



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

# INFOSAN



## ACTIVITY REPORT

2014/2015



International Food Safety Authorities Network



# **INFOSAN**

ACTIVITY REPORT 2014/2015



**International Food Safety Authorities Network**

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# Foreword

The 2014/2015 biennium has been marked by a number of high-profile occasions that have emphasized the significance of food safety for public health, good nutrition and food security.

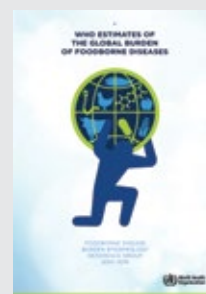
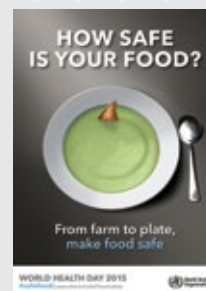
At the second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in November 2014, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and national governments reiterated the importance of food safety in ensuring healthy diets. ICN2 also provided a forum for FAO and WHO to underscore the importance of exchanging food safety information between government authorities nationally and across borders in order to prevent foodborne diseases. A few months later, in April 2015, World Health Day was dedicated to food safety to catalyse collective government and public action to put measures in place that will improve the safety of food from farms, factories, street vendors, and kitchens alike. Many countries around the world marked this special day by staging diverse activities to raise awareness about food safety. Most recently, in December 2015, WHO released estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases for the first time. These global and regional data illustrate the considerable impact that foodborne diseases are having on individuals of all ages, particularly children under five years of age and persons living in low-income regions of the world.

Each of these occasions have shone an international spotlight on food safety and reminded us that everyone involved in the production, distribution and preparation of food — from farm to plate — must play his or her part to make it safe. In addition, it is now widely recognized that making food safe requires international and national cross-sectoral collaboration among those working in human health, animal health, agriculture, environmental health, education, tourism, trade and other fields.

For more than 10 years, the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) has been strengthening food safety systems by fostering communication across sectors and disseminating important food safety information of global relevance.

INFOSAN has continued to grow and develop in 2014/2015, forging functional links with regional food safety networks and initiatives, and building on a strong global reputation for efficiency and effectiveness, especially in the context of international food safety emergency response. Then again, more can always be done — active participation and support for INFOSAN should be a priority for Member States to safeguard the global food supply.

Safe food is critical, not only for better health, improved livelihoods and food security, but also for economic development, trade and the international reputation of every country. Efforts to improve food safety should, therefore, be strengthened through public health and development policies, especially as we look towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We must capitalize on the momentum created during the 2014/2015 biennium to scale up and mainstream food safety in national and international political agendas. Enhanced participation in INFOSAN is just one of the many ways in which national government agencies can demonstrate their dedication to improving food safety around the globe.



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# Table of contents

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Network Membership</b>	<b>2</b>
OVERVIEW	2
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP	2
REPRESENTATION BY SECTOR	4
<b>INFOSAN Activities</b>	<b>6</b>
NETWORK-BUILDING ACTIVITIES	6
EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES	10
INFOSAN EMERGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN 2014/2015	10
EVENTS IN FOCUS	17
THE INFOSAN COMMUNITY WEBSITE	19
<b>The Rising Profile of INFOSAN</b>	<b>21</b>
INFOSAN IN THE TWITTERSPHERE AND OTHER MEDIA	21
INFOSAN AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND UNIVERSITY TRAINING COURSES	22
<b>Conclusion and Future Directions</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>26</b>
APPENDIX A - INFOSAN EVENTS IN 2014	26
APPENDIX B - INFOSAN EVENTS IN 2015	32
<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>37</b>

## Abbreviations

ACHIPIA	Chilean Food Safety and Quality Agency
AMRO	WHO Regional Office for the Americas
ANVISA	Brazilian Health Surveillance Agency
DG SANTE	The Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission
ECCP	European Commission Contact Point
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EMPRES Food Safety	The FAO Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety
EREN	Emerging Risks Exchange Network
EU	European Union
EURO	WHO Regional Office for Europe
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICN2	2nd International Conference on Nutrition
IHR (2005)	International Health Regulations (2005)
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network
MFDS	Ministry of Food and Drug Safety, Republic of Korea
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
RASFF ECCP	RASFF European Commission Contact Point
SAGARPA	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, Mexico
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SENASICA	National Service of Animal and Plant Health, Quality and Food Safety, Mexico
SEARO	WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
United Kingdom	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
USA	United States of America (the)
US FDA	United States Food and Drug Administration
WHO	World Health Organization
WPRO	WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

# Executive Summary

## INFOSAN in 2014 and 2015

Since the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) was launched in 2004, 186 Member States<sup>1</sup> (plus 10 Associate Member States, areas or territories) have joined the Network. While the process to designate INFOSAN members (i.e. an Emergency Contact Point and Focal Points) at the national level has been an important focus during the biennium, the active participation of designated members through registration and participation on the INFOSAN Community Website is vital. Members are expected to respond to requests for information and take the initiative to share and disseminate food safety information of potential international relevance. Overall, 73% of all Member States had registered an active INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point by the end of 2015, which represents a 17-point increase over the biennium. The largest gains were made in the African and Americas regions as a result of targeted actions there. Efforts will be sustained during the 2016/2017 biennium to ensure that new INFOSAN members are well informed and empowered to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and actively participate in Network activities. The INFOSAN Secretariat undertook new activities during the 2014/2015 biennium, such as using webinars to train new members. These online presentations were made in English, French and Spanish, and provided an opportunity for new members to familiarize themselves with INFOSAN operations and the INFOSAN Community Website, and to pose any questions directly to the INFOSAN Secretariat.

The INFOSAN Community Website is the main platform through which members communicate with each other and the INFOSAN Secretariat. It now supports 440 users around the globe and the user interface has been translated into French and Spanish to facilitate the participation of members who are more comfortable making contributions in those languages. A review of website usage patterns indicates that 75% of Emergency Contact Points and 64% of Focal Points accessed the website over the past year. Compared to previous years, there was a marked increase in the utilization of the discussion forum; members asked questions and shared information, particularly on food safety events of international concern. Monitoring website usage enables the INFOSAN Secretariat to prioritize follow-up actions for those members who, while still registered on the website, may no longer hold their position or need to be encouraged to use the website to share information, such as routine surveillance data or lessons learned from outbreaks of foodborne illness.

Data from the INFOSAN Community Website registration form has been extracted and summarized to illustrate which government sectors are represented by INFOSAN members (both Emergency Contact Points and Focal Points) and in which proportion. At the end of 2015, 39% of Emergency Contact Points and 35% of Focal Points reported being based in an authority responsible for food safety; 32% of Emergency Contact Points and 21% of Focal Points reported being in an authority responsible for public health. The remaining members reported being based in an authority with overarching responsibilities for a combination of food safety, public health, animal health, agriculture, trade, etc.

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this report, the term Member State is used to refer to those countries that are members to either WHO or FAO. WHO Member States are listed here: <http://www.who.int/countries/en/>. FAO members are listed here: <http://www.fao.org/legal/home/fao-members/en/>



Regarding emergency activities, the INFOSAN Secretariat facilitated international communications among INFOSAN members during 77 events during the biennium: 37 in 2015 and 40 in 2014 (there were 44 in 2013, 42 in 2012, and 46 in 2011). Biological hazards were responsible for the largest number of INFOSAN events, the most common of which was *Salmonella* spp. This remains consistent with hazards involved during INFOSAN food safety events during the previous biennium. In 2014/2015, events most commonly involved meat and meat products, followed by fish and other seafood. The average time the INFOSAN Secretariat remained actively engaged with an event was 22 days (compared to 19 days during the previous biennium). The majority of the 77 events involved Member States in the European Region, followed by the Western Pacific Region, the Region of the Americas, the South-East Asia Region, the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and the African Region, respectively.

During the biennium, one important strategic objective was to strengthen collaborative partnerships with other international networks, initiatives and agencies. For example, as part of the European Commission's Better Training for Safer Food initiative, the INFOSAN Secretariat participated in three regional workshops in Senegal (2014), Ireland (2014) and Estonia (2015). Participants included officials from national food safety authorities in the European Union (EU) and beyond; their objective was to promote cooperation between EU and non-EU Member States on food safety, specifically food safety incident notification and response. The INFOSAN Secretariat also supported capacity-building efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) during three regional workshops to enhance food safety early warning systems in the context of the FAO's Emergency Preparedness System for Food Safety (EMPRES Food Safety) in Kenya in 2014, and in Hungary and the United Arab Emirates in 2015, where many participants represented their country's INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point. Leveraging existing tools and momentum to amplify the work of INFOSAN through functional links to other programmes and networks has remained a priority, and has proven mutually beneficial for achieving common goals in the face of limited financial and human resources.

Other work conducted during the biennium to strengthen the Network included following up on recommendations for the World Health Organization (WHO) and FAO to continue to work with Member States to convene regional forums on food safety to review progress, share country practices, and address common issues related to INFOSAN development and the strengthening of national food safety systems. This was addressed by organizing the first and second regional meetings of INFOSAN members in the Americas in Chile in 2014 and Mexico in 2015, as well as the third regional meeting of INFOSAN members in Asia in 2015 in China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR).

Finally, encouraging the active participation of INFOSAN members continues to be a top priority. During the 2016/2017 biennium, FAO and WHO will implement an INFOSAN workplan that will focus on:

1. the promotion of cross-sectoral collaboration and information sharing to optimize response to foodborne health risks, including outbreaks; and
2. the development of countries' capacities to manage food safety risks (which includes the establishment and refinement of systems to monitor, assess and manage food safety incidents and emergencies).

These activities will be undertaken in consultation with the INFOSAN Advisory Group and with support from a new INFOSAN Strategic Framework.

# Introduction

The publication of the WHO's estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases in 2015<sup>2</sup> provides a stark reminder of the high morbidity and mortality wrought by preventable foodborne illnesses around the world. With our increasingly globalized food supply, contaminated food produced in one country can easily cause illness in other countries, where failures in food safety systems result in unsafe food entering the international market.

INFOSAN has been connecting national authorities worldwide since 2004. Its goal has been to prevent the international spread of contaminated food and foodborne disease, and strengthen food safety systems globally. This has been done by:

1. promoting the rapid exchange of information during food safety events;
2. sharing information on important food safety issues of global interest;
3. promoting partnership and collaboration between countries and networks; and
4. helping countries to strengthen their capacity to manage food safety emergencies.

