Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Workshop Summary Report

Training of Trainers on Risk Categorization for Effective Risk-based Imported Food Control in the Philippines

15–17 May 2018

Quezon City, Philippines

Conducted under the FAO SP4 One Health project

Strengthening national capacity for risk-based food import control within a One Health framework

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Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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Abstract

The concept of risk categorization has been employed in the Philippines, particularly within the plant quarantine system at border controls. However, such risk categorization does not cover food safety issues such as pesticide residues and foodborne pathogen detections. With the aim of having a holistic approach to risk categorization for livestock products, fisheries, forestry products and processed food, the first training of food safety authorities and relevant agencies for imported food control – for the purpose of exercising risk categorization processes – was organized under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations SP4 One Health project "Strengthening national capacity for risk-based food import control within a One Health framework". Over 70 participants attended the three-day workshop with the objective of becoming effective at applying risk categorization for all food items imported into the Philippines, and identifying risk categorization priorities. Through technical presentations, examples of good practices in other countries, and hands-on exercises on food import scenarios, participants obtained knowledge on the objectives and principles of risk categorization. They also developed their capacity in communicating risk categorization results with non-food safety partner agencies. The workshop enabled participants to discuss which approach was best suited to the Philippines. To advance risk categorization for effective imported food control in the country, participants agreed to adopt potential food safety risks and country of origin as risk categorization priorities, and identified action points to mainstream risk categorization for imported food control in the country.

Keywords: food safety; import controls; inspection; capacity building; One Health; Philippines; food standards; foodborne diseases

Contents

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations and acronyms

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Overview

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture – conducted the "Training of Trainers on Risk Categorization for Effective Risk-based Imported Food Control in the Philippines" from 15 to 17 May 2018 in Quezon City, Philippines. There were 73 participants, mainly food safety and quarantine officers from different agencies of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Drugs Administration, Bureau of Customs, including representatives from the National Codex Organization, and World Health Organization Philippines. The workshop provided participants with an understanding of the principles of risk categorization through various examples from other countries and hands-on exercises. Participants have shared their commitment to further strengthening risk-based imported food control in the Philippines.

2. Background

According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), food products have been the third most valuable commodity group traded internationally, and a significant proportion of food supplies of many countries, including developing countries, are imported. Over the last decades, WTO has set two international agreements that define the framework for control measures to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair trade practices. The agreements on sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical barriers to trade recognize the international food standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius as significant food safety reference documents for WTO member countries to follow.

In 2017, the Philippines received technical assistance from the FAO SP4 One Health project "Strengthening national capacity for risk-based food import control within a One Health framework". The concept of risk categorization has been employed in the Philippines, particularly within the plant quarantine system at border controls. However, such risk categorization does not cover food safety issues such as pesticide residues and foodborne pathogen detections. In addition, there is no holistic approach used at borders for the control of imported foods, including livestock products, fisheries and forestry products, and processed foods. The findings in national situation report[1] indicate that one area that needs improvement is the limited capacity in risk management, and one of the recommended actions is to develop the capacity of government personnel, especially those working in food safety regulatory agencies (FSRAs), in risk profiling, policy and risk categorization. Food safety authorities and relevant agencies proposed that a workshop on risk categorization processes be provided.

3. Scope and objectives

The objective of the training was for food safety officials to become effective at applying risk categorization for all food items imported into the Philippines so that a common list of priority food items subjected to food inspections could be developed and updated regularly.
Specific objectives of the training were for participants to:

- be equipped with real food safety risk categorization examples from other countries;
- conduct hands-on exercises of the food safety risk categorization process; and
- obtain capacity in communicating risk categorization results with non-food safety partner agencies.

4. Participants

Over 70 participants – mainly quarantine, food safety and customs officers from the different agencies of the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Customs, and Food and Drugs Administration – attended

[1] **FAO**. 2018. *Ensuring the safety of imported food: Current approaches for imported food control in Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka*. Bangkok, FAO. (available at http://www.fao.org/3/ca0286en/CA0286EN.pdf)

the three-day workshop. Representatives from the National Codex Organization and WHO Philippines participated in the workshop.

