

Money, Markets, and "Get Out of Our Way" The National Health Federation at Codex Committee on Food Additives in Hong Kong

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NHF President Scott Tips at Codex Food Additives meeting in Hong Kong, preparing to speak



The National Health Federation (NHF) returned again to Asia in mid-March 2014, to attend the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) Forty-Sixth Session in Hong Kong, China. [1] Last year's CCFA meeting, held amidst the death-smog of Beijing, yielded a great victory as NHF reduced neurotoxic aluminum by 50% in many food products and completely eliminated it in others.

NHF's goal was the same this year: To eliminate more aluminum and aspartame too, particularly based on a plethora of new studies on this killer-sweetener, some of which called for "**urgent re-evaluation of aspartame**" [2] by international regulatory agencies (Such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission) and to consider re-evaluation an **urgent** matter of public health. So when the Codex Chairman parroted the Codex party line ad nauseam, "***We have full acceptance of aspartame by JECFA. [3] This meeting is not about safety. Aspartame's safety is a Global standard in a Global marketplace,***" NHF found it nearly unbearable to endure this bureaucratic ignorance.

Later, in a side admission to me by a country delegate, **NHF learned that this delegate was threatened with having his office "torched" if he spoke out against aspartame at this CCFA meeting!** Regardless of whether this would have happened or not, NHF takes its share of risks in representing you. In a room of hundreds of country and industry delegates, NHF is oftentimes your **only** Voice for health and health freedom – literally.

NHF is one of five consumer groups at Codex (**none** of the others were in attendance) and the **only** health-freedom organization able to speak, submit arguments and supporting research, and fully participate. You were well represented against International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) such as the Calorie Control Council (aspartame group),

the International Sweeteners Association (ISA) (another aspartame front group), the International Food Additives Council (aluminum industry), and others. Many INGO and country delegates have never had a nutrition course in their lives and seemingly attend for one reason: Ensuring financial success and keeping trade open among countries. The CCFA meeting was again marked by greed fueling industries' bottom line while World trade remained unfettered as most country delegates joined in a "Wall Street Wolf" frenetic elevation of commerce over health, despite Codex's stated goal of protecting the consumer via food safety.

Codex Alimentarius (Latin for "Food Code") opted to continue approving its Member States' (and, importantly, their industries') export of health-killing goods like aspartame- and aluminum-laden products, among other additives. Even additives to food additives – all at the expense of your health.

The Greedy Shipping Lanes of Codex Alimentarius

The bustling Hong Kong harbor is the quintessential image of trade and the nicer aspect of what CCFA's unspoken but clearly evident goal is: Greed-based exports, much of it unfit for human consumption, and World Trade remaining open to neatly "harmonized" countries, which, in a nutshell, means loss of national sovereignty. CCFA's hot debate swirled around the infamous Note 161, a footnote to the aspartame food-additive standards, guaranteeing every country's right to decide whether to permit the sale of toxic aspartame and at what levels. Those industries and their country supporters (U.S., Canada, Australia) who **love** aspartame view Note 161 as a barrier to their Nazi-like plans for world-market conquest. "Get rid of Note 161 and the World is *ours, ours,*" you can just hear them cackling. Since NHF supports the right of countries to choose, we opposed these cacklers.

Unfortunately, Note 161 was destined for oblivion as the European Union agreed to a compromise permitting world-wide sales of aspartame-laden products under certain, prescribed circumstances (for energy-reduced foods and foods with no added sugar only). *Even those limits were too much for greedy U.S., Australia, Canada, and its aspartame-industry concubines, who demanded no restrictions whatsoever.* The debate over Note 161 continues.

You'd have thought that the NHF delegation had walked into the wrong room and were at the UN/World Trade Conference as health and food safety were conspicuously absent. "Money, markets, stand out of the way of our moving forward" was the mantra of the more than week-long CCFA meeting.

The delegates were **only** allowed to comment on the technical necessity of food additives – not their safety. Why is aspartame technically necessary when a safe substitute could be employed? NHF President Scott Tips argued that "it's about health and safety, not World trade," to which Physical Working Group (pWG) Chairman Honigfort replied, "**We have full acceptance of aspartame by JECFA. This meeting is not about safety. Aspartame's safety is a Global standard in a Global marketplace.**"

Time and again Scott Tips argued, "We can use alternative sweeteners like stevia." But Note 161 was the key issue and the aspartame proponents were adamant that each country not have the right to decide on the sweetener issue but that we reach agreement harmonizing aspartame's use globally.