Since its inception, the INFOSAN Secretariat has facilitated international communications between members during hundreds of food safety events; there were 77 during the 2014/2015 biennium.

This INFOSAN Activity Report provides an overview of the major events, activities and information products relating to INFOSAN in 2014/2015. The report highlights some achievements from the biennium, as well as challenges to overcome and areas for improvement. INFOSAN should be a member-driven network; a united and sustained effort must be made by all INFOSAN members for INFOSAN to reach its full potential.

<sup>2</sup> Further reading: [http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas\\_work/foodborne-diseases/ferg/en/](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/foodborne-diseases/ferg/en/)



*Together with our public health partners in food safety, the information shared through*

*INFOSAN has helped us identify emerging public health threats associated with specific food items, and respond to these threats in a timely and effective way.*



Dr Derrick Heng  
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# Network Membership

## OVERVIEW

Membership to INFOSAN is voluntary, but is restricted to representatives from national and regional government authorities. Each member should be officially designated. In order to foster multisectoral collaboration, the ideal structure of INFOSAN membership at the national level should be characterized by a single INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point (designated by the government authority responsible for coordinating national food safety emergency response activities), and additional INFOSAN Focal Points from each of the various government sectors involved in food safety.

Since its launch in 2004, 186 Member States have joined INFOSAN. In addition, some Associate Member States and overseas areas/territories of Member States have also designated INFOSAN members.<sup>3</sup> Sustained efforts at the Secretariat are ongoing to encourage existing members to remain active and engaged, and to advocate for all 194 members of WHO and FAO to join INFOSAN.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP

Active engagement requires INFOSAN members to regularly access the INFOSAN Community Website, which was launched in 2012. This members-only, online platform provides a secure forum for INFOSAN members to connect with one another, exchange ideas, and ask fellow food safety regulators around the world questions. While the INFOSAN Secretariat maintains a list of INFOSAN members, only those registered on the INFOSAN Community Website are considered “active”. Table 1 displays the number of Member States by region,<sup>4</sup> with an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point registered on the INFOSAN Community Website as of the end of 2015, compared to the end of 2014 and 2013, respectively.

As of the end of 2015, 141 (73%) of 194 Member States have an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point registered, representing a 17-point increase during the 2014/2015 biennium. INFOSAN membership was particularly enhanced in the African Region during this period; 14 new Member States registered an Emergency Contact Point on the INFOSAN Community Website. Similarly, 10 new Member States and two Associate Member States from the Region of the Americas designated INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points.

Unlike the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, INFOSAN Focal Points may not be directly involved during an emergency response; however, they will still have important responsibilities for ensuring national food safety. Table 2 illustrates, by region, the number of Member States with one or more INFOSAN Focal Point(s) registered on the INFOSAN Community Website as of the end of 2015, compared to the end of 2014 and 2013, respectively.

As of the end of 2015, 109 (56%) of 194 Member States have one or more INFOSAN Focal Point(s) registered, representing a 14-point increase during the 2014/2015 biennium. None of the four associate Member States have designated Focal Points. Seven (32%) of 22 areas/territories of

<sup>3</sup> Associate Member States are invited to designate an Emergency Contact Point and Focal Points; areas/territories are represented by the Emergency Contact Point from their participating Member State but are encouraged to designate Focal Points.

<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this report, regional divisions of Member States/areas/territories are based on coverage provided by the six WHO regional offices. For more information visit: <http://www.who.int/about/regions/en/index.html>

Member States have registered INFOSAN Focal Points; only five (23%) had done so by the end of 2013. INFOSAN members from both the African Region and the Region of the Americas have made the most progress with respect to the designation of new INFOSAN Focal Points during this two-year period.

These achievements are in line with one of the future directions defined in the 2013 INFOSAN Activity Report: to strengthen INFOSAN membership by focusing on under-represented areas (including in Africa and in the Americas). Targeted efforts will continue through the current biennium (2016/2017) to ensure that all INFOSAN members are active and well versed in their roles and responsibilities.

**TABLE 1** MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS WITH AN **INFOSAN EMERGENCY CONTACT** POINT REGISTERED ON THE INFOSAN COMMUNITY WEBSITE BY REGION FROM 2013 TO 2015

REGION		2015, n (%*)	2014, n (%*)	2013, n (%*)	Increase during 2014/2015 biennium n (%**)
African Region	47 Member States	26 (55%)	18 (38%)	12 (26%)	14 (117%)
Region of the Americas	35 Member States 4 Associate Members	25 (71%) 2 (50%)	19 (54%) 2 (50%)	15 (43%) -	10 (67%) 2
Eastern Mediterranean Region	21 Member States	13 (62%)	10 (48%)	8 (38%)	5 (63%)
European Region	53 Member States	45 (85%)	43 (81%)	42 (79%)	3 (7%)
South-East Asia Region	11 Member States	10 (91%)	10 (91%)	9 (82%)	1 (11%)
Western Pacific Region	27 Member States	22 (81%)	19 (70%)	22 (81%)	-
Global	194 Member States 4 Associate Members	141 (73%) 2 (50%)	119 (61%) 2 (50%)	108 (56%) -	33 (31%) 2

\* Percentage is calculated by dividing the number of Member States (or Associate Members) with an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point registered on the INFOSAN Community Website in each region by the total number of Members States (or Associate Members) in that region. For example, in the African Region in 2015,  $26/47 = 55\%$ .

\*\* Percentage is calculated by dividing the number of Member States (or Associate Members) in each region where an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point registered on the INFOSAN Community Website during 2014/2015 by the number of Member States (or Associate Members) in that region where an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point was already registered on the INFOSAN Community Website as of the end of 2013. For example, the increase during the 2014/2015 biennium in the African Region is  $(26-12)/12 = 14/12 = 117\%$ .

*Within my institution (INVIMA), INFOSAN is considered an efficient tool to facilitate orientation and communication during food safety events. By staying informed through INFOSAN on food safety situations, as well as on actions taken by food safety authorities at the global level, we are able to articulate proper measures in response to potential food safety emergencies.*



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**TABLE 2** MEMBER STATES, ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, AND AREAS/TERRITORIES WITH ONE OR MORE **INFOSAN FOCAL POINT(S)** REGISTERED ON THE INFOSAN COMMUNITY WEBSITE BY REGION FROM 2013 TO 2015

REGION		2015, n (%*)	2014, n (%*)	2013, n (%*)	Increase during 2014/2015 biennium n (%**)
African Region	47 Member States	23 (49%)	18 (38%)	12 (26%)	11 (92%)
Region of the Americas	35 Member States	23 (66%)	15 (43%)	13 (37%)	10 (77%)
	4 Associate Members 12 areas/territories	- 3 (25%)	- 3 (25%)	- 1 (8%)	- 2 (200%)
Eastern Mediterranean Region	21 Member States	10 (48%)	8 (38%)	10 (48%)	-
European Region	53 Member States	30 (57%)	26 (49%)	24 (45%)	6 (25%)
South-East Asia Region	11 Member States	5 (45%)	5 (45%)	6 (55%)	-1 (-17%)
Western Pacific Region	27 Member States	18 (67%)	18 (67%)	16 (59%)	2 (13%)
	10 areas/territories	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	-
Global	194 Member States	109 (56%)	90 (46%)	81 (42%)	28 (35%)
	4 Associate Members 22 areas/territories	- 7 (32%)	- 7 (32%)	- 5 (23%)	- 2 (40%)

\* Percentage is calculated by dividing the number of Member States (or Associate Members or areas/territories) with at least one INFOSAN Focal Point registered on the INFOSAN Community Website in each region by the total number of Members States (or Associate Members or areas/territories) in that region. For example, in the African Region in 2015, 23/47 = 49%.

\*\* Percentage is calculated by dividing the number of Member States (or Associate Members or areas/territories) in each region where an INFOSAN Focal Point registered on the INFOSAN Community Website during 2014/2015 by the number of Member States (or Associate Members or areas/territories) in that region where at least one INFOSAN Point was already registered on the INFOSAN Community Website as of the end of 2013. For example, the increase during the 2014/2015 biennium in the African Region is (23-12)/12 = 11/12 = 92%.

## REPRESENTATION BY SECTOR

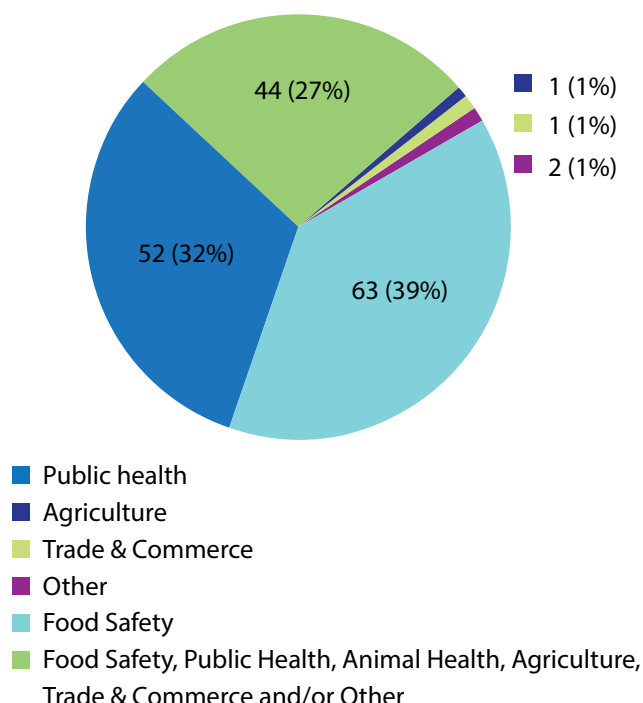
Data regarding membership by sector collected via the online registration form for the INFOSAN Community Website was analysed for 163 INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points<sup>5</sup> (from 141 Member States and two associate Member States) and 209 INFOSAN Focal Points (from 109 Member States and seven areas/territories of participating Member States).

Among INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points, 63 (39%) reported being based in an authority responsible for food safety; 52 (32%) in an authority responsible for public health; one (1%) in an authority responsible for agriculture; one (1%) in an authority responsible for trade and commerce; and two (1%) in authorities representing “other” sectors. The remaining 44 (27%) reported being based in an authority combining food safety, public health, animal health, agriculture, trade and commerce and/or other sectors (Figure 1).

