CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

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Agenda Item 5   **CX/NASWP 14/13/5**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

13th Session, Kokopo, Papua New Guinea

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

(Replies to CL 2014/19-NASWP of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and United States of America)

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems. These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiatives to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

AUSTRALIA

Food safety issues in Australia are managed at the national level by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and by the Australian Government Department of Health and its associated agency - Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

The domestic food regulatory system in Australia is a cooperative bi-national arrangement between the Australian and New Zealand Government and Australian States and Territories. Australia has a food regulatory system that protects and enhances public health and safety across the whole of the food chain. The system is based upon a partnership between government, consumers and industry. The food regulatory system separates the responsibility of policy development, standards setting and the implementation and enforcement of standards set for food between government agencies.

The Department of Health is responsible for development of food regulation policy, research and investigations to provide sound data on foodborne illness. FSANZ is responsible for the establishment of food standards taking into account the best available scientific evidence and good regulatory practice. Australian requirements for public health and safety are detailed in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code). The Code applies to all food for sale including those imported into or manufactured in Australia.

The Department of Agriculture helps protect Australia's food producers by managing the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering the country. In respect of imported food, the Department of Agriculture enforces the Food Standards Code and is responsible for inspection and testing of imported product at the border.

The legal basis for the food safety inspection of imported food is the Imported Food Control Act 1992 and the applicable standards under the Act are those set down in the Code. Under the Act, importers are responsible for ensuring that all food imported into Australia complies with relevant standards in the Code. This legislation allows the department to run a food safety inspection program known as the Imported Food Inspection Scheme (IFIS). Food is referred for inspection under the IFIS by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs) based on internationally agreed tariff codes.

In addition to the department's imported food testing, the state and territory jurisdictions also have responsibility for ensuring that all food, including imported food, meets the requirements of the Code at the point of sale. Food failing to meet the requirements of the Code must be re-exported, destroyed, treated where possible or downgraded.

The Australian Department of Agriculture's role is to develop and implement policies and programs that ensure Australia's agricultural, fisheries, food and forestry industries remain competitive, profitable and sustainable.

The department employs about 4,200 staff in Australia and overseas, including policy officers, program administrators, scientists, economists, meat inspectors, veterinary officers and quarantine inspectors.

The Department of Agriculture also provides export inspection and certification services and develops strategies to gain, improve or maintain market access for live animals and reproductive material, and a wide range of food and inedible products of animal origin. The division also provides residue monitoring services to Australian primary industries.

The Australia government is continuously working to reduce red tape and improve systems across food regulation in order to ensure safe food, less regulation and lower costs to industry. One of the initiatives implemented has focused on minimisation of duplication of regulatory audits. Regulatory responsibility to ensure compliance to food safety and export legislation at export registered establishments sits with both State Regulatory Authorities, for product destined for the Australian market, and the Department of Agriculture, for export product. The department has worked closely with State Regulatory Authorities, establishing formal agreements and negotiating systems and requirements so that only one state or Commonwealth authority conducts regulatory auditing for food safety and export addressing the needs of both organisations.

NEW ZEALAND

The following is a summary of developments in national food control systems in New Zealand since the last meeting:

Food Act 2014

The Food Act 2014 (the Act) was passed by the New Zealand Parliament in May 2014, and received the Royal Assent to become law on 6 June 2014.

Most provisions of the Act will not come into force until a date to be appointed, which must be no later than 1 March 2016. Some provisions of the Act came into force on 7 June 2014. These provisions are identified below, in the section Powers for administration and enforcement.

Purpose of the Food Act 2014

The purpose of the new Act is to:

(a) restate and reform the law relating to how persons trade in food; and

(b) achieve the safety and suitability of food for sale; and

(c) maintain confidence in New Zealand's food safety regime; and

(d) provide for risk-based measures that—

    (i)   minimise and manage risks to public health; and

    (ii) protect and promote public health; and

(e) provide certainty for food businesses in relation to how the requirements of this Act will affect their activities; and

(f) require persons who trade in food to take responsibility for the safety and suitability of that food.

The Act will replace the Food Act 1981, and has been drafted to sit alongside the Animal Products Act 1999, which remains the principal legislation relating to the processing of animal material into products for use, trade, and export.

Risk-based measures

Risk-based measures are the main mechanism under the Act for achieving the safety and suitability of food.

Food sectors

Central to the risk-based approach under the Act is the specification of food sectors, which are groups of food businesses that are defined in one or more of the following ways:

- The type of food that the sector trades in; or
- The intended purpose or destination of the food; or
- The type of operations or processes carried out in relation to food; or
- The type of place in which the operations or processes are carried out.

Food sectors are classified as high-risk, medium-risk and low-risk.