Codex's stated goal of providing safe food for consumers yielded to the gluttonous orgy of unfettered World trade. Later, when eating with scientist Taher Shoukry, Scientific Regulatory Affairs Manager at Coca Cola's Dubai branch, he reiterated the same market mantra regarding aspartame in Cola products, "Consider the marketplace." Forget health. Just reach consensus in selling Coke worldwide, will you?

NHF's Adaptability in Battle

Since Codex has considered aspartame “safe” based upon JECFA’s ignorant, outdated assessment, *NHF changed tactics fighting to lower the maximum allowable level of aspartame*. Despite repeated challenges by Scott Tips, the toxin’s defenders prevailed, relying upon JECFA’s “safety” assessment as their shield. NHF has argued at nearly every meeting that current, unbiased science from panels other than JECFA must be admitted to the Codex process.

The entire scientific process of Codex needs revamping to continually monitor health-damaging issues and admit real-time, breaking research studies for consideration. The review and implementation lag, while great for trade, is disastrous for health. One might even think Codex strategically designed to financially leverage and exploit these information-deficit lags. Even plenary-session Chairman Dr. Junshi Chen admitted that JECFA needs help getting more up-to-date studies to base their decisions upon but meantime instead of employing the precautionary principle and withdrawing aspartame and other excitotoxins like MSG from the Global marketplace, it’s full steam ahead because there is money to be made.

ISA argued that we “need to find consensus to move forward as we have had international trade problems over this The bigger issue [disregarding health notwithstanding] is not moving forward.” When Scott Tips brought up the fact that we cannot just rubber stamp these standards for the sake of expediency, “moving forward,” and keeping World trade open at the expense of health, this wisdom was sacrificed in the wake of commerce chugging along to the next port with its deadly cargo.

The bold truth is that there are untapped markets and populations to consume these poisonous additives first, and then pay into the medical system later with their loss of health, even their lives.

Sales First, Science Later

CCFA discussed acceptance of a “tentative” group of food additives like Advantame. As the debate went on, (JECFA) admitted, “We have a real need to receive updated data on these substances.” Amazingly, the head of food science is asking the delegates, many of whom have zero interest in health or research, to research. The Chairman confessed, “They are called ‘tentative specs’ because of the **lack of information** on these substances.” Sales first, science later.

NHF joined an electronic working group that will meet throughout the year to discuss sweeteners like just-mentioned Advantame, Sweetmyx, and others, and to further debate the successor to Note 161. Sweetmyx, which was recently approved for use in food and beverages, is an artificial sweetener to which PepsiCo holds the exclusive rights. Watch for variations on the theme as aspartame is now simply being rebranded as AminoSweet and other attractive names.

In the largest study of its kind, new research from Iowa State reveals aspartame’s implication in increased heart-attack and stroke rates among women, occurring with two or more diet drinks daily in normally healthy, postmenopausal women. ^[4] Anti-aspartame research studies continue to be published, yet JECFA, like the FDA, continues to put its seal of approval, based upon outdated studies, on aspartame to the detriment of its scientific reputation without considering new research. **A compelling new study is available stating the carcinogenic effects of aspartame and the urgent need for re-evaluation.** ^[5]

In the dawdling, dysfunctional Codex process, emerging research must be resubmitted to JECFA, who amazingly fails to conduct itself in real-time despite holding the power to make decisions that affect the health of the billions world-wide. After it is re-evaluated by JECFA,

aspartame will continue its dangerous launch into Global markets, ditching its bad reputation in favor of newer, brighter, and more deceptive names now smoothly hiding its toxic tendencies.

The fall of aspartame's favor and resultant decline in the diet-beverage industry's bottom line currently match the low 1995 levels. *Time Magazine* recently reported a decline of nearly 7% in sales of diet drinks. The public is getting savvy. Suppliers are running scared.

Outside the large conference room, the constant roar of traffic, horns honking, chatter of thousands is relieved by the seemingly placid water surrounding multitudes of high rises and skyscrapers, but even this is a deception; a steady stream of cargo ships and heavily laden barges head to the open waters of the China Sea as World trade glides by in the busy harbors. The CCFA Chairman smoothly steers his agenda through in our conference room at the Regal Airport Hotel; the proverbial spoon of medicine followed with a shot of humor to make the Committee feel it was all good.



