



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST
PACIFIC*12th Session, Madang, Papua New Guinea*

19 – 22 September 2012

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER
PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS
AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL(replies to CL 2012/6-NASWP of Australia, Canada, Papua New Guinea, United States of America and
Vanuatu)**Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems**

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems. These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiatives to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

AUSTRALIA

Food safety issues in Australia are managed at the national level by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) and its associated agency - Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

The Food Regulatory System in Australia is a cooperative bi-national arrangement between the Australian and New Zealand Government and Australian States and Territories. Australia has a food regulatory system that protects and enhances public health and safety across the whole of the food chain. The system is based upon a partnership between government, consumers and industry. The food regulatory system separates the responsibility of policy development, standards setting and the implementation and enforcement of standards set for food between government agencies.

The Department of Health and Ageing is responsible for development of food regulation policy, research and investigations to provide sound data on foodborne illness. FSANZ is responsible for the establishment of food standards taking into account the best available scientific evidence and good regulatory practice. In respect of imported food, DAFF enforces the Food Standards Code and is responsible for imported product at the border. DAFF is also responsible for export inspection and certification, in this regard during 2011–12, we implemented a suite of reforms to deliver more efficient export certification and inspection services.

The Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS) is an integrated set of controls specified and verified by Government that ensures the safety, suitability and integrity of Australian meat and meat products destined for domestic and export markets. Underpinning AEMIS are performance standards which are continually monitored and verified. Information is captured in a national database that is then analysed and reported in as close to real time as practicable.

A new service delivery model for the export fish industry will enable establishments to engage approved auditors to carry out regulatory audits of registered establishments that are engaged in the preparation, storage and loading of seafood for export.

DAFF and state regulatory authorities also reviewed arrangements to minimise the duplication of regulatory food safety audits across a range of commodities, including fish and dairy, to meet both domestic and export requirements.

In September 2011, revised legislation was introduced for the grain and horticulture export industries. The revised orders allow industry to independently hire specially trained individuals to manage and perform export inspection functions. This provides industry with greater flexibility over the timing and location of inspections.

CANADA

Canada promotes a “gate to plate” approach to food safety in partnership with all levels of government, industry and consumers. At the Federal level, regulatory responsibility for food safety and nutrition is a shared responsibility between Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Health Canada is the regulatory body responsible for establishing standards and policies for food safety and nutrition. The CFIA is the regulatory body responsible for enforcing the standards established by Health Canada. Since the 11th Session of CCNASWP, no significant changes were made to the structure and organisation of official services responsible for food control.

Updated legislation and regulations on food safety and quality:

A) Modernizing the *Food and Drugs Act*

In April 2012, the Government of Canada introduced amendments to modernize the *Food and Drugs Act* to give the Minister of Health the power to issue marketing authorizations that exempt a food, or an advertisement with respect to a food, from certain provisions of the Act and also provides that a regulation with respect to a food and a marketing authorization may incorporate by reference any document. These amendments provide new tools, processes and policies which allow the government to streamline and accelerate the process by which foods are regulated while ensuring that the health and safety of Canadians is not compromised by maintaining the scientific scrutiny and rigour of analysis for these products.

B) *Safe Food for Canadians Act*

The Government of Canada proposed legislation that will modernize the regulatory system for food commodities and align inspection and enforcement powers across all food commodities. The proposed legislation will consolidate the *Fish Inspection Act*, the *Canada Agricultural Products Act*, the *Meat Inspection Act*, and the food provisions of the *Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act*, into the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* to strengthen oversight of food commodities being traded inter-provincially or internationally. The *Food and Drugs Act* will continue to exist separately, providing overarching protection for consumers from any foods that are unsuitable for consumption, including those marketed exclusively within provinces. The proposed Act focuses on three important areas: 1) Improved food safety oversight to better protect consumers 2) Streamlined and strengthened legislative authorities and 3) Enhanced international market opportunities for Canadian industry.

More information can be found at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/acts-and-regulations/initiatives/sfca/eng/1338796071420/1338796152395>

C) Inspection Modernization

The Government of Canada’s 2011 Budget committed resources over five years for the CFIA to modernize its food inspection system. This included new resources to improve inspection delivery, training and tools for inspection staff, scientific capacity in food laboratories, and information management and technology.

As part of this modernization initiative, the CFIA has committed to develop an improved food inspection model. The basic goal of the model is to move from delivering eight independent food inspection programs to delivering one food inspection program. The CFIA will develop a single approach to food inspection based on common inspection activities supported by standard processes and tools, and based on science and risk. In this way, the CFIA would be able to assess and address risk consistently, use existing resources more effectively and level the playing field between food sectors so that similar risks are treated with the same level of rigour.

The CFIA is consulting stakeholders on the draft improved food inspection model starting in the summer of 2012. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/accountability/inspection-modernization/eng/1337025084336/1337025428609>

D) Import Licensing

The CFIA is proposing to develop new regulations that would tighten controls over the safety of imported foods sold in Canada. The new rules would require identifying food importers through a licensing regime and requiring them to enhance control measures for imported food products through food safety plans in place to identify, report and recall potentially hazardous products from the marketplace as quickly as possible.