High-risk food businesses must operate under a food control plan. A food control plan is a plan designed for a particular food business to identify, control, manage and eliminate or minimise hazards associated with the business's operations. A food control plan may apply to more than one business if the operator of the plan has sufficient control, authority and accountability for all matters covered by the plan. Template food control plans will also be developed for common food businesses such as cafes.

Medium-risk food businesses must operate under a national programme. A national programme is a programme designed to identify, control, manage and eliminate or minimise hazards associated with the businesses in the sector. A national programme will be constituted by a set of regulations (secondary legislation) that applies to all food businesses in the sector.

Low-risk food businesses are not required to operate under either a food control plan or a national programme. Low-risk food businesses will also not be required to register their businesses or have their operations verified.

Other exemptions from the requirement to operate under a food control plan or a national programme are provided for. For example, a business that is operating under a risk management programme under the Animal Products Act 1999 is not required to operate under a food control plan or a national programme.

Food businesses' responsibilities

As noted above, one of the purposes of the Act is to require persons who trade in food to take responsibility for the safety and suitability of that food.

This is reflected in various provisions in the Act which impose duties on food traders.

The primary duty for all persons who trade in food is to ensure that the food is safe and suitable.

The Act also imposes more specific duties on persons who:

- Operate under a food control plan:
- Operate under a national programme:
- Import food.

Regulatory roles

The key regulatory roles under the Act are conferred on:

- The Minister for Food Safety:
- The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI):
- Territorial authorities (which are part of New Zealand's local government structure).

Delegated legislation

The provisions of the Act will be supplemented by more detailed requirements that will be set out in delegated legislation made pursuant to the Act. The Act empowers:

- The making of regulations – regulations are classified as secondary legislation, must be drafted by the government's law drafting office, and require approval by the Cabinet;
- The issuing of notices – notices are classified as tertiary legislation, need not be drafted by the government's law drafting office, and are issued by the chief executive of MPI; and
- The adoption of food standards relating to matters such as composition and labelling, which are developed under the Australia-New Zealand Joint Food Standards Agreement.

A significant amount of delegated legislation will need to be developed, and this is the reason why most of the Act will not commence until a later appointed date.

Offences

The Act creates a range of offences for breaches of the legislation and other matters.

Powers for administration and enforcement

The powers for administration and enforcement of the Act are primarily conferred on the chief executive of MPI and on food safety officers.

The chief executive's powers include:

- Giving directions for a range of purposes, such as the recall of food;
- Making privileged statements for the purpose of protecting or informing the public; and
- Requiring information from food businesses.

The chief executive also appoints food safety officers.

The chief executive powers are the provisions of the Act that came into force on 7 June 2014.

Food safety officers have a range of powers under the Act, including:

- Powers to enter property, take samples of food, etc;
- Powers to require information, take photographs, copy documents, etc;
- Power to issue improvement notices to people who are not complying with the Act; and
- Power to seize evidence of offending.

Other provisions

Other key provisions include:

- Provisions for the implementation of monitoring programmes, which can be used for purposes such as ensuring the effectiveness of the food safety regime;
- Provisions relating to imported food, which include a requirement for the registration of persons who import food for sale, and the ability to prescribe high-risk foods for which clearance at the border is required; and
- Provisions for the recognition by the chief executive of MPI of persons and agencies who carry out verification activities.

Other legislative initiatives

Following the recent Independent Inquiry into the Whey Protein Concentrate Contamination Incident, the Government agreed to amend legislation to implement the Inquiry recommendations. Policy development is underway for a Food Safety Law Reform Bill. This bill will be omnibus – able to amend more than one food safety statute as necessary. Changes being examined include (among other things) harmonising some requirements across the relevant statutes [for example, the penalties regimes], ways to strengthen the verification system, and potential improvements to our other risk management tools. We are also assessing whether to extend official assurances to all food products.

Food Labelling

New Zealand recently announced that the Government will be joining Australia's voluntary Front of Pack Labelling System and use the Health Star Ratings system (HSR). The HSR system is about making it quicker and easier for New Zealand consumers to make better informed and healthy choices. The new system, which is voluntary, uses a star rating scale of ½ to 5 stars and, except for some exclusions such as alcohol, is able to be used on all packaged food products for retail sale. Foods with more stars reflect better nutritional value. The system also includes nutrient information icons for energy (kilojoules), saturated fat, sodium (salt), and sugars, and can include one positive nutrient such as calcium or fibre. The number of stars is determined by an algorithm that considers the overall nutritional value of the food.

