

11580897 Codex Alimentarius

Maybe you have heard of [Codex Alimentarius](#), but it's quite likely that you haven't. Maybe you have an idea what it actually does, but it's more likely that you don't. As this organisation is making far-reaching decisions that affect our daily lives, it's important we all have a clear understanding of who they represent and what purpose they serve. So let's begin there.

[Codex Alimentarius](#) – Latin for 'food code' – was founded in 1963 as a response to the growing global food trade. Its intention was to set guidelines and standards designed to prevent 'unfair trade practices' and protect consumers; these guidelines and standards are then used as a template for international laws. So far, so good. However, in 2002, an independent commission looked at Codex and what it was achieving and recommended it be disbanded, as the global food trade had grown so much in those 40 years, it had expanded beyond the capabilities of the original Codex mandate, and become unwieldy. But instead what happened is the major corporations muscled in and carried on with their own route for Codex.

Currently, it acts as a body of experts who make recommendations to the 185 governments who are members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Although Codex recommendations are not, strictly speaking, legally binding – and are described as voluntary by governments and regulatory bodies, such as the USA's Food & Drug Administration (FDA), when questioned – the reality is somewhat different. For one thing, the bodies with the most influence at Codex are countries involved in the greatest volume of international trade in food – plus 'key stakeholders' represented by agri-business and biotech trade associations. Those with little clout include local, community-based growers, food producers and suppliers.

Secondly, Codex seeks to ensure 'fair trade practices' by removing trade barriers, and disputes over international trade are arbitrated by the World Trade Organization (WTO). And what does Article 3 of the WTO's Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement say? It specifically requires that countries harmonise their sanitary and phytosanitary measures with international guidelines, standards or recommendations – the guidelines in question being the Codex guidelines. Only the larger countries and 'trading blocs', such as the European Union (EU), can afford the fines levied by the WTO for non-compliance. Not quite so voluntary after all, then.

So essentially, Codex dictates European, American and Canadian law relating to the international trade of food, bypassing the democratic process; there are no elected representatives of the people involved in these decisions, since bureaucrats do all the work. Perhaps the best way to imagine Codex is as an overarching 'mothership' hovering above its country members. Sometimes, the templates for new laws are beamed down to larger, more influential Codex members, particularly the EU and US, for them to test out and fine-tune before Codex exports them internationally. Sometimes, these templates are based on existing legislation: the Codex Guideline on Vitamin and Mineral Food Supplements, for example, is modelled closely on the EU Food Supplements Directive; while a Codex task force on biotechnology, disbanded in 2004, was largely responsible for the incredibly lax regime for GM crop approvals in the USA, Brazil, China and other major GMO exporters.

Going back to what we said above, it's true that the larger, richer countries can theoretically refuse to adhere to Codex-inspired legislation by paying any fines levied by the WTO. However, the makeup of the Codex Committees makes it extremely unlikely that they would want to flaunt Codex. Committee meetings are held by Codex country members and attended by country delegates and so-called International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). INGOs overwhelmingly represent big business, i.e. the large pharmaceutical, agricultural and chemical companies; and although they can't vote, they have huge influence over the voting members in the country delegations. Not only that, but governments and INGOs collaborate widely outside Codex meetings, and often arrive at these meetings with common positions. Many INGOs are little more than fronts for Big Food, and it's not uncommon for INGO members to use a ["revolving door"](#) to move between positions at national regulators like the FDA, corporations and other government agencies or appointments.

So what overall effect does Codex have on the regulatory systems of member countries? We can observe inadequate safety testing for genetically modified (GM) foods, diluted organic standards, tolerance of potentially dangerous pesticide levels in foods, approval of large numbers of chemical food additives and irradiation and – as we shall see below – overly strict scientific substantiation requirements for health claims and flawed risk assessment methods for vitamins and minerals.