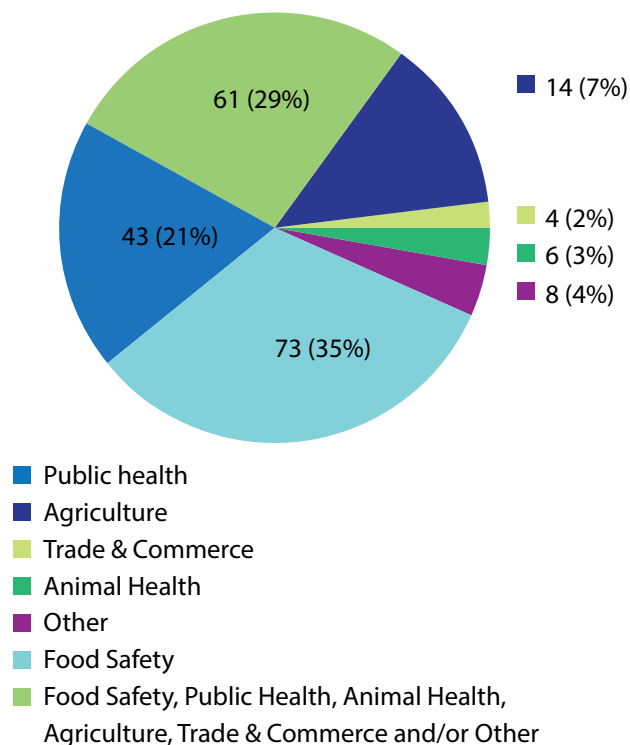
For INFOSAN Focal Points, 73 (35%) reported being based in an authority responsible for food safety; 43 (21%) in an authority responsible for public health; 14 (7%) in an authority responsible for agriculture; six (3%) in an authority responsible for animal health; four (2%) in an authority responsible for trade and commerce; and eight (4%) in authorities representing “other” sectors. The remaining 61 (29%) reported being based in a national authority that represents food safety, public health, animal health, agriculture, trade and commerce and/or other sectors (Figure 2). There are 64 Member States that have designated one INFOSAN Focal Point; 29 Member States have designated two Focal Points; 15 Member States have designated three Focal Points; and eight Member States have designated four or more Focal Points (there is a maximum of seven).

<sup>5</sup> Fourteen Member States have designated more than one INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point for specific operational reasons.

**FIGURE 1 EMERGENCY CONTACT POINTS**  
BY GOVERNMENT SECTOR (N=163)



**FIGURE 2 FOCAL POINTS**  
BY GOVERNMENT SECTOR (N=209)



No significant change in the proportion of INFOSAN members across government sectors was observed when compared to the previous biennium. Member States have been, and continue to be, invited and encouraged to designate additional INFOSAN Focal Points from government sectors not currently represented to further strengthen cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation at the national level.

It is important for Emergency Contact Points and Focal Points from different agencies in the same country to understand each other's roles and responsibilities in case a national food safety emergency response effort needs to be made. To ensure a coordinated approach, best practice suggests developing a national food safety emergency response plan in collaboration with all relevant agencies.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See FAO/WHO framework for developing national food safety emergency response plans: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1686e/i1686e00.pdf>



# INFOSAN Activities

## NETWORK-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

### 1. Connecting with new INFOSAN Members via online seminars (i.e. webinars)

In 2015, the INFOSAN Secretariat engaged with members online during six live webinars, in which members' roles and responsibilities were discussed and a demonstration of the INFOSAN Community Website was made. These online presentations were delivered in English, French and Spanish, and provided an opportunity for new members to familiarize themselves with INFOSAN and ask the INFOSAN Secretariat questions directly. The webinars proved to be a popular and effective communication tool and will be used again in the future to connect with members and exchange information on various food safety issues.

### 2. Participating in training workshops organized by the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food Safety

The Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission (DG SANTE) coordinates the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed<sup>7</sup> (RASFF) and continues to be an important partner for INFOSAN. As part of the Better Training for Safer Food initiative, the INFOSAN Secretariat was invited to participate in three workshops during the biennium, including in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2014, Trim, Ireland, in June 2014 and Tallinn, Estonia, in June 2015. These workshops included participants from national food safety authorities in the EU and beyond, and had the objective of promoting cooperation between EU and non-EU Member States on matters of food safety, specifically with respect to food safety incident notification and response. As most national RASFF Contact Points have the dual function of also serving as their country's INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, these training workshops provide an important opportunity to clarify how the INFOSAN Secretariat interacts with DG SANTE to share information during food safety emergencies.

### 3. Supporting FAO capacity-building efforts to enhance food safety early warning systems

To strengthen food safety early warning systems, FAO's EMPRES Food Safety<sup>8</sup> programme has developed a new training package, which was piloted during regional workshops in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2014, in Budapest, Hungary, in May 2015 and in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in November 2015. The workshops utilized a recently published handbook,<sup>9</sup> which explains how to identify, assess and prevent future threats to the food chain before they become emergencies and cause adverse events and illness. The handbook takes into account the globalized food supply; therefore, an important component of the workshops was explaining how national early warning systems need to be linked to regional and global rapid alert networks, such as INFOSAN. The INFOSAN Secretariat was able to support these important capacity-building initiatives by participating in the workshops and providing a detailed overview of INFOSAN to participants,

<sup>7</sup> Created in 1979, RASFF enables information to be shared efficiently between its members (EU-28 national food safety authorities, Commission, EFSA, ESA, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland) and ensures that urgent notifications are sent, received and responded to collectively and efficiently.

<sup>8</sup> The EMPRES Food Safety unit works with FAO members and other partners to prevent food safety emergencies. It is a fundamental component of FAO's Food Chain Crisis Management Framework (FCC).

<sup>9</sup> This is available online at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5168e.pdf>

many of whom had been designated as their country's INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point or one of several INFOSAN Focal Points.

#### 4. Strengthening the INFOSAN community and its activities through regional initiatives in Asia and the Americas

As elaborated in the 2013 INFOSAN Activity Report, enhancing participation in INFOSAN through the expansion of regional initiatives in Asia and the Americas was identified as a priority for the 2014/2015 biennium.

In the Americas, Network members from 28 countries met together for the first time in September 2014 in Santiago, Chile. During the meeting, participants improved their understanding of INFOSAN and gained a deeper knowledge of their roles and responsibilities as Emergency Contact Points or Focal Points within their respective authorities. Through panel discussions and case studies, the participants discussed how INFOSAN activities should be linked to other food safety programmes in the region and aligned with the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005). Most importantly, participants worked in small groups and contributed to the development of the new Regional Strategy to Strengthen INFOSAN in the Americas, which will guide regional participation in INFOSAN in the coming years. In October 2015, INFOSAN members from this region were reunited in Pachuca, Mexico, to review the progress made during 2015 and establish regional and sub-regional action plans to prioritize and implement the actions outlined in the regional strategy.

In Asia, the WHO Regional Food Safety Strategies for South-East Asia and the Western Pacific focus on strengthening national food safety systems and emphasize the importance of building countries' capacities to detect, assess and manage food safety incidents and emergencies. The strategies identify the priority actions required to ensure safe and healthy food and reduce the risk of food contamination and foodborne diseases. The strategies also promote partnerships, cooperation and collaboration across borders, as well as appropriate control and prevention mechanisms for foodborne diseases. Enhanced participation in INFOSAN and improved collaboration between INFOSAN members and national IHR Focal Points has been emphasized. To improve this collaboration and test the effectiveness of communication during a food safety emergency response, INFOSAN members and their national IHR counterparts from 11 countries in the Western Pacific Region participated in a food safety emergency simulation exercise in



Regional INFOSAN Meeting in Mexico, 2015



December 2014. The objectives of the exercise were to:

1. Validate the accessibility of the National IHR Focal Points and INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points using registered contact details;
2. Facilitate communication and collaboration during food safety emergencies between National IHR Focal Points, INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points and WHO, including at headquarters and the Regional Office for the Western Pacific.



Regional INFOSAN Meeting in Hong Kong SAR, 2015

In November 2015, a meeting on strengthening INFOSAN and national food safety systems in Asia was held in China, Hong Kong SAR. The meeting built on the outcomes of previous bi-regional meetings to strengthen INFOSAN and national food safety systems in Asia. The previous meetings on enhancing INFOSAN in Asia were led by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO), in close collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO), WHO headquarters, and FAO. The bi-regional nature of the meetings and the collaboration with other WHO offices and FAO has provided an excellent platform for strengthened multi sectoral collaboration and an excellent opportunity to better address regional food safety issues in Asia.



*INFOSAN provides reliable updates on food safety issues and connects food safety authorities around the globe.*

*The INFOSAN Community Website is a very informative platform and the alerts help us at BAFRA to keep ourselves abreast of food safety issues.*



**Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA)**  
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests,  
Royal Government of Bhutan  
INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, BHUTAN

Overall, regional initiatives in Asia and beyond have succeeded in raising the profile of INFOSAN and improving members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Moving forward, however, sustained efforts will be required to ensure that the identified strategic actions are carried out and that members are adequately supported to actively engage in Network activities and respond effectively to food safety emergencies and prevent foodborne illnesses around the globe.

## 5. Fostering stronger links to other networks, including the European Commission's RASFF

Ensuring food safety has long been recognized as a priority for DG SANTE, which has been operating RASFF since 1979. Both RASFF and INFOSAN aim to promote the rapid exchange of information about food safety incidents, and partnership and collaboration between countries, as well as to support strengthening of members' capacity to manage food safety risks.

All RASFF members are also INFOSAN members; however this dual membership has sometimes led to confusion with respect to reporting lines, and has resulted in a duplication of efforts for both members and staff at the INFOSAN Secretariat and the European Commission. In spring 2014, responsible officers managing both networks had the opportunity to work closely together towards defining and establishing the procedures for interaction during the secondment of a European Commission staff member to the INFOSAN Secretariat for three months. Specifically, this work led to clarification of the criteria for exchanging information between the two networks. This cooperative activity strengthened communications between the INFOSAN Secretariat and the European Commission's RASFF Contact Point (RASFF ECCP) for the purpose of reinforcing public health protection. It also moved efforts forward to unify and standardize information-exchange processes between the INFOSAN Secretariat and the RASFF ECCP to avoid confusion and remove double-reporting burdens on RASFF National Contact Points, who fill the dual role of also being their country's INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point.