- Department of Agriculture
  - Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards
  - Bureau of Animal Industry
  - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
  - Bureau of Plant Industry
  - National Meat Inspection Service
  - National Dairy Authority
  - National Food Authority Food Development Center
  - Office of Assistant Secretary for Regulations
  - Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning
  - Policy Research Service
  - Philippine Coconut Authority
  - Sugar Regulatory Administration
- Bureau of Customs
- Food and Drugs Administration
- National Codex Organization
- World Health Organization Philippine Country Office

5. Workshop discussions

Day 1

Dr Marvin Vicente, National Codex Organization Technical Committee Chairperson, welcomed participants, and highlighted the importance of the training workshop towards effective risk-based imported food control in the Philippines, using Codex Alimentarius standards to form the overarching framework vis-à-vis implementation of the Food Safety Act. Ms Tamara Jean Palis-Duran, Assistant FAO Representative (Programme), FAO Philippines echoed the recent statement of FAO's Director-General on the need for more stringent imported food controls to protect consumers. She also emphasized FAO's support in assisting national government counterparts to have increased technical capacities on risk-based food import controls, food safety and quality, SPS measures, among others. FAO has also long recognized and promoted the fostering of interagency collaborations through the One Health Initiative.

Mr Rafael Umbrero, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, FAO Philippines, presented the objectives of the training workshop, which are to: 1) provide examples of food safety risk categorization form other countries; 2) understand the principles, approach, methodologies and applications of risk categorization for imported food control; 3) conduct hands-on training exercises; and 4) increase capacity in communicating the risk categorization results with non-food safety partner agencies.

Dr Masami Takeuchi, Food Safety Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP), discussed the principles of risk categorization, highlighting that it is a tool for risk management, systematic prioritization, and communication that requires a transparent and consistent process. Four examples of good risk categorization from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Singapore were provided, and their similarities and differences were discussed. These were used as point of discussions as to which approaches would be most applicable in the Philippines.

To facilitate better understanding on risk categorization principles and methods, hands-on exercises were given to participants who divided into seven groups. Hypothetical food import scenarios included information on country of origin; background of country of origin, including risk factors, products and commodities; and importation volume. Each group was provided with instructions on how to formulate risk categorization objectives, priorities, a scoring system, and management actions.

Day 2

The groups presented their outputs to the plenary, and allowed other groups to comment and critique their works, which helped stimulate the discussion on what would work best in the Philippines, considering the country's actual situation at borders. The discussion also highlighted the need for strong communication and collaboration among different agencies at border checkpoints.

During the discussion, it was noted that the objectives of risk categorization should be clear and measurable. Dr Takeuchi also clarified that risk categorization by itself does not ensure compliance by importers, but also requires verification, validation, rejections, and looking at reports. Compliance is ensured by informing importers of the necessary regulatory requirements resulting from risk categorization. This highlights the importance of publicly available information on the necessary requirements for food importation. Regarding the scoring system, it was noted that it is not a quantitative rating, and only denotes a risk category hierarchy; it does, however, serve as a qualitative rating for statistical purposes in risk categorization. Furthermore, participants were advised to be careful of the range of scores to avoid subjective or "gut feeling" decisions.

Participants also stated that risk assessment results should be the basis of risk categorization priorities, although risk assessment takes time to complete. In the absence of risk assessment results, risk categorization becomes a useful tool for priority ranking and identifying gaps and needs for a risk assessment.

Some participants also noted the issue of mis-declarations made by importers and exporters. It was suggested that based on experiences from other countries, it is important for government to help importers and exporters follow regulations by making the requirements for them transparent and visible so that they fully understand the process (e.g., scheduled inspections). In the past, punitive regulations were effective but this is no longer the case.

Day 3

A summary of activities and outputs from the first two days of the workshop was presented by Mr Umbrero. The discussion on finalizing risk categorization objectives and priorities for the Philippines was facilitated by Ms Amparo Ampil, Policy Research Service Officer, and Department of Agriculture. Participants agreed on three objectives based from the seven groups' outputs, which mainly concerned providing guidance to competent authorities in making proper decisions, informing trade partners of requirements for importing food commodities, and informing the public to ensure consumers' safety. Priorities listed were potential food safety risk in consideration of population exposure, and country of origin. The groups also identified a set of activities to perform risk categorization for imported foods, which included: creating working groups, developing guidelines on food safety risks categorization, training on risk profiling, and developing communication materials on Philippine imported food controls.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The three-day workshop provided participants with concrete knowledge on risk categorization, and participants found it very useful for and relevant to their functions at the border. To advance risk categorization for effective imported food control in the country, participants agreed to adopt potential food safety risks and country of origin as priorities, and risk categorization objectives as follows:

- To guide competent authorities in making proper decisions as to whether to accept, reject or put on hold, specific imported food commodities.
- To inform trade partners with the requirements of importing or exporting specific food commodities to the Philippines for ease of compliance and facilitation of trade.
- To inform the public about risks associated with certain imported food commodities to ensure consumer safety.