Since 2002, many new EU regulations have been coming into effect, with the stated intention to protect the consumer. Unfortunately, their end result is to support the continued growth of the big industries, while largely neglecting to pay attention to what may serve consumers or small businesses. The entire holistic health industry has been affected by these laws: homeopaths, reflexologists, herbalists, naturopaths, health food manufacturers...in fact, anyone whose profession involves people taking part in their own responsibility for their health, and healing by working with natural methods, has found that in recent years it has become harder to share products and inform customers and clients of the benefits of both products and procedures.

How Does It Affect Us?

So let's examine the European laws that are having the most drastic effects.

[The Food Supplements Directive](#) (FSD; Directive 2002/46/EC) became law in 2002. Its primary influence so far has been the creation of 'positive lists' that dictate how manufacturers may use vitamins and minerals in food supplements: only the vitamins and minerals (e.g. vitamin C, folic acid, magnesium or calcium) that appear on one positive list are legally permitted in food supplements, while another positive list limits which molecular forms of vitamins and minerals are permissible (e.g. cholecalciferol or ergocalciferol for vitamin D, or nicotinic acid or nicotinamide for niacin [vitamin B3]). If a substance is not on a positive list, it is effectively banned. The only exceptions are vitamin and mineral forms that are identical to those found in nature, which may be used in food supplements without needing to appear on a positive list.

Under the FSD, the European Commission is obliged to create EU-harmonised maximum (and minimum) permitted levels (MPLs) of vitamins and minerals allowed in food supplements. Although the Commission has not released its proposed MPLs as yet, early signs are that the methods it is using to assess the potential risk of consumption of vitamins and minerals in food supplements will make supplement doses so low as to become meaningless. The MPL for beta-carotene, for example, may be equivalent to eating a carrot, and the MPL for selenium may be the equivalent to eating a couple of Brazil nuts. Current high dosage vitamin D supplements start at 1000 IU/day, and some practitioners recommend as much as 6000 IU/day for those with vitamin D deficiency; the new MPL may be just 20 IU.

Industry research shared with the UK Government and the European Union suggests that 4000 jobs could be lost and 700 independent health retailers could close in the UK alone, when these laws come into affect. Small, specialist manufacturers would also be adversely impacted. This one is still before the EU commission and not UK law yet, but is expected to become law in 2014.

You might remember the outcry around the [Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive \(THMPD; Directive 2004/24/EC\)](#), which came into full force across the EU in April 2011. Despite all the protests, the THMPD as enacted places heavy restrictions on the sale of herbal medicines. The THMPD covers herbal medicines that meet the following criteria:

- Intended for sale to the public 'over-the-counter', e.g. in health food shops or supermarkets
- Is 'manufactured', i.e. is not a raw herb and has undergone an industrial process, such as extraction or distillation
- Is intended to treat minor, self-limiting conditions that do not require the involvement of an herbal medicine practitioner.

Herbal medicines such as these must now be approved and given a 'Traditional Herbal Registration' number by the [MHRA](#) before they can be sold in shops. It is important to realise that the THMPD licenses herbal medicinal products, rather than the herbs themselves. There are currently only 114 [herbs approved](#) as the basis for THR herbal medicines in the UK, and 134 across the entire EU. Although this number includes some of the most popular Western herbs, such as Echinacea and peppermint, it excludes the vast majority of Chinese, Ayurvedic and South American herbs. There are many reasons for this exclusion of non-European herbs from the THMPD, but the primary culprit is the Directive's definition of 'traditional': only if an herb has been sold in the EU for 15 years or more, and has been used for a total of 30 years or more worldwide, is it 'traditional' according to the THMPD. Herbs that fall outside this classification cannot be registered as herbal medicines under the THMPD, thus excluding herbs from all of the great, non-Western herbal traditions.

