

codex alimentarius commission E



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

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ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS

This document presents an update of the information provided in CX/FICS 08/17/3.

FAO/WHO GLOBAL TOOLS

1. The FAO 'Risk-based food inspection manual' which introduced a risk-based inspection approach and procedures for primary production operations and food processing establishments is now available in French and Spanish, in addition to the original English version.
2. 'Guidelines for risk-based fish inspection' which provides technical information to support fish inspection systems has been published in English, French and Spanish. This publication is a separate chapter of the above mentioned 'Risk-based food inspection manual' to cover fisheries products. As another chapter of the above mentioned "food inspection" series, guidelines for imported food control are under preparation. They are expected to be field tested in 2010, and possibly published in late 2010 or early 2011.
3. FAO is also planning to improve tools and training materials on sampling in the context of contaminant monitoring and food safety surveillance programmes. The Codex Alimentarius provides guidance in this area and is about to embark on the revision of its guidance on the establishment and application of microbiological criteria in foods. However the practical implementation at country level continues to present problems particularly in developing countries. FAO is working to ensure that these countries have an appropriate understanding of how to establish, apply and interpret sampling plans and their output in a manner that will provide both consumer protection and facilitate market access and trade. A web-based tool is being developed to assist countries in establishing appropriate sampling design in their surveillance/ monitoring programmes according to the objectives of the programme. Work on the further improvement of this tool and the development and implementation of programmes of training on sampling in the context of food safety programmes is planned for 2010-2011.
4. In addition, FAO and WHO are currently developing a web based decision support tool to assess and compare the impact of different measures implemented on the control of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in chicken meat. This tool is aimed at supporting the implementation of the guidelines under development by Codex on the control of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in chicken meat. This would be achieved by (i) providing countries with a mechanism of demonstrating the impact of a range of measures and (ii) enabling them to select measures which are most appropriate to their production/processing system, and still provide the necessary level of control and public health protection.
5. Many member states have requested FAO and WHO to provide technical assistance in developing food safety emergency response plans. Reinforcing preparedness, recognizing and responding rapidly to food safety emergencies are key elements of FAO and WHO's food safety emergency related programmes, namely Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety (EMPRES Food Safety) and the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN). FAO/WHO have therefore developed a guidance framework, soon to be published, which documents the best practices concerning the process of developing such plans or what

they should contain. It aims at assisting countries in formulating and implementing national food safety emergency response plans.

PROPOSED FAO/WHO GLOBAL MEETING ON FOOD SAFETY EMERGENCIES:

6. FAO/WHO have proposed holding a Global Meeting on International Food Safety Emergencies (Early warning, emergency prevention and rapid response) for senior decision makers in government agencies in charge of food safety, in September 2010.

7. Its objectives are to:

- Enhance awareness of the impact of international food safety emergencies on public health, economic development and food security
- Share information on INFOSAN, EMPRES Food Safety for the early identification of food safety threats in the food chain, the prevention and control of international food safety emergencies- their efficiency and how to improve them
- Discuss the challenges of identifying emerging hazards and risks, and the needs of national authorities for implementing effective systems for early warning, emergency prevention and rapid response
- Identify challenges in responding to international food safety emergencies and identify capacities required at national and international level to best address these
- Gain recommendations from member countries for FAO/WHO on potential priority areas for technical assistance, based on the identified needs (early warning, emergency prevention, emergency response and capacity building).

FAO REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PROJECTS

Asia

(i) *Enhancing food safety by strengthening food inspection systems in ASEAN countries*

8. The FAO project GCP/RAS/222/223/JPN aimed at “enhancing food safety by strengthening food inspection systems in ASEAN countries” has been in progress since 2007. The objectives of the project is to strengthen food inspection systems by enabling ASEAN countries to recognize and comply with international standards and guideline on food safety, with a view to enhancing public health protection from food borne diseases, facilitation of food trade and increasing competitiveness in the international market.

9. Two regional workshops have been organized in 2009: on food import and export inspection and certification (Bangkok, March 2009) and on good practices and HACCP (Singapore, October 2009). Two training sessions have been completed in 2009: a training session on sampling and analysis for food inspection (Lao, August 2009) and a training session on "Risk-based Food Inspection" (Manila, October 2009).

10. A 4th regional workshop will be organized in march 2010 on “SPS measures and their impact on food inspection and certification, including managerial aspects”, to reflect the need to enable the ASEAN free trade zone to also benefit food trade, by overcoming food safety and sanitary hurdles, while recognizing the expectation of some member countries to have guidance in the management of inspections and certifications at different administrative levels.

11. The final regional workshop will be organized in 2011 to implement final strategies for the region. High-level food safety officers are expected to attend it.

12. The final regional training course will be organized in 2010 on import and export inspection and certification, with regards of the needs for the region to facilitate regional and international food trade.

