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# codex alimentarius commission E



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
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WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION



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## Agenda Item 3

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME**  
**FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA**  
**AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC**  
*Tenth Session*

**Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 28-31 October 2008**

**ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX  
ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING**

### INTRODUCTION

1. This paper describes FAO/WHO activities in the areas of capacity building and the provision of scientific advice implemented since the 9<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the South West Pacific which are complementary to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Information on FAO's and WHO's main capacity building activities in food safety and quality during the reporting period is provided below.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - OVERVIEW

2. FAO and WHO are engaged in a programme of technical assistance activities and projects at national, regional and international levels. The areas covered include strengthening food control systems, training of food control officials and technical staff (food control managers, food inspectors, and food analysts), enhancement of food control laboratory capabilities, implementation of risk analysis and risk assessment of microbiological hazards in food, support in establishing national Codex committees, policy advice and establishment of regulatory frameworks. More information is available from: [www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns](http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns). FAO and WHO technical assistance activities are in support of the Codex Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013, in particular, activities 1.7, 2.6 and 5.4.

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

3. FAO and WHO are also engaged in the development of a number of manuals, guidelines and training materials to facilitate the capacity building effort. These materials are particularly relevant to policy makers responsible for strengthening food control programmes. Most are developed jointly except for a few which are prepared under specific field projects operated either by FAO or WHO. These materials include the following:

- “Food Safety Risk Analysis: A guide for national food safety authorities” is now also available in French and Spanish. An accompanying CD-ROM comprising a slide presentation for training, related FAO and WHO training materials and risk analysis case studies is currently under finalization.
- “Animal Production and Health Manual: Good Practices for the Meat Industry” is now available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, also on-line. The manual is a tool to comply with the Codex Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat (CAC/RCP 58-2005).

- FAO, in collaboration with the International Feed Industry Federation (IFIF), produced a Manual of Good Practices for the Feed Industry, to assist in the practical implementation of the Codex Code of Practice for Good Animal Feeding (CAC/RCP 54-2004).
- FAO collaborated with the OIE for the production of a “Guide to good farming practices for animal production food safety”. The guide is intended to help competent authorities to assist stakeholders, including farmers, to fully assume their responsibilities at the first stage of the food chain to produce safe food of animal origin.
- FAO began work on a CD-Rom based technical resource package on food hygiene and quality assurance. The target audience for the resource package includes governmental and non-governmental organizations that provide training and other technical support to small and medium-scale businesses on programmes of food hygiene and quality assurance.
- FAO, together with WHO and ICD, developed a Basic Awareness Course on Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA). The primary objective of this course is to acquaint governments with the general concept of risk analysis and how MRA fits into the framework of Microbiological Risk Management (MRM);
- The FAO/WHO e-learning training course “Enhancing participation in Codex activities is available on CD-ROM. The training course will be accessible through FAO and WHO websites;
- The FAO/WHO guidance document for governments on the application of HACCP, in small and less developed businesses (SLDBs) was finalized. The document is now available at [http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/food/quality\\_haccp\\_en.stm](http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/food/quality_haccp_en.stm) and at: [www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/fs\\_management/haccp\\_sidbs/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/fs_management/haccp_sidbs/en/index.html); as well as in a printed version in English, French and Spanish. The guidelines are also being translated into Chinese.
- FAO developed a standardized training package to assist countries in implementing relevant Codex texts related to the food safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA plants. This training package, entitled "GM food safety assessment: tools for trainers", contains both theory and practical examples of risk assessments of foods derived from modern biotechnology and a guide for training regulators. The pre-publication copy is available and the publication including a CD with training materials is expected to be out in early winter 2008.
- The WHO/FAO *Guidelines on the Safe Preparation, Storage and Handling of Powdered Infant Formula* are available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish and have recently been translated into Japanese.
- FAO published case studies on “Implementing programmes to improve safety and quality in fruit and vegetable supply chains: benefits and drawbacks” in English and Spanish.
- PAHO/WHO published: The Five Keys to Safer Food Manual (theoretical manual); Activity Book for Teachers: Five Keys to Safer Food; a Guide for the Parent-Teacher Association: *How to make a water and food safety plan for my school?* The five steps to be a school with safe food and water, and a poster “The 5 Keys to Safer Food “
- WHO published 'Guidelines for the Investigation and Control of Foodborne Disease Outbreaks. These guidelines serve as a general introduction to the identification, as well as a practical aid for the investigation and control of foodborne disease outbreaks in a variety of settings. The Guidelines include background information and practical tools, such as sample questionnaires and investigation report forms.
- The FAO Biosecurity toolkit is available in English, French and Spanish. Member countries can use this toolkit to analyse and manage risks that exist in food safety, animal and plant life and health, and associated risks to the environment. It outlines principles and components of biosecurity, provides a guide to assess biosecurity capacity and guides the application of risk analysis principles in biosecurity.
- FAO published ‘Risk-Based Food Inspection Manual’ which introduces a risk-based inspection approach and procedures for primary production operations and food processing establishments. The publication is currently in English but it will be available in French and Spanish in winter 2008.