Implementing the system will take time. Work is being done on assisting industry on how to use this system as well as education for consumers about what the star ratings mean and how best to use it. It could then take 6-12 months for labels to start appearing on products

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Recently, Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Codex Committee (NCC) and SPS Compliance committee with funding assistance from European Union (EU) EDES COLEACP program organized three (3) International Workshops on Risk Communication from 22-26 April, 2013. It was held in Holiday Inn in Port Moresby.

The Risk Communication Workshop was attended by 16 participants from food control organizations. The outcome was to know how to communicate risks and develop networking to best address emerging diseases in relation to food security and safety.

The other two (2) training workshops on the Execution of Official Controls and Organization of Official Controls were from 9-11 April, 2014 and 14-17 April, 2014 respectively. Both workshops were held at the Madang Resort Hotel. It was attended by well over 30 participants who are involved in the food control systems within the government sector and food industries. The outcomes of the two workshops were to set up a National Food Authority and SPS Board in PNG to fully address food safety standards from farm to table. The two (2) workshops were managed and co-ordinated by Codex PNG Secretariat in the Department of Agriculture & Livestock (DAL) based on the SPS Compliance Policy (2011).

Also, in July this year 2014 EU EDES made an intervention and conducted further stakeholder analysis and held a round table of discussions for one week. Their collaborative findings have been submitted to EU for future assistance. Amongst other things the meeting discussed the formation of the National Food Authority and the establishment of SPS Board under Codex Secretariat in DAL due to SPS Compliance Policy (2011).

In 2013, the Department of Health (DoH) organized a workshop in Lae to review the Food Sanitation Act (1991) and Food Regulation (2007). During the workshop the CCP PNG made a presentation to highlight to accommodate codex texts and principles in the National Food Law and Regulation. Subsequently, there were several follow up consultative workshops by DoH and currently the Food Sanitation Act (1991) and Food Regulation (2007) has been reviewed by Expert consultations from USA together with DoH and other relevant stakeholders.

Initially, the EU-Trade Related Assistance Project (TRAP) in 2009-2011 strongly emphasised the review of PNG's existing Food Laws in the country.

With regard to laboratory capacity building, the Codex PNG Secretariat is organizing specific training for Laboratory personal under EU EDES COLEACP program. Recently, the National Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Authority (NAQIA) has been accredited for histamine testing in fish by EU and PNG and the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI) Laboratory will soon be accredited to do chemical testing such as heavy metals.

Additionally, Codex PNG has been meeting at least four (4) times a year and several ad-hoc consultations with stakeholders. Also, Codex PNG participated in some EWGs such as Histamine and other EWGs in 2013.

Figure 1.0 below shows NCC Organizational Structure and Figure 2.0 also indicates Codex PNG Integrated Approach Structure – Food Control Coordination System.
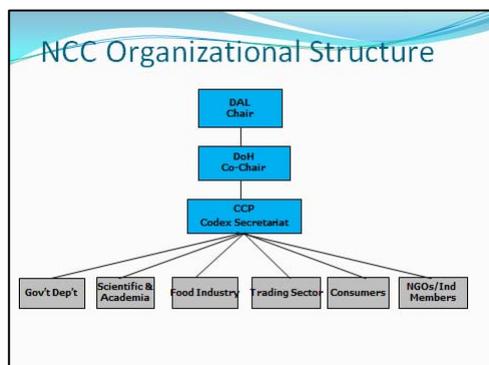

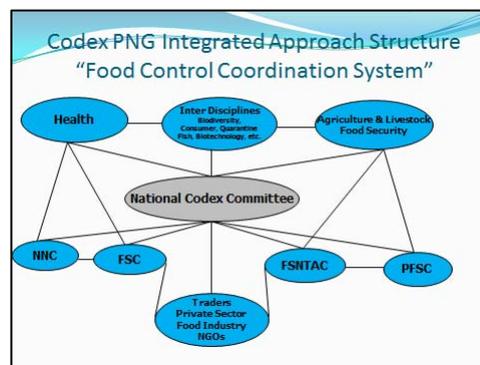Figure 1.0 NCC Organisational Structure in PNG

Figure 2.0 Codex PNG Integrated Approach Structure –Food Control Coordination System

SOLOMON ISLANDS

a) National Food Law & Regulation:

    a. Pure Food Amendment Bill 2014: Currently under amendment. The following had been taken into consideration:

        i.   Industry's duties to Health Inspectors.

        ii. Powers to carry out and remain on processing establishment without any hindrance.

        iii. Establishment, objectives and functions of Competent Authority. This is crucial for the country in terms of facilitating trade (Fish & Fishery Products) into EU and other destined markets.

        iv. Procedures for verification and certification of both Food Imports and exports.

    b. Rationale for amendments: Meeting Market access requirements.

