

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

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CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FOOD STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

1. This paper describes FAO/WHO capacity building activities on food safety and quality issues, including food standards and regulations that have been implemented since the 13th Session of the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and are relevant to member countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

B. NEED FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

2. A new international food and agriculture trade environment has emerged as a result of the Uruguay round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and subsequent agreements on the application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures and on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

3. Members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are required to base their domestic technical regulations or standards on standards developed by international organisations. These organisations include the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety; the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) for animal health; and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for plant health.

4. The evolution of the conditions for international trade in relation to food and agriculture affects numerous cross-cutting sectors in every country, including human, animal and plant health, environmental welfare and economic development. The regulatory systems and infrastructure needed to conform to the new international trading environment are weak in many developing countries. This puts these countries at a competitive disadvantage in the international trade arena and constitutes a major limitation to the effective participation of these countries in the discussions and decisions taken at the level of international standardisation bodies.

5. Both the SPS (article 9) Agreement and the TBT (article 12) Agreement make specific reference to increasing the capacity of developing countries and remaining cognisant of the unique needs of developing country Members. Specifically section 12.3 of the TBT states “Members shall, in the preparation and application of technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures, take account of the special development, financial and trade needs of developing country Members, with a view to ensuring that such technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures do not create unnecessary obstacles to exports from developing country Members”. Reinforcing these views, the Executive Heads of FAO, WHO, WTO, WB and OIE, in a joint statement issued at the occasion of the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Doha in November 2001, expressed their commitment to strengthening the capacity of developing countries to meet the requirements of the SPS agreement.

6. In keeping with these mandates, FAO and WHO engage in diverse capacity building activities designed to assist developing countries to improve their food safety and plant and animal health systems. Together with international organisations, national governments, international and regional financial institutions and NGOs, various capacity building and technical assistance initiatives have been undertaken. This often involves a review and analysis of the institutional set up for food control: evaluating its effectiveness, identifying main weaknesses, and formulating recommendations and proposals for the establishment of technically sound food control systems which are harmonised with current international standards. Specific activities falling within the realm of capacity building include, training of food control officials and technical staff (food control managers, food inspectors, food analysts) in the form of seminars, workshops and study tours to broaden in-country skills and increase the ability of local governments to implement comprehensive food control systems, enhancement of food control laboratory capabilities, preparation of training manuals and guidelines, support in establishing and strengthening National Codex Committees, policy advice and establishment of regulatory frameworks.

C. RECENT AND ONGOING CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES AT GLOBAL LEVEL

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

7. As a follow-up to the successful first Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators and with the support and approval of the FAO and WHO member countries, FAO Food Quality and Standards Service (FAO/ESNS) and WHO held the Second Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators (GF-2) in Bangkok, Thailand from 12-14 October 2004, under the main theme of: “Building Effective Food Safety Systems”. The forum focused on the two following sub-themes: 1) Strengthening official food control services and 2) Epidemio-surveillance of foodborne diseases and food safety rapid alert systems. A number of related side events were also held before, during, and after the Forum, the reports of which are available from the forum website. More information on the First and Second Global Fora, including the final report when available, can be found at: www.foodsafetyforum.org/index_en.htm.

8. FAO/ESNS and the Institute de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) facilitated a Conference on Food Safety Under Extreme Conditions (Jaen, Spain, 6-8 September 2004) to address the issues of foodborne pathogens, anti-nutritional and toxic factors in fermented foods produced in small-scale producing units. This conference promoted sharing of information and viewpoints between scientists and experts from Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean countries on progress in scientific and regulatory knowledge of small-scale units. More information is available from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_fermented_en.stm.

9. FAO/ESNS co-sponsored the XI international IUPAC symposium on mycotoxins and phycotoxins from 17 to 21 May 2004 in Bethesda, Maryland, USA. The symposium assessed progress or advances made since the previous symposium in 2000 in relation to overall goals of the series and the evolving global perspective of food safety. Topics addressed included: advances in methodology; the value of risk assessment and its regulatory use; laboratory quality assurance and quality control, accreditation and method validation, particularly in developing countries. Advances in genomics for detection and evaluating the impact of mycotoxins and phycotoxins on human and animal health, as well as control strategies were also discussed. More information on the symposium is available from: www.aoac.org/meetings1/iupac/main.htm.

