



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES

53rd Session

(Virtual)

4-8 July and 13 July 2022

MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

Prepared by FAO and WHO

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

Matters arising from FAO

International Day of Plant Health (IDPH)

1. The first International Day of Plant Health (IDPH) was celebrated on 12 May 2022, with the major global event hosted virtually by FAO. It was attended by nearly 1400 participants from over 140 countries.
2. The IDPH was established following a decision taken by the UN General Assembly on 29 March 2022.
3. Plants make up 80% of the food we eat and 98% of the oxygen we breathe and yet they are under threat. Up to 40% of food crops are lost due to plant pests and diseases every year. This is affecting both food security and agriculture, the main source of income for vulnerable rural communities.
4. The event of this first celebration of IDPH served to map out the priorities for plant health including fostering development and implementation of the international standards on phytosanitary measures to protect global plant resources while facilitating safe trade; focusing on sustainable pest management and pesticides through promotion of green and digital plant protection; and creating enabling surroundings for plant health by enhancing the health of soils, seeds and pollinators. And, there was clear support for the critical role plant health plays in overall collective efforts with a One Health approach.
5. 4. Further FAO initiatives included: i) a successful social media campaign for Plant Health Day, with around 170 posts shared by FAO channels; ii) articles on the contribution of pest and pesticides management and food safety to plant health; and iii) the launch of the IDPH website. Following this first IDPH in 2022, FAO will lead celebrations for the Day every year on the 12th of May at global, regional, national and farm level.

Matters arising from WHO

WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety

6. The WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety 2022-2030 was endorsed by the WHO Executive Board 150 in February 2022 recommending its adoption by the WHA75. It updates the last strategy in order to address current and emerging challenges, incorporate new technologies, and include innovative approaches for strengthening national food safety systems. This request was made by Member States in recognition that food safety remains a public health priority with a critical role in the achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
7. In developing this strategy WHO has had the support from the Technical Advisory Group on Food Safety: Safer Food for Better Health, consulted widely with scientific experts, with WHO regional advisors in food safety, international partners such as FAO and OIE, Member States and public consultation. Existing regional food safety action plans and food safety strategies were also taken into account, as well as the recommendations and guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius and the FAO food safety priorities.
8. The WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety has been developed to guide and support Member States in their efforts to prioritize, plan, implement, monitor and regularly evaluate actions towards the reduction of the burden of foodborne diseases by continuously strengthening food safety systems and promoting global cooperation.

Burden of foodborne diseases

9. Given a new WHO mandate to update its global burden estimates of foodborne diseases by 2025, WHO re-established in May 2021 its technical advisory group, “Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG)”¹ with 26 new members under specific terms of reference.² Three expert meetings were organized in July October 2021, and April 2022 respectively. FERG is finalizing its three-year strategic framework on three primary activities, including (1) estimating the global burden of foodborne diseases, (2) providing country supports on the national estimation of foodborne disease burden, and (3) developing a methodology to monitor progress against the new global food safety strategy with appropriate indicators and targets. FERG is advancing a discussion to consider expanding a list of hazards for the next estimates, including estimation of chemicals and toxins that were not included in the previous estimation efforts. New systematic reviews and other studies will be commissioned, and a call for expressions of interests will be publicized to collect candidates for conducting these reviews and studies.
10. WHO published in June 2021 a new guidance entitled, “Estimating the burden of foodborne diseases: A practical handbook for countries”, aiming to help Member States assess causes, magnitude and distribution of foodborne diseases through the estimation of the public health burden of foodborne diseases at the national level.³ The handbook also aims to promote national studies in order to better allocate resources efficiently for prevention, intervention and control measures. English, French, Spanish and Russian versions are already available, and executive summary is available in all 6 UN languages. Presentation modules are ready for use in English, and 5 other UN language versions are underway for publications in 2022.

¹ [https://www.who.int/groups/foodborne-disease-burden-epidemiology-reference-group-\(ferg\)](https://www.who.int/groups/foodborne-disease-burden-epidemiology-reference-group-(ferg))

² https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/food-safety/call-for-experts/tor-for-reference-ferg-31aug2020.pdf?sfvrsn=b0a3d1f_8

³ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240012264>