b) Food Control Management:

    a. National Level: 3 officers

    b. 2 at Provincial (Oversee Exports of Fish & Fishery Products)

    c. 2 EHOs(City Council)

    d. 1 EHO/Province (9 Provinces)

    e. Focus on Farm to Fork approach in ensuring that all links are strong and secure and that Food Safety risks and foodborne illness are minimised, eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels.

    f. Separation and maintaining independence(Industry- Government). This is seen as crucial in that Industry takes its responsibility in food safety. The Government cannot be a watchman and gamekeeper at the same time throughout the food chain.

c) Multi- Sectoral Collaboration:

   a. Industry Working Group set up. Rationale was to discuss issues affecting both the Industry and Competent Authority. It was seen to have positive impact on both the Government and Industry in that issues are discussed openly and what needs to be done are given high priority.

   b. There is current collaboration amongst the existing stakeholders e.g. Flour Fortification Initiative. Work will start in September to work with the only Flour mill in the country to have a Fortificant injector installed at the mill. Monitoring will be done by EHOs from the national level.

d) Inspection Services:

   a. HACCP concept introduced into small medium food operators. Inspectors need addition know how of existing processes.

   b. Small Medium Businesses had been encouraged to have manageable and operational Food Safety Systems in place and thus would make the Inspectors job easier.

   c. Street Vendors: Honiara just like any other growing cities in the world is faced with a big challenge of how to manage this group of people. These entrepreneurs do contribute to the Country's GDP in terms of the money that they get or generate. The main issue that is challenging the Inspectors is the knowledge, attitudes behaviours and practices. Most are illiterate. Trainings had been organised on a monthly basis for most of them.

   d. New Challenges: Inspection Skills of the inspectors. Inspectors need continuous up skilling in order for them to carry out their tasks.

   e. Changing human behaviour: traditional inspection approach being outweighed by new scientific approaches which at times Food Inspectors are incompetent.

   f. There is a great need to accept and appreciate that Food Safety is a shared responsibility.

e) Laboratory Services:

   a. There is an existing Laboratory which is doing basic Food and Water Analysis for Micro and Chemical parameters.

   b. There was intent for accreditation of the Micro aspect of the lab as samples cannot be sent offshore due to the time with flights etc.

   c. Solomon Islands is still waiting for an imitative and intent from FAO to assist the Lab with its accreditation facilitation on the Micro aspect for water.

   d. Samples are sent offshore to New Zealand to an accredited lab. (A requirement by EU) for the tuna products and water for Chemical analysis.

   e. There is a big need for other agriculture products to be tested for nutrient composition.

f) Training: Continuous and on –going trainings for inspectors is a priority for the country so that inspections are done in a more scientific and risk based approach and that resources and time are not wasted. Specific and targeted trainings on all aspects of Food Safety is a key to sustainable inspection services i.e. canning, organoleptic checks, traceability, date marking and food labelling etc.

Priority Food Safety Issues:

a) National:

   a. Further amendment/insertion to cater for NCD issues.

   b. Legislation to be pushed through to the Legal System.

   c. Food Import Control Guideline to be implemented.

   d. Training attachment for inspectors (Look and Learn) from a NASWP country to implement bullet c above.

   e. Develop and build capacity of food inspectors at all levels both national and provincial.

   f. Equipping food inspectors with knowledge so that it is in line with the current advancement in food trade..

b) Regional:

   a. Revisit the WHO Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

b. Reviewing of all existing strategies that exist within the Pacific Region

c. Harmonisation of all existing strategies that exist within the Pacific Region

d. Review of Codex Offices at country level for PICs.

UNITES STATES OF AMERICA

The United States has multiple agencies that are charged with ensuring food safety. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authority over all food products except meat, poultry, and egg products which are covered by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).   FDA also regulates the use of animal drugs and establishes tolerance levels.   The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates pesticide use and establishes tolerance levels in food products.   FDA and FSIS are responsible for enforcing these tolerances on all foods under their respective authorities.   The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) safeguards national animal and plant health in the United States by inspecting for disease and/or pests. This multi-pronged system has proven to be effective in protecting American consumers while granting U.S. market access to other countries. Below we elaborate more specifically on initiatives in FDA and FSIS over the last two years.

FDA

FDA is in the process of implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on January 4, 2011. The law provides FDA with new enforcement authorities designed to achieve higher rates of compliance with prevention- and risk-based food safety standards to better respond to and contain problems when they do occur. The law also gives FDA important new tools to hold imported foods to the same standards as domestic foods, directs FDA to build an integrated food safety system with state and local authorities, and spans intentional and unintentional contamination of food.

