CHAPTER 5.4.

CRITERIA TO ASSESS THE SAFETY OF AQUATIC ANIMAL PRODUCTS COMMODITIES

In the context of this chapter the word ‘safety’ is applied only to animal health considerations for listed diseases.

Article 5.4.1.

Criteria to assess the safety of aquatic animals and aquatic animal products imported (or transited) for any purpose regardless of the disease X status of the exporting country, zone or compartment not declared free from disease X.

In all disease chapters, point 1 of Article X.X.3. of all disease-specific chapters (Sections 8-11), lists aquatic animals and aquatic animal products that can be imported (or transited) for any purpose regardless of the disease X status of the exporting traded for any purpose from a country, zone or compartment not declared free from disease X. The criteria for inclusion of aquatic animals and aquatic animal products in point 1 of Article X.X.3. are based on the absence of the pathogenic agent in the traded aquatic animals and aquatic animal products or inactivation of the pathogenic agent by treatment or processing.

The assessment of the safety of the aquatic animals and aquatic animal products using the criteria relating to treatment or processing can only be undertaken where treatments or processing are well defined. It may not be necessary to provide details of the entire treatment or process undertaken. However, the steps considered critical in the inactivation of the pathogenic agent of concern should be detailed.

It is assumed that treatment or processing (i) is done by using standardised protocols, which include the steps considered critical in the inactivation of the pathogenic agent of concern; (ii) is conducted in accordance with good manufacturing practices; and (iii) that any other steps in the treatment, processing and subsequent handling of the aquatic animal product do not jeopardise the safety of the traded aquatic animal product.

Criteria

For an aquatic animal or aquatic animal product to be considered safe for international trade under the provisions of Article X.X.3., it should comply with the following criteria:

1) Absence of pathogenic agent in the traded aquatic animal or aquatic animal product:
   a) There is strong evidence that the pathogenic agent is not present in the tissues from which the aquatic animal or aquatic animal product is derived.
   AND
   b) The water (including ice) used to process or transport the aquatic animal or aquatic animal product is not contaminated with the pathogenic agent and the processing prevents cross contamination of the aquatic animal or aquatic animal product to be traded.
   OR

2) Even if the pathogenic agent is present in, or contaminates the tissues from which the aquatic animal or aquatic animal product is derived, the treatment or processing methods to produce the aquatic animal or aquatic animal product to be traded inactivate the pathogenic agent such as:
   a) physical (e.g. temperature, drying, smoking);
   AND/OR
   b) chemical (e.g. iodine, pH, salt, smoke);
AND/OR

c) biological (e.g. fermentation).

Article 5.4.2.

Criteria to assess the safety of aquatic animals or aquatic animal products imported (or transited) for retail trade for human consumption regardless of the disease X status of the exporting country, zone or compartment not declared free from disease X

In all disease chapters, point 1 of Article X.X.12. (amphibian and fish disease-specific chapters) and Article X.X.11. (crustacean, fish and mollusc disease-specific chapters) lists aquatic animals or aquatic animal products for retail trade for human consumption. The criteria for inclusion of aquatic animals or aquatic animal products in point 1 of Article X.X.12. (amphibian and fish disease-specific chapters) and Article X.X.11. (crustacean, fish and mollusc disease-specific chapters) include consideration of the form and presentation of the product, the expected volume of waste tissues generated by the consumer and the likely presence of viable pathogenic agent in the waste.

For the purpose of this criterion retail means the selling or provision of the aquatic animals or aquatic animal products directly to the consumer with the intended purpose of human consumption. The retail pathway may also include wholesale distribution of the products provided they are not further processed by the wholesale distributor or the retailer, i.e. are not subjected to actions such as gutting, cleaning, filleting, freezing, thawing, cooking, unpacking, packing or repackaging.

It is assumed that: (i) the aquatic animals or aquatic animal products are used for human consumption only; (ii) waste may not always be handled in an appropriate manner that mitigates the introduction of the pathogenic agent; the level of risk is related to the waste disposal practices in each Member's country or territory; (iii) treatment or processing prior to importation is conducted in accordance with good manufacturing practices; Good Manufacturing Practices, and (iv) any other steps in the treatment, processing and subsequent handling of the aquatic animals or aquatic animal products prior to importation do not jeopardise the safety of the traded aquatic animals or aquatic animal products.

Criteria

For aquatic animals or aquatic animal products to be considered safe for international trade under the provisions of point 1 of Article X.X.12. (amphibian and fish disease-specific chapters) and Article X.X.11. (crustacean, fish and mollusc disease-specific chapters), it should comply with the following criteria:

1) the aquatic animal or aquatic animal product is prepared and packaged for retail trade for human consumption; AND

EITHER

2) it includes only a small amount of raw waste tissues generated by the consumer;

OR

3) the pathogenic agent is not normally found in the waste tissues generated by the consumer.