10. FAO/ESNS and WHO, in collaboration with ILSI facilitated a workshop on 5 March 2004 on the Detection of Protein and/or DNA in Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology. The workshop was held in the same venue and immediately prior to the 25th Session of CCMAS and was attended by 23 participants from 9 countries. The purpose of this workshop was to give an introduction to the tools, information and experiences available to test for protein/DNA from foods derived from modern biotechnology to the CCMAS delegates and other interested parties. Emphasis was placed on similarities and differences among chemical analytical methods available, with particular attention to how biological factors can affect measurement results. Current efforts in methods development, standardization and validation, including those within ISO, were described. The complete workshop programme can be accessed from: www.fao.org/es/esn/food/capacity_workshops2004_en.stm.

11. FAO/ESNS held a Ministerial Round Table on 3 December 2003, on the occasion of the 32nd session of the FAO Conference, on the Dimension of Food Safety in Food Security. The background document and final report for this round table discussion can be accessed from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_mrt_en.stm.

12. FAO/ESNS and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) jointly facilitated a workshop on the subject of: "Strengthening Capacities for Implementing Codex Standards, Guidelines and the Recommended International Codes of Practice for Control of the Use of Veterinary Drugs" from 20-24 October 2003 in Vienna, Austria. Technical training courses for scientists/ technicians/ laboratory managers to complement these workshops have also been held in various regions of the world. More information on this workshop and training courses can be found at www.iaea.org/programmes/nafa/d3/index.html.

13. FAO is involved in a number of events relating to Good Agricultural Practices and food safety. These include: a Food-Feed Safety Conference jointly with the International Feed Industry Federation (IFIF) in Rome, from 29 to 31 October 2004; an International Symposium on Dairy Hygiene and Safety with the International Dairy Federation (IDF), in South Africa, 2-5 March 2004; and an International Workshop on Good Practices for the Meat and Livestock Sector in Windhoek, Namibia from 6 to 8 April 2004. A workshop related to Echinococcosis was held in Morocco on the 19 September 2003 and another on Fasciolosis, diagnostics and control in Egypt on the 12 of January 2004. A presentation on Cysticercosis: FAO perspectives - FAO support possibilities, was presented on the 19th International Conference of the World Association of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP), USA on the 12 August 2003.

14. FAO/ESNS and WHO jointly facilitated an international seminar on Acrylamide in Food: Current State of Affairs in Arusha, Tanzania on 16 March 2003, held immediately prior to the 35th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants. This seminar provided for the exchange of views, an update on ongoing research, and identification of gaps in the area of acrylamide in foods. Presentations were given by representatives of FAO/WHO, the US, JIFSAN, the EU, Australia, Japan, and Norway and are available for viewing from FAO's website at: www.fao.org/es/ESN/jecfa/acrylamide_en.stm.

GLOBAL PROJECTS

15. FAO/ESNS- implemented a global project for the Enhancement of Coffee Quality through the Prevention of Mould Formation, which started in December 2000 and is due to end in June 2005. This project is being carried out in Brazil, Colombia, Ivory Coast, India, Indonesia, Kenya, and Uganda, with ongoing collaboration from the Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) and the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC), and earlier collaboration with the University of Surrey, U.K. The project is funded by the Common Fund for Commodities and the Dutch Government. An additionally funded component for training and dissemination of best practice in ochratoxin A (OTA) control in Ecuador was incorporated, and completed in 2002.

16. The project approach emphasises capacity building in coffee-producing countries, with the aim of formulating codes of practice for the coffee industry. Key initial activities under the project involve defining mould formation mechanisms, identifying critical control points, evaluating optimal drying conditions, and developing the necessary tools (e.g. GAP, GMP and HACCP) to control and monitor both mould formation and OTA production. Specifically, the project builds capacity at the national level within the industry and responsible government agencies in the application of internationally-agreed principles of food hygiene and a HACCP-based approach to food safety throughout the coffee production and processing chain. The project also builds the analytical capacity and capability required to support national programmes for prevention and control of OTA contamination of coffee.

17. FAO/ESNS is involved in a number of capacity building and technical assistance activities to develop food safety policies and to build local capacities for fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV) in developing countries and has recently implemented the global project PFL/857 "Global Inventory, Reference Materials and Food Safety Training Programme for Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables", targeting Latin American and Caribbean countries. The project focuses on the application of good practices (GAP, GMP, GHP) to prevent hazards at appropriate points in the fresh fruits and vegetable chain (production and post-harvest stages-**food chain approach** "*from farm to table*").