FSMA is built around several fundamental programs, whose key components include:

- Prevention: mandatory preventative controls for food facilities; mandatory produce safety standards; enhancing tracking and tracing of food; enhanced protection against intentional contamination.
- Inspection and compliance: mandated inspection frequency; records access; testing by accredited laboratories; mandatory recall; expanded administrative detention; suspension of registration; enhanced product tracing abilities; additional record-keeping for high risk foods.
- Imports: Importer accountability including foreign supplier verification; accreditation of third party auditors; authority to require import certification; voluntary qualified importer program;
- Enhanced partnerships: State and local capacity building; foreign capacity building; reliance on inspections by other agencies.

Interested persons can learn more about FSMA and track its implementation at http://www.fda.gov/food/foodsafety/fsma/default.htmdocument.

In addition, on June 10th, 2014, FDA published a final rule to strengthen current good manufacturing practices, quality control procedures, quality factors, notification requirements, and recordkeeping for infant formula.   The rule became effective on July 10th, 2014.   More information can be found at: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/06/10/2014-13384/good-manufacturing-practices-quality-control-procedures-quality-factors-notification-requirements

FSIS

FSIS has taken a number of important steps to enhance its inspection system since September 2012. These efforts are designed to target the agency's food safety prevention tools at areas that will have the most significant public health impact.   For example, an estimated 1.3 million illnesses can be attributed to Salmonella every year. To address this challenge, FSIS has developed a Salmonella Action Plan, which outlines the actions FSIS will take to lower *Salmonella* contamination rates on meat and poultry products. The plan includes developing a new performance standard for comminuted poultry, as well as new strategies for inspection to address potential sources of Salmonella contamination throughout the food production process. Finally, the plan realigns the agency's education and outreach tools to raise public awareness of ways to limit cross contamination with *Salmonella*.

In July 2014, FSIS announced new requirements that all poultry companies take measures to prevent *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* contamination, rather than addressing contamination after it occurs. Also, all poultry facilities will be required to perform their own microbiological testing at two points in their production process. These requirements are in addition to FSIS' own testing, which the agency will continue to perform. Also in July 2014, FSIS announced the New Poultry Inspection System (NPIS), an updated science-based poultry inspection system, in which poultry companies must sort their own product for quality defects before

presenting it to FSIS inspectors. This system allows for FSIS inspectors to focus less on routine quality assurance tasks that have little relationship to preventing pathogens like *Salmonella* and instead focus more on proven strategies to strengthen food safety. More inspectors will now be available to more frequently remove birds from the evisceration line for close food safety examinations, take samples for testing, check plant sanitation, verify compliance with food safety plans, observe live birds for signs of disease or mistreatment, and ensure plants are meeting all applicable regulations. FSIS estimates that the NPIS will prevent nearly 5,000 Salmonella and Campylobacter foodborne illnesses each year.

FSIS has also made great strides since 2012 to improve how the agency uses data to make inspection decisions. FSIS implemented the Public Health Information System (PHIS), a web-based system that integrates agency data sources to support a comprehensive, timely and reliable data-driven approach to inspection. PHIS allows FSIS to identify food safety threats and emerging trends more rapidly and accurately. The agency launched PHIS's import component in 2012, and added three major functionalities to the system in 2013.

Related to PHIS, in 2014, FSIS began a pilot of Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Partner Government Agency (PGA) Message Set, which will allow a harmonized set of entry data that FSIS will collect electronically.   PHIS currently interfaces with CBP's Automated Commercial Environment, enabling a seamless transfer of the data required for the application for FSIS import inspection, in advance of a shipment's arrival. Ultimately, the pilot will remove paper-based entry forms from the process and save agency resources by avoiding manual data entry. Inspection and enforcement will be more efficient by having the required data available prior to the shipment's arrival at the official import inspection facility, benefitting FSIS, industry, trading partners and U.S. citizens. The pilot will lay the groundwork for FSIS to fully implement the International Trade Data System, or "single window," mandated for all federal agencies by the Security and Accountability for Every Port Act of 2006. Executive Order 13659 on Streamlining the Export/Import Process for America's Businesses, signed on Feb. 19, 2014, sets timelines for single window implementation.

Furthermore, in 2012, FSIS implemented a "hold and test" policy, which requires meat and poultry establishments to hold FSIS-sampled product from commerce until test results have come back negative. This policy will help to prevent meat and poultry products that test positive for dangerous pathogens from reaching store shelves or consumers' tables. As it relates to U.S. imports, this policy directly affects the importer of record, not foreign establishments, as the U.S. importer of record is required to control FSIS-sampled product until test results have come back negative.

