i) A first proposal is limited solely to substances the use of which is indispensable for the manufacture of hams and is designed to eliminate the following products : agar agar, alginates, carrageenins, isoascorbic acid, preparations of empyrenematic agents, citrates and phosphates of sodium.
- (ii) A second proposal is designed to confirm the use of potassium and sodium nitrates and of potassium and sodium nitrites. It is justified by the inhibiting power of the products on the development of *Clostridium botulinum*.

5. Hygiene

It is proposed that the hygiene problems relating to this draft standard be dealt with alongside those relating to the fresh meat code.

During the fifth session it was decided to delete the requirements relating to heating temperature. If there are no requirements relating to storage conditions in the paragraphs concerning analysis and sampling, the standard is not appropriate. Incubation tests and bacteriological examinations should be included.

6. Labelling

It is proposed that the date of manufacture (day, month, year) be shown uncoded and that particulars be given as to storage temperature and maximum recommended storage period (e.g. "Can be kept until at a temperature of.....").

III. Draft standard for cooked shoulder of pork

Same remarks as for the draft standard for cooked hams.

.... / ...

IV. Draft standard for canned corned beef

One proposal refers to a study on international trade in corned beef. It shows that this is a range of products in which the required properties appear to be distributed with great dispersion.

Present analytical studies are not sufficient to throw up a criterion which might allow of a definition of different categories. It would therefore presumably be best to postpone the study of this problem.

There is another proposal which would exclude corned beef with cereals and corned beef with broth from the standard, suggesting that they form part of a category of products called "compound meat products".

However, it is also suggested that within this category of compound meat products the products in question may still be called "corned beef", provided these words are followed by "with cereals", "with broth" etc. The corned beef content would have to satisfy the requirements as to composition of the corned beef standard.

A third proposal is that the following be added to the present draft standard :

"2. Description

The meat content should be expressed by a system identical to that employed for ham and cooked shoulder of pork. The words "the resulting weight of the product must not represent more than 70% of the weight of the raw meat before cooking" are thus redundant and may be deleted.

3. Essential factors of composition and quality

The preparation of corned beef with jelly, with cereals, requires certain optional ingredients which must be added to the list of ingredients already mentioned.

.../...

3.1 Ingredients

3.1.1 Essential ingredients

unsalted beef

salting agentsglucose syrup

3.1.2 Optional ingredients

gelatin

cereals (maximum added proportion : 5%)

protein binders (maximum added proportion: 2%)"

A subchapter must be added worded as follows :

"Meat content : minimum arithmetic mean value for the percentage of proteins in the delipidated product: 20% ".

6.1 Name of the product

" The name of the product must contain one of the following designations :

corned beef

corned beef with jelly

corned beef with broth"

V. Draft standards for course-ground and fine-ground meat products

At point 71 of document Alinorm 72/16 the Committee had asked for a new working paper to be prepared.

This has not yet been done. The United Kingdom delegation points out that it is ready to help with the preparation of the new paper.
