

08/10/2014

**European Union Comments on  
Codex Circular Letter CL 2014/5-FFP:**

**B. REQUEST FOR COMMENTS**

**5. Proposed Draft Code of Practice on the Processing of Fresh and Quick  
Frozen Raw Scallop Products (para. 61, Appendix V)**

*Mixed Competence  
Member States Vote*

The European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to submit the following comments:

**(i) General comments**

As a general comment, the EUMS would like to suggest that the scope of this draft CoP should be clarified. It is currently unclear whether or not whole scallops intended for shucking at a shore-based processing factory are included. Specific guidance is given in some sections but not in all of them.

Considering that:

- It is clearly indicated in the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs (CODEX STAN 292-2008) that it does not apply to scallops when the final product is the adductor muscle only.
- The adopted draft Standard for raw, fresh and quick frozen scallop products states that whole scallops (live, fresh or frozen in which the shell and all viscera are attached) are included in the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs (CODEX STAN 292-2008).

It is our understanding that whole scallops intended for shucking at a shore-based processing factory are covered by the standard for live and raw bivalve molluscs (CODEX STAN 292-2008) and by the code of practice for fish and fishery products (CAC/RCP 52-2003, section 7 processing of live and raw bivalve molluscs).

Thus, we would like to suggest supplementing the draft CoP with an introduction (to present the objectives) and a section 1 dedicated to the scope of this CoP.

Taking as example other CoP already available, the following text could be used as a starting point.

## **Introduction**

**This Code of practice on the processing of raw, fresh, and quick frozen scallop products has been developed in complement to the Code of practice for fish and fishery products (section 7 – processing of live and raw bivalve molluscs) and the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs to provide specific guidance on processing practices of scallop meat to meet international requirements. The application of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and “defect action point” (DAP) approaches for these products should be promoted to ensure consumer health and safety as well as scallop meat quality.**

**This Code will address the general processing steps and technical guidance to be employed by scallop meat manufacturers which could vary from country to country. Potential hazards and defects at each processing step starting from raw material reception and ending with final product distribution will also be identified. In addition, each processing step will include technical guidance for controlling the identified hazards and defects that help ensuring consumer safety and product quality.**

This Code also addresses the control of unintentional and intentional addition of freshwater during processing and the addition of phosphate solutions to enhance water retention. The example of the flow diagram (Figure X.1) will illustrate some of the common steps involved in the processing of scallop products.

The commercial harvest practices of scallops can be quite variable. For instance, shucking can occur on board **of** scallop vessels equipped for such operations or in on-~~shore~~**land** processing facilities. For long fishing voyages, scallops are shucked and washed on deck in totes with fresh saltwater or a fresh saltwater and ice solution, then drained, bagged and stored below deck with freshwater ice. The exposure time to water during washing and melting ice during storage can affect both the product quality and composition. For the product to meet international and/or regulatory standards aimed to prevent consumer fraud and unfair trade practices, scallopers and processors should have controls in place that prevent addition of freshwater to the product to the extent attainable and practical, using proper equipment and handling practices.

## **Section 1 - Scope**

**The Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs states that it does not apply to scallops when the final product is the adductor muscle only. As a results, the processing steps covered by this Code start with live scallops.**

This Code covers the preparation and handling of fresh Scallop Meat and Roe-on Scallops **both** on board **of** long haul harvesting vessels **and in on-land processing facilities**. It also covers the preparation and handling ~~at the processing facility~~ of fresh Scallop Meat or Roe-on Scallops with ~~our~~ **or** without added water and quick frozen Scallop Meat or Roe-on Scallops with or without added solution of water and phosphate.

## (ii) Specific comments

### **X.2.1.1 Marine Biotoxins**

Marine biotoxins such as paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP), amnesic shellfish poisoning (ASP) and diarrhetic shellfish poisoning (DSP) are not reasonably likely to present a **public health risk hazard** in properly processed commercial scallop adductor muscle meat. Scientific data has shown that when present, PSP, ASP and DSP toxins are concentrated in the viscera. ~~However, [D~~during periods of high toxicity, toxins ~~may can~~ accumulate **in the adductor muscle and roe at a level that could present an health risk for the consumer. hazardous level in roe on scallops and. P**preventive measures should be in place in accordance with the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Molluscs (CODEX STAN 292-2008).~~] Biotoxins may also migrate into the adductor muscle (meat) or roe if the viscera and roe are not removed while the scallop is alive. Scientific information is still limited for toxins in some scallop species therefore the hazard analysis will need to consider marine biotoxins in scallop meat as a potential hazard. This hazard will be excluded or included based upon the species, processing methods, and the available country specific scientific evidence data for toxins in that species.~~

During shucking to produce Scallop Meat, incomplete removal of the viscera and roe could occur and may introduce biotoxin and pathogen health hazards associated with whole bivalves.