More information can be found at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/non-federally-registered/imports/regulatory-proposal/eng/1326141954943/1326142115688>

E) Allergen Labelling

Health Canada published amendments to the food allergen labelling regulations in 2011. These amendments address the increasing need to enhance labelling requirements for specific priority allergens, gluten sources and added sulphites in prepackaged foods sold in Canada. These new regulations will come into force on August 4, 2012. Canada continues to encourage industry to declare priority allergens, gluten sources and added sulphites on prepackaged food labels to provide Canadians with the information necessary to make informed food choices.

Additional information can be found at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/allergen/index-eng.php>

F) Transition of Foods marketed as Natural Health Products to the Food Regulatory Framework

Since 2010, Health Canada has been working with manufacturers to transition food products that look like food and are consumed as food but marketed as Natural Health Products (NHPs), are regulated as foods. In October 2011, Canada announced its intent to transition caffeinated energy drinks to the food regulatory framework as the first phase in the process. Additional categories of foods currently being marketed as NHPs will begin to transition in 2012. In doing so, Canadians will be able to make more informed choices due to consistent nutrition information and labelling requirements for food products. For the food industry, this transition will level the playing field, reduce red tape and continue to help support innovation.

Additional information can be found at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/prodnatur/index-eng.php>

G) Listeria Policy

The Government of Canada completed its update of the 2004 policy on *Listeria Monocytogenes in Ready-To-Eat foods* and the new policy came into effect on April 1, 2011. The new policy is based on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). The policy was developed using a health risk assessment approach and uses as its foundation a combination of inspection, environmental sampling and end-product testing to verify control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. Focus is given to environmental verification and control, especially in post-lethality areas. This policy applies to RTE food sold in Canada, produced both domestically and imported.

The policy can be found at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/legislation/pol/policy_listeria_monocytogenes_2011-eng.php

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

According to our recent findings with the Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Codex Committee (NCC) with funding assistance from European Union Trade Related Assistance Project (EU-TRAP), the NCC was able to compile a “needs analysis” for the players who are involved in food safety from farm to table. The NCC have realised that the Food Control System in PNG is fragmented (some-what silo) and hence the overall chain is not well addressed. Thus, the NCC-EU TRAP was fully in the process to advise Government of PNG on how best the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Compliance issues can be fully addressed at national level. The NCC-EU TRAP was able to do a comprehensive “stakeholder analysis” to assess the strengths and weaknesses of PNG’s Food Control System. As a result a preliminary workshop was conducted on 24 February, 2010 to gauge views and create awareness to all the stakeholders. The meeting agreed that SPS

Compliance issues has to be addressed as an *“Integrated Approach”* taking into consideration all other players that are involved such as Animal, Plant and Environmental health perspectives.

In addition, a second workshop was conducted on 11 August 2010 and some of the resolutions reached was that PNG need an Apex body to oversee the SPS Compliance issues in the country. Another recommendation was that there is a great need for Infrastructure and Information Technology (IT) investment and also EU-TRAP has recommended that NCC is capable of playing the lead role in this area. Initially, a donor assistance is required at the establishment stage of about five (5) years to actually set up the body and then Government of PNG will enhances its sustainability thereafter.

Additionally, the NCC was able to coordinate the two (2) weeks workshop on Quality Management Systems Auditor and Basic Tools for Food Safety in collaboration with EU-TRAP and AusAID. The main objectives of the workshop was to benefit our country when auditing skills and knowledge on Food Safety are applied at various organisation levels.

Further, with the assistance of EU-TRAP the NCC was able to contract an EU Food Law Expert to review all the existing Food Legislations and Regulations and was able to inform NCC that all the Existing Food Laws in our country is out dated and needs to be revised. Furthermore, during the presentation by EU Food Law Expert the NCC and other relevant stakeholders were informed that the Food Sanitation Act (1991) and Food Regulation (2007) do not capture the Codex Food Safety HACCP Principles. The EU Food Law Expert presented the shortcomings and the way forward at a ½ day workshop organized by NCC on 25 March, 2011. The expert strongly recommended *“Integrated Approach”* coordination mechanism is the way forward to address food safety issues in PNG rather than Multiple or Single Agency approach.

Figure 1.0 below shows NCC Organizational Structure and Figure 2.0 also indicates Codex PNG Integrated Approach Structure – Food Control Coordination System.