Participants recognized risk categorization as a very important tool to help them be more effective at food import control and to keep all stakeholders involved. As a way forward, the group identified action points to mainstream risk categorization for imported food control in the country. These steps include:

- Convening food safety focal points to create a working group to address risk profiling and categorization
- Developing guidelines on food safety risk categorization of imported food commodities
    - FSRAs to list imported food commodities
    - FSRAs to identity current food safety risks being addressed by the current food safety procedures and determine if these are integrated or covered by an SPS Import Certificate
    - For risks not being addressed, conduct risk profiling by identifying food safety risks and country of origin
- Providing training on risk profiling
- Developing communication materials on Philippine Imported Food Controls
- For a future activity, developing publicly accessible, harmonized information on the requirements for importers and exporters

7. Evaluation

Pre- and post-workshop questionnaires were administered to measure the knowledge gained by participants. The questionnaires included commentary parts on participants' expectations (pre-workshop) and recommendations (post-workshop). Many participants wrote that their expectations for the workshop were to: 1) gain more knowledge and understand the principles of risk categorization and risk analysis; 2) understand risk management; 3) gain competence in performing functions related to risk categorization as food safety and quarantine officers; and 4) have confidence in providing training on risk categorization.

As to the knowledge gain assessment, pre-workshop questionnaire scores (PRE) and post-workshop questionnaire (POST) scores were analysed by the paired t-test. Those who did not return either of the questionnaires were excluded from the analysis (N=57). With the highest score of 17 and the lowest of 7, the means of PRE and POST were 10.61 (SD 1.90) and 14.95 (SD 1.42), respectively. Thus, a 95% confidence interval of this difference ranges from -4.930 to -3.74, and the t-value was calculated to be 14.5106 with the degree of freedom of 56. The result showed that with the two-tailed P value of < 0.0001, the knowledge gained by participants was statistically extremely significant.

Post-workshop comments from participants showed that their expectations were fulfilled. Some participants emphasized that the workshop was very informative, useful, and helpful on the performance of their duties, and provided tools and strategies to perform risk categorizations. Additional comments included the need for a follow-up workshop on risk profiling. Suggestions for improvements included more examples and case studies, and a framework applicable to the

Philippines. Also suggested was to include important personnel in pre-border, border and post-border inspections. The specific objectives determined before the workshop were successfully reached.

Annex 1. Agenda

Tuesday, 15 May 2018

#	Time	Agenda item	Note
1.	08.00 – 09.00	Registration	Pre-workshop questionnaire
2.	09.00 – 09.30	Opening session **Dr Marvin Vicente** *Chairperson, National Codex Organization Technical Committee* **Ms Tamara Jean Palis-Duran** *Assistant FAO Representative in the Philippines (Programme)* Photo session	
3.	09.30 – 09.45	**Presentation 1**: Objectives of the meeting	Rafael Umbrero
4.	09.45 – 10.00	Introduction of the participants	All
5.	10.00 – 10.30	Tea/coffee break	Pre-Q collected
6.	10.30 – 11.00	**Presentation 2**: Results of the national situation analysis on imported food control in the Philippines	Amelia Tejada
7.	11.00 – 11.30	**Presentation 3**: Introduction to the principles of risk categorization	Masami Takeuchi
8.	11.30 – 12.00	Discussions	
9.	12.00 – 13.30	Lunch	
10.	13.30 – 14.00	**Presentation 4**: Case studies from various countries on risk categorization and imported food control	Masami Takeuchi
11.	14.00 – 15.00	Discussions	
12.	15.00 – 15.30	Tea/coffee break	
13.	15.30 – 15.45	**Presentation 5**: Introduction to the working group	Masami Takeuchi
14.	15.45 – 17.00	**Working Group activity 1**: Scenario 1	Working Group