#### Reasons:

The EUMS still have a concern on how the regulatory authorities will make sure that the specific scientific evidence data for toxins in the species are sufficient to make it possible to harvest scallops from areas that are not monitored. Moreover, an unusual toxic episode may occur and lead to contamination of the shellfish.

In fact if it is proven that at least for ASP toxins the contamination of adductor muscle is very unusual, the majority of the toxins are accumulated in the viscera; the same cannot be demonstrated for other toxins as PSP.

The EUMS are therefore of the opinion that the risk regarding muscle contamination is underestimated in case of high toxicity period, especially if there is no requirements for monitoring; consequently should be no distinction in the level of risk associated with scallop meat alone or with roe.

### **X.3.1.1 Scallop Landing/Deck Dump (Processing Step 1)**

Potential Hazards: Marine biotoxins

Potential Defects: Dead scallops

Technical Guidance:

- Live scallops should be collected and placed in clean storage containers without undue delay and with care to avoid contamination.
- Rough handling of live scallops should be avoided to minimize stress and injury which could lead to the death of scallops prior to processing.
- {Preventive measures such as on-board biotoxin screening methods should be used when the intent is to produce scallop meat **and/or roe-on scallops** for which marine biotoxins cannot be excluded as a hazard.}

**Reasons:** Same as described above.

The EUMS are of the opinion that there should be no distinction in the level of risk associated with scallop meat alone or with roe.

### **X.3.1.3 Shucking**

Potential Hazards: Marine biotoxins in viscera and roe; microbiological contamination

Potential Defects: Remaining viscera; remaining roe (in the case of Scallop Meat); dead scallops

Technical Guidance:

- Live scallops should be shucked as soon as possible.
- {Dead scallops observed during shucking should be discarded because once a scallop dies biotoxins, if present in the viscera ~~and roe~~, can migrate into the meat **and roe**. In addition, the quality of the meat and roe in dead whole scallops may be unacceptable because the time of death is unknown.}
- Removal of the viscera and roe in live freshly harvested scallops prevents the migration of biotoxins, if present, into the adductor muscle (meat). **If biotoxins are present in the viscera, control measures should be in place to ensure the scallops are safe for human consumption.**
- For Scallop Meat, care should be taken to ensure that the viscera and roe are completely removed.
- For Roe-on Scallop Meat, care should be taken to ensure that the viscera is removed. If biotoxins are present in the viscera, control measures should be in place to ensure the roe-on scallops are safe for human consumption (i.e. further sampling of the roe).

- Care should be taken to insure that shucking tables, containers, and knives are properly cleaned and sanitized.
- The shucked scallops should proceed immediately to the next steps to minimize their exposure to ambient temperatures above 4 °C.

**Reasons:** Same as described above.

The EUMS are of the opinion that there should be no distinction in the level of risk associated with scallop meat alone or with roe.

### **X.3.2.1 Scallop Reception**

Potential Hazards: Marine biotoxins, microbiological, chemical and physical contamination

Potential Defects: Decomposition; excess water uptake; dead or injured scallops; parasites; objectionable matter; foreign matter

Technical Guidance:

- Live scallops should be unloaded without undue delay and with care and adequately chilled to avoid contamination.
- [Whole scallops should be examined to assure they are all still alive, and any dead scallops should be discarded because once a scallop dies biotoxins, if present in the viscera and roe, can migrate into the meat. In addition, the quality of the meat and roe in dead whole scallops may be unacceptable because the time of death is unknown. (See section X.3.1.3).]
- Rough handling of live scallops should be avoided to minimize stress which could lead to the death of scallops prior to processing.
- Product specifications could include the following characteristics:
  - organoleptic characteristics such as appearance, flavour, odour, texture, etc;
  - species identification;
  - acceptable upper limit moisture content;
  - workmanship (e.g. presence of viscera/roe (in the case of adductor muscle meat only));
  - chemical contamination such as heavy metals, pesticide residues, etc.;
  - presence of visible parasites;
  - foreign matter.

- **{For the marketing of roe-on scallops, or scallop meat in case of presence of marine biotoxins in the viscera of whole scallops,** a processor should have a process in place to ensure that the toxin~~seity~~ content meets the regulatory requirements of the official agency having jurisdiction over the harvest area. This could be accomplished by adhering to a toxin monitoring programs or end product testing.}
- Scallop handlers and appropriate personnel should acquire skills in sensory and physical examination techniques to ensure incoming lots meet essential quality provisions of the Standard for Raw, Fresh and Quick Frozen Raw Scallop Products (under development).
- Appropriate procedures should be in place for scallop handlers and appropriate personnel to verify that species specifications are met. This could include but not limited to reviewing product information in commercial documentation.
- Scallops should be rejected if known to contain harmful or extraneous substances, which will not be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by normal procedures of sorting or preparation. An appropriate assessment should be carried out to determine the reason(s) for loss of control and the HACCP or DAP plan should be modified where necessary.

**Reasons:** Same as described above.

The EUMS are of the opinion that there should be no distinction in the level of risk associated with scallop meat alone or with roe.