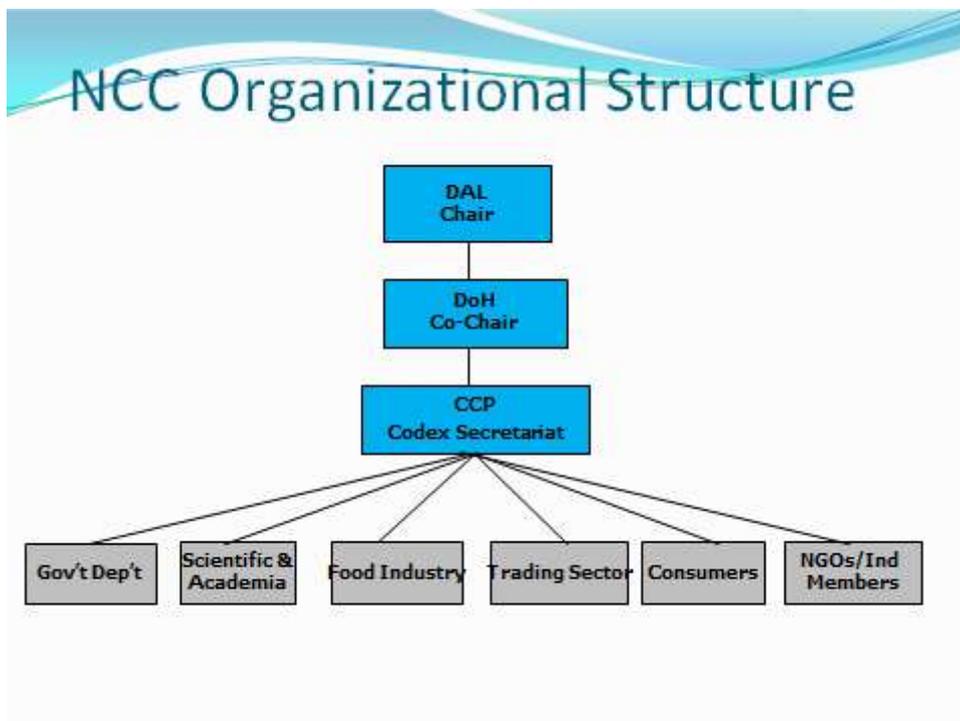


Figure 1.0 NCC Organisational Structure in PNG

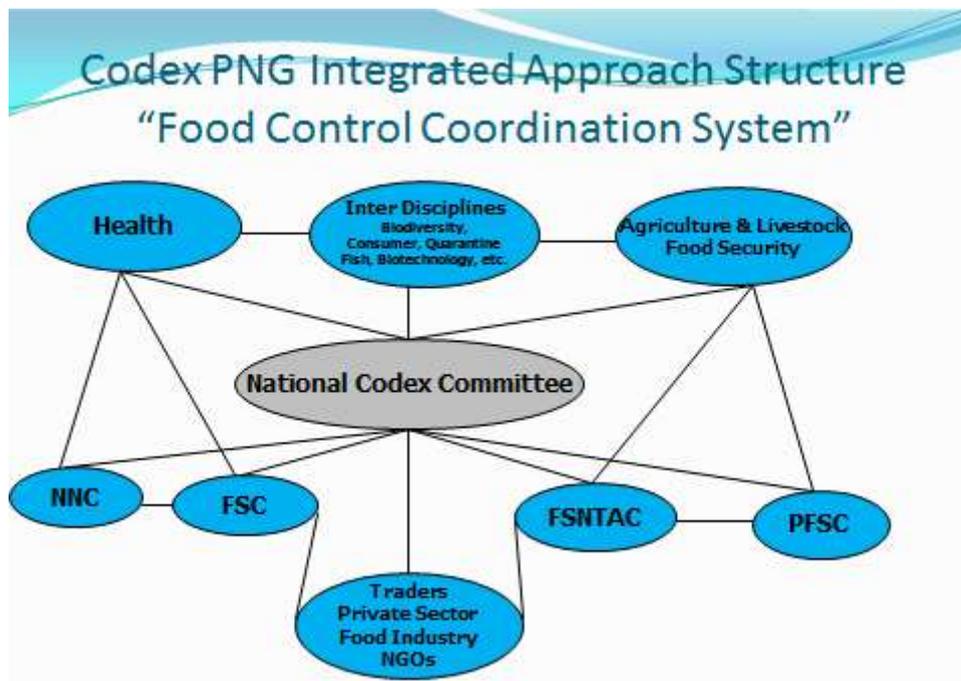


Figure 2.0 Codex PNG Integrated Approach Structure –Food Control Coordination System

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States has multiple agencies that are charged with ensuring food safety. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authority over all food products, except meat, poultry, and egg products which are covered by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). FDA also regulates the use of animal drugs and establishes tolerance levels. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates pesticide use and establishes tolerance levels in food products. FDA and FSIS are responsible for enforcing these tolerances on all foods under their respective authorities. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) safeguards national animal and plant health in the United States by inspecting for disease and/or pests. This multi-pronged system has proven to be effective in protecting American consumers while granting U.S. market access to other countries.

FSIS requires establishments under its jurisdiction to operate under Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems. Importing countries are required to operate equivalent inspection systems.

With respect to the FDA, it is in the process of implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama on January 4, 2011, is the most sweeping reform of U.S. food safety laws in more than 70 years. FSMA aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it. The law provides FDA with new enforcement authorities designed to achieve higher rates of compliance with prevention- and risk-based food safety standards to better respond to and contain problems when they do occur. The law also gives FDA important new tools to hold imported foods to the same standards as domestic foods and directs FDA to build an integrated food safety with state and local authorities. FSMA also requires the development of a Food and Agriculture Defense Strategy that federal agencies are already working on.