*Thanks to INFOSAN, we are pleased to make connections by exchanging information on matters of food safety. We appreciate and value the way INFOSAN is operating.*



Mr Abera Tekle,  
Unit Head,  
Animal Health and Plant Health,  
INFOSAN Focal Point, ERITREA

## EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES

INFOSAN has been operational during numerous food safety events during the 2014/2015 biennium. The INFOSAN Secretariat's involvement during a food safety event is categorized as either a consultation, a verification request, or coordination:

1. **Consultation:** The INFOSAN Secretariat provides technical advice or information to an INFOSAN member regarding a food safety event or issue.
2. **Verification Request:** Following the receipt of information about a food safety event of potential international concern, the INFOSAN Secretariat requests additional details from an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point.
3. **Coordination:** The INFOSAN Secretariat actively obtains and disseminates information from INFOSAN members regarding a food safety event of international concern; this may or may not result in an INFOSAN alert/notice being posted on the INFOSAN Community Website.

## INFOSAN EMERGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN 2014/2015

Overall, the INFOSAN Secretariat was involved in 77 events during the 2014/2015 biennium (see Appendices A and B), including 8 consultations, 25 verification requests, and 44 coordination events. The average time that the INFOSAN Secretariat remained actively engaged with an event was 22 days, with a minimum of one day and a maximum of 99 days (median = 17 days). There were 48 events involving a biological hazard, 18 involving a chemical hazard, 5 involving an undeclared allergen, 4 involving a physical hazard, and 2 involving an unspecified hazard.

*I admit that as soon as I got designated as the INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point in Togo, I was impressed by the number of INFOSAN alerts and by the very fruitful exchanges with INFOSAN members. Congratulations to the INFOSAN Secretariat for the quickness of action and its permanent care.*



Mr Tchala Bodomziba,  
Chef Service,  
Direction de la Protection des Végétaux  
INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, TOGO

For events involving a biological hazard, *Salmonella* spp. was most commonly responsible (10 events in 2014/2015). These were followed by *Listeria monocytogenes* (8), *Clostridium* spp. (6), *Escherichia coli* (5), Norovirus (4), Hepatitis A Virus (3), *Bacillus* spp. (3), *Cyclospora cayetanensis* (2), an unspecified biological hazard (1), *Shigella* spp. (1), *Rhizopusoryzae* (1), *Trichinella* (1), *Vibrio* spp. (1), *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* (1), and a dead lizard (1). With regard to chemical hazards, events involving excess amounts of heavy metals occurred most frequently (3).

The food categories most commonly involved in the 77 events in 2014/2015 were meat products (13), fish and other seafood (11), fruit and fruit products (7), and vegetable and vegetable products (6).

For a Member State to be considered involved in an INFOSAN event, this means that: 1) potentially contaminated food was possibly imported to or exported from that Member State; or 2) cases of foodborne illness linked to internationally distributed, contaminated food were reported in that Member State. The majority of the 77 events in 2014/2015 involved Member States in the European Region (43), the Western Pacific Region (37), the Region of the Americas (33) The South-East Asia Region (11), the Eastern Mediterranean Region (10), and the African Region (9).

Most event notifications in 2014/ 2015 were reported to the INFOSAN Secretariat by an INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point or Focal Point (23), followed by WHO staff at headquarters (14). Other notifications were made by WHO staff from the Regional Office for Europe (EURO) (13), WHO staff from the Regional Office for the Americas (AMRO) (11), RASFF ECCP (9), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) (4) and, finally, WHO staff from WPRO (3).

Tables 3-10 provide an overview of food safety events during which INFOSAN was active by region, food category, hazard, and source of notification in 2014/2015.

*For the Dominican Republic, INFOSAN represents an important tool as provider of useful and reliable food safety information as well as guidance. INFOSAN's valuable platform, the INFOSAN Community Website, allows for the exchange of information and alerts in different countries. We hope this tool will continue and can be strengthened day by day with our information.*



**Dr Waddy Casado**  
Epidemiological Surveillance  
Ministry of Health - Department  
of International Cooperation  
INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point,  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (the)

TABLE 3 INFOSAN INVOLVEMENT BY REGION\*, 2011-2015

REGION	2015 N = 37 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 40 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 44 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 42 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 46 EVENTS n (%)
African Region	5 (14%)	4 (10%)	-	2 (5%)	2 (4%)
Region of the Americas	17 (46%)	16 (40%)	17 (39%)	19 (45%)	22 (48%)
Eastern Mediterranean Region	7 (19%)	3 (8%)	6 (14%)	3 (7%)	6 (13%)
European Region	18 (49%)	25 (63%)	30 (68%)	27 (64%)	21 (46%)
South-East Asia Region	7 (19%)	4 (10%)	5 (11%)	6 (14%)	3 (7%)
Western Pacific Region	15 (41%)	22 (55%)	16 (36%)	19 (45%)	17 (37%)

\* Multiple regions are often involved in the same event

TABLE 4 INFOSAN INVOLVEMENT BY FOOD CATEGORY, 2011-2015

FOOD CATEGORY	2015 N = 37 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 40 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 44 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 42 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 46 EVENTS n (%)
Meat and meat products	5 (14%)	8 (20%)	5 (11%)	5 (12%)	5 (11%)
Fish and other seafood	7 (19%)	4 (10%)	5 (11%)	4 (10%)	3 (7%)
Fruit and fruit products	5 (14%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)	5 (12%)	7 (15%)
Unknown	4 (11%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)	2 (5%)	2 (4%)
Vegetables and vegetable products	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	6* (14%)	3 (7%)	4 (9%)
Composite food	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	-	-	4 (9%)
Milk and dairy products	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	7 (16%)	6 (14%)	3 (7%)
Snacks, desserts and other foods	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	-
Fats and oils of animal and vegetable origin	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	-	-	1 (2%)
Herbs, spices and condiments	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)
Cereals and cereal-based products	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	2* (5%)	2 (5%)	-
Sugar and confectionary	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)
Eggs and egg products	-	2 (5%)	-	-	-
Food additive	-	2 (5%)	-	-	-
Foods for infants and small children	-	2 (5%)	-	2 (5%)	1 (2%)
Nuts and oilseeds	-	2 (5%)	5 (11%)	2 (5%)	5 (11%)
Alcoholic beverages	1 (3%)	-	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Non-alcoholic beverages	1 (3%)	-	1 (2%)	-	-
Products for special nutritional use	-	1 (3%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)
Animal feed	-	-	-	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Legumes and pulses	-	-	-	-	1 (2%)

\* 1 event involved both vegetables and vegetable products and cereals and cereal-based products in 2013

TABLE 5 INFOSAN INVOLVEMENT BY HAZARD CATEGORY, 2011-2015

HAZARD	2015 N = 37 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 40 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 44 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 42 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 46 EVENTS n (%)
Biological	22 (59%)	26 (65%)	28 (64%)	30 (71%)	31 (67%)
Chemical	8 (22%)	10 (25%)	15 (34%)	10 (24%)	13 (28%)
Physical	3 (8%)	1 (3%)	-	-	-
Undeclared allergen	3 (8%)	2 (5%)	-	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Unknown	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)

TABLE 6 INFOSAN INVOLVEMENT BY EVENTS INVOLVING BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS, 2011-2015

BIOLOGICAL HAZARD	2015 N = 22 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 26 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 28 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 30 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 31 EVENTS n (%)
<i>Salmonella enterica</i> spp.	4 (18%)	6 (23%)	7 (25%)	13 (43%)	10 (32%)
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	3 (14%)	5 (19%)	5 (18%)	2 (7%)	2 (6%)
<i>Clostridium</i> spp.	4 (18%)	2 (8%)	4 (14%)	4 (13%)	7 (23%)
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	1 (5%)	4 (15%)	3 (11%)	4 (13%)	6 (19%)
Norovirus	3 (14%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	1 (3%)	-
<i>Bacillus</i> spp.	1 (5%)	2 (8%)	-	1 (3%)	-
Hepatitis A virus	2 (9%)	1 (4%)	4 (14%)	-	1 (3%)
<i>Cyclospora cayetanensis</i>	2 (9%)	-	-	-	-
Unknown	1 (5%)	-	-	1 (3%)	-
Dead lizard	-	1 (4%)	-	-	-
<i>Rhizopus oryzae</i>	-	1 (4%)	-	-	-
<i>Shigella</i> spp.	1 (5%)	-	-	-	-
<i>Trichinella</i>	-	1 (4%)	-	-	-
<i>Vibrio</i> spp.	-	1 (4%)	-	-	1 (3%)
<i>Yersinia pseudotuberculosis</i>	-	1 (4%)	-	-	-
African Swine Fever virus	-	-	-	-	1 (3%)
<i>Brucella</i> spp.	-	-	-	1 (3%)	2 (6%)
<i>Cronobacter sakazakii</i>	-	-	-	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
<i>Cryptosporidium</i> spp.	-	-	-	1 (3%)	-
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	-	-	1 (4%)	-	-
Influenza A virus (H7N9)	-	-	1 (4%)	-	-
Schmallenberg virus	-	-	1 (4%)	-	-
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	-	-	1 (4%)	1 (3%)	-

TABLE 7 INFOSAN INVOLVEMENT BY EVENTS INVOLVING CHEMICAL HAZARDS, 2011-2015

CHEMICAL HAZARD	2015 N = 8 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 10 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 15 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 10 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 13 EVENTS n (%)
1,3-dimethylamylamine	-	-	-	1 (10%)	-
Aflatoxin	-	-	2 (13%)	2 (20%)	-
Atropine	-	-	2** (13%)	-	-
Carbamate	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Chloramphenicol	-	-	1 (7%)	-	-
Cocaine	-	-	1 (7%)	-	-
DEHP/DINP/DBP	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Deoxynivalenol (DON)	1 (13%)	-	-	-	-
Dicyandiamide	-	-	1 (7%)	-	-
Dimethyl yellow	-	1 (10%)	-	-	-
Dioxin	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Formalin	-	-	1 (7%)	-	-
Heavy metals	1* (13%)	2 (20%)	-	1 (10%)	3*** (23%)
Histamine	1 (13%)	-	-	-	-
Hydrocyanic acid	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Hydrogen cyanide	-	1 (10%)	-	-	-
Hydrogenated oils	1 (13%)	-	-	-	-
Iodine	-	1 (10%)	-	-	-
Isopropyl alcohol	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Melamine	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Methanol	1 (13%)	-	1 (7%)	1 (10%)	1 (8%)
Monosodium glutamate	1* (13%)	-	-	-	-
Nitrates	-	-	1 (7%)	-	1*** (8%)
Nitrites	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Organophosphate	-	-	1 (7%)	-	-
Oxedrine	-	1 (10%)	-	-	-
Paralytic shellfish toxin	1 (13%)	-	-	1 (10%)	-
Pesticide residues	-	2 (20%)	-	-	-
Phenylbutazone	-	-	1 (7%)	-	-
Phthalates/polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons	1 (13%)	-	-	1 (10%)	-
Plastic	1 (13%)	-	-	-	-
Radionuclides	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)
Rat poison	-	-	1 (7%)	-	-
Salt (not for human consumption)	-	-	-	1 (10%)	-
Scopolamine	-	-	1** (7%)	-	-
Sodium nitrite	-	-	-	1 (10%)	-
Sulphites	-	-	-	-	1 (8%)



