



Item 15.3

Documents A73/4 and EB146/2020
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Written Intervention

Accelerating efforts on food safety

In Viet Nam, food safety remains a high priority which receives due attention from the Government, industrial sector and consumers. Currently, in Viet Nam, three ministries share the responsibilities for food safety including Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT). Viet Nam Government has established the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Food Safety which is chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister to coordinate food safety management among the three ministries.

One of the core principles on food safety management in Viet Nam is to manage on the foundation of technical regulations and standards for foodstuff which are developed on the harmonization of Codex standards, guidelines and recommendations, especially some of the national technical regulations have fully been adopted from the Codex standards for food additives, Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for pesticide residues, MRLs for veterinary drugs, etc.

Following the guidance of the Regional Framework for Action on Food Safety in the Western Pacific, the food safety management system in Viet Nam has been step-by-step strengthened. The Food Safety Law has come into force since 2010 and subsidiary legal documents have been developed, amended and updated to be in line with international orientation. During the past two years, Viet Nam has made a number of achievements in implementing respective action areas of the Regional Framework. These include

- Food safety policy and legal frameworks: The improvement of food safety focusing on the coordination among the three ministries is a priority in Viet Nam. There are also provincial-level agencies to implement food safety management with specific responsibilities as assigned by Provincial People's Committee and a model of single food safety agency is currently being piloted in three provinces.

Initial findings show that this new model of a single agency approach has a potential to be effective in mitigating limitations in coordinating various agencies involved as per the current multi-agency approach at provincial level.

- Risk-based food inspection and enforcement: There is a transition from planned inspection to risk-based inspection in Viet Nam. Every year, the results from an active monitoring program on foodstuff are used to rank the risks and to develop the target for food safety inspection. The risk-based food inspection training manual was developed and has been tested in Viet Nam which would greatly facilitate this effort in the coming years.
- Food safety information underpinning evidence: Viet Nam is one of the countries to support the establishment of ASEAN Risk Assessment Centre for Food Safety (ARAC). The ARAC establishment, supported by the European Union, is meant to assist ASEAN in reaching the consensus on food safety issues based on common interests and, at the same time, leveraging and pooling scientific resources and experts in the region for informed decision-making.
- Food safety incident and emergency response: Viet Nam has assigned the INFOSAN National Emergency Contact Points at each of the three responsible Ministries (MoH, MARD and MoIT). In the events of food safety, the INFOSAN focal points at respective ministries and the IHR National focal point work together to share the information in Viet Nam and respond to the requests from INFOSAN Secretariat and Members as needed.
- Food safety communications and education: as part of annual activities, Viet Nam celebrates the World Food Safety Day; the event conducted in 2019 had gained a great attention and interest from multiple stakeholders and general public.