FSMA is built around several fundamental programs, whose key components include:

- Prevention: mandatory preventative controls for food facilities; mandatory produce safety standards; authority to prevent intentional contamination.
- Inspection and compliance: mandated inspection frequency; records access; testing by accredited laboratories; mandatory recall; expanded administrative detention; suspension of registration; enhanced product tracing abilities; additional record-keeping for high risk foods.
- Imports: Importer accountability; third party certification; certification for high-risk foods; voluntary qualified importer program; authority to deny entry.

- Enhanced partnerships: State and local capacity building; foreign capacity building; reliance on inspections by other agencies.

Implementation of FSMA has been initiated and will be on-going for an extended period of time. Interested persons can learn more about FSMA and track its implementation at <http://www.fda.gov/food/foodsafety/fsma/default.htm#document> .

VANUATU

The Government of Vanuatu recognises the importance of Food Safety and through its main implementing body (Ministry of Health) has developed and endorsed a National Strategy that will complement the existing Food Control Act and the Food Regulation No.37 of 2009. The National Environmental Health Policy and Strategy 2012-2016 includes Food Safety as Strategy 2 with a Goal to minimize food borne illness and death and also impact poverty reduction and socio-economic development by means of improving access to safe food through adequate and proper food hygiene education.

Implementation of the Penalty Notices under the Food Control Act that was gazetted in 2010 began in 2011.

A draft Street Food Vendors Guideline has been developed and is currently being reviewed by the Vanuatu National Codex Committee (VNCC) before going through consultations with stakeholders.

It has been identified that there is a need for the review of the Food Legislations to be in line with Codex Standards. As such, a Concept Note has been presented to the Director of Public Health (who is also the Chief Food Authority) outlining the specific sections under the Legislations that need reviewing. The VNCC will coordinate and facilitate the reviewing of the Food Legislations.

With regards to Nutrition, the Public Health Act has included Nutrition within its scope. There is also work on developing a Guideline on Multi Micronutrient. This is anticipated to be completed in May 2012.

The Vanuatu National Plan of Action on Nutrition is in the review stage and should be finalised and endorsed by June 2012.

A draft Biosecurity Act has been developed and is proposed to be finalised and endorsed by 2013.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Objective 3 of the Regional Strategic Plan aims to promote the development and enhancement of national capacities of Codex Contact Points and supporting infrastructures.

Please describe: i) any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex; ii) any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

AUSTRALIA

Codex Australia continues to hold seminars for first time delegates to the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) These seminars assist with enhancing effective participation at sessions of CCFICS. All first time participants are invited to attend the information seminar which is held on the Sunday afternoon prior to the commencement of the plenary session.

This seminar outlines the processes and procedures that are essential for the smooth operation of the Committee during its deliberations, including:

- registration of participants;
- seating arrangements;
- operation of microphones & headsets;
- how to make an intervention; and
- papers for the meeting.

The Chair of the Committee addresses the seminar and provides an overview of the items on the agenda, this session also includes some insight into the outcomes he is hoping that the current session will achieve.

This seminar provides delegates with the opportunity to ask questions of the Chair and the Australian Secretariat on any other issues concerning the operation of the Committee.

CANADA

To strengthen Canada's Codex Program and thus, enhance the effectiveness of Canada's participation in Codex activities, "*Canada's Strategic Framework for Participation in the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program 2008-2012*" identifies the broad objectives for the Government of Canada (GOC) with regards to Codex. As such, the document is a tool to guide Departments and Agencies in developing and implementing their specific work plans related to Codex activities. The Strategic Objectives identified in this Framework are grouped around four related themes:

1. Enhance Canada's influence on Codex deliberations and outcomes.
2. Promote the use of Codex standards as the basis for national policies and regulations.
3. Enhance strategic and functional management of Canada's domestic Codex program.
4. Promote processes to enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

The Strategic Objectives reflect the GOC priorities and interests. They emphasize Canada's support for a transparent, science-based international regulatory system as well as continued efforts to be an influential architect and promoter of this system. The current Strategic Framework can be found at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/intactivit/codex/activit/strateg-codex-2008-2012-eng.php>.

In addition to the Framework, Codex awareness and training sessions are held as needed to provide a general overview of Codex and how it operates. Participants include newcomers to Codex, as well as Codex participants wanting to enhance understanding and relevance of Codex to their activities (both Government and industry). These sessions discuss the importance of Canada's participation in Codex, how Codex carries out its work, the importance of using Codex texts when developing national regulations and policies, and how Canada's Codex program works.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

With the involvement of EU-TRAP intervention the CCP PNG was fully involved in the program as part of capacity building. As a result we were able to organise three (3) very important workshops as a result of stakeholder analysis and facilitation of the SPS Compliance Policy (2011) to address SPS issues in the country.