18. Under the project, approximately 150 national staff professionals have been trained as multipliers through sub-regional workshops "to train the trainers" carried out in: Santiago, Chile (March 2003); Antigua, Guatemala (July 2003); Cochabamba, Bolivia (March 2004); Bridgetown, Barbados (May 2004). A training package has been produced by FAO/ESNS to support the national training courses and is available in English, French and Spanish (CD-Rom and hardcopies), and is freely available on the FAO web site. The training package/manual was validated through the sub-regional workshops and contains: power point presentations, gallery of pictures, complete documents, recommended readings, etc. regarding safety and quality issues for FFV. In January 2004, the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Safety and Quality Database was launched as part of the FAO/ESNS strategy to improve sharing information amongst the food chain actors. Nineteen countries in Latin America have received FAO financial support to implement National Action Plans, involving 60 national institutions (public and private sector). Through these National Plans, approximately 3.300 food chain actors have been trained by the multipliers through national courses, a total of 1000 CD-ROM manuals have been distributed to support the national trainers courses, local training materials have been produced and, in some countries, initiatives have led to the creation of national groups (national commissions) to address quality and safety matters in the FFV sector. More information is available from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/foodandfood_fruits_en.stm.

GLOBAL INITIATIVES

19. FAO, WHO, OIE, WTO, and the World Bank established a Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in 2003 to coordinate the capacity building efforts of these organizations in the areas of food safety, plant, and animal health and to provide a funding mechanism for countries and stakeholders to improve in meeting WTO SPS standards. The STDF has already and will continue to facilitate or support information exchange, development of databases, tool kits, and learning materials on trade-related SPS issues. It facilitates consultations to better coordinate inter-agency capacity building projects and funding of projects in capacity building in individual countries or through regional initiatives, including activities involving both public and private sectors. The specific projects supported with funding by the Facility are identified by partner institutions in consultation with the developing countries concerned. An FAO (ESNS) /WHO project to assist the low income countries in Developing Food Standards within a Risk Analysis Framework- pilot application in Asia and the Pacific was approved for funding from this Facility in 2004 and will be implemented in late 2004. Interested countries and stakeholders are encouraged to propose projects and submit them to the STDF for consideration. More information on the STDF is available from: www.standardsfacility.org.

20. In February 2003, FAO/ESNS and WHO launched a Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex to increase the participation of developing countries and countries in transition in the vital work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The fund provides financial support to increase their ability to participate in the establishment of global food safety and quality standards, as well as improve their capacity to implement those standards in their own countries. Thanks to the generosity of several donors, the minimum threshold of US\$ 500 000 was reached at the beginning of March 2004, allowing the Fund to become fully operational. Over eighty applications from all Codex regions were received by April 2004, with delegates from Ghana, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea already benefiting from the Fund. More information and application forms are available from www.who.int/foodsafety/codex/trustfund/en/ in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

21. In early 2004, FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) launched a joint initiative entitled a “Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases” (GF-TADs). Some of the diseases addressed in GF-TADs are of public health interest and the FAO-OIE activities will have a global objective of re-enforcing Veterinary Services.

22. In response to resolutions of the World Health Assembly calling for enhanced communication between WHO and its Member States on matters of food safety, WHO, in collaboration with FAO, is now establishing an official International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) to be used for targeted and rapid distribution of various information for the protection of public health. One part of INFOSAN will be dedicated to food safety emergency situations (INFOSAN EMERGENCY) where imminent risk of serious injury or death is present.

23. WHO also manages a global network of laboratories and individuals involved in surveillance, isolation, identification and antimicrobial resistance testing of *Salmonella* (Global Salm-Surv). The network, which links around 800 members from nearly 500 institutions in 138 countries, is currently being extended to include other major foodborne pathogens, e.g. *Campylobacter*. The Global Environment Monitoring System/Food Contamination Monitoring and Assessment Programme (GEMS/Food) has now been introduced to 13 francophone countries, mainly from Africa, through the Third International Total Diet Study Workshop and Training Course held in May 2004. The workshop presented the latest developments in methods and technology which continue to make total diet studies the most cost-effective exposure assessment tool available for assessing human exposure to chemicals in food.

