

PRESS RELEASE

KEBS approves new standards for agro-processing

Nairobi, 10th March 2022 ... The Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) has approved 28 new standards comprising adoption of Codex standard primed to manage food allergen, corrigenda on dried peaches as well as grading of meat and poultry products.

Considering that food allergen has over the years emerged as a critical safety issue of concern with population increasingly developing different allergies to food products, KEBS has approved a labelling standard KS EAS 38:2014. The standard requires the declaration of allergen status on products that commonly cause allergic reactions.

According to KEBS, the corrigenda on dried peaches, the residue values for sulphur dioxide and fermentation were reduced based on recent evidence that showed the previous levels were high hence potentially affecting the quality and safety of the product.

For several consumers, dried peaches have over the years been part of their diets and in recent years the health benefits and the importance of adding them into daily lives is getting more widely known and appreciated hence the recent review and approval of the new standards. However, nuts and dried fruits still suffer some myths related to their health benefits and nutrient content.

“By unveiling the precautionary allergen labelling on packaging, KEBS purposes to effectively regulate the forms used by various food industry which often has inconsistent and may over time diminish the value of such advisory to consumers,” said Lt Col (Rtd.) Bernard Njiraini, Managing Director, Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS).

The newly approved standards gradually purpose to familiarize consumers with food allergens as they diet and address many questions regarding their preferred food products hitching with medical and safety considerations.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has propelled us into an era where medicine is increasingly practiced via online platforms, highlighting the need for standardized food allergen ladder approaches for successful and safe introduction of food allergens,” added Njiraini asserting that the approved standards will help to improve governance, fix inconsistent usage of precautionary allergen labelling which will result in communicating risks to consumers to make informed choices when purchasing food products.

On the other hand, in a quest to standardize and uphold better animal welfare standards in poultry industrial systems, which has increasingly become a matter of global interest, KEBS has unveiled standards of handling poultry responsibly right from production, transportation and during slaughter. Kenya has a growing poultry sector and thus the welfare of chicken need to be protected” said Njiraini. This will be facilitated by the new code of practice for chicken welfare, KS 2945:2021. The Technical Committee also developed new sets of standards for grading of live chicken for both indigenous (Kienyeji) and improved indigenous chicken (KS 2774-5:2021 and KS 2774-6:2021) so as to ensure value addition and enhance trade in poultry.

The Kenya Bureau of Standards, is prevailing upon the populace to end the shocking inhumane chicken farming within the chicken production systems. These range from overfeeding, cramped living spaces to lack of exposure to natural lighting, crude transportation as means to meet the fast-growing demand for chicken meat. Unfortunately, this leads to painful lameness, overworked hearts and lungs and wounds including skin sores and poor quality poultry meat, said Esther Ngari, the KEBS Director for Standards Development and Trade. Stressing the need for understanding and implementing positive poultry welfare practices during handling and transportation, Ngari stressed that poultry supply stakeholders should commit and accept the responsibility of humane poultry handling and minimizing stress to the birds while catching, loading, transporting, unloading and processing them.

The standards will ensure that the poultry supply chain improves the well-being of poultry by reducing handling and transport stress; addressing customer expectations and regulatory oversight such as company reputation, retail audit requirements, and government regulations; and minimize mortalities; maximize yields, protect product quality and shelf life, safeguard product integrity.

Other standards approved include prerequisite programmes for transportation and storage of grains and determination of moisture content (on whole grains and milled grains) to promote practices that will enhance Food Security by enabling availability of safe food for human consumption in the country. Contamination of food can occur during transportation and storage of the food commodity or the raw materials. This standard proposes the necessary programmes to put in place during transportation and storage of food commodities in order to ensure that food contamination does not occur.

Additionally, moisture content can provide a favourable environment where yeasts and moulds can grow on suitable food material hence proliferating aflatoxin contamination in the food. "Routine and reference method of test for moisture content particularly in maize and maize products is very important to ensure that these food commodities are transported and stored at the right moisture levels to avoid this contamination from occurring in the products", said Njiraini.

#Ends

Notes to the Editor:

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About KEBS

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is a statutory body established under the Standards Act (CAP 496) of the laws of Kenya and is a member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). KEBS' mandate is to provide standardization and conformity assessment services

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