

16 September 2024

CCNFSDU44: ISDI Position on Agenda Item 9

Discussion paper on methods of assessing the sweetness of carbohydrate sources in the Standard for Follow-up Formula (CXS 156-1987)

Background CCNFSDU43 ([link](#))

ISDI is concerned by the current work on appropriate methods for assessing sweetness of carbohydrate sources in non-dairy based “Drink for young children with added nutrients or Product for young children with added nutrients or Drink for young children or Product for young children”.

Based on the answers to the eWG (eight Codex Members and five Observers), ISDI does not agree that general support from many countries of different regions of the world for the proposed method was found and considers that further discussion is needed and an additional request for expert advice from ISO should be put forward, before seeking advice from CCMAS.

ISDI continues to oppose the need for this specific provision regarding sweet taste in the standard and considers that recommending a method to assess sweet taste is unnecessary.

In addition, the appropriateness of the method and the practicality of the proposal is questionable.

- ISO5495 has not been specifically validated for the assessment of relative sweetness of a carbohydrate ingredient against lactose as a reference.
- As highlighted by the Discussion paper, this kind of sensory testing is applied in the food industry as a sensory test to choose the sample that is perceived higher in the specified sensory attribute. However, the discussion paper fails to emphasize that in the case of finished products such as products for young children, these sensory trials are 1) conducted for the finished products and 2) not intended for regulatory compliance purposes. ISDI does not see how this method can be of use for individual carbohydrate sources by controlling authorities or for trade dispute purpose.
- The Discussion Paper highlights the fact that sensory methods are applied to some **finished products** in Codex standards for fish and fishery products, which prescribe the use of [CXG 31-1999](#) (Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories) and the Standard for olive oils and olive pomace oils ([CXS 33-1981](#)), and ISDI would like to better understand the appropriateness of such indirect references in the specific context of this discussion?

- ISDI notes that in the Codex Standard on Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CXS 234-1999) a sensory panel test method is only listed once for Olive oils and olive pomace oils for the **organoleptic characteristics of the finished product** (method COI/T.20/Doc. no. 15). In the case of olive oil, the reference sensory methods and vocabulary appears to be developed by the International Olive Council (COI) and not ISO.
- There are no sensory intensity reference values for sweetness of carbohydrate sources that can be defined as an indicator of sweetness in product for young children as it is unfeasible to define an accurate sweetness reference value or selectively measure perceived sweetness of carbohydrate sources in these products due to individual variability.
- The method also ignores factors affecting the perception of sweet taste (for example the taste of other ingredients, heat treatment, matrix effects, etc.).
- The method ignores compositional requirements by relying on higher concentration levels that can 'artificially' generate differences in sweet taste that would be imperceptible in the finished product.
- Indeed perceived sweetness of a carbohydrate source dissolved in an aqueous solution does not necessarily indicate the sweetness which would be present in the final product.
- It seems difficult to imagine that a national authority would invest and organize panels with around 50 sensory experts specifically trained to control a criterion that is not linked to public health or food safety for a product with the most restrictive framework at Codex in terms of carbohydrate content.

ISDI is questioning the prioritisation of this work at CCFNFSDU and calling on CCFNFSDU to dismiss this work at Codex Alimentarius considering the added value is highly limited, the scientific basis uncertain and the practical implementation by countries highly improbable.