GLOBAL TOOLS AVAILABLE

24. Apart from the direct implementation of activities in the area of food quality and safety in developing countries, FAO and WHO elaborate guidance and technical materials to be used by other implementing agencies working in these areas. This ensures broader and more sustainable impact of the technical assistance provided in the field. Several tools are also under development. Some of the tools developed on food quality and safety include the following:

25. FAO, often in collaboration with WHO, convenes *Expert Consultations/workshops* to provide guidance and advice to the Codex system and to national governments on specific issues such as Safety Assessment of Foods from Genetically Modified Animals (www.fao.org/es/esn/food/risk_biotech_animal_en.stm), Non-human Antimicrobial Usage and Resistance (www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/meetings_antimicrobial_en.stm), the use of a Good Agricultural Practice Approach (www.fao.org/prods/GAP/gapindex_en.asp), and Pathogens of concern in powdered infant formula (www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/risk_mra_riskassessment_entero_en.stm). Some of these Expert Consultation reports are available electronically from the FAO website and printed copies of most are available in multiple languages from the FAO publications page: www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/publications_en.stm.

26. FAO/ESNS and WHO publish a series of guidelines on topics related to *Microbiological Risk Assessments*. For example, the third publication in this series, Hazard Characterization for Pathogens in Food and Water guidelines, (MRA Series No. 3) endeavours to provide a practical framework and a structured approach for the characterization of microbiological hazards. It is aimed at assisting governmental and research scientists in identifying the points to be addressed, the methodology for incorporating data from different sources, and the methodology of dose-response modeling. These guidelines are available from: www.fao.org/es/esn/food/risk_mra_hazard_en.stm.

27. FAO/ESNS and WHO have jointly prepared and published (2003) *Assuring Food Safety and Quality - Guidelines for Strengthening National Food Control Systems* to enable national authorities, particularly in developing countries, to improve their food control systems. This publication replaces the previous (1976) guidelines. The guidelines seek to provide advice on strategies to strengthen food control systems to protect public health, prevent fraud and deception, avoid food adulteration and facilitate trade. In addition to national authorities, the guidelines will also be of assistance to a range of other stakeholders including consumer groups, industry and trade organizations, farmer groups and any other groups or associations that influence national policy in this area. The guidelines are now available electronically in English (www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/control_FCS_en.stm) and Spanish (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/guideFCS_es.pdf) and will soon be available electronically in French and Arabic. Printed copies can be ordered in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/pub_control_en.stm.

28. An example of a possible *structure of a food law* has been developed by FAO/ESNS and WHO and is based on a number of food laws currently in force in developed and developing countries. Since different countries place responsibility for food control with different Ministries or agencies, the draft has been prepared in a general way so that it can be adapted to local conditions. It has been reviewed and endorsed by Joint FAO/WHO meetings of countries of the Africa and Asia regions and is available from FAO's website at: <ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/foodlaw.pdf>.

29. *Food Quality and Safety Systems - A FAO/ESNS Training Manual on Food Hygiene and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System* is available electronically in:

- English: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/W8088E/W8088E00.htm>,
- French: ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/HACCPManual_fr.pdf,
- Russian: <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/006/W8088R/W8088R00.HTM>,
- Spanish: ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/HACCPManual_es.pdf,
- or as a printed publication in these 4 languages from:
http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/pub_quality_en.stm.

30. *FAO(ESNS)/IAEA Manual on the Application of the HACCP System in Mycotoxin Prevention and Control* is available electronically in English (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/mycotoxin_manual.pdf) and Spanish (ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/haccp_micotoxinas.pdf) or as a printed publication (in En, Fr, Es) from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/pub_quality_en.stm. The manual will soon be available electronically in French as well.

31. Training manuals and guides on *food safety in the street food sector* are also available in multiple languages in publication format from the FAO publications page: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/publications_en.stm. A *Training of Street Food Vendors didactic guide*, materials designed for training courses are available electronically in English and Spanish from: www.rlc.fao.org/prior/segalim/accalim/Guias/faoguias.html.

32. FAO/ESNS has also published many *manuals on food inspection*, including a series of fourteen Manuals on Food Quality Control. Printed copies of these manuals are available in multiple languages from the FAO publications page: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/publications/publications_en.stm.

33. FAO/ESNS has developed a *training package and manual* as well as a *database of resources* available in the area of *Improving the Safety and Quality of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*, which are freely available from FAO web pages or as a CD-ROM in English, French, and Spanish from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/foodandfood_fruits_en.stm.

34. FAO/ESNS and WHO provide a platform for the exchange of current information on the topic of Acrylamide through an electronic *Acrylamide InfoNet*, which is operated by the Joint (United States Food and Drug Administration and the University of Maryland) Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN). The Research Database now lists more than 100 projects and a "Call for Data on Levels of Acrylamide in Food and the Total Diet" was issued in July 2003. The Infonet is available from www.acrylamide-food.org/.

