

Codex/SPS Updates (Aug – Oct 2018)

The number of correspondence items from the horizontal Codex Committees between 01 Aug and 31 October 2018 was 28 and 26 of those were relevant to the seafood industry, as shown in Figure 1. In addition, Food Standards Australia New Zealand removed the MRL for florfenicol and tylosin in fish and fish muscle, respectively.

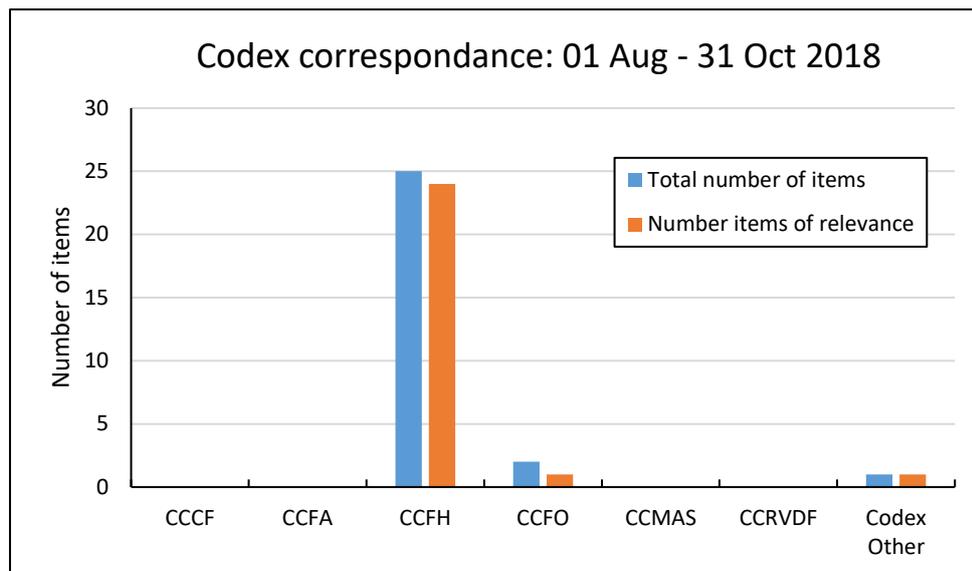


Figure 1 Codex correspondence: 01 August 2018 – 31 October 2018

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

- [Histamine - Update on control guidance and harmonisation of Commodity Standards](#)
- [Ciguatera – Australian working group](#)
- [More Methylmercury – CCCF considering if additional MLs are required](#)
- [Named Fish Oils – CCFO26 to report on conformity](#)
- [Florfenicol and Tylosin – FSANZ removes MRL in fish and fish muscle](#)
- [Upcoming Codex Meetings](#)

Histamine - Update on control guidance and harmonisation of Commodity Standards

An electronic working group for the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) have finished reviewing the histamine hygiene and sampling plans sections within the relevant seafood Commodity Standards and have considered how the recently adopted histamine control guidance could be included in the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products. Dr Stephen Pahl was a member of the electronic working group and provided input during the development of the draft amendments.

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During this process SafeFish also widely canvassed the seafood industry for comment through email notifications to executive officers and representatives of seafood sectors or associations that could potentially be impacted.

In October 2018 SafeFish provided a submission to Codex Australia supporting the recommendation that the guidance should be located directly after Section 9 in the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products. SafeFish also recommended that the existing histamine decomposition levels should be reviewed prior to progressing the current revisions, as there is concern that the histamine decomposition provisions are a source of confusion, do not necessary correlative to other decomposition attributes (i.e. odour), and could become pseudo maximum levels. SafeFish maintains that the existing 200mg/kg food safety provision provides the necessary level of protection for public health.

A number of delegations are likely to be concerned that the proposed minimum sampling plan will be too onerous.

Ciguatera – Australian working group

Following the request from the 11th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF11), the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee for Food Additives (JECFA) released an international call for data on ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP) to conduct an international risk assessment. To ensure that the outcome of the FAO/WHO risk assessment is topical to Australia, SafeFish established an Australian working group on CFP in May 2018, encompassing representatives from State health departments, researchers and regulators.

The working group collated and submitted all available Australian ciguatera-related data to the FAO/WHO. Members expressed great interest in continuing to work through SafeFish beyond the FAO/WHO call for data to build a strong Australian ciguatera network.

An Australian ciguatera workshop with invited international experts was identified as a vital first step to develop Australian research programs and coordinate strategic access to funding sources (both national and international). **The SafeFish board recognised the workshop as a priority, committing \$25,000 to host international experts and conduct the workshop.**

Members of the working group (Shauna Murray, UTS; Gustaaf Hallegraeff, UTAS; Hazel Farrel, NSW Food Authority and Andreas Seger, SARDI) recently attended the 18th International Conference on Harmful Algal blooms in Nantes, France (21-26th of Oct. 2018), where the latest international ciguatera research was presented (28 oral and 30 poster presentations covering all aspects from ecology to ciguatoxin analytical methods). International experts approached at the conference expressed strong interest and support for the development of an Australian ciguatera network with strong links to the international research effort. **Potential international experts to be invited to the Australian ciguatera workshop were identified and a draft workshop agenda will be presented to the SafeFish board at the next partners meeting (14th of Nov. 2018).**

Methylmercury – CCCF considering if additional MLs are required

Following the recent Codex adoption of maximum levels (MLs) for methylmercury in selected tunas, alfonsino, marlin and shark, CCCF have established an electronic working group to prepare a discussion paper on the establishment of MLs for methylmercury for additional fish species. The discussion paper will identify the fish species for which MLs might be established and proposed MLs for these species.

SafeFish has requested through Codex Australia to be kept informed of developments and will maintain a watching brief.

Named Fish Oils – CCFO26 to report on conformity

In August 2017 the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO) invited comments regarding any monitoring of the Standard for Fish Oils (Codex Stan 329-2017) with respect to the conformity of named fish oils with the requirements (especially the fatty acid profile), and its effect on trade. In August 2017 SafeFish informed TSGA and NuMega of the call for information.

CCFO26 will report on any findings at their next meeting (25 February – 1 March 2019). SafeFish to maintain watching brief.

Florfenicol and Tylosin – FSANZ removes MRL in fish and fish muscle

On August 23, 2018, FSANZ removed the temporary MRL for florfenicol and Tylosin in fish and fish muscle respectively. Following the announcement SafeFish immediately notified several aquatic veterinarians, feed companies and finfish aquaculture operations or associations.

Upcoming Codex Meetings

Date	Committee	Location	SafeFish sponsored representation
12 – 16 November 2018	CCFH50 – 50 th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene	Panama City, Panama	-
25 February – 1 March 2019	CCFO26 – 26 th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	-
25 - 29 March 2019	CCFA51 – 51 st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives	China (TBC)	-
29 April - 3 May 2019	CCCF13 – 13 th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminates in Foods	Yogyakarta, Indonesia (TBC)	Dr. Hazel Farrell (NSW Food Authority)
27 – 31 May 2019	CCMAS40 – 40 th Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling	Budapest, Hungary	-
7 – 12 July 2019	CAC42 – 42 nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission	Geneva, Switzerland	-
TBC - 2020	CCRVDF25 – 25 th Session of the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods	TBC	-