Additionally, towards the end of 2010 under the Department of Agriculture & Livestock (DAL), the office of the Codex Contact Point has been fully renovated by both DAL & EU-TRAP. The procurement of equipment such as computers, desks etc was funded by EU-TRAP under Component 2.

The DAL has created a new unit known as the "Agrofood Safety and Codex PNG Unit" under the Science & Technology Branch to address issues purely on Agrofood safety and Codex Food Standards. The Unit is managed by an Acting Director, Science & Technology Branch who is the Codex Contact Point for the country. The A/Director has postgraduate qualifications in Science from the University of Queensland, Australia. The Agrofood Safety and Codex PNG Unit under DAL then recruited three (3) specialized staff who are graduates from PNG Universities and Institutes to work on a full time on Codex food standards development issues.

The Government of PNG noted under its major policies such as Vision 2050 under 2nd pillar it talks about wealth creation, under PNG Development Sustainable Plan (PNGDSP) 2010-2030 it reflects Codex Standards enforce Market, under PNG Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2011-2015 it enforces establishment of National Food Authority formation, under National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) 2007-2016 it indicates Food and Nutrition (Food Safety), under National Health Plan (NHP) 2011-2020 it mentions health of consumers and SPS Compliance Policy 2011 it talks about addressing the Food Chain as an Integrated Approach Coordination mechanism. On the basis of the above high level National Government documents available, it shows Codex food standards is the priority agenda for PNG.

Also, recently the NCC membership has been extended to other stakeholders including Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DoFAT), Department of Environment & Conservation (DEC), Department of National Planning & Monitoring (DNPM) including Food Industries such as Manufacturers Council (MC) of PNG, PNG Growers Association (GA), Rural Industries Council (RIC).

As new CCNASWP Regional Coordinator, Codex Contact Point is currently involved in the organization and logistics of the 12th Session of the CCNASWP to be held in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea from 19-22 September, 2012 as this contributes to our capacity building.

Additionally, PNG believes that it is advisable to have more Regional workshops for CCPs similar to such as the Risk Assessment workshop which was held in New Zealand in 2011 where PICs Food Legislation Experts meet to discuss strategies to drive forward codex issues in the Region. It is important for all CCPs to develop linkages and network to learn from each other. It is equally important for NCC to have annual workshops to discuss the Codex Food standards issues at operational level.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States has established effective mechanisms nationally and internationally to ensure that horizontal communication on cross cutting issues occurs between delegates to various food standards related international organizations. This includes consultations by our delegates with other Federal agencies, consumer groups, and industry representatives during the drafting process of the U.S. position, followed by public meetings prior to each Codex Committee session that solicit input on the draft U.S. position from the public at large. These public meetings, which are notified via the Federal Register, press releases and the U.S. Codex website, are open to all interested parties. They also afford the opportunity for those who cannot physically attend to participate via telephone.

VANUATU

Vanuatu has benefited from a Codex On-the-Job Training Attachment with the New Zealand Codex Office (Wellington) in March 2012. The training was attended by the Codex Contact Point (CCP) and the Food Safety Officer.

The Vanuatu National Codex Committee (VNCC) continues to engage in Codex awareness programs to consumers and relevant stakeholders.

Question 3: Regional Strategic Plan- priority areas for implementation and related training needs

Of the activities listed in the Regional Strategic plan please describe: i) the priority areas for your country; and ii) what additional support through training and development is required to ensure their effective implementation.

AUSTRALIA

Australia is interested in the responses from the Pacific Island Countries in relation to this question.

CANADA

Canada remains committed to the objectives identified in the CCNASWP Regional Strategic Plan. Canada is currently exploring mechanisms to enhance our ability to contribute to the achievement of these objectives, in particular Objective 3 (Promote the development and enhancement of the capacities of national Codex Contact Points and their supporting infrastructures of the PIC members to carry out their core functions); and Objective 4 (strengthen the exchange of scientific and technical expertise amongst the developed and developing members of the region).

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PNG as a new Regional Coordinator our priority activity is objective 1: To improve the coordination and communication of the region's activities in Codex. PNG wants to see all NASWP members hold pre-session meeting at Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working groups; ensure the written comments by NASWP members countries are submitted on Codex issues to consolidate position of the Region; Prepare checklist to ensure smooth transition of the Regional Coordinator; Ensure and identify the Issues Relevant to the Region

is brought to CCNASWP Regional meeting for discussion and to ensure NASWP member countries develop and implementation the Regional Strategic Plan. Thus, the Regional Coordinator (RC) and CCP PNG would need an additional training to identify issues relevant to the Region and how to compile written comments, circular letters and coordinating of positions. We also would invite non Codex member countries in the Region such as New Caledonia, Wallis & Futuna and other Pacific island countries to attend the CCNASWP meetings and become members of Codex Alimentarius Commission.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States does not have any specific comments to this question.

VANUATU

Vanuatu has benefited from a Codex On-the-Job Training Attachment with the New Zealand Codex Office (Wellington) in March 2012. The training was attended by the Codex Contact Point (CCP) and the Food Safety Officer. A VNCC Guide, Terms of Reference, Council of Ministers paper has been developed to seek endorsement at the highest level for the purpose of government recognition to the work of Codex. This training also indicated the need for a permanent location for the Codex Contact Point and Secretariat to allow consistency and improvement to the work of codex at the national level.