35. FAO has prepared a series of *fact sheets on trade-related issues* for the 2003 WTO Cancun Ministerial Conference. Sheet # 14 in this series deals with the prevalence of non-tariff measures, such as food standards, and FAO's activities to assist countries in dealing with these measures. The entire series of fact sheets is available from: www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4852e/y4852e00.htm.

36. In January 2004, FAO, jointly with IDF, published a *Guide to Good Dairy Farming Practice*. FAO is finalizing the publication of a "*Manual on Good Practices for the Meat Industry*", with funding from the private sector. The manual will provide practical guidelines for primary producers and is also intended to guide managers of abattoirs and the meat industry. The manual takes a risk analysis approach and will be of value to veterinarians, with their supervisory roles in meat hygiene. The book covers topics such as application of risk management principles to the meat sector, meat hygiene applying to primary production, animals transport, handling, stunning, traceability and control of processing operations.

37. In an effort to allow users to access complete information on international standards, national regulations, scientific evaluations, and other supporting official information on sanitary and phytosanitary measures from a single source, FAO is leading an interagency initiative to develop and maintain an internet-based portal - *the International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health*. This portal allows users to by-pass secondary (interpreted) information, as well as material which may be out of date – both of which can be found using typical internet search tools - and focus on the definitive official sources across the three main disciplines of food safety, animal health and plant health.

38. As of November 2004, the portal contains references to over 15,000 items, drawn from the three SPS-recognized standard setting bodies, as well as from CBD, FAO, WHO, and WTO. It also includes demonstration 'nodes' of nearly 400 items each from the US and the EU, and smaller data sets from selected developing countries. Version 1.0 of the portal was formally launched on 25 May 2004, on the occasion of the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for Asia and the Pacific (Seremban, Malaysia). It is now freely accessible from the FAO Biosecurity PAIA webpage (www.fao.org/biosecurity) or directly from www.ipfsaph.org. Interested users are invited to utilise the portal, share the link with other users, and provide feedback to the FAO project team on the portal content and usability. Work is now underway to include more detailed information from the current sources, including from Codex, JECFA and JMPR, as well as data from additional countries. A capacity building programme related to the portal is also planned. More information on the portal project is available as CAC27/INF/4.

39. In an effort to improve information exchange and communication with stakeholders in food safety and quality, FAO/ESNS distributes a monthly electronic newsletter, the *Food Safety and Quality Update*, to over 2,500 subscribers to provide information on recent developments and upcoming activities of FAO and Codex that are related to food safety and quality. Other parties interested in receiving the newsletter can also subscribe by following the simple instructions listed in the newsletter itself. The current newsletter and an archive of past newsletters are available from: http://www.fao.org/es/ESN/fsqu_en.stm. WHO also periodically sends an electronic newsletter, the *Food Safety News*, to interested parties regarding the activities of WHO in food safety, available from: <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/newsletter/en/>.

GLOBAL TOOLS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

40. FAO/ESNS is involved in the work which has commenced with the newly created IDF/ISO/AOAC lactic bacteria action team on *methods for the assessment of probiotic microorganisms* as a follow up of the recommendations of the FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Health and Nutritional Properties of Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria, held in Cordoba, Argentina 2001.

41. FAO/ESNS and WHO are in the process of finalising a CD-ROM training package on *Food Safety Risk Analysis*, which includes a framework and overview manual, a training module presentation, case studies in risk analysis, and access to FAO/WHO resources related to food safety risk analysis. An FAO(ESNS)/WHO workshop was held in Bali, Indonesia on 4 March 2004 to introduce the package to some potential users and to provide participants with practical tools for risk analysis. The workshop report is available from the following: ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/meetings/bali_report_mar04.pdf.

42. In order to assist countries in *Evaluating Capacity Building Needs for Food Control*, FAO/ESNS and WHO are preparing a joint publication on the subject to assist countries to identify and prioritise the areas where capacity building is needed. This publication is in the final stages of approval and printing.

43. FAO/ESNS and WHO are currently developing a training manual on *Improving Participation in the Work of Codex*, designed to strengthen national food safety and quality systems through enhanced participation in the Codex process. It has been field-tested in Africa and the Pacific and it is expected to be available in final form in late 2004. The manual provides information on the Codex process and the development of national Codex programmes. It should serve both as a reference document for those involved in national Codex activities and as a training tool for national/regional training courses on Codex. In addition, the manual is an important capacity building tool within the ongoing FAO and WHO programmes to increase effective participation in Codex activities, and it is anticipated that it will be of great support when used in conjunction with direct participation in Codex meetings of increasing numbers of countries through the funds of the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund.

