INTERNATIONAL FOOD INFORMATION SYSTEMS
PART 1: PROCEDURES FOR NAMING FOODS AND RECORDING DATA

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It is proposed to develop An International Food Information System similar to the International Network of Feed Information Centers (INFIC) Feed System. INFIC now has Centers in 16 countries. These centers use the same International Feed Names, input forms and codes. This makes it possible to exchange information through a computer. The proposed food system is described below.

The International Food Information System is divided into two parts; the international name file and the data file. Most systems do not have a clear distinction between the names of the foods and the parameters that describe the data. The system proposed keeps these two items on separate tapes or disks. These are linked together by a 5-digit international food number. In making up reports or feed composition tables, the food group number is put in front of the 5-digit international food number. The food group can be composed of the usual five food groups with the USDA food groups or the FAO food groups as subgroups. The system is flexible, however, and will accommodate several food group systems.

The International Food Name File

The International Food Name File is composed of five facets, elements and descriptors (Table 1). Each of the elements has a tag i.e., 025, 030, etc. This makes it possible to sort the food name descriptors by these tags. The descriptors make up the International Food Names (tags 025 to 327). These descriptors are used as alphabetical codes, therefore, they are flexible and open-ended. By sorting on the element tag and the descriptors, it is possible to make up a list of food names in any order using the five facets (origin, part, process, maturity or grade). Before data are entered into the system, a food name must be in the name file. The system overcomes many difficulties because coding is open-ended and the name can be printed out for reports or food composition tables in many different ways.

The country name in this example is from France. In the system, there are also codes for language and country so the names may be translated to other languages. When names are retrieved from the name file, any name or combination of names could be selected.

Parameters to Describe the Data

Parameters to describe the data include such items as project number, sample number, laboratory number, country, region, state, county, season, brand of food, kind of package, fertilizer, amount of fertilizer applied and so on.

TABLE 1. Facets, Elements, and Descriptors which Portray the International Food Names, and Country Names

Facet No.		Element Tag		Descriptors[a]
International Food Name				
1	Original material (origin)	025	Genus (first)	*PHASEOLUS*
		030	Species (first)	*VULGARIS*
		155	Generic (common) name	BEAN
		185	Breed or kind	KIDNEY
2	Part	215		PODS
3	Process	245		RAW
4	Maturity	275		IMMATURE
5	Grade	325		—
Country Food Name				
		425	Country Food Name	Haricot main

[a] Facets and descriptors pertain only to the International Food Name (elements 025 to 325).

Analytical and Biological Parameters

The system utilizes an attribute deck as described in Table 2. There are attributes for proximate analysis; minerals; digestion coefficients and many other items. The first column of Table 2 consists of a series of numbers which lines up the data to print out information according to a format similar to that of the recent USDA publications. Column two contains a 3-digit code for attributes. Column three contains codes for animal kind.

For example, man, swine and rats are used in human nutrition. Column four gives the description of the attribute. Column five gives the unit, and column six gives the number of decimal points to carry each attribute.

TABLE 2. List of Attributes and Codes

Printing Sequence No.	Attribute No.	Animal No.	Unit No.	Attribute	Unit		Number Decimal Points for Data
0095	101	000	01	DRY MATTER		%	1
0340	109	000	01	PROTEIN		%	1
0370	109D	490	02	MAN	DIG COEF	%	0
0385	109D	700	02	RATS	DIG COEF	%	0
0460	111	840	03	SWINE	DIG PROT	%	1
2295	530	000	01	CALCIUM		%	2
2375	534	000	01	PHOSPHORUS		%	2
2705	763	000	01	ALANINE		%	2

Conversion Codes

Conversion codes have been developed to convert measures in the English system to the metric system, such as ounces to g/100g. Conversion codes have also been developed to convert the metric system to servings such as cups, teaspoons, and so on.

Input of Information

Two types of forms are used for input. One is a source form which is distributed to laboratories who wish to contribute to a central center such as the 20 countries working with FAO and the World Health Organization on the Food Contaminant Project. Laboratories fill out the source form without codes. It is then sent to a central center where it is coded and processed.

The second input forms are called input formats which will handle 40 samples per form. The formats are used for filling in informtion as well as for coding. This input form is used at a central center to take unpublished information from laboratories or from the literature.

The third type of input does not use a format. The International Food Number may be inserted, usually on the left hand side of a published table