

CLEN WORKSHOP ON VEGETABLE FATS AND OILS, ALBERNA, BULGARIA

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Codex Alimentarius standards for oils and fats – current status and developments

A brief overview about the structure and working procedures of the Codex Alimentarius is given with special emphasis on the oils and fats related standards. The current status of the different standards is presented and the latest changes and developments from the last Codex Conference on Fats and Oils at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2019 are explained.

The Codex Alimentarius gathers actually 188 member states and 1 Organisation (EU). They are organised by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Executive Committee, 10 general purpose committees and six commodity committees. Codex standards have been set up in order to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in the food trade. During the development of the Codex standard system 191 commodity standards, 73 guidelines and 51 codes of practice had been established. Several steps are necessary starting from a first discussion paper until finalising a standard according to a procedure of revising and adapting to keep the Codex Alimentarius up to date.

There is a Codex Committee for oils and fats and its secretary is held by Malaysia. Several standards deal with fats and oils:

- Standard for Named Vegetable Oils (CODEX STAN 210-1999)
- Standard for Olive oils and Olive Pomace oils (CODEX STAN 33-1981)
- Standard for Named Animal Fats (CODEX STAN 211-1999)
- Standard for Fish Oils (CODEX STAN 329-2017)
- Standard for Edible Fats and Oils not Covered by Individual Standards (CODEX STAN 19-1981)

Some of the topics of the latest session of the Codex Committee for oils and fats were:

- Physical properties of palm superolein
- Replacement of acid value for virgin palm oil and inclusion of free fatty acids for crude palm kernel oil
- Inclusion of specifications for almond, flaxseed (linseed), hazelnut, pistachio and walnut oil
- Applicability of the fatty acid composition to oils in crude or refined state
- Inclusion of free fatty acids as quality characteristic criteria for refined rice bran oil
- Monitoring on the implementation of the standard for fish oils has been finished
- Fatty acid composition of sunflower seed oils
- Inclusion of avocado oil
- Revision of the standard for olive oils and pomace olive oils