44. As part of a field project on the safety of street foods, FAO/ESNS is in the process of preparing a *Training of Trainers Manual in Street Food Safety* to assist countries in improving the safety of this important source of nutrition for many cultures.

45. FAO is finalizing publications on the following topics:

- A manual on the *Prudent Use of Antimicrobials*.
- An FAO/ESNS manual on *Marine Biotoxins*
- *Worldwide Regulations for Mycotoxins in Food and Feed in 2003* (FAO/ESNS)

46. In recent years, WHO has elaborated rules to promote the production and handling of safe food, the *Five Keys to Safer Food*: keep clean, separate raw and cooked food, cook food thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures and use safe water and raw material. WHO is now developing a food safety training manual based on the Five Keys to Safer Food. The purpose of this manual is to facilitate implementation of the Five Keys at country level. The manual will provide relevant food safety information when disseminated.

47. All these materials, once finalized, will be issued in multi-lingual form for wider use by member countries.

D. RECENT AND ONGOING CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Regional Activities

Regional Workshops

48. FAO/ESNS and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) implemented a workshop on Food Control Systems immediately prior to the 14th CCLAC meeting on 28 November 2004 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. More information can be found at: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/capacity_workshops2004_en.stm.

49. FAO, along with PAHO and the Instituto Panamericano de Protección de Alimentos (INPPAZ), the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC), and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) implemented a Regional Inter-Agency Workshop for Strengthening and Co-ordination of Food-borne Disease Surveillance in Support of Food Safety Programmes in the Caribbean in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago from 20 to 23 June, 2004.

50. A workshop on Food Control Systems: Practical Approaches for the Andean region was implemented in March 2004 by FAO(ESNS)/WHO, in collaboration with ILSI. Thirty- two participants attended the workshop held in Quito, Ecuador. Presentations were given by representatives of FAO, PAHO, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and local examples of food control systems. More information on the workshop is available from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/capacity_workshops2004_en.stm.

51. FAO and PAHO implemented a workshop on Food Labelling in February 2004, in collaboration with the National Nutrition Centre of Barbados and the Barbados National Bureau of Standards, with forty-two persons participating. Presentations were given by representatives of FAO and PAHO.

52. FAO/ESNS, in collaboration with the Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (CENSA), facilitated a workshop on the application of the HACCP system for mycotoxin prevention and control for Latin American and Caribbean countries from 22-23 September, 2003, in Havana, Cuba. The workshop was held immediately prior to the IV Latin American Society for Mycotoxicology (SLAM) Congress. More information on the workshop is available from: www.fao.org/es/ESN/food/capacity_workshops2003_en.stm.

FAO Regional Projects

53. An FAO regional project (TCP/RLA/2904) to strengthen the management of National Codex Committees and Application of the Codex Alimentarius standards of the Andean Countries was initiated in September of 2002 and will continue until December 2004. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela are participating in this project. The main objectives are to strengthen the management of the National Codex Committees; to develop a national and sub-regional training program and to promote the harmonisation of the national standards to Codex. At present, the objectives are being met through 13 National Seminars on Codex (2 per country), 7 sub-regional workshops and 35 national workshops (7 per country) have been carried out with 983 persons trained and 148 established as trainers. The web sites of the 5 national Codex Committees will be created in each country to disseminate relevant information to governments and to other stakeholders. A comparative analysis between the national regulations and Codex standards was carried out in each country with the purpose of promoting their harmonisation or equivalence. The complete project, including objectives and activities with the corresponding reports and documents, is available at: www.rlc.fao.org/prior/comagric/codex/rla2904/default.htm.

54. An FAO regional project (TCP/RLA/0177) to evaluate and strengthen the prevention systems for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and the feed quality control system began in January 2002 and finished in May 2004 in the countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The project promotes capacity building in food quality and safety at regional level in South America. The activities of the project were designed to help ensure the quality and safety of the bovine meat produced both for national consumption and for international trade, ensuring that all beef produced is free from BSE. The project covered the organization of study tours on laboratory diagnosis, epidemiological surveillance, and three regional courses related to legal aspects, development of media communications and elaboration of the Manual on Quality Control on Animal Feeding, as well as a publication with all the scientific-technological information carried out by the Project. More information on the project is available at <http://www.rlc.fao.org/prior/segalim/animal/eeb/>.