Wednesday, 16 May 2018

#	Time	Agenda item	Note
15.	09.00 – 09.30	**Plenary reporting 1**	All
16.	09.30 – 10.00	**Working Group activity 2**: Scenario 2	Working Group
17.	10.00 – 10.30	Tea/coffee break	
18.	10.30 – 11.00	**Plenary reporting 2**	All
19.	11.00 – 11.30	**Working Group activity 3**: Scenario 3	Working Group
20.	11.30 – 12.00	**Plenary reporting 3**	All
21.	12.00 – 13.30	Lunch	
22.	13.30 – 14.30	**Working Group activity 4:** Philippines' contexts	Working Group
23.	14.30 – 15.00	**Plenary reporting 4**	All
24.	15.00 – 15.30	Tea/coffee break	
25.	15.30 – 16.00	Discussion on communication of the risk categorization results and mechanisms to ensure the results would be implemented at the borders	Structured discussion
26.	16.00 – 17.00	Development of the list of follow-up action items	Structured discussion

Thursday, 17 May 2018

#	Time	Agenda item	Note
27.	09.00 – 09.30	**Presentation 6:** Summary of the Day 1 and 2 and action items	Rafael Umbrero
28.	09.30 – 10.00	Discussion on the process to finalize the risk categorization and its list in the Philippines	Amparo Ampil
29.	10.00 – 10.30	Tea/coffee break	
30.	10.30 – 11.30	Discussion on integration of One Health in imported food control	Amparo Ampil
31.	11.30 – 12.00	Closing remarks	Post-workshop questionnaire and evaluation
32.	12.00 – 13.00	Lunch	

Annex 2. List of participants

NAME	Organization	Designation
Gari Pellinor Hernandez	Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards	Senior Science Research Specialist
Katrina Maminta	Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards	Science Research Specialist II
Mary Grace Mandigma	Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards	OIC Chief- Technical Services Division
John Gregory V. Aquino	Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards/Sub-Committee on Food Hygiene	Senior Science Research Specialist
Imer Dante B. Occena	Bureau of Animal Industry	Veterinarian III
John Roel C. Hilario	Bureau of Animal Industry	Veterinarian IV
Christian P. Daquigan	Bureau of Animal Industry – National Veterinary Quarantine Service Division	SRS II
May Magno	Bureau of Animal Industry - Veterinary Quarantine Station-Ninoy Aquino International Airport	Veterinarian III
Hyacinth G. Napiloy	Bureau of Animal Industry - Veterinary Quarantine Station-Region V	Veterinarian III
Jeffrey D. Welan	Bureau of Customs	COO IV, VCO, IAS, AOCG
Romy Lloyd So	Bureau of Customs	Acting Principal, Appraiser and Acting Assistant Team Leader, Alert Team, Bureau of Customs-MICP
Haide T. Rojas	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	Aqua II
Dennis Tiotangco	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	OIC, Fisheries Inspection Section
Nilo S. Katada	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	Chief, Fisheries Inspection and Quarantine Division
Rhose Mariel Magnaye	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	BIO II
Merry Jane Espinosa	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - Region III	Fish Inspector

Ronald M. Bathan	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - Region III	Fisheries Quarantine Officer
Carmi A. Cervo	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - Region IV-A	Unit Head, FIQS- Certification Unit
Natividad B. Efondo	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - Region IV-A	OIC, FIQS- Fish Inspection Unit
Pamela Joy A. Robledo	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - Region IX	Aquaculturist I/ Fisheries Inspector
Randolph Corrales	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - Region VII	Regional Fisheries Quarantine Officer
Eugene M. Casas	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources - Region XII	Senior Fishing Regulations Officer
Niño Carlo Isnit	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources / Sub-Committee on Food Hygiene	Aquaculturist I
Jhoana Grace B. San Gabriel	Bureau of Plant Industry – National Plant Quarantine Services Division	Agriculturist II
Salome S. Castañeda	Bureau of Plant Industry - National Plant Quarantine Services Division, Port of Cebu	Agricultural Technologist
Flor De Hasmin Bayo	Bureau of Plant Industry - National Plant Quarantine Services Division, Port of Davao	Senior Agriculturist
Jacqueline R. Ramos	Bureau of Plant Industry - National Plant Quarantine Services Division, South Harbor of Manila	Agriculturist II
Christian Allen L. Taleon	Bureau of Plant Industry-– Plant Product Safety and Services Divison	Agriculturist I
Noreen D. Escobar	Bureau of Plant Industry -Plant Product Safety and Services Divison	Chemist II
Edna Guiang	Bureau of Plant Industry / Sub-Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	Head, Accreditation and Inspection Section,Plant Product Safety Services Division, Bureau of Plant Industry

