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**European Community comments for the
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD ADDITIVES
AND CONTAMINANTS**

38th Session, The Netherlands, 24-28 April 2006

*Mixed Competence
Member States Vote*

Proposed draft Appendix to the Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of
Aflatoxin Contamination in Tree Nuts (CX/FAC 06/38/20)

Agenda Item 13 (a)

The European Community and its Member States (ECMS) support the development of additional measures for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Brazil nuts.

Given the toxicity of aflatoxins, their presence in Brazil nuts should be avoided as much as possible in order to protect public health. Significant levels of aflatoxins in Brazil nuts have been observed in the European Union. Consignments of Brazil nuts, which are not complying with the EU legislation on aflatoxins, are rejected or destroyed, involving economic losses.

It is therefore of major importance for the protection of public health but also to avoid economic losses, that these measures for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxin contamination in Brazil nuts are effectively applied to avoid as much as possible the presence of aflatoxins.

As regards the Code of practice the ECMS wish to make the following comment as regards § 6. It is important for the prevention of contamination that nuts are not damaged. Therefore it is appropriate to add in § 6 that pods have to be opened in such a way that damage to the nuts is avoided as much as possible. In addition a number of editorial comments are proposed. In the attached Code of Practice, the proposed modifications are highlighted.

**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF AFLATOXIN
CONTAMINATION IN TREE NUTS**

**PROPOSED DRAFT APPENDIX ON MEASURES FOR THE PREVENTION AND
REDUCTION OF AFLATOXINS CONTAMINATION IN BRAZIL NUTS**

(N08-2005)

(At step 3)

INTRODUCTION

1. The formulation and acceptance of an appendix to the Code of Practice for the Prevention and Reduction of Aflatoxin Contamination in Tree Nuts will provide uniform guidelines for producing countries in attempting to control and manage contamination of Brazil Nuts by aflatoxins. In order for these measures to be effective, it will be necessary for collectors, processors and other members of the production chain to consider the general principles established by the Code, while taking into account the fact that the Brazil nut tree (*Bertholletia excelsa*) is not cultivated. This species exists all over the Amazon Region, however the largest concentration of trees are in the Brazilian Amazon.

2. This appendix applies only to Brazil nuts, given the very specific conditions related to their collection and processing.

**RECOMMENDED PRACTICES BASED ON GOOD EXTRACTIVISTIC PRACTICES
(GEP)**

PRE-COLLECTING

3. Before the start of the crop season extractivists should clear the area under the Brazil nut trees, removing residual pods and nuts from the former crop. Pods left from the last crop season must never be mixed with pods from the present crop season, as they represent a potential focus of contamination with *Aspergillus*.

COLLECTION

4. Collection of Brazil nuts should begin as soon as most of the pods have fallen from the trees to minimize problems involving *Aspergillus* contamination. A certain delay in the collection is expected because during the crop season remaining pods may fall, posing a risk to the lives of the collectors.

POST-COLLECTION

5. The pods should be sorted to remove broken and damaged ones, and gathered in piles or preferentially in thin layers, for only a short period of time.

6. Pods should be opened as soon as possible after collection, with the nuts being removed from the pods and placed on clean flooring or plastic canvas in good condition, to avoid contact with the soil. During the opening of the pods, care should be taken to avoid damage to the nuts as much as possible. The nuts should be sorted to remove damaged, rotten, empty, and rancid ones.

7. The transportation of the nuts, from the forest to a storage facility, should occur as soon as possible, using containers that are clean, dry and protected against rain and insects, to the greatest extent possible.

8. At the location of the primary storage, nuts must be dried to a safe moisture content to prevent mould growth and possible aflatoxin contamination during storage. For this purpose nuts should be spread out in thin layers, in open air, on clean surfaces, above ground level, and sun dried and/or a natural air circulation, with regular turning. The nuts should be protected against rain and pests, such as birds, rodents and insects.

9. After drying, the nuts should be placed in a storage facility that has floors that are at least 50 cm above ground level; protected against rain and pests and allows good air circulation. For the purpose of identification and traceability nuts, in bulk or in bags, from different origins and/or days of collection, should be handled separately and kept separated until the final processing and packaging.

10. During the transportation of the nuts from the primary storage facility, in bulk or in bags, either to an intermediary location or to a processing facility, the nuts should be separated from other goods, in containers that are clean, dry, protected against humidity and free from insects and visible fungal growth. Conveyances for transporting nuts should be made of material that will permit thorough cleaning and maintenance so as not to constitute a potential source of contamination for the Brazil nuts.

11. If the nuts are stored at an intermediate location, before reaching the processing facility, the storage facility should have the following:

- (a) protection from rain and animals;
- (b) a washable and impermeable floor;
- (c) drainage for ground water;
- (d) good air circulation;
- (e) sufficient area and proper divisions to keep lots separated.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

12. National, State and local governments, as well as Non Governmental Organizations –NGOs and trade associations and cooperatives should provide basic education and update information on the hazards associated with aflatoxin contamination to the extractivists and other agents involved in the Brazil nuts production chain.

13. Personnel involved in collecting pods should be regularly trained in personal hygienic and sanitary practices that must be implemented in the pre-collection, collection, post-collection and in processing facilities throughout the crop season.