- FAO has also published the following training manuals: On-farm mycotoxins control in food and feed grain; and Maintaining quality of food and feed grain through trade and processing (both available also on-line).

## INFORMATION EXCHANGE MECHANISMS

4. The International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health ([www.ipfsaph.org](http://www.ipfsaph.org)), a joint initiative with IPPC, OIE, Codex and WTO, continued to develop. As of April 2008, the portal contains over 34 000 records (representing an increase of 38% year on year) sourced from nearly 50 different official data sources, and growing. The number of page views averages 9 000 per day, with over 40 000 visitors per month. It was also noted that there are annual surges in demand during the spring, which, possibly, can be attributed to the timing of key meetings of standard setting bodies (e.g. WTO SPS, Codex and OIE) in the spring and summer. The portal recently added a number of new data sets, as follows:

- IAEA's Nucleus Clearance of Irradiated Foods Database using an automated web services linkage;
- All current JECFA specifications for food additives, flavouring agents, and residues of some veterinary drugs in animals and foods, and the portal is now automatically linked to the updated and revised JECFA databases;
- Automatic linkage with WTO's new SPS Information Management System ensures that vital SPS related data sets such as Notifications, Specific Trade Concerns and national SPS enquiry point details are automatically updated through the portal;

5. In addition, a data set for food safety assessment of r-DNA plants authorized in accordance with the Codex Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessments of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants was created<sup>1</sup>. In cooperation with the OECD BioTrack database, an interoperable central database, publicly accessible from [www.ipfsaph.org](http://www.ipfsaph.org), containing food safety assessments relating to foods derived from r-DNA plants has been developed and populated. The data set pools food safety assessment records for approved transformation events from various official online sources including OECD BioTrack, the Biosafety Clearing House and the EC Register of Genetically Modified Food and Feed, amongst others.

6. INFOSAN, the International Food Safety Authorities Network, developed and maintained by WHO in collaboration with FAO, was inaugurated in October 2004. Identified as a priority need by both Codex and the World Health Assembly, 167 Member States have now joined the network. Since its creation, INFOSAN has responded to requests for information on how to develop and maintain food control systems by providing INFOSAN Information notes on timely food safety topics. INFOSAN EMERGENCY, the emergency arm of the network which operates under the umbrella of the International Health Regulations (2005), performs global surveillance of food contamination and foodborne disease events. Every month, the INFOSAN identifies an average of 157 notices of food contamination and food-borne disease events with potential international implications. On average, about 10-20 food notices require follow up activity by INFOSAN. One to two INFOSAN Emergency Alerts are sent out to countries receiving contaminated food each month. During the past year, INFOSAN Emergency Alerts about the global distribution of contaminated food have gone to all Members of INFOSAN.

7. In June 2008 FAO/AGNS launched the new website on "Specific quality" under project GCP/INT/022/FRA funded by France. Some food products differentiate themselves from others within a category by some characteristics, quality or reputation essentially due to their geographical origin. This differentiation can be attributed to the typicity, history of the product, distinctive character linked to natural and human factors such as soil and climate, local know-how, traditions. These quality products are interesting as part of food security, by contributing to rural development and giving consumers greater choice. The aim of the website is to provide information on this type of quality and the activities done in this area: case studies, regional seminars, expert meetings and technical cooperation projects.

8. FAO also launched a new webpage on Veterinary and Public Health, Feed and Food Safety [www.fao.org/ag/AGInfo/programmes/en/A6.html](http://www.fao.org/ag/AGInfo/programmes/en/A6.html) and one global and four regional networks on the same themes.

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<sup>1</sup> As requested by the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (Chiba, Japan, 24-28 September, 2007).