13. To prevent duplication with existing papers, namely CCFICS documents, the number of planed guidance documents will be reduced from 6 to 3. The topics will be: “harmonized procedures for sampling and testing”, “Risk categorization applicable to ASEAN countries” and “Practical inspection manual for catering establishments including street foods”.

(ii) *Improving food safety, quality and food control in Bangladesh*

14. The project “Improving Food Safety, Quality and Food Control in Bangladesh” commenced in 2009 and has a budget of over \$US 10 million. The project is being implemented jointly by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh) and the FAO, and is funded by the European Commission. The project team will work closely with the World Health Organization, and other agencies involved in food safety initiatives in Bangladesh such as UNIDO.

15. The project will contribute to a safer food supply in Bangladesh, by strengthening the national food control system, and increasing awareness of food safety and quality matters among food producers, food processors, the food service sector, and Bangladeshi consumers.

(iii) *“Capacity building for the food inspection system in Vietnam”, under the One UN-programme in Vietnam*

16. Implementation of the project entitled “Capacity building for the food inspection system in Vietnam” has begun in January 2010. The project has been developed within the framework of the One-UN programme in Vietnam and has a project life of 116 months. It is being implemented jointly by the Vietnam Food Administration and the FAO. The project aims to assist the Government of Vietnam to review, revise and develop inspection regulations as necessary and to strengthen programmes of food inspection in the country.

(iv) *“Strengthening Vietnamese Capacities for Trade- Improving safety and quality of fresh vegetables through the value chain approach” in Vietnam*

17. The project “Strengthening Vietnamese Capacities for Trade- Improving safety and quality of fresh vegetables through the value chain approach” was approved in 2009 and will become operational in the first quarter of 2010. The project is expected to run for 24 months and is jointly implemented by the Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute in Hanoi and the FAO.

18. The project's objective is to enhance the SPS capacity of Vietnamese vegetable industry through an integrated training programme that addresses the critical capacity building needs across the value chain from farm to the retail sector. The project will be implemented in three carefully selected regions to increase the production of selected vegetables that offer significant market potential both in terms of volume and value. The successful implementation of the project will have significant impact on other parts of Vietnam's horticulture sector and enable the country to realise its goal of significantly increasing the volume and value of vegetable exports.

(v) *Strengthening the food testing laboratory in Bhutan*

19. Through the FAO Multi-Donor Partnership Programme (FMPP), technical assistance was provided to Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Agency to improve coordination between the food inspection service and the food laboratory in order to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the implementation of food safety surveillance programmes.

(vi) *Improving hygiene practices in the production of fish sauce in Cambodia and Myanmar*

20. Through the FMPP programme, FAO was able to assist Cambodia and Myanmar to assess practices within their fish sauce sectors and to advise on codes of practice that would minimize the levels of histamine contamination. This technical assistance has enabled countries to both participate effectively in discussions within the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products to establish a standard for fish sauce and to prepare themselves for enforcing the internationally-agreed limit once it is set.

(vii) *Training on the application of the food safety risk analysis framework*

21. Under the NZ-aid funded project “Improving food safety and its management in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam” a series of national and regional level workshops with held to enable food safety officials to apply the risk analysis framework to better understand and make decisions on food safety issues. The training brought together technical/ scientific staff from a number of Ministries and Departments as well as from universities and research stations and focused on providing skills in data mining, risk profiling and risk ranking. Workshops were also held with senior risk managers to improve their awareness of risk analysis

and its relevance to addressing their priority problems. The sub-regional project was completed in November 2009.

Pacific

22. FAO and WHO held a joint training course on risk based food inspection and certification in Wellington, New Zealand from 30 November – 3 December 2009. It was attended by delegates from Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, with resources persons from WHO, FAO, FSANZ, AQUIS, NZFSA, CFIA.

23. FAO provided technical assistance to review the Food inspection system in Fiji in October 2009. The purpose of the review was to identify areas in the food inspection system that may require strengthening/amendments and based on this recommend appropriate actions including capacity building that will increase the effectiveness of the food inspection system in protecting consumers.

Latin America and Caribbean

24. FAO and the General Management of Environmental Health in Peru (DIGESA) organized in Lima, Peru, in June 2009, and in collaboration with ILSI South Andean, an Andean Regional Workshop on “Food Inspection System based on Risk”. It convoked the inspectors of different areas of Peru and the representatives of the agencies responsible for Inspection Systems of the other Andean countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Colombia, with a total of 80 participants. The main objectives of the Workshop were a) to provide food inspectors practical guidelines in order to realize inspections based in risk with a modern approach, b) determinate the sequence of necessary steps required to conduct an inspection to any establishment of primary production or food producers, regardless of which specific product is elaborated or handled in the establishment being inspected, c) to guide food inspection to a process based in risk and not in the product, d) evaluate and detect needs of the Inspection Systems of the Andean Region.