NHF delegate Katherine Carroll on the day of the reading of the Report

Hong Kong is Agenda 21 in action, with its stacked cubical housing in oftentimes old, sooty skyscrapers impossibly close together – sometimes 10 people to 500 square feet per unit – their laundry hanging out open windows; homogenous, white medical-masked school children in identical uniforms, and crushing waves of people working very long hours without much to show for it except eating out, which is a national many-times-daily pastime here engaged in with the fanatical commitment of sports fans at the Superbowl. The smells of good Asian cooking, cigarettes, and sadly, sewage, tinged the hazy air. For all of this, Hong Kong is clean. SARS taught them well. The people are also kind and respectful, no pushing and shoving despite the ever-present thick crowds mincing along with their characteristic “Hong Kong shuffle.” It's just too densely populated to take a decent stride and subways so crowded it is impossible to see the signage for the stops.

What is More Disruptive to World Trade?

NHF has made a commitment to attend Codex meetings from their initial pWG launch to their landings (reading of the Final Report) unlike most of the attendees, so we attended the pWG prior to the plenary where Chairman Paul Honigfort from the U.S. Delegation used the loaded word “disruptive” many times in asking repeatedly, “What is more disruptive to international trade?” “*Disruptive.*” This is a manipulative and loaded word-choice, as if disruption should be the main concern of the delegates.

“Disruptive technology” instantly comes to mind; the power of an upstart to upset tradition and “the way things are” in a bold move to seize the market. The pWG Chairman was warning against this type of eddy that could sink the powerful old warships of the U.S.,

Canada, Australia, etc., floating dangerous goods to unsuspecting buyers, by repeatedly asking this loaded question.

Then he pleaded with the attendees as he tried to reach consensus on sweeteners, “Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water. What is more disruptive of World trade – or more importantly, our need to achieve a *spirit of compromise*?” Sweet words with all of the appeal of the mental and physical destruction wrought by the very aspartame they sought to advance. Again, he restated for the third time, “What is more disruptive to World trade?” Clearly he was anticipating a battle in which NHF would initiate the cannon fire once again as we did last year and also at the Vet Drug Residues in Food Codex Committee meeting that Paul Honigfort chaired and that NHF attended in August 2013 where Scott Tips, along with others, spoke successfully to aid in the ban of 9 out of 10 veterinary antibiotics with residues in foods.

Meantime, hundreds of Country delegates listened for hours while country and industry delegates spoke. The International Council of Beverages Associations (ICBA) said they were disappointed about trying to respond to public officials’ call to reduce calories in products, “We have a problem with natural sweeteners. We have a tool already – aspartame [for calorie reduction].” What is so deceptive, though, are the “studies” cited in Conference Room Documents (CRDs) tying calorie reduction through the use of artificial sweeteners to weight loss; junk science at its finest hour.

This is a myth and the reverse is actually true as artificial sweeteners stimulate more eating by dysregulation of our appetite-satiation mechanism. The room, however, continued focusing in the wrong direction, aiming for “energy reductions of 25%” using a dangerous carcinogen linked to brain tumors, heart attack, stroke, and a neurotoxin powerful enough to destroy neurons and rewire our brain; all of which was possible because JECFA has deemed it safe while ignoring true, recent science.

Since there are volumes of recent research demonstrating the damaging effects of aspartame in particular, it was a lesson in frustration to gloss over excitotoxins like MSG and aspartame in food. Did you know that some frozen peas given to a teething child contain added MSG? The same MSG that destroys neurons and attacks an area of the brain that has no blood-brain-barrier protection at all, the same MSG that can literally rewire a brain? Codex thinks that this additive and the same pirate aspartame are equally suitable for your children and you. Additives are big money. Watch them on the market news. Follow the projections for sales increases.

Co-Regents of Codex

There are two reigning demi-gods at Codex: The World-Trade God and the JECFA Junk-Science God, who are co-regents. Junk science is one thing but this science is expediently driven by the market and greed; a selective, biased “Wall Street Wolf” kind of science. Remember now, don’t disrupt World trade...

If you believe the stated aim and goal of Codex, then you’re lost in the fog of illusion. “China has **always** been concerned with food safety,” stated the Vice Minister of Health, Dr. Xiaohong Chen in his opening speech (China’s version of the head of the FDA). Actually, Chinese industry is known for deceptive food practices, many of which have been humiliatingly plastered over the media for years.

