



EMPRES Food Safety

Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety

Strategic Plan



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Elements of EMPRES Food Safety Strategic Plan





Foreword

AN ESTIMATED THREE MILLION PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD, in developed and developing countries, die every year from food and water-borne disease, with millions more becoming sick. Occurrence of such disease can easily escalate to a food safety emergency situation, which can adversely impact national economies and livelihoods through reduced availability of food for national consumption, closure of export markets, and/or the high cost of addressing the effects of the threat.

To contribute to the efforts to reduce this adverse impact of food safety emergencies on global food security and public health, and at the request of its members, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has established an Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety (EMPRES Food Safety). EMPRES Food Safety will complement and enhance FAO's ongoing work in food safety, as well as in animal health and plant health emergencies.

In this regard, and as the first step toward the development and implementation of EMPRES Food Safety, the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN) of FAO, in collaboration with other concerned technical divisions and units, has prepared this Strategic Plan, which aims at making full use of relevant available expertise along the food chain within FAO.

With this background, I am pleased to present the Strategic Plan of EMPRES Food Safety.

The plan reflects FAO's comparative advantages of having a mandate covering the entire food chain, its status as a neutral international forum and its linkages with national governments, regional bodies, other international agencies, universities, research centres and the donor community. The Plan will be regularly updated to reflect the ever-changing nature of food safety emergencies.

FAO looks forward to working with the numerous partners in effectively implementing this Strategic Plan, to contribute to improved consumer protection and global food security.



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Ezzeddine Boutrif
Director, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



Introduction

THE SAFETY AND WHOLESOMENESS OF FOOD has always been important for humankind. Given the intimate relationship between human health and food, the resolve to keep it protected has given rise to ways which ensure that food has never been safer than it is today. Yet, food safety is an increasingly important global issue. This is not due solely to a rise in the number of reported food safety events, but is also due to the increasing globalization and complexity of the food chain. Trade of food and agricultural products around the world continues to increase, with worldwide food and agricultural exports more than doubling from US\$400 billion in 2000 to US\$900 billion in 2007. This growth in international trade means that food safety hazards which may have previously been confined in a relatively small area can now disseminate with ease across countries and continents. Accordingly, reacting to food safety events in isolation and after their occurrence is inadequate. Anticipation, prevention, and timely action should be the principal means to counter food safety threats.

Therefore, FAO has established an Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety (EMPRES Food Safety) to serve as a key international system to assist in the prevention and management of global food safety emergencies, including the three pillars of early warning, emergency prevention and rapid response. This paper describes EMPRES Food Safety's strategic plan to deal with global food safety emergencies to contribute towards protecting human health and ensuring the safe trade of food.