9. To ensure effective bridging between early warning, preventive actions and response to threats to the food chain, FAO is in the process of streamlining its emergency prevention and management framework for food-chain crisis. This includes the extension of the FAO EMPRES (Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animals and Plant Pests and Diseases) programme to also cover food safety. The primary purpose of EMPRES-Food Safety is the prevention and early warning of food safety emergencies and it is being established taking into consideration existing networks and activities in the area of prevention and early warning worldwide. To this end, EMPRES-Food Safety will facilitate greater FAO support to INFOSAN, particularly in relation to accessing relevant information from the agriculture sector, analysing trends, forecasting and providing technical assistance to prevent emergencies.

## INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

10. FAO/AGNS convened a High Level Special Event on Food Quality and Safety during the last session of the FAO Conference in November 2007. The objective of the event was to draw the attention of policy makers to the importance of food quality and safety for consumer protection and trade promotion. It also underlined the increasing needs of developing countries for capacity building to improve the efficiency of their national food safety system throughout the food chain, including the involvement of food producers, processors and distributors in this endeavour. A brief report of the event is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French and Spanish from: [http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/capacity\\_events\\_2007\\_en.asp](http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/capacity_events_2007_en.asp)

11. At the end of November 2007, a High-level International Forum on Food Safety cosponsored by WHO and the Chinese Ministry of Health and the State Administration for Quality and Safety Inspection and Quarantine adopted a significant statement on the basic requirements for national food safety systems. The Beijing Declaration sends a clear message that participation in the maturing global food marketplace will be based on assurance that a country's national food safety system is in place and operational, especially components related to emergency response.

12. FAO provided technical assistance to the IDF in the organization of an international symposium which took place in Bali, Indonesia from 13 to 15 February 2008. The purpose of the symposium was to look at practical experiences and the challenges and feasibility issues to be addressed by those working to move forward in food safety management. More information on the symposium is available from:

<http://www.idfsymposium-bali2008.com>

13. In collaboration with FAO, WHO launched an initiative to estimate the global burden of foodborne diseases from all major causes. This work is taken forward by the *Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG)*, a multi-disciplinary expert group which met in Geneva in November 2007 and outlined a detailed and ambitious workplan to estimate disease burden from enteric, chemical and parasitic causes. WHO is now implementing the action plan proposed by FERG and reporting on global disease burden within a 5-year timeframe. One area of particular emphasis of FERG will be the development of and training in the use of tools for country-specific burden of disease assessment.

14. FAO/UNIDO/IFAD and the Government of India jointly organized a Global Agro-Industries Forum which took place in New Delhi, India, from 8 to 11 April 2008. The Forum provided delegates with the opportunity to discuss and share lessons on improving competitiveness and the development impact of agro-industries. One of the twelve roundtables addressed the subject of "Meeting consumer requirements: quality, safety, emerging concerns", in which a range of aspects influencing quality and safety in food chains at the national level and in international markets were discussed from different perspectives. The plenary paper "Technologies shaping the Future" also addressed quality and safety issues from the viewpoint of how adequate and cost-effective technologies can contribute to enhance quality and safety in future scenarios. Further information on the Forum is available from: [www.gaif08.org](http://www.gaif08.org).

15. FAO is planning with the International Industry Academy (IIA), Russian Federation, an international conference on food safety which will take place in Moscow from 28-30 to October 2008. The conference programme will address topics related to the management and implementation of food control systems to ensure safe food and consumer protection. Specific issues will include harmonization of food standards, risk analysis principles and practical application, and food safety management systems within the food industry.

16. WHO provided 12 international training courses on the surveillance and detection of foodborne and other infectious enteric diseases through a programme called WHO Global Salm-Surv. Training sites included Russia (St. Petersburg and Moscow), Trinidad and Tobago, Kenya, Brazil, China, Poland,

Cameroon, Malaysia, Argentina, Papua New Guinea and Madagascar. With the exception of Brazil and China, each international training course is attended by 2 to 4 representatives from between 8 and 18 countries. During the courses integrated laboratory-based surveillance is promoted and inter-sectorial collaboration between human health, veterinary and food-related disciplines is fostered around the world. WHO is actively seeking collaboration with FAO in future training activities.

## GLOBAL PROJECTS

17. The Government of Norway signed a Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with FAO, with the overall objective of supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries through the work of FAO, for the period 2005-2006. One of the principal objectives of this project is "Improved Food Safety and Quality at National Level and along the Food Chain". Activities are being conducted in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Honduras, Kenya, Laos, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Uganda. Outcomes to be reached include: acceptance and use of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP); capacity building and awareness raising for integrated natural resource governance and management (SARED), support to food quality and safety and Codex related work and guidelines, advice and instruments related to small-scale/artisanal fisheries implemented/developed.

