

ASSURING FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY:

GUIDELINES FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

Lesson 3

By:

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INTRODUCTION

- **Why Effective national food control systems ?**
- essential to protect the health and safety of domestic consumers
- critical in enabling countries to assure the safety and quality of their foods entering international trade
- ensure that imported foods conform to national requirements
- global environment for food trade places considerable obligations on both importing and exporting countries to strengthen their food control systems and to implement and enforce risk-based food control strategies

Factors Undermining Effective Food Control:

- fragmented legislation
- multiple jurisdictions
- weaknesses in surveillance, monitoring and enforcement.

Our Obligation is to Provide:

Advice to national authorities on strategies to strengthen food control systems to:

- Protect public health**
- prevent fraud and deception**
- avoid food adulteration and**
- facilitate trade**

Benefiting Stakeholders are:

- consumer groups
- industry and trade organizations
- farmer groups and
- any other groups or associations that influence national policy in this area

FAO-WHO Recommends For Developing Countries to :

- Plan
 - Organize
 - Implement
- 
- their national
food control
programmes

Why Develop Food standards and regulations, and the strengthen Food Control Infrastructure at the Country Level?

- Globalization of the food supply chain
- Increasing importance of the **Codex Alimentarius Commission**
- Obligations emerging from the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement

CHALLENGES FOR FOOD CONTROL

AUTHORITIES INCLUDE:

- Increasing burden of foodborne illness & new and emerging foodborne hazards;
- Rapidly changing technologies in food production, processing and marketing;
- Developing science-based food control systems with a focus on consumer protection;
- International food trade & need for harmonization of food safety and quality standards;
- Changes in lifestyles, including rapid urbanization;
- Growing consumer awareness of food safety and quality issues
- increasing demand for better information.

REALITY

Globally, the incidence of foodborne diseases is increasing and international food trade is disrupted by frequent disputes over food safety and quality requirements

REALITY

It has never been more important for developing countries to implement and enforce a food control system based on the modern concept of risk assessment.

Food Safety, Quality and Consumer Protection

- **Food safety** = All those hazards, whether chronic or acute, that may make food injurious to the health of the consumer. It is not negotiable
- **Food Quality** = All other attributes that influence a product's value to the consumer.

Negative Aspects of Food Quality

- Spoilage
- contamination with filth
- Discoloration
- off-odours

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Positive Aspects of Food Quality

- The origin
- Colour
- Flavour
- Texture
- Processing method of the food.

Definition of Food control

....a mandatory regulatory activity of enforcement by national or local authorities to provide consumer protection and ensure that all foods during production, handling, storage, processing, and distribution are safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption; conform to safety and quality requirements; and are honestly and accurately labelled as prescribed by law.

Factors Contributing to Potential Hazards in Foods

- Improper agricultural practices
- Poor hygiene at all stages of the food chain
- Lack of preventive controls in food processing and preparation operations
- Misuse of chemicals
- Contaminated raw materials, ingredients and water
- Inadequate or improper storage, etc.

Specific concerns about food hazards are Focused on the followings:-

- Microbiological hazards;
- Pesticide residues;
- Misuse of food additives;
- Chemical contaminants, including biological toxins; and
- Adulteration

Additional Areas of Focus:-

- genetically modified organisms
- Allergens
- veterinary drugs residues
- growth promoting hormones used in the production of animal products

Expectations of Consumers!

Consumers expect protection from hazards occurring along the entire food chain, from primary producer through consumer (often described as **the *farm-to-table continuum***). Protection will only occur if all sectors in the chain operate in an integrated way, and food control systems address all stages of this chain

Thus an ideal food control system should include effective enforcement of mandatory requirements, along with training and education, community outreach programmes and promotion of voluntary compliance. The introduction of preventive approaches such as the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System (HACCP), have resulted in industry taking greater responsibility for and control of food safety risks.

Elements of a National Food Control System (5 Components)

- Food Laws and Regulations
- Food Control Management
- Inspection Services
- Laboratory Services: Food Monitoring and Epidemiological Data
- Information, Education, Communication and Training

Principal Objectives of National Food Control Systems

- Protecting public health by reducing the risk of foodborne illness;
- Protecting consumers from unsanitary, unwholesome, mislabelled or adulterated food; and
- Contributing to economic development by maintaining consumer confidence in the food system and providing a sound regulatory foundation for domestic and international trade in foods and Foodstuffs and Feedstuffs.

1. Food Law and Regulations

The development of relevant and enforceable food laws and regulations is an essential component of a modern food control system. Many countries have **inadequate food legislation** and this will impact on the effectiveness of all food control activities carried out in the country.

2. Food Control Management

Effective food control systems require policy and operational coordination at the national level. It necessitates the establishment of a leadership function and administrative structures with clearly defined accountability for issues such as:

- 1. The development and implementation of an integrated national food control strategy**
- 2. Operation of a national food control programme**
- 3. Securing funds and allocating resources**
- 4. Setting standards and regulations**
- 5. participation in international food control related activities**
- 6. Developing emergency response procedures**
- 7. Carrying out risk analysis; etc.**

3. Inspection Services

The administration and implementation of food laws require a **qualified, trained, efficient** and **honest** food **inspection service**. The food inspector is the key functionary who has day-to-day contact with the food industry, trade and often the public. The reputation and integrity of the food control system depends, to a very large extent, on their integrity and skill.

Responsibilities of the Inspection Services

1. Inspecting premises and processes for compliance with hygienic and other requirements of standards and regulations
2. Evaluating HACCP plans and their implementation
3. Sampling food during harvest, processing, storage, transport, or sale to establish compliance, to contribute data for risk assessments and to identify offenders;
4. Recognizing different forms of food decomposition by organoleptic assessment
5. Identifying food which is unfit for human consumption; or food which is otherwise deceptively sold to the consumer; and taking the necessary remedial action;
6. Recognizing, collecting and transmitting evidence when breaches of law occur, and appearing in court to assist prosecution
7. Encouraging voluntary compliance in particular by means of quality assurance procedures
8. Carrying out inspection, sampling and certification of food for import/export inspection purposes when so required
9. In establishments working under safety assurance programmes such as HACCP, conduct
 - (HACCP = Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System)

4. Laboratory Services: Food Monitoring and Epidemiological Data

1. Laboratories are an **essential component** of a food control system.
2. The establishment of laboratories requires **considerable capital investment** and they are expensive to maintain and operate.
3. Therefore **careful planning** is necessary to achieve optimum results.
4. The **number and location of the laboratories** should be determined in relation to the objectives of the system and the volume of work.
5. If more than one laboratory is required, consideration should be given to apportioning the analytical work to achieve the most effective coverage of the food analyses to be performed and also **to having a central reference laboratory equipped for sophisticated and reference analyses** i.e. a Center of Excellence

5. Information, Education, Communication and Training

- a) An increasingly important role for food control systems is the delivery of information, education and advice to stakeholders across the farm-to-table continuum. These activities include:
 - b) The provision of balanced factual information to consumers
 - c) The provision of information packages and educational programmes for key officials and workers in the food industry
 - d) Development of train-the-trainer programmes
 - e) Provision of **reference literature** to extension workers in the agriculture and health sectors.

LAST BUT VERY IMPORTANT

1. Food control agencies should address the specific training needs of their food inspectors and laboratory analysts as a **high priority**.
2. These activities provide an important means of building food control expertise and skills in all interested parties, and thereby serve an essential **preventive function**.

THANKS FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION !

MERÇI POUR VOTRE ATTENTION !

VIELEN DANK FÜR IHRE AUFMERKSAMKEIT !

ASANA SANTE !