TABLE 7 CONTINUED

CHEMICAL HAZARD	2015 N = 8 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 10 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 15 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 10 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 13 EVENTS n (%)
Sulphuric chemicals	-	-	-	1 (10%)	-
Unknown	-	1 (10%)	2 (13%)	-	-
Waste oil	-	1 (10%)	-	-	-

\* 1 event involved both heavy metals and monosodium glutamate in 2015

\*\* 1 event involved both atropine and scopolamine in 2013

\*\*\* 1 event involved both heavy metals and nitrates in 2011

TABLE 8 INFOSAN INVOLVEMENT BY EVENTS INVOLVING PHYSICAL HAZARDS, 2011-2015

PHYSICAL HAZARD	2015 N = 3 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 1 EVENT n (%)	2013 N = 0 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 0 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 0 EVENTS n (%)
Glass	2 (67%)	-	-	-	-
Foreign metal	1 (33%)	1 (100%)	-	-	-

TABLE 9 INFOSAN INVOLVEMENT BY EVENTS INVOLVING UNDECLARED ALLERGENS, 2011-2015

UNDECLARED ALLERGEN	2015 N = 3 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 2 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 0 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 1 EVENT n (%)	2011 N = 1 EVENT n (%)
Almond	2* (67%)	-	-	1*** (100%)	-
Egg	-	1** (50%)	-	-	-
Gluten	-	-	-	1*** (100%)	-
Hazelnut	-	-	-	1*** (100%)	-
Milk	1 (33%)	-	-	-	-
Peanut	2* (67%)	2** (100%)	-	-	1 (100%)
Sesame	-	1** (50%)	-	-	-

\* 2 events involved both undeclared almond and peanut in 2015

\*\* 1 event involved undeclared egg, peanut and sesame in 2014

\*\*\* 1 event involved almond, hazelnut and gluten in 2012

“*INFOSAN is an accurate warning tool that allows the Network to do traceability of food products in the context of food safety. It is also a tool for effective communication between Member States to fight and prevent the consumption of contaminated food.*”



Mr Daffe Mamady,  
Chef Division Alimentation/Nutrition  
Ministère de la Santé et de l'Hygiène Publique  
INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, GUINEA



TABLE 10 SOURCE OF NOTIFICATION OF INFOSAN EVENTS, 2011-2015

SOURCE OF NOTIFICATION	2015 N = 37 EVENTS n (%)	2014 N = 40 EVENTS n (%)	2013 N = 44 EVENTS n (%)	2012 N = 42 EVENTS n (%)	2011 N = 46 EVENTS n (%)
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	-
European Commission's RASFF Contact Point (RASFF ECCP)	3 (8%)	6 (15%)	4 (9%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)
INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point or Focal Point	14 (38%)	9 (23%)	8 (18%)	8 (19%)	5 (11%)
WHO headquarters event-based surveillance*	8 (22%)	6 (15%)	11 (25%)	11 (26%)	9 (20%)
WHO Regional Officer for Europe (EURO)	5 (14%)	8 (20%)	15 (34%)	13 (31%)	17 (37%)
WHO Regional Office for the Americas (AMRO)	5 (14%)	6 (15%)	4 (9%)	3 (7%)	7 (15%)
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO)	-	3 (8%)	-	3 (7%)	7 (15%)

\* Includes surveillance activities conducted in different departments of the Health Security and Environment Cluster

“Cameroon is grateful to INFOSAN for the wealth of information put at the disposal of its Focal Points, as well as the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other countries. This will help in the development and formulation of policies and strategies to ensure safe food for Cameroonians.”



**Doris Mbeng née NKO SADI**,  
Chef de service du Contrôle de qualité et de la  
Certification vétérinaire  
Ministère de l'Élevage des Pêches et des Industries  
Animales (MINEPIA),  
INFOSAN Focal Point, CAMEROON

## EVENTS IN FOCUS

### Outbreak of salmonellosis associated with internationally distributed chia seed products

In 2014, an outbreak of salmonellosis involving several serotypes in Canada<sup>10</sup> (63 cases) and the United States of America (USA)<sup>11</sup> (31 cases) was linked to multiple products made with raw chia seeds from Argentina potentially contaminated with *Salmonella*.<sup>12</sup> Investigations in the USA and Canada led to a multitude of recalls of implicated products, which had been exported widely and were available for sale over the internet. Products reached countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the European Region, the South-East Asia Region and the Western Pacific Region. An INFOSAN alert informed Network members of potentially contaminated products, providing authorities in these countries with the details required to recall products and prevent further outbreaks. This event highlighted the increasingly complex task of tracking and tracing products through the global distribution chain, especially as it becomes more and more common to purchase products online. INFOSAN members from seven countries shared their respective risk management actions, using the discussion forum on the INFOSAN Community Website and pulling together the various international dimensions of this event.



Indian food safety authority reacts to INFOSAN alert

Photo credit: © Rania Spatha

### Outbreak of listeriosis linked to internationally distributed pre-packaged caramel apples

By January 2015, commercially produced, pre-packaged caramel apples contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* had reportedly caused an outbreak of 35 cases of listeriosis in the USA, resulting in 34 hospitalizations and seven deaths. The details of the investigation provided to the INFOSAN Secretariat by the Emergency Contact Point in the USA indicated that the implicated products had also been exported to 11 countries. An INFOSAN alert was subsequently posted on the INFOSAN Community Website to notify Network members of the outbreak and recommend risk management actions. This alert marked the first time the INFOSAN Secretariat had included the whole genome sequences of the relevant outbreak strain to aid national authorities identify related cases in their respective countries.



Vietnamese food safety authority reacts to INFOSAN alert

Photo credit: © Rania Spatha

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2014/salmonella-nh-053114-eng.php>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/newport-05-14/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://cste.confex.com/cste/2015/webprogram/Paper4822.html>

## Reports of fake rice allegedly originating from China distributed to several countries

In May 2015, the INFOSAN Secretariat received several enquiries from concerned INFOSAN members following media reports about fake rice allegedly originating from China. Several countries were named by news outlets as having imported the rice, purported to be fabricated from potato and inedible industrial synthetic resin. The INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point in China reported that no such export of fake rice could be confirmed; however, consumer concerns in several countries prompted many food safety authorities in the region to make public statements. The Emergency Contact Points named in the media as having imported fake rice indicated that such reports were unfounded and no such fake rice had been identified in their respective countries. Nevertheless, the event garnered international attention, including from scientific experts, who discussed the rumours during a meeting of the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) Emerging Risks Exchange Network (EREN) in November 2015, in which the INFOSAN Secretariat participated as an observer. Participants highlighted the complexities that arise when food safety issues involve an element of fraud, particularly the difficulty in characterizing potential health risks, since the type of resin allegedly used to fabricate the fake rice remains unknown. Food safety authorities should remain vigilant in order to combat instances of food fraud which could result in human illness and report any such evidence to the INFOSAN Secretariat.



Numerous media outlets reported rumours about fake rice in Asia

Photo credit: © Rania Spatha

*"INFOSAN is a fast and reliable source of information on food safety issues. It enables us to be engaged with food safety authorities around the world in times of imminent food safety threats, emergencies and alerts. Also, INFOSAN promotes the rapid exchange of information, partnerships and collaboration between countries and between networks".*



**Dr Ruba Goussous**  
Head of Risk Assessment  
Jordan Food and Drug Administration  
INFOSAN Focal Point, JORDAN

Photo credit: © Ruba Goussous

## THE INFOSAN COMMUNITY WEBSITE



Photo credit: © Rania Spatha

Since its launch in 2012, the INFOSAN Community Website has been used to engage with members and as the primary tool for disseminating food safety information to members during emergency situations (e.g. INFOSAN alerts). The website now supports more than 440 users around the globe and encourages each of them to connect with one another to build and exchange knowledge on global food safety matters. In addition to Emergency Contact Points and Focal Points from Member States, users include FAO and WHO staff, INFOSAN Advisory Group Members, regional food safety authority contact points, and WHO Collaborating Centre contact points. The user interface was translated into French and Spanish in 2014 to further facilitate participation among members for whom it is comfortable to make contributions in those languages. INFOSAN members have a wealth of knowledge and expertise, and are encouraged to utilize the discussion forum on the INFOSAN Community Website to share and discuss important global food safety issues.

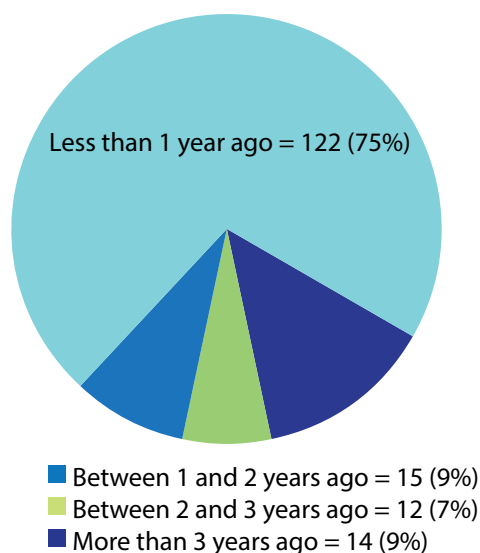
### **Analysis of Members' Access to the INFOSAN Community Website**

Analysing access patterns to the INFOSAN Community Website is the most basic measure to assess how active INFOSAN members are, including both Emergency Contact Points (N=163) and Focal Points (N=209). As of the end of 2015, 122 (75%) Emergency Contact Points had accessed the website within the past year, 15 (9%) between one and two years ago, 12 (7%) between two and three years ago, and 14 (9%) more than three years ago (Figure 3). Concerning Focal Points, 133 (64%) had accessed the website less than one year ago, 21 (10%) between one and two years ago, 31 (15%) between two and three years ago, and 24 (11%) more than three years ago (Figure 4).