Furthermore, once an herb is approved, it doesn't mean everyone can sell it. If I wanted to import reishi from China and sell it and I got it approved, and you imported it from the same supplier but wanted to sell it under your brand, you would have to go through the same registration process independently. [\[A11\]](#)

To put this in context, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) alone uses over 3,000 herbs. One of the reasons for the low uptake of registrations is that it costs over £100,000 to get a product registered, which is prohibitive to small companies; the average cost for certifying and registering a TCM consisting of 5 herbs is about £444,800. In contrast, the pharmaceutical industry is consistently [one of the most profitable industries in the world](#) – indeed, until 2003, it was THE most profitable industry. The US pharmaceutical industry spent \$855 million, more than any other industry, on lobbying activities from 1998 to 2006.

Furthermore, the MHRA wants to remove all unlicensed herbal medicinal products from shelves by December this year. When the laws were passed in April 2011 there was a [grace period proposed until 2014](#), allowing companies to sell through herbs they already had in stock, but the regulators are bringing the end date forward, which means that only a handful of herbs will be legal to sell.

At present, herbal medicine practitioners in the UK can dispense unlicensed herbal medicines to their patients, following an individual consultation, thanks to a legal exemption in the [2012 Human Medicines Regulations](#). This exemption is under threat thanks to pressure from the EU and the so-called 'skeptical' movement. In May 2011, the UK government did say it would set up a [statutory register of herbal medical practitioners](#). By giving herbalists the legal status of 'authorised health-care professional', such a register would ensure that herbalists maintain their prescribing rights. However, the government have not been forthcoming on that and at the moment there are no apparent moves to make that happen.

Next, we have the [Nutrition & Health Claims Regulation \(NHCR; No. 1924/2006\)](#), which was passed in the EU with little fanfare in Dec 2012. In effect, the NHCR ensures that manufacturers cannot make unauthorised claims about the nutritional benefits or health benefits of foods. The only permissible health claims are those that have been approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and published on the [EU Register of health claims](#). Less than 250 health claims are currently approved, for just over 70 nutrients, so the list of authorised claims is limited to say the least. Non-specific claims like 'oily fish is good for you', 'antioxidant', 'probiotic' and 'superfood' are banned unless they are accompanied with an authorised 'general function' (Article 13.1) health claim. Go into a health food store and look at the products on the shelves and notice how nondescript the labels are. If a product does carry any information beyond that contained on the highly restricted approved health claims list, it's because the authorities haven't caught up with the manufacturers yet – the law is less than a year old, and it takes a very long time to enforce it with each individual company.

As someone who is reading this article, you must have a relatively good awareness of health foods already, and presumably know enough about a supplement like EPA or DHA that you will buy it anyway, or at least have the wherewithal to do your own research. But at a time when the general state of health is at an all-time low, with 1 in 2 people expected to develop cancer, and when common deficiencies like vitamin D, B12, magnesium and calcium are increasingly becoming a problem for Western cultures, it's crazy that governments are limiting the spread of quality products and information rather than supporting it.

Last but not least, we have [The EU seed law](#), which was put before the EC in May this year. Under the new law, it will immediately be illegal to grow, reproduce or trade any vegetable seed or tree that has not been tested and approved by a new "EU Plant Variety Agency", who will make a list of approved plants. Moreover, an annual fee must also be paid to the Agency to keep them on the list, and if not paid, they cannot be produced. This law is being approved by the European Commission before it can become UK law. It's created by and designed by big agricultural companies to help them protect their seed patents, but it completely overlooks small seed companies who want to share heirloom seeds. The inevitable outcome of this law if it's allowed to go ahead is that it will become illegal to grow your own food, and all crops will be non-organic and GMO.

Why Are the Laws so Unfair?

The presumed thinking behind the laws, taking a sympathetic viewpoint, is that the health food and holistic health industry has ballooned dramatically in the last couple of decades. From being a minority interest, now health food stores are groaning with products that promise to change your life, and we have stores like Wholefoods which are as big as a supermarket. More regulation is called for, and this isn't something the industry is opposed to by any means. But the framework that is being provided for registration is completely out of touch with the reality of how holistic health products and practices work, and ignores the position of small businesses, which are more often than not run by people working long hours for low profits and simply don't have the time or financial resources to jump through the minefield of hoops set out for them.

