Why EMPRES Food Safety was established

EMPRES FOOD SAFETY was established following requests from FAO members to develop conceptual approaches and strategies to tackle international food safety emergency events. It was endorsed during the 21st Committee on Agriculture (COAG) session in April 2009, as a key unit result of FAO's internal Strategic Objective D in the area of food quality and safety² and was confirmed at the FAO Conference in November 2009. EMPRES Food Safety aims to contribute towards fulfilling FAO's mandate of ensuring a safe and affordable food supply for the world's population. EMPRES Food Safety complements FAO's well-established EMPRES systems in animal and plant health.

EMPRES Food Safety is a part of FAO's Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN), which has a more than 50 year history of work in international food safety matters, including: the provision of scientific advice, delivering food safety capacity building activities, hosting the Codex Alimentarius Commission secretariat, and collaborating with key international food safety partners (World Health Organization-WHO, World Trade Organization-WTO, World Organization for Animal Health-OIE and others). EMPRES Food Safety is a fundamental component of FAO's Food Chain Crisis Management Framework (FCC) which addresses, in an integrated way, all food chain threats, including in animal health and plant protection. Leveraging FAO's position as the premier intergovernmental organization on food, EMPRES Food Safety works with various national agencies with food safety-related responsibilities in an integrated, transparent and neutral manner. EMPRES Food Safety complements related activities of the Division by strategically providing member countries with services and activities in three important areas related to food safety emergencies: early warning, emergency prevention and rapid response.

FAO's new draft Strategic Objective D (SO D) entitled "Improved quality and safety of food at all stages of the food chain" has an Organizational Result (OR) "National/regional authorities are effectively designing and implementing programmes of food safety and quality management and control, according to international norms" which includes an Unit Result (UR) for EMPRES Food Safety, that is "Provision of guidance, information and other support to promote improved food safety emergency preparedness and response at national and international levels" (as of April 2010).