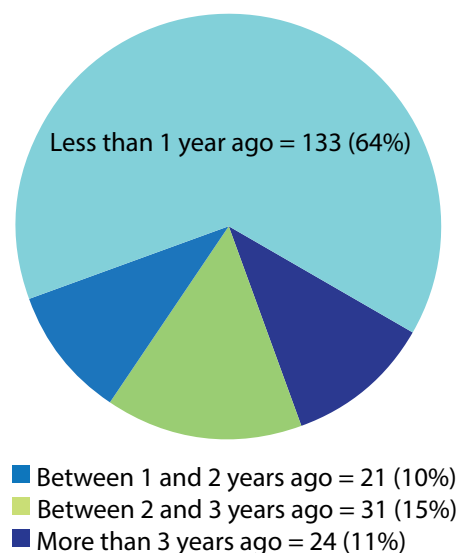
Members who have not accessed the website in over a year are missing out on important information shared by the INFOSAN Secretariat and other members of the Network.

Monitoring website usage enables the INFOSAN Secretariat to prioritize follow-up actions towards those members who, while registered on the INFOSAN Community Website, may no longer hold their position or who need encouragement to use the website to share information such as routine surveillance data or lessons learned from outbreaks of foodborne illness.

**FIGURE 3** **EMERGENCY CONTACT POINTS'**  
LAST ACCESS TO THE INFOSAN  
COMMUNITY WEBSITE, N=163



**FIGURE 4** **FOCAL POINTS'**  
LAST ACCESS TO THE INFOSAN  
COMMUNITY WEBSITE, N=209



### Discussions initiated on the INFOSAN Community Website

In 2014/2015, a total of 27 new threads were initiated in the discussion forum of the INFOSAN Community Website, including 19 (70%) by INFOSAN members, seven (26%) by the INFOSAN Secretariat, and one (4%) by a WHO Collaborating Centre.

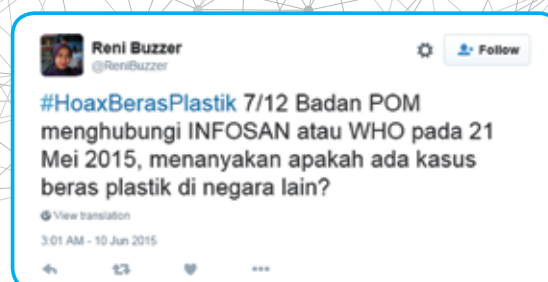
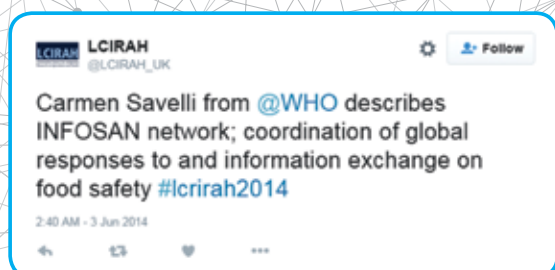
The average number of comments per discussion thread was six, with a minimum of zero comments and a maximum of 21 comments (median = four). On average, four INFOSAN members were engaged per thread, with a minimum of zero and a maximum of 15 (median = two). The average number of views per thread was 150, with a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 678 (median = 88). The average time that INFOSAN members remained actively engaged in a discussion was 24 days, with a minimum of one and a maximum of 119 (median = eight).

Compared to previous years, there was a marked increase in the utilization of the discussion forum by members to ask questions and share information, particularly in the context of ongoing food safety events. Members are encouraged to use the discussion forum to post short summaries of risk management actions taken in response to particular food safety emergencies, outbreaks, or food recalls. In this way, INFOSAN members who may read a headline in the news about a particular event can turn to the INFOSAN Community Website for an update and gain clarity as to whether or not their country is involved by reading a post of the relevant Emergency Contact Point or by engaging in a discussion directly.

# The Rising Profile of INFOSAN

## INFOSAN IN THE TWITTERSPHERE AND OTHER MEDIA

- In 2014/2015 #INFOSAN was tagged in 94 tweets from 67 different accounts, representing individuals, news outlets, consumer organizations, academic institutions and government authorities.
- These tweets originated from 14 different countries and demonstrate the wide audience of INFOSAN and its activities.
- A significant number of tweets were made in reference to media reports about fake rice circulating in Asia in mid-2015.
- A significant number of tweets were also made during the regional INFOSAN meeting of members in the Americas hosted in Mexico in October 2015.
- As observed in past years, several food safety events captured headlines around the globe this past biennium, with news report citing INFOSAN as a source of information that prompted national authorities to take action, or recognizing the Network for its information-dissemination activities.





## INFOSAN AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND UNIVERSITY TRAINING COURSES

The INFOSAN Secretariat discussed the activities of the Network at a number of international conferences and university training courses in 2014/2015. A selection of these is listed below:

1. Fourth Annual LCIRAH Research Conference: Agri-food policy and governance for nutrition and health, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), June 2014
  - Oral presentation entitled, "Investigating barriers and best practices for intersectoral collaboration and active participation in the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN)"
2. Engaging International Organizations for Food Safety, Animal Health and Public Health (University of Minnesota), World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, March 2014 and 2015
  - Oral presentations entitled, "Cross-sectoral solutions for global food safety and the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN)"
3. International Food Safety Forum, Beijing, China, June 2015
  - Oral presentation entitled, "Risk communication during food safety emergencies"
4. Fighting Food Crime, Enforcing Food Safety, Milan Expo, Milan, Italy, July 2015
  - Oral presentation entitled, "Connecting food safety authorities to reduce foodborne risks"
5. Third Geneva University Summer School, Global Health and Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland, July 2015
  - Oral presentation entitled, "Responding to foodborne diseases using INFOSAN and with consideration for the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)"

*Until now, INFOSAN has been an important platform for connecting member countries by sharing information on food safety issues. Based on our experience, INFOSAN makes both the rapid exchange of information on emerging food risk issues and the timely implementation of public health prevention measures possible. Thanks to the Network, we have been able to receive food safety alerts, access references and share expertise.*



**Ms Immaculate Justin**  
Food Risk Assessment Officer,  
Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority  
INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point,  
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

## Conclusion and Future Directions

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During the 2014/2015 biennium, the INFOSAN Secretariat responded to 77 international food safety events to facilitate communication among Network members. This allowed for the removal of contaminated food from international markets and mitigated risks of foodborne disease outbreaks. Membership has continued to grow; 73% of all WHO Member States have an active INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point, an increase of 17 percentage points during the biennium. The largest gains have been observed in Africa and the Americas as a result of targeted efforts in those regions.

One priority for the biennium was to expand regional initiatives to enhance participation in INFOSAN. Regional efforts to strengthen INFOSAN in Asia were sustained; these included a successful simulation exercise run in 2014 and the third regional meeting of INFOSAN members in China, Hong Kong SAR in 2015. Lessons from experiences in Asia were applied in the Americas when members from the region came together, enabling them to successfully draft and then adopt the regional strategy for strengthening INFOSAN in the Americas at regional meetings held in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Commitment from INFOSAN members to act as champions in their region is still required for agreed-upon actions identified at regional meetings to be achieved. Work will continue in coordination with regional FAO and WHO offices to support such efforts.

Much progress has been made during the biennium to strengthen INFOSAN; however, many challenges persist. While the proportion of event notifications coming directly from INFOSAN Emergency Contact Points or Focal Points increased in 2014 and 2015 compared to previous years, there is still room for improvement. Delays in reporting food safety events means that unsafe food can remain in the market, is available to consumers for purchase, and can result in preventable foodborne illnesses in multiple countries. Proactive, cross-border and international sharing of information about food safety events is needed from members if INFOSAN is to fully reach its potential as an effective early warning communication tool.

Many of the gaps in membership that existed in previous years were addressed during the biennium; however, existing limitations in basic surveillance capacity to detect foodborne diseases and food safety events still persist in many countries. This highlights the continued need for INFOSAN to partner with FAO and WHO capacity-building programmes to support the overall development of food safety systems. When national food safety systems are strengthened, INFOSAN members will become better equipped and capable of identifying, communicating, and responding to food safety emergencies.

In the broader context, we must also consider several important scientific developments that have emerged in recent years, and have significant implications for the future of food production and food safety. These developments will have a direct impact on food chain transparency and the efficiency of managing food safety events. The use of whole genome sequencing for foodborne outbreak detection is one such example of a new technology with significant



implications. During regional meetings, INFOSAN members have reiterated that more work is needed to take globalization and the increased complexity of our food supply into account, as well as the potential application of new technologies.

Encouraging the active participation of INFOSAN members continues to be a top priority for the Network. During the 2016/2017 biennium, FAO and WHO will implement an INFOSAN work plan that will continue to focus on:

1. the promotion of cross-sectoral collaboration and information sharing to optimize the response to foodborne health risks, including outbreaks; and
2. the development of countries' capacities to manage food safety (which includes the establishment and refinement of systems to monitor, assess and manage food safety incidents and emergencies).

This will be achieved by focusing on three activity areas:

### **1. Emergency Activities**

- *Management of international food safety events of international relevance through effective interaction with all relevant partners*

### **2. National Capacity-building Activities**

- *Publication of INFOSAN Information Notes and/or other technical guidance documents to assist member states manage food safety events*
- *Strengthening of links to other regional food safety networks (e.g. RASFF, EREN, etc.) to improve information exchange*
- *Simulation exercises to test emergency communication protocols*

### **3. Communication**

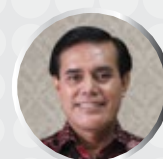
- *Addition of new features to the INFOSAN Community Website to further facilitate communication*
- *Delivery of online webinars on various topics to strengthen the Network (by WHO, FAO and INFOSAN Members)*
- *Convening of regional and/or global meetings of INFOSAN members*

These activities will be undertaken in consultation with the INFOSAN Advisory Group and with the support of the new INFOSAN strategic framework.

## Acknowledgments

FAO and WHO wish to express gratitude and appreciation to all our partners and donors for their generous financial and in-kind contributions in 2014/2015 which enabled INFOSAN to continue operating. Particular thanks go out to the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the Chilean Food Safety and Quality Agency (ACHIPIA), the Brazilian Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, Mexico (SAGARPA), the National Service of Animal and Plant Health, Quality and Food Safety, Mexico (SENASICA), the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety, Republic of Korea (MFDS), and the Centre for Food Safety, China, Hong Kong SAR.