55. An FAO regional project (TCP/RLA/2914) to promote the development and good use of South American camelids breeding in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru. The project began on October 2003 and will end March 2005. It promotes capacity building in food quality and safety at regional level in South America. One of the main components of the project is the establishment of the elaboration of meat products at a low cost and under adequate sanitary conditions with camelids meat and consumption promotion.

56. An FAO project to assist countries with trade was initiated in September 2001 as part of the Regional Special Programme for Food Security (RSPFS) for the Caribbean. The specific objective of this TCP assistance is to formulate a trade facilitation project as a component of the Regional Special Programme for Food Security (RSPFS) for the Caribbean. Particular attention will be given to food quality and safety standards; trade and commodity development programmes; transitory and compensatory measures relating to the present trading environment, and capacity building required for effective participation in multilateral trade negotiations. Specific elements of trade facilitation within the overall framework of RSPFS include, upgrading Food Quality and Safety Standards, promoting intra-regional trade in agriculture, raising the competitiveness of agricultural commodities (both import and export) and increasing national capacity to participate effectively in multilateral trade negotiations on agriculture.

Other Regional Activities

57. The Inter American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL), with secretariat *ex officio* by (PAHO/INPPAZ) and the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, is conducting a survey of laboratories. INFAL's Second Assembly was carried out in Cancun, Mexico (June 11-13, 2003). During the meeting some modifications of bylaws were approved; members of the Executive Committee were elected; the evaluation of the laboratories' survey and the results of the inter-laboratory tests were presented; and the Plan of Action for the period 2003-2005 was also established.

58. With FAO's support, the Latin American Food Composition Network (LATINFOODS) continued working on the update of the Regional Food Composition Table which is available from: www.fao.org/Regional/LAmerica/bases/alimento/default.htm. A CD-ROM with this Table was published and distributed. An FAO/SLAN/LATINFOODS workshop on the Importance of Food Composition in Food Security and Trade and a FAO/ LATINFOODS Meeting was held in Acapulco, México, in November 10, during de 13th Latin American Congress of Nutrition. In this meeting, the Regional Work Plan on Food Composition was approved. This report is available at: http://www.inta.cl/latinfoods/informes_y_publicaciones.html. The Second Electronic Conference on Food Data Quality Evaluation for Data Base and Food Chemical Composition Table was carried in October 2004 (<http://www.rlc.fao.org/foro/latinfoods/default.htm>).

National Activities

Workshops and Seminars

59. FAO provided assistance to the Government of Chile, General Secretariat of the Presidency and the Dirección Multilateral, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in modernising their food control system. A seminar and working sessions were held with local authorities from the ministries and institutes responsible for food control activities in the country in relation to the reform process currently being undertaken to update and unify the food and agricultural sectors. Over 30 participants attended the Seminar from the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Codex Committee, Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Trade, Industry, Consumer organisations, and Universities. The main topics of the discussions were key issues in the transition to a modern food control system, including legislation, management, inspection, laboratories, co-ordination of activities and policies, economic feasibility and trade impact. The FAO/WHO recently updated Guidelines for Food Control Systems were discussed. Presentations were also given on modern food control systems with practical examples and case studies from countries with similar agriculture-based economies in the process of modernising into a unified system.

60. The FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Barbados through the Government Analytical Service (GAS). The technical support assisted in developing a comprehensive quality assurance system for food analysis laboratories, which will contribute to increased export of food and ensuring safety of the domestic supply.

61. In addition, numerous conferences were given by FAO's technical officers at regional and national meetings.

Field Projects

62. An FAO TCP project was recently approved to provide training for prevention of OTA in coffee in Ecuador. The project will be implemented in the upcoming months with ESNS as the lead technical unit.

63. An FAO TCP project to improve the quality and safety of spices produced in Grenada was approved in March 2004, with initial activities currently on-going.

64. An FAO project designed to strengthen the Food Control System in Guyana began in May 2002 and will continue through 2004. The project assists the Government in upgrading the food law and harmonising national food standards with international standards. Efficiency of the food inspection system will be improved in order to facilitate compliance with the WTO Agreements on SPS and TBT. The analytical capabilities of the Government food control laboratory will be upgraded, to ensure the monitoring of food contaminants and permit the certification of exported products. The capability of the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) and the National Codex Committee will be strengthened, facilitating more active and effective national participation in Codex work. The successful accomplishment of the project should produce a coherent food control system with efficient utilisation of resources and operations compliant with international requirements. The laboratory will be upgraded and personnel trained to expedite product testing and certification. Codex contact point will be strengthened to allow for improved involvement in Codex work, with national interests protected and adequate representation in the international arena. The National Legal Consultant will be trained in legislative drafting and will therefore be able to assist in later preparation of regulations and standards.