18. Under the same Programme Cooperation Agreement, Norway is supporting a series of activities aimed at strengthening FAO's earlier work on the integration of food safety, animal health, plant health and biosafety under the biosecurity framework. In this context, a three-part Biosecurity Toolkit (comprising an introductory text, a biosecurity capacity assessment guide and a biosecurity risk analysis manual) is now available and other activities to assess biosecurity capacity needs and strengthen an integrated biosecurity approach are underway (including in Bhutan, El Salvador, Haiti and Panama). In order to launch this toolkit, FAO organized an international training of trainers' workshop on "An integrated approach to food safety and animal and plant health (biosecurity) and the assessment of capacity needs". The training course took place in Rome, from 22-25 January 2008 and was attended by 22 experts from selected countries in the world. More information is available at [www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/foodcontrol\\_en.asp](http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/agns/foodcontrol_en.asp).

19. Project GCP/INT/022/FRA funded by France (2007-2008) and implemented with support from FAO, aims to assist Member Countries in developing specific quality schemes, that are adapted to their economic, social and cultural situation, and contributing to rural development through the valorisation and preservation of quality products and local resources associated. The practical objective is to capitalize information and knowledge about experiences of Member countries, so to support FAO policy and strategy in this area and recommend mechanisms to address member countries' needs. In this view, different activities have been implementing: regional seminars, expert meeting, networking, case studies with concrete examples on assets and constraints, success or failure factors, supportive tools.

## GLOBAL TOOLS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

20. FAO is developing 'Guidelines for risk-based fish inspection' which provides technical information to support fish inspection systems. This publication is a separate chapter of the 'Risk-based food inspection manual' to cover fisheries products and expected to be published in winter 2008.

21. FAO and WHO are developing food safety emergency response guidelines to assist member countries to both prepare for and manage such emergencies. In addition, a series of subject specific guidelines on food recalls, food complaint systems, risk communication during food safety emergencies and risk assessment and risk management for urgent food safety events are being developed to provide more detailed guidance on these important aspects of food safety emergency preparedness, alert and response.

22. WHO, FAO, in collaboration with OIE and the Industry Council for Development (ICD), are planning a round table discussion on the global needs for capacity building in food safety, water and nutrition through training and education to be held in September 2008. A preparatory meeting was held on 5 March 2008 in Rome, Italy, to discuss the objectives, the programme and the dates and venue for the round table discussion.

## CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN NORTH AMERICA AND THE PACIFIC

**Regional/National events**

<b>Activity (Workshop/Seminar/Training Course)</b>	<b>Organizers</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Venue</b>
FAO, in close cooperation with other development partners (SPC, IFAD, NZ Government, PIFS, FFA, PITIC) continued to conduct Annual Roundtable Meeting on WTO and Regional Trade Agreements Provisions for Pacific Island Countries.	FAO and partners	17- 21 September 2007 15-19 September 2008	New Zealand
Meeting on Enhanced food-borne disease surveillance networking in Asia	WHO	August 2007	
National training workshop on Enhancing Participation in the Standard Setting Work of Codex	FAO	14-15 November 2007	Solomon Islands
Subregional Meeting of Codex Coordinators from selected Codex member countries in the Pacific to discuss issues relevant to the region and develop discussion papers on kava and nonu (noni) for the 10 <sup>th</sup> CCNASWP	Regional Coordinator (Tonga) through LOA with FAO	14-16 May, 2008	Fiji

**Projects/Direct assistance**

<b>Title</b>	<b>FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Status</b>
Technical assistance to revise the draft food hygiene regulations.	FAO	Solomon Islands	Technical review and national stakeholder completed in 2007
Technical assistance to develop a Meat Hygiene Legislation, including the Abattoir and Meat Supply Act and the Abattoir and Meat Inspection Regulations	FAO	Samoa	Legislation drafted in early 2008, now under review by the MAF's Legal Counsel.
Enhancement of food safety education based upon the Five Keys to Safer Food, including food safety education in schools	WHO	Pacific countries	
Food safety regulations have been drafted	WHO	Cook Islands, Kiribati and Nauru	

<b>Title</b>	<b>FAO/WHO</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Status</b>
Food standards have been drafted	WHO	Federated States of Micronesia	
Training on risk assessment	WHO	Papua New Guinea	
Review of the food inspection services	FAO	Fiji	Consultants being shortlisted
Integrated Food Standards Project to strengthen capacity of the Pacific Islands Forum countries to establish and enforce internationally recognized food laws, standards and inspection procedures to promote unhindered trade in safe and wholesome food.	WPRO/FAO-SAP/Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	14 Pacific Island countries	Ongoing