

“Aligning priorities in food safety between the private and public sector”

Side Event, during the 21st Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG)

23 April 2009, FAO Headquarters, Rome

Summary of Discussion

The Side Event was convened to discuss public private partnership in the field of food safety. FAO is interested to explore opportunities for closer ties, while maintaining neutrality and transparency, and to build on past successes of collaboration with the private sector – benefits, among others, include involvement of expertise and data from the food industry, leveraging of contributions, scaling up of operations. It was recognised that to be effective public private partnerships need to be mutually beneficial and provide a win-win opportunity and results.

SSAFE (Safe Supply of Affordable Food Everywhere, Inc) is a not for profit organization which has a formal status since 2006. The scope of the organization is the interaction between animal health, wildlife and food safety, and key interests are the harmonization of standards, capacity building and social responsibility. SSAFE confirmed it is open and welcomes foreign members and that it is funded by membership dues only. SSAFE also supports the Global Initiative for Food Systems Leadership (GIFSL).

Many challenges exist and much needs to be done to enhance food safety globally. During the discussion, speakers identified assuring sufficient capacity at the national level as key to achieving safe food. This included scientific and institutional capacity covering food inspectorates, analytical laboratories and the ability to effectively participate in Codex Alimentarius. An integral part of raising capacity and awareness is involvement of government and food industry as co-partners with the common objective of safe food. An advantage of SSAFE is its experience in taking internationally agreed principles and standards and applying them directly to food systems by its member companies. This experience could contribute to strengthening and harmonising food safety systems globally.