Becoming compliant with the laws is prohibitively expensive to small companies. The kind of amounts needed are small change to multi-national corporations, but to local independent businesses, the costs make it impossible to even consider registration. Plus the amount of paperwork involved and the knowledge needed to enter the registration process is practically a full-time job. For example, if you want to try getting a health claim approved for your product, just the pre-submission guidelines are [17 pages of Orwellian doublespeak](#).

Secondly, the regulations themselves are designed for pharmaceutical products. [97% of claims for botanicals are rejected](#). For example, no claims for probiotics have been approved, and currently it is illegal to both use the word “probiotics” or say anything about their benefits, despite the fact that probiotics are the most popular health supplements sold in Europe today. Many bigger health food and supplement companies who do have the budgets, are working hard to be within the law, but are finding it impossible to have their products authorised because the kind of testing that is being done just doesn’t fit these foods.

There are so many known carcinogens on the market today that have far worse effects than herbs. If this was genuinely about consumer protection, it would be much more fair to enforce the laws as they are for dangerous substances such as cigarettes and alcohol. Have warnings on the packaging, like they do in the USA, where everything carries lines such as “this claim has not been approved by the FDA,” or, “this product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.” But to outlaw everything, no matter its history of use or the amount of people who can attest to its benefits, is exceptionally harsh. Many Ayurvedic herbs and Chinese herbs have a long history of use going back hundreds or even thousands of years, and are in widespread use in these most populous of nations. How can that count for nothing, and the herb be banned outright, when modern pharmaceutical medicines, which have been created in the past few decades, are prescribed with pages and pages of warnings against potential side effects? There is no logic at work here, simply the preference of one system over another.

Why Are They Doing This?

“He Who Controls the Food Supply, Controls the World.” Henry Kissinger, 1974

My personal viewpoint is that they are in this for the same reasons that I am. My long-held belief is that food is the most powerful weapon we have, and it can be used for us or against us. When we eat a diet of natural, wholesome, powerful plant foods, we become strong, empowered, pure and aligned. We are working within our purpose and find that we can surmount all challenges. However, the opposite is also true. The more unnatural, processed, and tampered-with our food is, the more we become weak in our purpose, chaotic in our lives, unhappy, disillusioned, angry and disconnected. Those who are currently running the show have an agenda that pushes profit and power over people and the earth, and they are well aware that the worse the food and water quality that people are consuming, the easier it is for them to push their agenda onto us.

That might be a viewpoint that you choose not to go along with, you might have your own theory, or you might think the truth couldn’t possibly be that sinister. Whatever your beliefs, it’s hard for any right-thinking person to justify this level of regulation over substances which in the majority have no damaging side effects, when so many more harmful substances are permitted. At this stage, examining the reasoning behind it is less important than the immediately pressing issue, which is that we can’t let this go any further, or our freedom of choice and freedom of speech will be severely compromised, and thousands of small businesses in the UK alone will go under.

Why Haven’t I Heard About It Before?

So now you are probably thinking, if this is so important and so serious, why haven’t I heard about it before? Why isn’t it front page news? I believe it should be, which is why I have spent months researching it and preparing the information for you. But just the fact that you are not reading about it in the mainstream media, means it’s hard for many people to take it seriously. Unfortunately, the media rarely reports on these kind of issues, so it is up to us to share the information. As we said before, the laws come through Codex, who pass them down to the EU, who pass them down to the member states, so they don’t go through the normal political party process and even some politicians may be unaware of them.

I would say it’s a combination of equal parts ignorance and apathy which allows these measures to be put in place. This is one of the strategies they use to get the laws in place: if we don’t read about it in the mainstream media, we doubt its veracity, we dismiss it as a “conspiracy theory”, and we don’t pay attention to what’s really going on behind the scenes. Stories such as the birth of a royal baby or chemical weapons in a far-off land are pushed upon us as a smokescreen for

the real issues at stake, the things that are happening that will have a far bigger impact on our lives, but that they don't want us to know about.