China is simply a microcosm of Codex Alimentarius and, therefore, a fit setting to stage this latest CCFA meeting where food additive standards are winked on through in favor of not upsetting Global financial markets. The Country member delegates and Industry representative delegates are the courtiers in this Global kingdom, most of whom are set upon

securing their own allies to support and advance their position, which is, in many cases, anti-health and anti-health freedom.

Some delegates do care deeply but must uphold their industry's or country's position. When delegates are threatened by industry and industry delegates are subject to their company's financial interests and are basically forced as paid representatives to set personal commitments to a position aside in order to keep their job, you can see that it is difficult for Codex to align itself with anything other than a debased financial "Wall Street Wolf" styled orgy where health is sacrificed as innocence lost.

NHF takes personal risk in faithfully and accurately reporting exactly what transpires in the Codex conference halls. The internet is full of Codex conspiracy-conjecture and health-freedom writers who have never once spoken out to represent you before Codex much less even attend as silent observers. **Astoundingly, there are rarely if ever reporters at Codex.** Amazingly, for all the health-freedom organizations that write, speak, and ask for your donations continually, they are not present at these meetings typically. They aren't even in the parking lot holding up a sign.... And if they were present, they would be absolutely impotent and powerless to do anything but listen.

NHF alone is able to provide this vital research that can and will change the course of aspartame's ill-history of health abuse globally, and then speak to defend you and your family. Why do you think we were told at last year's Codex meeting that NHF was hated? When queried why, "Because you cost the World money. Every time you speak, we [industries or countries] have to change something – equipment, the way we manufacture or process goods." Well, better hated than selling out to the global-greed bacchanalia we witness at these meetings, which are supposed to protect consumers.

The intellectually heady food scientists and health ministers are naïve when they place blind faith in the verdicts of the JECFA Junk-Science God's presumed logic. The aim and goal of Codex to protect the consumer and ensure food safety is nothing more than the verbal finery covering the disease-provoking process with an insatiable appetite to open World trade in the guise of helping consumers and developing countries.

Despite the latest studies showing increases in lymphoma and leukemia^[6] with aspartame ingestion, this current science is not considered unless someone brings it to JECFA's attention but then how long will it take for the cherry-picked scientific board to consider it? Last year in Beijing the discussion on aspartame was pushed forward to this year. How many years will this filibustering tactic continue while the trading World rakes in the ill-gotten gain from it? No amount of pressure seems to create any opening in the black hole of their cherished position. At some point we have to call it for what it is: A sell-out to Global Trade. An industry shill is too soft a word when nearly all of the 250 country and industry delegates present at CCFA can look the other way and allow their children or grandchildren's brains to get rewired – yes, literally – by excitotoxins like aspartame and MSG, which are overly prevalent in the food, beverage, chewing gum, and even supplement supply chain.

NHF was successful again this year in reducing and eliminating one form of aluminum food additive, finishing the work begun in Norway, and not selling out under pressure but firmly holding a steady course for health and health freedom – for you! Isn't it time you deepened the level of your commitment to your health and health freedom? Join us at <https://thenhf.com/join-us/become-a-member/> and help to underwrite research, education, and Codex attendance by your donation at <https://thenhf.com/join-us/make-a-donation/>. It is your chance to make a difference to billions in the World

[1] The NHF delegation consisted of Scott C. Tips, as the Head of Delegation and spokesman for NHF, and Katherine A. Carroll. For the writing of this article, Scott C. Tips provided the Note 161 written portions. He also wrote and submitted to CCFA the NHF's latest Conference Room Document (CRD) on aspartame based upon the research of Dr. Betty Martini, NHF's in-house aspartame expert. Other important research was provided by NHF Advisory Board Member Sayer Ji (of Green Med Info) and Jonathan Middleton (UK researcher).

[2] Morando S, Padovani M, Tibaldi E, Falcioni L, Manservigi F, Belpoggi F, "The Carcinogenic Effects of Aspartame: The Urgent Need for Regulatory Re-Evaluation," *American Journal Of Industrial Medicine* 57:383–397 (2014).

[3] The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Food Additives

[4] Vyas A, et al., "Diet drink consumption and the risk of cardiovascular events: A report from the Women's Health Initiative," *American College of Cardiology* 2014.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Schernhammer ES1, Bertrand KA, Birmann BM, Sampson L, Willett WC, Feskanich D, "Consumption of artificial sweetener- and sugar-containing soda and risk of lymphoma and leukemia in men and women," *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2012 Dec;96(6):1419-28. doi: 10.3945/ajcn.111.030833. Epub 2012 Oct 24.