Question 4: Codex Standards- national priorities and interests

Taking into account several CCNASWP Strategic Plan activities (2.5, 3.5, 4.4 and 6.2) please describe: i) which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country; ii) what are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and iii) use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

AUSTRALIA

Australia is interested in the responses from the Pacific Island Countries in relation to this question.

CANADA

One of Canada's priorities in Codex is to influence Codex standards and processes, and take a leadership role in promoting science as the basis for decision making in Codex. Canada is committed to continue promoting the development and adoption of Codex standards that are risk-based, founded on sound science and evidence. In particular, efforts will be directed to continue developing strategies and working with like-minded countries for preventing erosion of Codex science-based decision making.

From a domestic perspective, federal departments and agencies must respect Canada's international obligations at all stages of the regulatory life-cycle as required by the *Cabinet Directive on Streamlining Regulation*, a Government of Canada policy applicable to all departments and agencies which sets out requirements for the development, implementation, evaluation and review of regulations. The policy also requires the use of available international standards, guidelines, and recommendations as a basis for technical regulations and for conformity assessment procedures where they achieve the intended regulatory objective.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The most important Codex Standard that is of importance to PNG includes (1) Codex HACCP Principles developed by CCFH, (2) Food Labelling Principles developed by CCFL, (3) Food Import and Export Principles developed by CCFICS, (4) General Principles developed by CCGP, (5) Fish and Fishery Product Principles developed by CCFFP; (7) Risk Analysis Principles developed by JECFA/JMPR; Pesticide Residues Limits developed by CCPR, and Veterinary Drug Residue Limits developed by CCRVDF.

However, PNG believe that some of the issues of interest to the Region includes (1) development of Kava, Noni and Galip nut standards, (2) Date marking, (3) Food labelling, (4) National Food Control System and Consumer Participation in Food Control Setting, (5) Risk Analysis on Dietary Exposure Assessment, (6) Pesticide and Veterinary drug / hormones residues, (7) Contaminant Monitoring, and (8) Feed development issues. These are some of the key issues of national importance.

Also, at national level our National Institute of Standards & Industrial Technology (NISIT) has been mandated to adopt Codex Food Standard and recommend to be used by PNG. Some of the issues highlighted does not have national standards and it is NCCs recommendation that NISIT adopt them and recommend to the consumers to use at National level.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States strongly supports the science-based approach to food safety decision making. Taking into account the relevant activities mentioned in the CCNASWP Strategic Plan, the United States, Australia, New Zealand in cooperation with the FAO hosted a workshop in Apia, Samoa, May 10-12, 2011, for our Codex colleagues in the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga. The workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Codex Contact Points in the Pacific Island countries by providing techniques to participate effectively in Codex. It provided practical guidance on how to manage Codex at the national level and a forum to share experiences/learn the best practices in organizing Codex activities.

The first two days of the workshop focused on four themes: Codex Contact Point Roles and Responsibilities; Managing Codex at the National Level; Effective Participation in Codex; and Developing National and Regional Strategies for Codex. On the third day, the group continued discussions originally covered at the 11th Session of CCNASWP in Tonga in September 2010, regarding a harmonized approach to date marking in the region. The workshop concluded with a discussion on the 2011 Codex Commission session, including: election of new Commission Chair/Vice Chairpersons, regional coordinator transition, and standards for adoption. A case study on ractopamine was presented in support of the scientific process in Codex standard setting.

VANUATU

Vanuatu considered the following activities in the regional strategy of high importance to its National training and development needs:

- 3.2 Conduct national and/or regional workshops on Codex for CCPs and National Codex Committee members.
- 3.5 Develop a mentoring programme between the developed and developing countries of the region to enhance the PIC knowledge and understanding of Codex issues, structure and processes and promote more effective participation in international standards development.
- 4.4 Conduct workshops/training courses as appropriate to facilitate the development of technical capacity of the members of the region to address the identified issues.
- 5.1 Support practical training on the importance of international harmonisation and the development of national standards and regulations based on Codex.
- 6.4 On-the-job training at appropriate institutions/ministries/departments in the developed member countries of CCNASWP.

Question 5: Scientific activities and data collection activities

Related to Objective 4 in the Regional Strategic Plan, please describe: i) ongoing activities to determine food safety priorities and ensure the scientific basis of food safety decisions; ii) key data collection activities ongoing to determine key hazards and contaminants in the food supply; and iii) any significant activities related to food monitoring and collection of epidemiological data.

AUSTRALIA

APEC cooperation on food safety

APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF)

At its last meeting in the US the APEC FSCF agreed to build on already established communication networks and processes, specifically by sharing information on emerging food safety issues and during food safety emergencies. It was recommended that the APEC FSCF Food Safety Incident Network (FSIN) be

formed in order to engage all member economies more fully in the work of the FSCF and PTIN and to facilitate engagement with INFOSAN.