65. An FAO/ESNS project to strengthen the food control system of Haiti began in July 2002 and was completed in 2003. This was a second phase project following up on an 18 month project to reinforce national food control capacity. The main activities of this project included drafting of food law and basic regulations in accordance with Codex Guidelines, creation of a National Codex Committee, training of food inspector trainers, training of laboratory personnel and provision of basic laboratory equipment.

66. FAO/SLAC has been assisting in the Establishment of a National Codex Committee in Jamaica and will assist the Jamaica Bureau of Standards in preparing its Plan of Action for the Codex National Committee.

67. An FAO project to strengthen the National Codex Committee in Paraguay (TCP/PAR/2801) began operations in October 2002 and was completed in July 2004. The main objectives of the project were to support the work of the National Codex Committee and Codex focal point, to establish linkages between government sectors, industry and consumers, develop an action plan to update national food standards in harmony with Codex guidelines and to establish a web site for exchange of information on Codex. The project achieved these objectives through 6 National Seminars on Codex and 6 national workshops that have been carried out with 182 persons trained. A Work Plan 2004-2005 for the Focal Point and National Codex Committee was prepared as follow-up of the project, as well as plans of actions to harmonize the national food standards with Codex, to establish a national system for chemicals contaminants in foods, and to modernize the national food control system. More information can be obtained from: www.rlc.fao.org/prior/comagric/codex/par2801/default.htm.

68. An eighteen month FAO project to strengthen the food control system of Suriname began in May 2002 and is continued through early 2004. The main objective of the project was to strengthen the National Food Control System through providing training, upgrading laboratory facilities and supporting the functioning of the National Codex Committee and its Working Groups. The expected project outputs were amended national food laws, regulations and standards which comply with international guidelines, improved food inspection service which applies modern quality assurance and HACCP principles, improved laboratory facilities capable of contamination monitoring in primary agricultural products and processed foods and a plan of action on food safety, conforming to Codex Commission recommendations.

69. An FAO project designed to strengthen the National Codex Committee of Uruguay began in 2001 and was completed in early 2003. The main objective of this project was to improve national and local capacity of the Codex Committee, by enhancing the decision making structure and encouraging greater participation from government officials, industry and other stakeholders in National Codex activities. The outcome of this project is a stronger Codex Committee able to inform and advise the state and civil society in matters related to Codex.

70. An FAO/ESNS project was funded to provide emergency technical assistance to the Government of Uruguay in evaluating *Fusarium* contamination of grains. A large part of the 2002 wheat crop was infected with *Fusarium*, a mould species that produces the mycotoxin deoxynivalenol (DON) which can have both short term and long term detrimental effects on human and animal health. Immediate assistance was provided by FAO and emergency legislation was passed limiting the DON content in human foods and animal feed. The project was expanded into longer-term technical assistance (mid 2002-early 2004) which established adequate controls in the supply chain and formulated future prevention and control strategies. It included a study mission, extensive training activities in GAP, GMP and HACCP for mycotoxin prevention and control, an integrated national action plan, rapid detection methods and laboratory strengthening, the establishment of a DON rapid alert forecasting system and a crop information network.

Upcoming Activities/Projects

71. Two FAO sub-regional projects requesting assistance for strengthening the analytical activities, laboratory quality assurance and capacity building of the Interamerican Network of Food Analytical Laboratories (INFAL/ RILAA) have been re-drafted and are in the final stages of approval.

72. The Government of Argentina has requested assistance from FAO for an Integrated Program for Mycotoxin Prevention and Control. The project is in the formulation phase.

73. A regional project for capacity building in Latin American consumer organizations is being prepared by FAO and Consumers International- Latin American Regional Office.

74. As a follow-up to the recommendations of the first Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators and in line with the 123rd FAO Council's instructions, FAO/ESNS and WHO have sought the views of the countries of each region on the interest in convening other regional food safety conferences. At the request of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, preparations are underway for a Regional Conference on Food Safety for Latin America and the Caribbean. A preliminary meeting with the delegates of the region to the 27th Codex Alimentarius Commission Meeting was held on 2 July 2004 to initiate discussions on the themes of the conference and other logistical and technical details. Further planning will occur in the upcoming months.