Everyone I know is too busy these days! Everyone has too much going on. The cost of living continues to rise, meaning we have to hustle harder just to pay the bills. Since the advent of social media, we are most of us in a state of information overload, digesting more but absorbing less. Many of us simply do not have the time to process this kind of complex information; we put it to one side, thinking we will consider and research it more another time, because right now we have to get the kids fed and out the door, or we have a work deadline that means we can't possibly think about anything else, or we are having a well-earned holiday and going offline for a week. This is an understandable, but dangerous approach to take, because although the issues might not seem pressing now, while we can still buy supplements, seeds and herbs, it will seem a lot more pressing when these freedoms are taken away from us.

What Can We Do About It?

Hopefully, if you are still reading, you are now wondering what you can do to preserve our right to use traditional herbs and high strength supplements. The more I research, the more I see that the problem isn't with Codex at all. It isn't with the big corporations, who are doing what big corporations do. They are the bullies in our midst, greedy, selfish, lying, thieving bullies, and we can't expect them to change anytime soon. No, the problem doesn't lie with them, it lies with us.

To make these laws, Codex depend on people either

- Not knowing what's going on
- Only being partly informed so not aware of the seriousness of the situation
- Knowing but not being bothered, thinking it's not going to affect them
- Knowing but thinking it couldn't happen, so not taking action
- Knowing but not caring because they think the laws are just

If people do not act out these scenarios, but empower themselves with knowledge and take positive action, the bullies cannot force their agenda on us, and they become powerless. I am such a huge believer in people power! I think humans are amazing! We can do anything. We can make miracles. So it's up to us to prove the bullies wrong. I think their downfall lies in the fact that they believe that people are fundamentally dumb so it's easy to manipulate them. I believe people are fundamentally intelligent, just many have become disconnected from their intelligence through the unnatural foods and media programming they have received since childhood.

What the Codex people, like the new-agers, understand, is that we are all one. I would say that the most compelling and over-arching desire for a human, is to be at one with the tribe, in accord with a larger group of people than just the immediate family unit, and connected to the mass mind. Ideas spread through this mass mind like viruses, and once they reach a point of critical mass, they get taken on board as unquestioned fact. In this way, it's easy to make people accept a lie as an unequivocal truth, because if it's presented in a certain way, enough people will believe it, and once enough people believe it, it becomes an accepted reality, and to challenge it is taboo. At the moment, as we don't fully understand what this mass mind is and how to use it, it's being used against us to manipulate us into behaving in certain ways. But once we learn to master it, the fact that we are indeed all one (it's not just a spiritual cliché!), will be our greatest asset. I believe that's why the pressure to keep us separate is being piled on us so heavily at the moment, because those who are using it against us know that once we achieve this state of oneness, they have lost control.

If you've got to the bottom of this article, you have such power! You have facts, and knowledge, and understanding and awareness, and it's vital that you take that out into the world. Contact your MP and your MEP, yes. Sign the petitions, please (links at the bottom of the page). As far as possible, consciously choose to only spend money with companies who are proactively working for health and the environment, who don't put profits before integrity. But actually the most valuable thing you can do is just to tell everyone you meet about what is happening. Think of yourself as a wake-up worm, the awareness virus that spreads to everyone you know, so we can mobilise and turn things around.

If everyone stopped buying from the big corporations, they would have no power. If everyone contacted their elected representatives and organised protests, the full story would get out and the outcry would be enough for the government to u-turn. We can do it! Thank you for being the change. Thank you for proving them wrong, and showing them that we humans are wonderful, clever, awakened beings who can take charge of our lives with authenticity and integrity.

<http://www.katesmagicbubble.com/writing/codex-alimentarius>