During 2011–2012, significant progress has been made toward the establishment of the APEC FSCF FSIN. It is expected that the FSIN will assist in facilitating development and implementation of FSCF agreed approaches to improve information and knowledge sharing, food safety incident preparedness, response and recovery mechanisms across the APEC region as well as INFOSAN.

Following on from APEC initiatives in Big Sky, the co-chairs of the APEC FSCF (FSANZ on behalf of Australia and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, on behalf of the People's Republic of China) and the World Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 18 May 2011, to form the Global Food Safety Partnership (GFSP). The signing of this Memorandum acknowledged that the work of the APEC FSCF and its PTIN contributed significantly to improving food safety in the APEC region.

Australian Total Diet Study

The Australian Total Diet Study (ATDS) continues to be the primary tool for monitoring levels of chemicals in the food supply. Through this study, issues that may require further investigation or follow-up activity are highlighted.

Traditionally, the ATDS has primarily focussed on agricultural and veterinary residues, pesticides and contaminants (e.g. 20th ATDS and 23rd ATDS) however, in recent years the ATDS has evolved to consider other food chemicals such as additives (e.g. 21st ATDS) and nutrients (22nd ATDS).

Over the past three years, FSANZ has published the 22nd ATDS (2008) and 23rd ATDS (2011), as well as commenced the 24th ATDS (2011) and undertaken planning activities for the 25th ATDS (2011/2012).

The current study, 24th ATDS, has a primary focus on acrylamide, aluminium and some packaging migration materials. All sampling and analysis for this survey is complete and the report is in preparation. The next iteration of this study, the 25th ATDS, is now in the planning phase and is anticipated to commence in the 2012-2013 financial year.

FSANZ also gathers surveillance and monitoring data on chemicals in food through other targeted surveys which may be conducted in response to emerging food issues or food incidents. Examples of such surveys that have been completed in the past three years are available on the FSANZ website and include:

- Supplementary report to the 2008 survey of added colours in foods available in Australia
- National coordinate survey of sulphite levels in sausages, cordial and dried fruit
- Survey of nitrates and nitrites in food and beverages in Australia
- Survey of iodine levels in seaweed and seaweed containing products in Australia
- FSANZ survey of chemical migration from food contact packaging materials in Australian food
- Survey of GM ingredients in soy-based infant formula
- Baseline survey on the prevalence and concentration of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in chicken meat on-farm and at primary processing
- FSANZ survey of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in Australian Foods
- Survey of chemical contaminants and residues in espresso, instant and ground coffee
- FSANZ survey of bisphenol A in Australian foods
- National coordinated survey of melamine in food and beverages
- Survey of iodine levels in beverages enriched with seaweed

CANADA

Science is critical to delivering on Canada's food safety mandate. Science informs policy development as well as program design and delivery through the scientific practices of foresight, advice, risk assessment, influencing of international standards, research and development, and testing.

The CFIA established a Food Safety Science Committee (FSSC) in 2007 to identify and rank food safety priorities used to establish risk management, research and regulatory priorities in order to reduce risks to Canadians. The objectives established by the FSSC are to identify hazards and prioritize food safety risks; identify possible risk management options; identify additional regulatory tools needed; identify research needs related to food safety; and ensure the above outputs are used to plan and link activities leading to improved food safety outcomes. The output of this process informs risk-based allocation of program delivery resources for the CFIA. A Steering Committee for the FSSC included representatives from Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Working groups also included representatives from provincial governments and academia.

The CFIA is further working to enhance its scientific capacity by developing a strategy for an integrated national food laboratory network; increasing its testing capacity; and improving its science facilities and equipment.

As part of its responsibility for enforcing food-related standards, Health Canada conducts food-related human health risk assessments prior to making decisions on food recalls. Health Canada will be enhancing its food safety incident management capacity and processes. This will include enhancement of health risk assessment capacity, risk assessment methodologies, and analytical method to support early detection resulting in improved foresight and preparedness mechanisms. This will allow Canada to rapidly respond to priority food safety hazards.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The development of scientific activities and data collection activities needs to be enhanced in the PICs. As the Codex principles are science based and to develop codex standards it has to be supported by strong scientific evidence. Therefore, the PICs have to work in collaboration with QUAD countries to develop capacities to undertake research on food safety and be able to collect appropriate data to determine key hazards and data collection. The data collection has to be on the basis of key hazards and contaminants to be endorsed by CCNASWP or relevant other Regional Committee. In terms of monitoring the epidemiological data, PNG would enable the laboratories in each country to share facilities and experts. It is the role of CCPs in the region to provide a list of Technical Experts to obtain specific technical information. Also, conduct workshops and seminars to develop capacity of members on issues of Regional importance. NCC also of the view to have the existing laboratories accredited to international level to conduct more scientific research. Also, there is a need to coordinate food safety issues in a more collaborative manner by sharing facilities and train more staff in food safety standard research.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the last couple of years, food safety in the United States has been improved by published regulations on a number of things, including:

- new performance standards for high-risk pathogens,
- the identification of adulterated or misbranded products,
- the enhancement of inspection and compliance procedures,
- trace back procedures of the contamination source of foodborne outbreaks at retail level, and
- the enhancement of food recall procedures

In the area of food control management, the United States is developing a national environmental assessment system that identifies factors contributing to foodborne outbreaks to help determine how to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses associated with food-service establishments. It is also enhancing national surveillance networks for foodborne diseases to share information and properly deal with incidents of unsafe food released in commerce, pursuant to FSMA's Section 205 requirements. This section calls for enhancing the foodborne illness surveillance network at all levels of government through better coordination, information-sharing, epidemiological tools, illness attribution, identification of new or rarely documented causes of foodborne illness, and data integration.