*The INFOSAN Community keeps us updated on food safety issues around the world. When it comes to a crisis situation, INFOSAN provides information to help competent authorities take appropriate measures in a timely manner. However, it is challenging for INFOSAN to encourage active participation of its members in sharing recent information on food safety issues.*



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# Appendices

## APPENDIX A - INFOSAN EVENTS IN 2014

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
1. Frozen foods from Japan contaminated with malathion pesticide	08-Jan-2014	20	Verification Request	Western Pacific Region	Japan	Chemical	Malathion	Composite food	Pizza, croquettes, lasagne
2. Burgers sold during a concert venue in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Scotland) contaminated with <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7	04-Feb-2014	11	Verification Request	European Region	United Kingdom	Biological	<i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7	Meat and meat products	Burgers
3. Excess iodine in baby foods produced in Netherlands and distributed internationally	07-Feb-2014	29	Coordination	European Region	Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Turkey	Chemical	Iodine	Food for infants and small children	Premature infant foods
4. Cactus from Mexico contaminated with monocrotophos pesticide and distributed to the United States of America (USA)	18-Feb-2014	56	Coordination	Region of the Americas	Mexico, USA	Chemical	Monocrotophos	Vegetables and vegetable products	Nopal cactus
5. Outbreak of salmonellosis associated with raw eggs from an egg farm in Australia	04-Mar-2014	1	Consultation	Western Pacific Region	Australia	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> spp.	Eggs and egg products	Raw eggs
6. Outbreak of Hepatitis A virus infections in Norway linked to berry mix buttermilk cakes imported from Germany	10-Mar-2014	33	Consultation	European Region	Germany, Norway	Biological	Hepatitis A virus	Sugar and confectionary	Berry mix buttermilk cakes
7. Rice porridge with abalone produced in the Republic of Korea contaminated with <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> and distributed internationally	04-Apr-2014	14	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Canada, China, China (Hong Kong SAR), Kazakhstan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, United Kingdom, USA, Viet Nam	Biological	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	Cereals and cereal-based products	Rice porridge with abalone
8. Presence of foreign metal in Barramundi fish portions from Indonesia and distributed to Australia	24-Apr-2014	30	Coordination	Western Pacific Region	Australia, Indonesia	Physical	Foreign metal	Fish and other seafood	Barramundi fish portions

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
9. Presence of undeclared peanut in almond crackers produced in the Republic of Korea and distributed to China, Hong Kong SAR	28-Apr-2014	5	Coordination	Western Pacific Region	China (Hong Kong SAR), Republic of Korea	Undeclared allergen	Peanut	Snacks, desserts and other foods	Almond crackers
10. Dexaprine powdered supplement from the USA recalled in Australia due to presence of oxedrine and high levels of caffeine	06-May-2014	17	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Western Pacific Region	Australia, USA	Chemical	Oxedrine	Products for special nutritional use	Powdered supplement for energy and weight loss
11. Cheese produced in France recalled in the USA due to contamination with <i>Salmonella</i>	13-May-2014	11	Verification Request	Region of the Americas, European Region	France, USA	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> spp.	Milk and dairy products	Cheese
12. Food poisoning in France after consumption of cherry tomatoes from Morocco distributed internationally	16-May-2014	8	Verification Request	Eastern Mediterranean Region, European Region	Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Slovakia, United Kingdom	Chemical	Unknown	Vegetables and vegetable products	Cherry tomatoes
13. Outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7 infections in the USA linked to ground beef	19-May-2014	4	Verification Request	Region of the Americas	USA	Biological	<i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7	Meat and meat products	Ground beef
14. Mercury contamination of frozen swordfish steaks from Viet Nam distributed internationally	21-May-2014	42	Verification Request	African Region, European Region, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Angola, Netherlands, Viet Nam	Chemical	Mercury	Fish and other seafood	Frozen swordfish steaks

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
15. Outbreaks of salmonellosis in the USA and Canada associated with products containing organic sprouted chia seed powder and distributed internationally	03-Jun-2014	87	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean Region, European Region, South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Estonia, China (Hong Kong SAR), Iceland, India, Israel, Jamaica, Lebanon, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia, United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Bermuda), USA	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Hartford and <i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Newport	Nuts and oilseeds	Chia seeds
16. Truffle pesto from Hungary contaminated with <i>Clostridium Botulinum</i> and distributed internationally	05-Jun-2014	29	Coordination	European Region, Western Pacific Region	Georgia, China (Hong Kong SAR), Hungary	Biological	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	Composite food	Pesto sauce with truffles
17. Outbreak of Anthrax in Hungary linked to frozen beef contaminated with <i>Bacillus anthracis</i>	04-Jul-2014	18	Consultation	European Region	Hungary	Biological	<i>Bacillus anthracis</i>	Meat and meat products	Frozen beef
18. Arsenic in food additive (trisodium citrate) from China identified in Italy and Spain	10-Jul-2014	85	Coordination	European Region, Western Pacific Region	China, Italy, Portugal, Spain	Chemical	Arsenic	Food additive	Food additive (trisodium citrate)
19. Enteropathogenic <i>Escherichia coli</i> O26:H11 in raw goat milk cheese from France and distributed internationally	12-Jul-2014	5	Coordination	African Region, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Côte d'Ivoire, China, France, Gabon, China (Hong Kong SAR), China (Macau SAR), Japan, New Zealand, Senegal, South Africa	Biological	<i>Escherichia coli</i> O26:H11	Milk and dairy products	Raw goat milk cheese
20. Dead lizard found in infant formula produced in Singapore and exported to Australia	17-Jul-2014	31	Coordination	Western Pacific Region	Australia, Singapore	Biological	Dead lizard	Food for infants and small children	Infant formula
21. Outbreak of salmonellosis in France and Austria associated with consumption of raw eggs from Germany	04-Aug-2014	37	Verification Request	European Region	Austria, France, Germany	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Enteritidis	Eggs and egg products	Raw eggs

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
22. Outbreak of listeriosis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia linked to domestically produced meat products	07-Aug-2014	23	Coordination	European Region	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Meat and meat products	Pork neck
23. Recall of internationally distributed fresh whole peaches, plums, nectarines and pluots due to possible contamination with <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> in the USA	11-Aug-2014	79	Coordination	Region of the Americas, South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, China (Hong Kong SAR), China (Taiwan), India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore, USA	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Fruit and fruit products	Fresh, whole peaches, plums, nectarines, and pluots
24. Outbreak of listeriosis in Denmark linked to domestically produced rolled sausage products also distributed to Germany	13-Aug-2014	31	Consultation	European Region	Denmark, Germany	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Meat and meat products	Lamb-roll sausages
25. Recall of internationally distributed ground oregano in the USA due to possible contamination with <i>Salmonella</i>	15-Aug-2014	18	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region, South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Aruba, Bahamas, Indonesia, Jamaica, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Thailand, United Kingdom (Bermuda), USA	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype 4, [5], 12:b	Herbs, spices and condiments	Oregano
26. Recall of nut butters in the USA due to possible contamination with <i>Salmonella</i> and distributed internationally	20-Aug-2014	8	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean Region, Western Pacific Region	Canada, Dominican Republic, China (Hong Kong SAR), United Arab Emirates, USA	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Braenderup	Nuts and oilseeds	Nut butters
27. International distribution of products containing recycled waste oil from China, Taiwan	08-Sep-2014	52	Coordination	African Region, Region of the Americas, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, China (Hong Kong SAR), China (Macau SAR), China (Taiwan), France, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, USA, Viet Nam	Chemical	Waste oil	Fats and oils of animal and vegetable origin	Cooking oil

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
28. Frozen cooked prawns imported from Thailand recalled in Australia due to contamination with <i>Vibrio cholerae</i>	11-Sep-2014	8	Verification Request	South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Thailand	Biological	<i>Vibrio cholerae</i>	Fish and other seafood	Frozen cooked prawns
29. Food poisoning on a Maltese vessel cruising in the Mediterranean	22-Sep-2014	2	Consultation	European Region	Malta	Biological	Norovirus	Unknown	Unknown
30. Beef from Slovakia contaminated with <i>Bacillus anthracis</i> and exported to Netherlands	11-Oct-2014	5	Verification Request	European Region	Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden	Biological	<i>Bacillus anthracis</i>	Meat and meat products	Meat
31. Outbreak of <i>Yersinia pseudotuberculosis</i> infections in New Zealand, possibly linked to lettuce consumption	15-Oct-2014	20	Verification Request	Western Pacific Region	New Zealand	Biological	<i>Yersinia pseudotuberculosis</i>	Vegetables and vegetable products	Vegetables
32. Outbreak of <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7 infections in a nursery school in United Kingdom	28-Oct-2014	5	Verification Request	European Region	United Kingdom	Biological	<i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7	Unknown	Unknown
33. Presence of undeclared allergens in imitation meat products from China distributed to Australia and New Zealand	10-Nov-2014	12	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Canada, China, China (Taiwan), New Zealand	Undeclared allergen	Egg, peanut and sesame	Meat and meat products	Imitation meat products
34. Food poisoning in Cambodia possibly linked to imported cakes from Viet Nam	16-Nov-2014	9	Coordination	Western Pacific Region	Cambodia, Viet Nam	Unknown	Unknown	Snacks, desserts and other foods	Cakes
35. Excess hydrogen cyanide in organic raw almonds imported to the USA from Italy and Spain	19-Nov-2014	29	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region	Italy, Spain, USA	Chemical	Hydrogen cyanide	Snacks, desserts and other foods	Organic raw almonds

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
36. <i>Rhizopus oryzae</i> in probiotic dietary supplement for infants and children from the USA	21-Nov-2014	8	Coordination	African Region, Region of the Americas, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA	Biological	<i>Rhizopus oryzae</i>	Milk and dairy products	Probiotic dietary supplement
37. Vacuum packs of Smoked Nova Salmon from Denmark recalled in the USA due to possible contamination with <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	26-Nov-2014	9	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region	Denmark, USA	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Fish and other seafood	Smoked Nova Salmon
38. Outbreak of trichinellosis in Belgium from wild boar imported from Spain	08-Dec-2014	2	Verification Request	European Region	Belgium, Netherlands, Spain	Biological	Trichinella	Meat and meat products	Wild boar meat
39. Soya bean emulsifier from China, Taiwan, containing dimethyl yellow distributed internationally	23-Dec-2014	14	Verification Request	Region of the Americas, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Canada, China (Taiwan), Germany, New Zealand, Sweden	Chemical	Dimethyl yellow	Food additive	Soya bean emulsifier
40. Outbreak of listeriosis in the USA linked to internationally distributed apples and pre-packaged caramel apples	24-Dec-2014	48	Coordination	Region of the Americas	Canada, USA	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Fruit and fruit products	Apples and caramel apples



