



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT INSPECTION
AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

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ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF CCFICS

1. The present document contains a report on the tools produced and made available to Member States and the relevant activities carried out since the last meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export and Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS).

FAO guidance on risk-based imported food controls

2. At the request of a number of developing country Member States expressing the need for practical guidance on how to apply a risk-based approach in the context of imported food controls, a manual on risk-based imported food control has been finalized. The guidance explores the various risk-management options that can be used and combined to achieve risk-based controls and optimize the use of the available resources. It explains the various Codex principles relevant in this particular context and provides support to a country in assessing its situation and needs. The guidance does not substitute for national or regional implementation guidelines but provides the basis to develop imported food-control policy frameworks and develop their implementation guidelines.
3. The guidance is at press and will be available at: <http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/publications-tools/food-safety-publications/en/>.

The FAO/WHO histamine-sampling tool

4. Since its launch, the histamine tool has received consistently positive feedback from the users and provided support in discussions related to histamine sampling plans. Based on the feedback received, the tool was updated to expand the range of sampling plan options offered. In particular, the following changes have been made:
 - the maximum number of samples (n_{max}) supported by the tool was increased from 50 to 1,000;
 - the maximum level of protection supported by the tool was increased to 1 in 1,000,000;
 - the default level of protection was set to 1 in 10,000;
 - a tabular numeric output was added to the “Analyse a Plan” section, in addition to the existing charts;
 - the confidence-level limits in the “Design a Plan” section were modified to allow lower values (e.g. 20 per cent); and
 - the acceptable number of samples above little m (c) supported by the tool was increased from 5 to 200.
5. The tool is available at: www.fstools.org/histamine.

Risk Managers’ Guide to the Statistical Aspects of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods

6. FAO and WHO convened a technical meeting on the statistical and mathematical aspects of microbiological criteria, in Rome from 8 to 10 October 2013. A question-and-answer document was developed to address many of the statistical issues related establishing and applying microbiological criteria both in the context of end-product testing and process verification. It addresses, among other things, issues related to operating characteristic curves and moving windows. To facilitate understanding of this often-complex issue, a simple spreadsheet tool and a number of short videos have been developed as support material in addition to the guidance itself.
7. The guidance document is at press and will be published on the FAO (<http://www.fao.org/food/food-safety-quality/home-page/en/>.) and WHO websites (<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/en/>) by the end of 2015.

Publication of examples of the development of microbiological criteria for food

8. A special issue of Food Control will be published in December 2015 (volume 58) on the development of microbiological criteria for food. The issue will bring together a number of papers outlining examples of how microbiological criteria can be developed and applied for different purposes and in different situations. The papers are based on the work of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene working groups on microbiological criteria who developed the initial examples to support the revision of the Codex Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods ([CAC/GL 21-1997](#)).
9. In addition, a number of tools and approaches are currently being developed to enable countries to better implement relevant Codex recommendations, guidelines and standards.

Food control system assessment tool

10. The work of the FAO/WHO food control system assessment tool continues to assess, in structured, transparent and measurable ways, the performance of food control systems throughout the entire food chain, identify priority areas for capacity development, and measure and evaluate progress over time. The tool was conceived ultimately to operate in the context of self-assessment or with the support of adequately trained facilitators.
11. The first version of the tool was tested in the Gambia, Morocco and Zambia, with positive and informative results. As a result, a second version is being finalized. It has already been pre-tested in Sierra Leone and will be further field-tested in several regions, including in Bangladesh, Brazil, the Islamic Republic of Iran and another country of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.
12. FAO will hold a technical meeting in December 2015 to peer review the tool's assessment criteria and approach to measuring performance.

Evidence-informed risk management decisions considering multiple criteria

13. FAO continues its work developing guidance materials to support food safety risk managers in making evidence-informed decisions and policies. Once complete, the guidance will be a valuable document for the food-safety risk management community, further improving the transparency of decision-making and applicable approaches. It includes an important focus on how risk managers take various factors into account in decision-making, ranging from public health to economic and livelihood concerns to food security.
14. To ensure the guidance developed is practical and globally relevant, a pilot study was carried out in Uganda and a second is under way in Thailand. The materials are also informed by discussion with food-safety risk-managers in various countries, and the University of Dhaka hosted a second FAO Technical Meeting to review the draft materials from 6 to 10 September 2015.
15. The draft guidance will be further tested and shared with a broader number of countries through a regional workshop in Asia in 2016. The work is supported by the European Union-funded Programme Global Governance for Hunger Reduction. Further information is available at: <http://www.fao.org/europeanunion/eu-projects/global-governance/en/>.

Strengthening food safety systems and dealing with food safety emergencies

16. The Secretariat of the joint FAO/WHO programme International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) continues to develop and strengthen the Network. Regional meetings have been organized for the members in Asia (December 2013 and November 2015) and for the members in the Americas (September 2014 and October 2015). The African Union initiative to develop a rapid-alert system using INFOSAN supports members in Africa. The number of active members in the network has increased by 10 per cent in the past year, especially in Africa and in the Americas. Members' knowledge and capabilities to participate actively in the Network has been further developed through the development and use of webinars, as reflected by participation in the INFOSAN community website discussion platform. Six webinars were conducted in the past year, in English, French and Spanish. The INFOSAN Community website is now also available in English, French and Spanish.

