

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE
(Fifty-fourth Session)
Nairobi, Kenya
11 – 15 March 2024

European Union Comments on

Agenda item 8:

**PROPOSED DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR FOOD HYGIENE CONTROL
MEASURES IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS FOR FOOD**
**(Prepared by the Electronic Working Group Chaired by Kenya and co-
chaired by Bolivia and Nigeria)**

CX/FH 24/54/9
(Reply to CL 2024/11-FH)

Mixed Competence
European Union Vote

In response to the request for comments, the European Union and its Member States (EUMS) would like to make the following comments.

I. General Comments

The EUMS would like to thank and congratulate Kenya, Bolivia and Nigeria for the drafting of the Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets for Food. The EUMS generally support the draft, subject to the considerations of the comments made below and the outcome of the discussions at CCFH54.

As a general comment, the EUMS propose that traditional markets should either ban the sale of bush meat entirely or, if a complete ban is not feasible, restrict the sale and handling of bush meat to specific areas within the market. This approach aims to minimize any direct or indirect contact between bush meat and other food items. The recommendation aligns with the existing guidelines under section 4.2.3, which mandate the separation of critical areas for handling raw meat, fish, and poultry. The EUMS suggest extending these requirements to ensure that bush meat is separated even from these critical areas. Rationale:

1. **Legitimization Concerns:** There is a concern that including bush meat in official documentation might unintentionally endorse its use as a food item. This recognition could hinder local authorities' attempts to limit the trade of bush meat, as it may be perceived as an official acceptance of its consumption.
2. **Health Risks:** Bush meat poses significant health risks, including the transmission of zoonotic diseases and the potential for global pandemics. Handling, distributing, and

consuming bush meat inherently carries high infection risks, not only to local consumers but also on a global scale.

3. Limited Control Measures: There are few effective measures to control the risks associated with bush meat. A complete ban or strict regulation in traditional markets is deemed necessary to mitigate these risks effectively.

In reply to the specific recommendation made by the electronic working group, the EUMS:

- consider that the title can be changed into “Guidelines for Food Hygiene Control Measures in Traditional Markets for Food” since the original title contains some duplication of wording;
- prefer that the guidelines should follow the normal structure of guidelines. The EUMS are open to a unique structure if this can be thoroughly justified;
- believe that the structure (subject to the comments on the previous question) and headings capture all the key issues to be addressed;
- if not proposed to ban, consider that some specific recommendations could be added related to the control of zoonoses from bush meat, which are often presented for sale at traditional markets;
- believe that it is the responsibility of regional committees to consider if a revision/deletion of regional Guidelines/codes of Hygienic Practice related to street food, is appropriate, once these draft Guidelines have been adopted.

II. Specific comments

- Para 2.1: the EUMS agree that markets only selling live animals are excluded from the scope of these guidelines. However, to our knowledge traditional food markets may also sell live animals which may present an important risk of contamination of food. It therefore seems relevant to include in the guidelines recommendations to avoid such contamination (e.g. separation of vending areas). This could be done in para 4.2.3.
- Section 3: the EUMS propose to delete the definition of “food vendor” and use FBO throughout the draft. Rationale: The definition of food business operator features in the general principles of hygiene and is universally understood. The inclusion of an additional definition of ‘food vendor’ is unnecessary as these are also covered by the definition of FBO.
- Para 4.1.5: the EUMS consider that it is not very clear what is meant by surveillance systems in the event of food-borne outbreaks. It might be appropriate to be more specific. It might not be needed if it only refers to the need to be able to trace back food in the case of such outbreak (covered by paragraph 5.5.4).
- Para 4.1.8: the EUMS propose the following change: “Roles and responsibilities of ~~stakeholders~~ **FBOs, Market Authorities and Competent Authorities** should be clearly defined and documented, including their legal obligations.” Rationale: the use of ‘stakeholders’ in this section could lead to a lack of clarity. The EUMS would prefer to see the stakeholders listed.

- Para 4.1.9: The EUMS consider that it is not very clear what is meant by “The government in coordination with the FBOs should be responsible for maintaining the traditional market for food.” In particular the word “maintaining” is confusing and the sentence does not seem to be related to food hygiene issues. Deletion might be considered.
- Para 4.1.10: the EUMS propose the following change: “Market authorities should be empowered to assist the competent authorities with licensing and registration through a mutually agreed mechanism **to oversee and promote food safety by FBOs** ~~to promote self-regulation of FBOs.~~” Rationale: should be clearer and specific.
- Para 4.2.2: The EUMS propose the following change: “the infrastructure should be suitable for maintenance ~~and~~ **of** sanitation activities.” Rationale: editorial.
- Para 5.1.1: the EUMS propose to replace the first sentence by: “Food handlers should be in good health without symptoms of disease before handling foods.” Rationale: it may not be practical in such an informal setting to specify that food handlers undergo daily health checks before handling food.
- Para 5.3.1: the paragraph seems a repetition paragraph 4.3.2. One of them could be deleted.
- Para 6.3.3: the EUMS propose the following change: “Surfaces that come into direct contact with food should **be made from food-grade materials**, be in sound condition, durable, and easy to clean, disinfect and maintain. Rationale: completeness.
- Para 6.4.2: the EUMS propose the following change: “Ice must **be made from potable or clean water in order** not be a source of contamination for the food in direct contact”. Rationale: useful to specify that ice should be made of potable water or clean water in order not to contaminate the food in contact.
- Para 6.5.1: The EUMS propose to delete since repeating 6.2.1.11.
- Para 6.5.1.1: The EUMS consider that this should be 6.5.1 (when the previous comments is accepted) but can in any case not be a subdivision of the current 6.5.1. Rationale: not a subparagraph of the current 6.5.1.
- Para 7.2.3 and 7.2.5: the EUMS propose to merge. Rational: Maintenance of equipment should be addressed in a single subsection.
- Para 7.3.2: the EUMS consider that this paragraph should be redrafted. Rationale: disinfection of fruit and vegetables should be reconsidered in light of potential food safety contamination from chemicals that may be used. Washing in potable water might be safer in light of the informal settings of traditional markets.
- Para 7.3.11: the EUMS propose the following change: “Food should **be reheated until piping hot but no** ~~not be re-heated~~ more than once and only the portion of the food to be served should be re-heated”. Rationale: additional recommendation relevant for food safety.
- Para 7.4.11: The EUMS wonder if “Food handlers should avoid handling money. If this is unavoidable, the food handler should wash their hands and/or change gloves before

handling food.” represents a recommendation practically applicable since it is very strict.
Does it also apply to paying devices?