## APPENDIX B - INFOSAN EVENTS IN 2015

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
1. Outbreak of listeriosis in the USA linked to internationally distributed apples and pre-packaged caramel apples (continued from 2014 event)	24-Dec-2014	48	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean Region, South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Canada, China (Hong Kong SAR), India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, USA, Viet Nam	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Fruit and fruit products	Apples and caramel apples
2. Outbreak of methanol poisoning in Mozambique linked to consumption of home-brewed beer	19-Jan-2015	8	Consultation	African Region	Mozambique	Chemical	Methanol	Alcoholic beverages	Home-brewed beer
3. Undeclared peanut in ground cumin products from unknown origin in the USA and Canada and distributed to the United Kingdom	19-Jan-2015	16	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region	Canada, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA	Undeclared allergen	Almond and peanut	Herbs, spices and condiments	Ground cumin products
4. Presence of glass in canned mushrooms produced in China distributed internationally via Netherlands	10-Feb-2015	2	Coordination	African Region, Region of the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean Region, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Chad, China, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, United Arab Emirates, USA, Yemen	Physical	Glass	Vegetables and vegetable products	Canned mushrooms
5. Outbreak of Hepatitis A infections in Australia linked to mixed frozen berries from China	14-Feb-2015	33	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Chile, China, China (Hong Kong SAR)	Biological	Hepatitis A virus	Fruit and fruit products	Mixed frozen berries
6. Multiple recalls of cumin because of contamination with peanuts and almonds	15-Feb-2015	17	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom, USA	Undeclared allergen	Almond and peanut	Herbs, spices and condiments	Seasoning/spice products

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
7. Recall in the USA of smoked herring from Greece due to possible contamination with <i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	16-Feb-2015	11	Verification Request	Region of the Americas, European Region	Greece, USA	Biological	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	Fish and other seafood	Smoked herring
8. Outbreaks of norovirus cases in China, Hong Kong SAR, linked to raw oysters from Ireland	18-Feb-2015	6	Verification Request	European Region, Western Pacific Region	China (Hong Kong SAR), Ireland	Biological	Norovirus	Fish and other seafood	Raw oysters
9. Histamine poisoning (Scombroid) outbreak in Australia associated with imported tuna from Thailand	26-Feb-2015	6	Verification Request	South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Thailand	Chemical	Histamine	Fish and other seafood	Canned tuna
10. Mortadella from Italy recalled in Canada due to contamination with <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	28-Feb-2015	17	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region	Canada, Italy	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Meat and meat products	Mortadella
11. Recall of macaroni and cheese boxed dinners in the USA due to possible metal pieces	20-Mar-2015	8	Coordination	Region of the Americas	Puerto Rico, USA	Physical	Metal pieces	Composite food	Macaroni and cheese boxed dinners
12. Outbreak of listeriosis in the USA linked to domestically produced ice cream and frozen products distributed internationally	23-Mar-2015	61	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Eastern Mediterranean Region, Western Pacific Region	Belize, Chile, China, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Haiti, Jordan, Kuwait, Mexico, Oman, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, and Turks and Caicos), USA, Yemen	Biological	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Snacks, desserts and other foods	Ice cream, frozen yoghurt, sherbet and frozen snacks
13. Outbreak of salmonellosis in several European countries among junior ice hockey players attending the Riga cup 2015	16-Apr-2015	43	Coordination	European Region	Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Enteritidis	Unknown	Unknown

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
14. Outbreak of norovirus infections in Sweden linked to frozen raspberries from Serbia	12-May-2015	36	Coordination	European Region	Serbia, Sweden	Biological	Norovirus	Fruit and fruit products	Frozen raspberries
15. Recall in Canada of canned seafood products from Portugal due to possible contamination with unspecified bacteria	19-May-2015	4	Verification Request	Region of the Americas, European Region	Canada, Portugal, Spain	Biological	Unknown	Fish and other seafood products	Canned seafood products
16. Reports of fake rice from China in several countries	21-May-2015	56	Coordination	South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Viet Nam	Chemical	Unspecified plastic resin	Cereals and cereal-based products	Rice
17. High levels of lead and monosodium glutamate detected in instant noodles in India	29-May-2015	27	Coordination	African Region, Region of the Americas, European Region, South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Bhutan, Canada, India, Kenya, Nepal, New Zealand, Singapore, United Kingdom, USA	Chemical	Lead and monosodium glutamate	Composite Food	Instant noodles
18. Outbreak of botulism linked to domestically produced meat paste in Algeria	07-Jul-2015	1	Verification Request	African Region	Algeria	Biological	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	Meat and meat products	Meat paste
19. Outbreak of food poisoning among schoolchildren in Philippines linked to the consumption of contaminated durian candy	13-Jul-2015	4	Verification Request	Western Pacific Region	Philippines	Unknown	Unknown	Sugar and confectionary products	Durian candies
20. Case of botulism in the Russian Federation linked to the consumption of domestically produced canned tomatoes	15-Jul-2015	2	Verification Request	European Region	Russian Federation	Biological	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	Fruit and fruit products	Canned tomatoes
21. Deoxynivalenol (DON) in corn and soya blend from Belgium distributed to Kenya	16-Jul-2015	2	Coordination	African Region, European Region	Belgium, Kenya	Chemical	Deoxynivalenol (DON)	Cereals and cereal-based products	Corn and soya blend

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
22. Outbreak of norovirus infections in China, Taiwan, associated with raw oysters from Republic of Korea	20-Jul-2015	2	Verification Request	Western Pacific Region	China (Taiwan), Republic of Korea	Biological	Norovirus	Fish and other seafood	Raw oysters
23. Case of anthrax in Bulgaria linked to consumption of contaminated beef	21-Jul-2015	21	Consultation	European Region	Bulgaria	Biological	<i>Bacillus anthracis</i>	Meat and meat products	Beef
24. Outbreaks of cyclosporiasis in United Kingdom and USA associated with travel to Mexico	22-Jul-2015	99	Coordination	Region of the Americas, European Region	Canada, United Kingdom, USA	Biological	<i>Cyclospora cayentanensis</i>	Unknown	Unknown
25. Recall of soft drinks produced in New Zealand and distributed internationally due to possible presence of glass particles	30-Jul-2015	2	Consultation	Eastern Mediterranean Region, South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, China, Cook Islands, China (Hong Kong SAR), New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, United Arab Emirates	Physical	Glass	Non-alcoholic beverages	Soft drinks
26. Outbreak of salmonellosis in Austria related to frozen turkey meat from Hungary, imported via Slovakia	19-Aug-2015	16	Verification Request	European Region	Austria, Hungary, Slovakia	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Stanley	Meat and meat products	Turkey kebab
27. Recall in the USA of cucumbers from Mexico due to possible contamination with <i>Salmonella</i>	08-Sep-2015	18	Verification Request	Region of the Americas	Mexico, USA	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Poona	Vegetables and vegetable products	Cucumbers
28. Multiple imported coconut products recalled in Australia and New Zealand due to presence of undeclared milk	20-Sep-2015	68	Coordination	South-East Asia Region, Western Pacific Region	Australia, China, China (Hong Kong SAR), China (Taiwan), Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam	Undeclared allergen	Milk	Fats and oils of animal and vegetable origin	Coconut products
29. High levels of benzo(a)pyrene in soya bean oil products in Colombia imported from Brazil	21-Sep-2015	44	Coordination	Region of the Americas	Brazil, Colombia	Chemical	Benzo(a)pyrene	Fats and oils of animal and vegetable origin	Soya bean oil products

EVENT	DATE	LENGTH (DAYS)	INVOLVEMENT TYPE	REGION(S) INVOLVED	MEMBER STATE(S) OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER(S) INVOLVED	HAZARD TYPE	SPECIFIC HAZARD	FOOD TYPE	SPECIFIC FOOD
30. Multiple recalls of oysters in Australia due to contamination with paralytic shellfish toxin, also distributed to Japan	25-Sep-2015	1	Coordination	Western Pacific Region	Australia, Japan	Chemical	Paralytic shellfish toxin	Fish and other seafood	Oysters
31. Increase in cases of salmonellosis in Belgium, France and Netherlands associated with travel to Morocco	29-Sep-2015	23	Coordination	Eastern Mediterranean Region, European Region	Belgium, France, Morocco, Netherlands	Biological	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> serotype Chester	Unknown	Unknown
32. Recall of canned seafood in the USA due to possible contamination with <i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	23-Oct-2015	26	Coordination	Region of the Americas	Colombia, USA	Biological	<i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	Fish and other seafood	Canned salmon and tuna products
33. Snap peas from Guatemala recalled in Canada, United Kingdom and the USA due to <i>Cyclospora cayentanensis</i>	25-Oct-2015	12	Verification Request	Region of the Americas, European Region	Canada, Guatemala, United Kingdom, USA	Biological	<i>Cyclospora cayentanensis</i>	Vegetables and vegetable products	Snap peas
34. Report of food fraud associated with Labneh produced in Jordan and distributed internationally	04-Nov-2015	18	Coordination	Eastern Mediterranean Region	Jordan, United Arab Emirates	Chemical	Hydrogenated oils	Milk and dairy products	Labneh (fermented milk product)
35. <i>Shigella sonnei</i> cases in Sweden following food consumption in three different restaurants	05-Nov-2015	3	Verification Request	European Region	Sweden	Biological	<i>Shigella sonnei</i>	Unknown	Unknown
36. Frozen halal veal from India contaminated with <i>Escherichia coli</i> 0157:H7 and distributed internationally	16-Nov-2015	8	Coordination	Eastern Mediterranean Region, South-East Asia Region	India, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait	Biological	<i>Escherichia coli</i> 0157:H7	Meat and meat products	Frozen halal veal
37. Outbreak of Hepatitis A infections in New Zealand associated with frozen berries from China	20-Nov-2015	67	Coordination	Region of the Americas, Western Pacific Region	Australia, Canada, China, New Zealand, USA	Biological	Hepatitis A virus	Fruit and fruit products	Frozen berries

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