FSIS is also working closely with our agency partners to improve foodborne illness investigations. In 2014, FSIS and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will provide a more comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to address foodborne health hazards associated with meat, poultry and processed egg products. The MOU outlines mutual roles and responsibilities for the training of personnel and the planning of interagency assessment of FSIS-regulated establishments as part of foodborne illness investigations and health hazard evaluations.

FSIS requires establishments under its jurisdiction to operate under Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems. Countries seeking to export to the United States are required to operate equivalent inspection systems.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

i)   Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;

ii)   Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

AUSTRALIA

Codex Australia provides updates to stakeholders on the work of Codex Committees via our website in order to promote participation and involvement in our consultative processes. We also have a registration form on our website for stakeholders to register their interest in providing input to Australian positions on Codex issues and or standards under development. Once a stakeholder is registered they are added to a contact list and receive emails requesting comments on draft Codex standards as well as electronic working groups and reports of committees. Stakeholders are also invited to participate in Panel Meetings prior to a

Committee in order to provide comments for consideration when developing Australia's positions for the Committee.

The Australian Codex Contact Point works closely with the Australian OIE focal Point on issues that cross both Codex and the OIE. An example of this has been the recent work in the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene for the Guidelines on *Trichinella* in meat of Suidae. Comments from the OIE focal point have been sought and vice versa which has enabled Australia to develop a strong position for the Committee meetings.

Codex Australia continues to hold seminars for first time delegates to the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). These seminars assist with enhancing effective participation at sessions of CCFICS. All first time participants are invited to attend the information seminar which is held on the Sunday afternoon prior to the commencement of the plenary session.

This seminar outlines the processes and procedures that are essential for the smooth operation of the Committee during its deliberations, including:

- registration of participants;
- seating arrangements;
- operation of microphones & headsets;
- how to make an intervention; and
- papers for the meeting.

The Chair of the Committee addresses the seminar and provides and overview of the items on the agenda, this session also includes some insight into the outcomes he is hoping that the current session will achieve.

This seminar provides delegates with the opportunity to ask questions of the Chair and the Australian Secretariat on any other issues concerning the operation of the Committee.

NEW ZEALAND

Codex work remains a high priority activity for New Zealand. Well established systems for management of Codex work are already in place in the NZ Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the focus in recent years has been in terms of improved processes for prioritisation of work in the light of resource constraints. These include more rigorous work planning, development of annual work plans and identification of issues of priority interest to New Zealand.

As reported at the last session, an international standards organization group was established within the Policy Branch and brings together the work of the three international standards setting bodies and has proved beneficial in terms of improved consultation and communication.

MPI recognises and supports the engagement of non governmental organizations in Codex work. Policy positions are based on input of all interested parties and where required consultation meetings are held to discuss stakeholder views and interests.

MPI also conducts training workshops and information sessions for internal and external groups as a means of promoting awareness and interest in Codex.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

With the involvement of EU-EDES COLEACP intervention the Codex PNG Secretariat was able to facilitate three (3) stakeholder workshops on Risk Communication, Execution of Official Controls and Organisations of Official Control and involve local experts and food specialists in food industry to attend in Port Moresby and Madang in PNG. These were capacity building workshops as well as effective stakeholder collaborative workshops where stakeholders shared their experiences and expressed their views and raise their concerns in the forum.

However, in PNG the work of Codex PNG is now fully managed by the Agro Food Safety and Codex PNG Unit established in 2011 under DAL with four full time officers to drive the Codex agenda forward and relevant activities such as the SPS Compliance, EU-TRA and EU-EDES COLEACP initiatives.

Internationally in 2013, PNG was represented at CAC36 and 50th Anniversary in Rome, Italy by Minister for Agriculture & Livestock Hon Tommy Assik Tomscoll, MP and Secretary for DAL Dr Vele Pat Ila'ava, PhD as a Regional Coordinator (RC) have attended the CCEXEC68 Session and CCP PNG and Program Manager for Agro Food Safety, Mr Elias Taia also attended the CAC36 Session. The Minister made a very remarkable and memorable speech at the CAC36 Session and 50th Anniversary, and DAL Secretary made presentations to reflect the regional perspective. Also, in 2014 the RC, Chair for CCNASWP and Secretary for DAL attended CCEX37 and CCP PNG have attended CAC36 Session in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Codex PNG Secretariat also enhanced its capacity in organizing the CCNASWP12 Session in Madang very successfully and is effectively coordinating the planning and preparation of CCNASWP13 Session to fulfil the requirements of the RC 2011-2015. The Codex PNG Secretariat was also able to develop capacity in organizing the three (3) workshops counted funded by EU EDES COLEACP Programme.

Codex PNG also for the first time involve the stakeholders such as Fresh Produce Development Agency (FPDA) to attend CCFFV meeting in Thailand early this year. Currently, Codex PNG is implementing the SPS Compliance Policy 2011 mechanism to directly involve with food industries at operation level as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) under PNG Government guidance.