25. FAO has also developed an E – Learning course in “Control Systems of Food Safety” (SCIA). The course of 13 weeks had a call of 207 participants from countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and focuses on the role of Food Control System, at a regulatory level and on its implementation to guarantee food safety and quality during the stages of production, handling, storage, processing and distribution.

Europe

Azerbaijan - TCP/AZE/3101 "Food safety capacity building in Azerbaijan"

26. This project includes a component on strengthening official food inspection activities and increasing knowledge of good hygiene practices and the HACCP system among public and private sectors. Project activities will continue through 2010 and will include a more in-depth review of existing food inspection capacity, and implement improvements to strengthen the risk-based approach for inspection, and consolidate inspection procedures to assess and support implementation of GHP and HACCP. Specific training sessions on GHP and HACCP will be implemented to increase their application by food business operators, and sound knowledge among the inspection services. National guidelines and improved procedures will be documented and published as a basis for further improvement of the official inspection services and food businesses compliance rates. Target beneficiaries include relevant units within the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Economic Development.

Africa

(i) Strengthening of the National Codex Committee and Food Control System in Angola

27. FAO is implementing the project TCP/ANG/3104 entitled “Renforcement du Comité national pour le Codex Alimentarius et du système de contrôle des aliments”. While an important part of activities are focusing on reviewing the procedures of work of the National Codex Committee and review of food safety regulations and well as the food control system as a whole, training will be provided to the management staff of the food inspection services on how to use risk analysis as a decision tool to develop risk based strategies for inspection. Inspection procedures have been reviewed in line with the CCFICS guidelines, and specific training will be provided on imported food control, given the very important proportion of food products that are actually imported. The project was initiated in July 2008 for 2.5 years.

(ii) Support the setting up of a National Codex Committee and the Strengthening of the Codex Contact Point in Guinea

28. FAO is implementing the project TCP/GUI/3202 entitled “Appui à la création du Comité national du Codex Alimentarius et au renforcement du Service central de liaison du Codex Alimentarius”. While the initial project activities aimed at setting up a national codex committee and defining its procedures of work, as well as strengthening the participation of Guinea in CAC's work, policy advice and training have been and will be provided to the management staff of the food control system on how to use risk analysis as a decision tool to develop risk based strategies for inspection. Inspection procedures will also be reviewed in line with the CCFICS guidelines and training will be provided to inspection staff. Activities started at the end of 2008 and will continue for 2 years.

(iii) Strengthening the capacities of the National Codex Committee in Côte d'Ivoire

29. FAO is implementing the project TCP/IVC/3201 entitled “Renforcement des capacités du Comité national du Codex Alimentarius”. In addition to the main project activities focusing on strengthening the capacities of the national codex committee members and proposing an organizational setting for the committee, as well as strengthening the participation of Cote d'Ivoire in the CAC's work, policy advice and training will be provided to the management staff of the food control system on how to use risk analysis as a decision tool to develop risk based strategies for inspection. Inspection procedures will also be reviewed in line with the CCFICS guidelines and specific training in inspection, focusing the priorities identified jointly with the national authorities, will be implemented. Activities have started in January 2009, and will continue over 2010.

(iv) Risk-based food inspection trainings in Tanzania under “One UN Joint Programme”

30. FAO is implementing a series of training courses focusing on the modern framework of risk-based food inspection in Tanzania under the umbrella of One UN Joint Programme objective 1 (JP1), component 3. Two training or trainers workshops on food inspection were held in 2009, targeting senior food inspectors, disseminating the concepts of risk-based inspection framework. In addition a national workshop on “Codex Standards and Priorities for Development and Application of Food Safety and Quality Standards” was held in November 2009. The workshop was jointly organized by the Tanzania Bureau of Standards and the Sokoine University of Agriculture. The main objectives of the workshop were to promote familiarity and understanding of major Codex food safety and quality standards among national food safety professionals and to facilitate the identification of priority areas for standards development and application

(v) Strengthening sanitary and phytosanitary control in Cape Verde

31. FAO is currently implementing this 18 months project in Cape Verde (TCP/CVI/3203) with the aim of revising and updating the legislation as well as strengthening the capabilities of implementing a risk based approach to controls in the food safety, animal and plant health sectors. Training of managerial staff has been implemented in November 2009 and more specific training of food inspectors is scheduled in April 2010.

THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITIES NETWORK (INFOSAN)

32. The INFOSAN is now a joint FAO/WHO initiative, with the secretariat in WHO. The network currently includes the participation of 177 member states. The aim of the network is to promote the rapid exchange of information during food safety related events, share information on important food safety related issues of global interest, promote partnership and collaboration between countries, and help countries strengthen their capacity to manage food safety emergencies. Some of the key areas for development in 2010 include strengthening the collaboration of Member States to encourage communication and technical exchange of risk assessments and best practices, and enhancing linkages with other relevant organizations and networks. INFOSAN is also an important partner with FAO's EMPRES Food Safety programme.