John Michael F. Cabuguason	Department of Agriculture - Office of Assistant Secretary for Regulations	Veterinarian III
Lee Andrew Calimutan	Department of Agriculture - Office of Assistant Secretary for Regulations	EA III
Alicia O. Lustre	Department of Agriculture - Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning	Consultant/ Member of the National Codex Organization Technical Committee
Amparo Ampil	Department of Agriculture - Policy Research Service	
Frances Kaye Anne Adao	Department of Agriculture - Policy Research Service	
Bella Fe D. Carmona	Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority	Chemist III
Jacqueline M. Romualdez	Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority	Chemist IV
Danina E. Romulo	Food and Drugs Administration	FDROII
Gemie Rose P. Zabala	Food and Drugs Administration	FDRO III
Maripaz M. Perez	Food and Drugs Administration	FDROII
Rosaly F. Tomimbang	Food and Drugs Administration / Sub-Committee on Cereals, Legumes, and Pulses	ND IV
Kris Jenelyn M. Pasiona	Food and Drugs Administration / Sub-Committee on Food Hygiene	FDRO III
Hannah Margaret M. Rabaja	Food and Drugs Administration / Sub-Committee on Food Labeling	Food Drug Regulation Officer , Chair-CSFL
Rochelle H. Parangan	Food and Drugs Administration / Sub-Committee on Pesticide Residue	FDRO III

Remedios Baclig	National Codex Organization/ CCAsia	Member of NCO-TC
Judith A. Platero	National Dairy Authority / SCMMP and SCNFSDU	Project Development Officer
Dan Adrian D. Guban	National Dairy Authority Central Office	Food Technologist III
Marivic Callao	National Dairy Authority Region	Food Technologist III
Jocelyn Sales	National Food Authority - Food Development Center / MSO SC General Principles	Director
Perlita M. Palicpic	National Food Authority - Food Development Center / MSO SC General Principles	Supervising Research Specialist
Luz D. Padilla	National Food Authority - Food Development Center / SC Methods Analysis and Sampling	Chief Research Specialist
Edith M. San Juan	National Food Authority - Food Development Center / SC on Contaminants in Food and SC on Fish and Fishery Products	Chief Research Specialist
Elvira M. Martinez	National Food Authority / Sub-Committee on Cereal and Legumes	Department Manager
April Chavez	National Meat Inspection Service	SMCO
Beata Humilda O. Obsioma	National Meat Inspection Service	Deputy Executive Director
Clarita M. Sangcal	National Meat Inspection Service	Chief Meat Control Officer
Edna Y. Gray	National Meat Inspection Service	OIC-Head Plant Operations Standard and Monitoring Division
Jonathan V. Sabiniano	National Meat Inspection Service	Planning Officer V
Marvin Vicente	National Meat Inspection Service	Acting Director/ Chairperson, National Codex Organization Technical Committee
Mae Nimfa R. Cruz	National Meat Inspection Service	SMCO

Mignon A. Umali	National Meat Inspection Service	SMCO
Rina I. Angeles	Philippine Coconut Authority	PIDS II
Celia M. Raquepo	Philippine Coconut Authority / SC on Fats and Oils, Contaminants, Additives	Division Chief III
Emelyn B. Manalo	Sugar Regulatory Administration	Chemist III
Mae Ann Bagnos I. Naval	Sugar Regulatory Administration	Chemist I
Rondell Ray Manjarres	Sugar Regulatory Administration	Senior SPRO-CMD
Ruddi Chris L. Caintic	Sugar Regulatory Administration	SPRO II- CMD
Jean Nanette C. Sumagaysay	Sugar Regulatory Administration SC on Sugars	Chemist III/ Head, Sugar Laboratory
Bonifacio Magtibay	WHO	Technical Officer
Amelia Tejada	FAO	National Consultant
Masami Takeuchi	FAO	Food Safety Officer
Rafael Umbrero	FAO	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Tamara Jean Duran	FAO	Assistant FAO Representative for Programme

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