Also, as functional role of CCP and RC under the Codex Procedural Manual all the Codex documents received are immediately disseminated to NCC members and CCPs in the PICs to enhance national and sub-regional capacity building in Codex process.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;

Not much has been done in promoting active participation due to insufficient budgetary allocation by the government. However internal meetings and other administrative arrangements are done.

ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

There is a great need to do promotional activities.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States has established effective mechanisms nationally and internationally to ensure that horizontal communication on cross cutting issues occurs between delegates to various food standards related international organizations. This includes consultations by our delegates with other federal agencies, consumer groups, and industry representatives during the drafting of U.S. positions, followed by public meetings prior to each Codex Committee session that solicit input on the draft U.S. position from the public at large. These public meetings, which are notified via the Federal Register, press releases, and the U.S. Codex website, are open to all interested parties. They also afford the opportunity for those who cannot physically attend to participate via telephone.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Please describe:

i)   Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

AUSTRALIA

i) Specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) that are of most importance to Australia

Australia continues to place priority on the work of Codex committees dealing with inspection and certification, food additives and contaminants, residues of veterinary drugs and pesticides, food hygiene, food labelling, nutrition and food for special dietary uses.

Australia, as a major producer and exporter of meat, is participating in the development of Guidelines for the Control of Nontyphoidal *Salmonella* spp. in Beef and Pork Meat currently being undertaken by an electronic working group in the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene. This work is important to Australia as the outcomes may have an effect on importing country requirements and there is a need to make sure these guidelines are based on sound science and that they don't restrict trade.

Specific work within the Contaminants Committee that is of interest to Australia and which we are actively participating in is the work on methylmercury in fish and predatory fish, arsenic in rice, lead in a variety of

commodities, radionclides in food and pyrrolizidine alkaloids. The outcomes of this work will be considered by FSANZ and if necessary, updates to our Food Code will be made.

The 21st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems to be held in Australia in October 2014. The work of this committee is of particular importance to Australia as a major exporter it is in our interest to ensure that international standards and guidelines in this regard are not prescriptive and promote fair practices in food trade whilst ensuring trade in safe food.

The agenda for the 21st session of CCFICS includes several discussion papers on items of proposed new work including:

- Discussion paper on principles and guidelines for the elaboration and management of questionnaires directed at exporting countries
- Discussion paper on principles and guidelines for monitoring regulatory performance of national food control systems
- Discussion paper on the revision of the Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations (CAC/GL 19-1995)
- Draft amendments to Guidelines for the Exchange of Information between Countries on Rejections of Imported Food (CAC/GL 25-1997)
- Discussion paper on consideration of emerging issues and future directions for the work of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems

Australia continues to chair the priorities working groups within both the Codex Committees on Pesticide Residues and Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods. These working groups are integral in how the CCPR and CCRVDF set priorities for evaluation of chemicals by JECFA and JMPR.

Australia also plays a lead role in the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) in that we have led the work in regards to additional or revised nutrient reference values (NRV) for labelling purposes in the guidelines on nutrition labelling. Australia is currently leading the work on the draft revised or additional NRVs-R for Batch 2 vitamins and minerals for the general population.

As a major producer of infant formula Australia also takes and interest in the work in relation follow-up formula and other work related to food for infants and young children.

ii) Current priority areas for setting national standards;

The Australian Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) develops its work program in response to direction from the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation (Forum) and against the goals of the joint Australia New Zealand food regulatory system. Work is allocated to FRSC, FRSC working groups, the Implementation Subcommittee for Food Regulation (ISFR) or other relevant organisations (e.g. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)). The work program is reviewed and updated by FRSC at its first meeting each year. The current program 2014-2015 includes topics such as alcohol labelling, campylobacter in chicken, Implementation of the revised Policy Guideline for Food Safety Management: retail/food service and completion of the risk management toolkit project; Food/Medicine Interface; Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) etc. The work program for 2014-2015 can be found in detail at the following web link http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/foodsecretariat-food-regulation-activities:

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

Australia participates in Codex to improve outcomes for domestic food safety and public health policies and enhance opportunities for Australian agricultural and food industries, particularly in respect of their trade interests.