Early-warning/rapid-alert systems applicable to food safety

17. FAO has continued to develop and revise a new training programme for member countries on early-warning systems for food safety. The programme is designed to assist countries and regions in improving their capability to prevent and be better prepared to mitigate various threats to the safety of the food chain. It emphasizes the need to build and connect links between existing food-safety infrastructure (e.g. surveillance and food control) and to enhance collaborative relationships and

networks among all food-chain stakeholders. Its training resources include a comprehensive handbook, which is currently under peer review prior to publication online by early 2016.

18. The training programme and handbook were pre-tested at a workshop in Kenya, in October 2014, held in collaboration with the Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources and attended by representatives of five countries in East Africa. A second regional training workshop was held in Budapest, Hungary, on 1–4 June 2015, serving 13 countries from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. FAO is organizing a third regional training workshop, for Near East countries, to be held in Abu Dhabi in November 2015.

Guidance on the design and implementation of modern risk-based meat inspection systems

19. FAO is in the process of completing guidance intended to provide Member States with an up-to-date reference on developing and implementing risk-based meat-inspection systems. While it acknowledges that innovative approaches and new scientific knowledge continually contribute sharper insight and better-targeted control measures, the guidance also aims to provide smaller and less-developed countries and slaughterhouse facilities with key guidance for modernizing their meat-inspection systems.

Antimicrobial resistance

20. Since the adoption of the FAO Resolution on Antimicrobial Resistance in June 2015, FAO has established an internal working group to support its implementation and ensure that all relevant parts of the Organization are actively engaged and coordinated in promoting work to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The working group aims to facilitate cohesive planning of work on AMR across the FAO strategic objectives, coordinate initiatives through a cross-sectoral approach, ensure that information on AMR and related documentation is shared broadly within the Organization, and provide advice in response to AMR-related requests received by the Organization. FAO is developing an internal action plan to ensure follow-up to the FAO Resolution and the WHO global action plan, based around four pillars: evidence, awareness, governance and practice. It will take into consideration the importance of tripartite collaboration in the area of AMR. Further work is under way to identify external partners for collaboration on the specific food, agriculture and environmental aspects to be addressed as well as to secure resource partners to support such work.
21. Following the adoption of the AMR global action plan by the World Health Assembly in May 2015, the AMR Steering Group, the Global Technical Coordination Group for AMR and the AMR Secretariat were established to facilitate its implementation. The AMR Steering Group was established to make high-level recommendations and decisions to implement AMR policy, including direction setting, approving the Organization-wide AMR work plan, and allocating associated budget and funds. The Global Technical Coordination Group for AMR brings together headquarters technical leads and regional focal points implementing action under the global action plan. The Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on AMR (STAG-AMR) will continue to meet and provide expert strategic direction on implementation, including on the monitoring of intervention impact. The AMR Secretariat, headed by Dr Marc Sprenger, who joined WHO as Director in September 2015, will provide support to the groups above and serve as a central reference on global action plan initiatives for those working on AMR in country offices, at the regional level and in headquarters.
22. Other relevant aspects include the follow up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and the consideration of AMR in the High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) draft report on “sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition, including the role of livestock”, which is currently out for public comment.
23. Further details are available in document CX/CAC15/38/16 Add.1 (available at: ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/cac/cac38/cac38_16_add1e.pdf).

Regional and national activities

24. In addition to developing relevant tools, FAO and WHO support national authorities in establishing modern food-control systems through a variety of capacity-development activities, including on developing and implementing risk-based inspection programmes.
25. A complete list of such activities is provided annually to the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The regional and national activities with a specific focus on matters relating to the CCFICS mandate are presented below.
26. The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP) is working with countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on a good agricultural practice (GAP) for fruits and vegetables (Development of Standards and Scheme for GAP Implementation and Certification in countries of SAARC), based on international requirements. FAORAP supports the four pilot countries

- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal – in establishing national systems to set national standards, establishing scheme owners with the GAP logo, establishing national GAP certification bodies in line with ISO 17065, and providing training and awareness-raising activities to a range of stakeholders. Farmers/growers will be encouraged to participate in the scheme, which, together with national Government initiatives, which will result in not only increased safety and quality of produce but also economic viability, environmental sustainability and social acceptability.
27. FAORAP has developed a training manual on implementing ASEAN GAP in the fruit and vegetable sector, available at <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/i3576e/i3576e00.htm>> (RAP/Publication 2014/2).
 28. A training manual has been developed on the GAP scheme for SAARC countries, including GAP standards for the horticulture sector and guidance on establishing national implementation systems, scheme owners and GAP certification bodies, and on preparing farmers or farmers' groups to implement GAP and obtain certification.
 29. FAO provides technical assistance to strengthen national capacities in the area of imported food control in the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, the Solomon Islands and Tonga, including in clarifying responsibilities and improving coordination among relevant agencies/ministries; developing regulations and operational guidance, such as standard operating procedures; and establishing information systems and training inspectors (in courses tailored to the specific needs of each country).