

CAC adopts Codex norms for three spices

In a significant move, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) adopted three Codex standards for black, white and green pepper, cumin and thyme paving the way for an universal agreement on identifying quality spices in various countries.

The CAC cleared these standards at its session held in Geneva recently.

The adoption of Codex standards for the three spices, it is pointed out, will help evolve a common standardisation process for their global trade and availability.

“This (Codex standard) will bring harmony to the global spice trade and ensure availability of high quality, clean and safe spices to the world,” said Union Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in a statement.

“It may be a small beginning considering the number of commodities waiting in the ranks for the standardisation process. But what is really heartening is that spices have made a definitive entry into the league of commodities having Codex standards, and India played a key role in achieving this objective,” she added.

‘Food code’

The Codex Alimentarius or “Food Code” is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Commission, also known as CAC, is the central part of the joint FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations)/WHO (World Health Organisation) Food Standards Programme. It was established by FAO and WHO to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.

The CAC move is considered a crucial endorsement of the India’s initiatives to usher in a common standard across the globe for spices trade.

The adoption of Codex standards by CAC must be read in the context of the efforts put in by New Delhi in arriving at a common code for spices trade. India conducted three sessions of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) at Kochi (2014), Goa (2015) and Chennai (2017). The Chennai session especially succeeded in achieving this consensus. Subsequently, these drafts were placed before the CAC and the member-nations adopted them by consensus.

With the adoption of Codex standards, member-nations would now have reference points and benchmarks to align their national standards for spices with Codex.

Around 2013, the need for Codex standards for spices and herbs became a subject matter of increased concern owing to the increased level of issues in spice trade. At that time, there was no Codex committee exclusively for spices and culinary herbs. The first step in the development of Codex standards was taken with the establishment of a dedicated Codex committee for spices and herbs. Not surprisingly, the adoption of Codex standards is viewed as a major victory for India.

Such expenditure needs expeditious resolution of stressed loan problem: Crisil

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