In regards to laboratory infrastructure, the United States has established national standards for federal, state, local, and industry laboratory testing and results to ensure consistency in testing methodologies and results.

Federal agencies also advise training institutions in developing common training standards for all food protection agencies to ensure consistency.

The United States is using web-based and social media platforms to communicate food safety issues to the American public. In 2011, a national multimedia campaign was launched to urge consumers to reduce their personal risk of food-related illnesses by learning safer food handling behaviors.

VANUATU

Vanuatu is actively participating in the Discussion paper for the development of a Regional Kava Standard. We also support work on Noni and Galip Nut. Vanuatu would like to see more technical support provided for work to be done on the three important export commodities (kava, noni and Galip nut).

CCFL: The work on Date marking is of importance to Vanuatu.

CCFICS: The Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems. There is a working group to develop a questionnaire on how countries currently assess and manage the performance of their national food control systems.

Question 6: Cooperation with relevant international regional organizations

Please provide information on initiatives at national and regional level to promote coordination of work on food standards with other international and regional organizations.

AUSTRALIA

Australia through FSANZ continues to collaborate successfully internationally and regionally to support CCNASWP activities. FSANZ participates in informal networks such as the International Food Chemical Safety Liaison Group and its counterpart International Food Microbiological Safety Liaison Group. These liaison groups provide a platform for food regulators in different countries to exchange information on chemical and microbiological risk analysis, emerging issues and food surveillance.

Additionally FSANZ has continued in its role as a WHO collaborating centre for food contamination monitoring, and carries out activities in support of the WHO's programs. In this capacity we participate in the WHO Global Environment Monitoring System/Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Program (GEMS/Food) through the provision of monitoring data on levels of priority contaminants in food and total diet. A number of food analytical data sets have been submitted over the last 12 months.

FSANZ has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and/or bilateral agreements for sharing confidential information with food regulatory agencies in various countries, including some in the countries in the NASWP region. These agreements are focussed on the sharing of information related to risk analysis activities, emerging food safety issues and food incidents.

CANADA

Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)

Canada is currently working closely with PAHO on an initiative to strengthen national regulatory authorities' capacity for food safety in the Region of the Americas. The first activity involves developing a work plan to modernize the food safety inspection systems in the region, including legislation updates, clarification of roles, inspection of domestic and imported foods and effective coordination amongst competent authorities. The work plan will be based on the guidelines and standards developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The second activity involves conducting a workshop for the CARICOM members in the LAC and Caribbean region to field-test practical risk analysis training materials. The objective is to validate and improve the effectiveness of practical risk analysis training material currently under development by WHO and FAO.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

It is important to develop network and linkages between other international and regional organizations such as Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), New Zealand Food Authority (NZFA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Canada Food Authority (CFA), European Union – Trade Related

Assistance Project (EU-TRAP), South Pacific Regional Environmental Program (SCREP), Pacific Forum Secretariat (PFS) and South Pacific Community (SPC).

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States does not have any specific comments to this question.

Question 7: Any other matters

Are there any other comments you would like to make in any of the areas covered by the Regional Strategic Plan?

AUSTRALIA

There are no other matters that Australia would like to raise in response to CL 2012/6-NASWP.

CANADA

There are no other matters that Canada would like to raise in response to CL 2012/6-NASWP.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PNG believes that there needs to be a mid-term review of the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) to monitor and evaluate the implementation process. PNG also believes that some of our Regional Representatives from PICs should attend similar Regional meeting such as CCASIA to learn how other regions are progressing to make comparison with NASWP Region.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States does not have any other comments to raise under this question.

VANUATU

In objective 1 and 2 - It will be good to see the Regional Coordinator (RC) playing a more effective role especially in the coordination of PICs issues. RC can also seek to acquire funds to bring everyone together for urgent matters if need be and stimulate more discussions on specific regional (PICs) issues and sum up shared views thus encouraging effective participation.

Objective 3 and 6 - The activities in these objectives have been initiated but there is still need for continuation and improvement. Again Vanuatu would like to emphasize the need for more regular contact or communication with the regional coordinator.

Objective 4 and 5 - There is much need for technical assistance in science evidence. This includes research work, data collection, analysis, methods, experts, institutions, etc.

From what is already transpiring from the discussion paper for Kava, there is great need to understand better the Codex procedures in developing a standard.