National Regulatory Frameworks for Food Quality and Safety

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This programme aims at equipping high level officials from developing countries with cutting-edge knowledge and strengthening their capacity to base their decisions on sound consideration and analysis of policies and strategies both at home and in the context of strategic international developments.

Related resources

- Policy Learning Programme
National Regulatory Frameworks for Food Quality and Safety

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About EASYPol
The EASYPol home page is available at: www.fao.org/easypol

This presentation belongs to a set of modules which are part of the EASYPol Resource package:
FAO Policy Learning Programme: Specific policy issues: Food safety policies and regulatory frameworks

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Objectives

After this module, users should know about:

- the building blocks of a food control system
- the different modalities for organization
- the recent trends: the integrated and risk based approach to food control
Contents

- What are the new principles underlying to food control systems?
- Importance of a system approach
- What are the components of that system?
Modern food control system

- Reduce occurrence of food borne disease
- Promote economic development
- Science-based prevention and control programme to reduce food safety risks throughout the food chain, farm to table
Food chain approach

“The responsibility for the supply of food that is safe, healthy and nutritious, is shared along the entire food chain by all involved in production, processing, trade and consumption of food”

MOVE from RETROACTIVE towards PREVENTIVE approach

Application of measures at appropriate points in the food chain, from pre-production practices to the point of sale or distribution to consumers, to prevent and control contamination and consequently comply with the established norms and requirements.
Promoting a risk based approach for food control

- Developing science-based strategies
- Maximizing risk reduction
- Establishing risk-based priorities
- Integrated, economically feasible initiatives
- Ensuring transparency
Elements of a national food safety control system

Dictionary: A **system** is a complex whole, a set of connected things or parts.

The **elements of the FSCS are interdependent** and as parts of a “system” allow risk managers to recognize and solve food safety problems.

- Recognize the problem
- Understand the problem
- Deal with the problem
- Check to make sure that the problem has been solved efficiently
Elements of a national food safety control system

- Food law, regulation, and standards
- Food safety control management
- Inspection services
- Laboratory services
- Monitoring
- Surveillance of food borne diseases
- Capacity for emergency response
- Training
- Public information, education and communication

System to recognize/solve problems – project goal
Food law, regulations and standards

- **Modern food safety laws and regulations**
  - Provide a high level of health protection
  - Allocate responsibilities
  - Provide legal powers and prescriptions
  - Are based on transparent, independent scientific advice
    - **Risk analysis approach**

- **National standards should take full advantage of Codex Standards**
  - Codex standards are risk-based where possible
  - Preventive approach, domestic/imported
  - Meet demands of SPS Agreement
  - Meet demands of trading partners
Food safety control management

Problem recognition and solving

- Clearly defined responsibilities
  - efficiency
  - accountability

- Policy and operational coordination
- Integrated farm-to-table food safety strategy to reduce hazards, risks, and problems
  - Inter-sectoral/inter-agency
  - Joint planning - measurable outcomes and timelines

- Monitoring/Verification of system performance
Food inspection services

**Recognize problem, deal with the problem, confirm solved**

- **Input** - priorities from a coordinated FSCM
- **Outcome** - results impact coordinated FSCM

- Knowledge of relevant laws and regulations
- Trained in food science and technology
- Ability to collect evidence/samples and to send samples for appropriate analysis
- Need facilities and continued training and upgrading skills

**Qualified, trained, efficient, and honest**
Laboratory services

**Recognize problem (confirm solution)**

- Requires considerable capital investment to build and maintain
- Laboratories to meet national standards/norms
  - National laboratories to meet international standards
  - Training and certification
- Reference laboratory for sophisticated analysis and confirmations
- Defined standards as basis for regulatory action
Monitoring and surveillance

**Recognize problem, define the problem, confirm solved**

Monitoring of foods

Surveillance of food borne diseases

- Informs FSC decisions, e.g.
- Consumer information and communication
- Hazard identification, targeted inspection, setting priorities, regulatory determinations
Developing and/or strengthening of national food control systems

Three types:

1. **Multiple agency system**: high level of coordination necessary, possibility of conflicts

2. **Single agency system**: cost efficiency, uniformity, responsibility and quick to respond. No checks, difficult to implement

3. **Integrated system**: promotes collaboration, functional separation of risk assessment and management; transparency and accountability
Challenges facing national food control systems

- Outdated or incomplete food laws and regulations
- Absence of a national food control strategy, poorly defined and overlapping mandates among agencies involved
- Limited infrastructure, equipment, supplies, skilled personnel
- Inadequate scientific and technical resources for food inspection and compliance
- Limited knowledge about, and ability to comply with, food quality and safety assurance systems
- Weak capacity to participate fully in international bodies and agreements governing trade in food
Developing a national food control strategy

**Collection of information**
- generation and collection of data on food contaminants, food consumption, food borne disease

**Development of a strategy**
- Identify key foods, key risks
- Cost benefit analysis
- Prioritize
- Develop targets, programmes
Conclusion

**Food control systems:**

- Structure is less important than interaction and coordination
- Focus is on prevention
- Not only science based, but also risk based
Further readings