Australia supports objective, science-based risk analysis that focus on public health and safety. These principles and priorities are integral to the domestic regulatory framework. FSANZ uses risk analysis to manage a diverse range of food-related health risks. The risk analysis process used by FSANZ is based on the internationally accepted Codex Risk Analysis Framework.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand has a clear policy and commitment to harmonize with international standards to the maximum extent possible. New Zealand attaches particular importance to Codex food safety standards but non safety related standards are also taken into account in the development of national standards and regulations.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

i) which specific standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

The most important Codex Standard that is of importance to PNG includes (1) Codex HACCP Principles developed by CCFH, (2) Food labelling Principles developed by CCFL, (3) Food Import and Export Principles developed by CCFICS committee, (4) General Principles developed by CCGP, (5) Fish and Fishery Product Principles developed by CCFFP; (7) Risk Analysis Principles developed by JECFA/JMPR; Pesticide Residues Limits developed by CCPR, and Veterinary drug residue limits developed by CCRVDF.

However, PNG believe that some of the issues of interest to the Region includes (1) Development of Kava, Noni and Galip nut standards, (2) Date marking, (3) Food labelling, (4) National Food Control System and Consumer Participation in Food Control Setting, (5) Risk Analysis on Dietary Exposure Assessment, (6) Pesticide and Veterinary drug / hormones residues, (7) Contaminant Monitoring, and (8) Feed development issues. These are some of the key issues of national importance.

Also, at National level National Institute of Standards & Industrial Technology (NISIT) has been mandated to adopt Codex Food Standard and recommendations to be used by PNG. Some of the issues highlighted do not have national standards and it is NCC's recommendation that NISIT adopt them and recommend to the consumers to use at National level.

ii) what are the current priority areas for setting national standards

The current priority areas to set national standards are to ensure NISIT to adopt the Revise Food Law and Regulation of DoH and continuously monitor the Food Laboratories towards accreditation status. By doing this research, diagnostic testing and collaborative collection and storage of scientific data will be generated and would enforce national and regional food standards. If this is not accommodated NISIT shall adopt Codex Food Standards as a bench mark for trade facilitation and consumer health protection. Also, NISIT must involve PNG Codex Office to be part and parcel of the national Food Standards Committee with respect to food safety and nutrition.

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

The priority activity for PNG is objective 1:

(a) To improve the coordination and communication of the region's activities in Codex. PNG wants to see all NASWP Members hold pre-session meeting at Codex Committees, Task Forces and Working groups (Physical & Electronic Working Groups) to ensure the written comments by NASWP members countries are submitted on Codex issues to consolidate position of the Region;

(b) Prepare checklist to ensure smooth transition of the RC;

(c) Ensure and identify the Issues Relevant to the Region is brought to CCNASWP Regional meeting for discussion and to ensure NASWP member countries develop and implement the Regional Strategic Plan;

(d) PNG also would invite non codex member countries in the Region such as New Caledonia, Wallis & Futuna, Tuvalu and other Pacific island countries to attend the CCNASWP meetings and become Members of Codex Alimentarius Commission.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

The Kava and Noni Juice standards are seen to be of importance to Solomon Islands.

Food Labelling and Date Marking standards or guidelines are also of importance.

ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

a. Sugary and fatty foods as NCD rates had been declared in the Region as one of the highest causes of mortality.

b. Increase in Food Trade.

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

a. When standards are not available on the regional level, Codex standards had been adopted into the national regulation..

b. In absence of the Standards, there is no fall back system in place that countries can rely on. It helps in facilitating and assisting food trade.

UNITED STATE OF AMERICA

The United States strongly supports the science-based approach to food safety decision making in Codex. Among the standards currently under development with strong U.S. support are such important science-based texts as the Draft Guidelines for the Control of *Trichinella* spp. in meat of Suidae (pork), as well as the development of Guidelines for Control of Non-Typhoidal *Salmonella* spp in Beef and Pork Meat and the Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene to the Control of Foodborne Parasites in the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH); the Priority List for the Establishment of Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides in the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR); the Priority List of Veterinary Drugs for Evaluation or Re-Evaluation in the Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF).

Taking into account the relevant activities mentioned in the CCNASWP Strategic Plan (2008-2013) and the Draft CCNASWP Strategic Plan (2014-2019), the United States hosted a capacity building workshop in Geneva, Switzerland, July 13, 2014, for our Codex colleagues in the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia also participated and offered their perspectives. The immediate goal of the capacity building workshop was to give the members of our region an opportunity to work together to develop strategies to advance our mutual goals during the CAC and to discuss the following issues:

- preparation and development of national positions for CAC sessions
- expectations during the week of the Commission session
- Codex election procedures
- the role of the Regional Coordinator, since nominations for the next CCNASWP Coordinator will be accepted in September
- the draft CCNASWP Strategic Plan (2014-2019)

The long term goal of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of Codex Contact Points in the Pacific Island countries to participate effectively in Codex, by attending meetings, preparing comments, and joining working groups. It also provided practical guidance on how to manage Codex work at the national level and a forum to share experiences/learn best practices in organizing Codex activities.