

What is the AIJN Code of Practice?

The AIJN Code of Practice (CoP) for the Evaluation of Fruit and Vegetable Juices is accepted and used by the national fruit juice associations within the European Union, by national food inspections as well as by fruit processors and traders worldwide.

Code of Practice is acknowledged by the European Commission.

Furthermore the acceptance of the Code of Practice is a mandatory requirement for all participants in the European industrial self-control organisation (European Quality Control System for Juice and Nectars from Fruits and Vegetables) and also for the members of the International Raw Material Assurance Organisation (SGF/IRMA).

The Code of Practice contains:

1. Preface including the general operation of the Code
2. Comments, general and detailed, on the reference guidelines
3. Individual reference guidelines for 27 different juice varieties¹, which include Brix, acids, sugars, flavonoids, mineral contents and isotopic parameters
4. Provisional Brix and relative density for an additional 29 fruit varieties²
5. Analytical reference methods
6. Copy of the EU Fruit Juice Directive and other relevant EU legislation
7. List of additives allowed in juices and nectars
8. Overview of fruit names in 13 EU languages

Development and relevance of the AIJN Code of Practice for Fruit and Vegetable Juices in the Single Market

For the Member States of the EU, Council Directive 2001/112/EEC relating to fruit juices and certain similar products is legally binding. This directive is the constitutive codification of the original Fruit Juice Directive 75/726/EEC and its amendments. In the original Directive it was provided in Article 13 that the “analytical and microbiological characteristics of the products defined” had to be determined by the Council on a proposal from the European Commission. Requirement to determine other relevant regulations (like methods of analysis necessary for control of composition and production) was also requested but never carried out. In a later amendment of the Directive Article 13 was altered and it was left to the EU fruit juice industry to perform this task.

The umbrella association of the EU fruit and vegetable juice industry, AIJN, has accepted this task.

An global wide interdisciplinary group of recognized senior industry experts with deep technical background in several areas meet frequently to develop reference guidelines based on large analytical data profiles and develop guidelines and positions to address other relevant priority issue.

Firstly the reference guidelines for apple, grapefruit, orange and grape juice were designated. Following the addition of a commentary and the relevant analytical reference methods, these documents were approved as the Code of Practice by the AIJN General Assembly on 3 May 1990 in Bruges. The AIJN Code of Practice provides guidelines for the fruit juice industry with regard to expectations to be met for products produced and marketed by industry and trade.

¹ There are individual reference guidelines for: acerola, apple, apricot, aronia, banana, blackcurrant, carrot, coconut, cranberry, grape, grapefruit, guava, kiwi, lemon, lime, mandarin, mango, orange, passion fruit, peach, pear, pineapple, pomegranate, raspberry, sour cherry, strawberry, tomato.

² Currently: bilberry/blueberry, blackberry, boysenberry, cashew apple, cloudberry, crowberry, date, elderberry, gooseberry, lime, lingonberry, lychee, melon, papaya, plum, prune, quetsche, quince, red currant, rose hip, rowanberry, willow-thorn berry, sloe, soursop, stonessaer, sugar apple, umbu, water melon and white currant.

The Reference Guidelines set the analytical requirements. The comments assist in evaluating the analytical results obtained during the examination, with regard to meeting the minimum requirements regarding quality, authenticity and of the products. The chapter on methods of analysis lists those reference methods to be used for testing according to the Reference Guidelines.

As a whole, in accepting the Reference Guidelines set out in the AIJN Code of Practice, the fruit juice industry of the European Union undertakes:

- to meet justified minimum expectations of consumers with regard to fruit juices and fruit nectars;
- to comply with minimum requirements in the interest of a fair playing field within the Single Market.

In so doing, it also wishes to ensure that the growth of the fruit juice market as seen in recent years continues into the future in all member states without unfair restrictions.