



African Union

Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources

AFRICA RAPID SYSTEM FOR ALERT AND NOTIFICATION OF EMINENT PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS RELATED TO FOOD AND FEED

Continental Workshop on the establishment of Food Safety Authority at African Union and of a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed -RASFF.

29th – 30th October 2012, Kigali, Rwanda



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Definitions

Food means any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption, and includes drink, chewing gum and any substance which has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of “food” but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as drugs. (Codex)

‘Food’ (or ‘foodstuff’) - means any substance or product, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be, or reasonably expected to be ingested by humans. (Most AU member States)

‘Food’ includes drink, chewing gum and any substance, including water, intentionally incorporated into the food during its manufacture, preparation or treatment.

‘Food’ shall not include: (a) feed; (b) live animals unless they are prepared for placing on the market for human consumption; (c) plants prior to harvesting; (d) medicinal products; (e) cosmetics; (f) tobacco and tobacco products; (g) narcotic or psychotropic substances; (h) residues and contaminants.



Definitions cont..

Food safety: refers to the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumer when it is prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use. Food safety is rather related to the non-occurrence of food safety **hazards** or risks and does not include other human health aspects related to food, for example, malnutrition.

Food safety management system: a recognized formal approach giving a framework for effectively managing food safety responsibilities

Hazard: means a biological, chemical or physical agent in, or condition of, food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect.

Risk : refers to a function of the probability of an adverse health effect and the severity of that effect, consequential to a hazards(s) in food.



Definitions cont..

Feed' (or 'feeding stuff') means any substance or product, including additives, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be used for oral feeding to animals;

Final consumer : means the ultimate consumer of a foodstuff who will not use the food as part of any food business operation or activity.

- (consumers **consume** the food product.)
- (customers **distribute or sell foodstuffs** to consumers)

Contaminant: means any biological or chemical agent, foreign matter or other substance not intentionally added to the food which may compromise food safety or suitably so that it does not meet a standard requirement determined by any law (most AU member states food laws)

Codex-Contaminant means any substance not intentionally added to food, which is present in such food as a result of the production (including operations carried out in crop husbandry, animal husbandry and veterinary medicine), manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food or as a result of environmental contamination. The term does not include insect fragments, rodent hairs and other extraneous matter. www.au-ibar.org



Definitions cont..

Food control means *a mandatory, regulatory activity of enforcement by the competent health authority* to provide consumer protection and ensure that all food during production, handling, storage, processing and distribution is safe, wholesome and fit for human consumption; conform to safety requirements and are honestly and accurately labelled as prescribed by law (FAO/WHO ASSURING FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY: GUIDELINES FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, 2003)



Definitions cont..

OTHER IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:

Food law; Food business; Food business operator;

Feed (or ‘feeding stuff’);

Feed business; Feed business operator; Retail;

Placing on the market; Risk analysis; Risk assessment;

Risk management; Risk communication; Traceability;

Stages of production, Processing and distribution;

Primary production



Food safety alerts

Food safety alert refers to steps taken by:

- Industry requesting consumers/customers to return the implicated food product to retailers and/or to the business concerned, or to dispose of it as it is not fit for human consumption (voluntarily food safety alert). The consumer and retailer are refunded.
- The national health authority aimed at informing consumers of a potential or real health risk deriving from a specific foodstuff, which could still be available at food outlets or in the homes of consumers. This usually lead to **mandatory product recall**.



Product (Food) recall

A *product recall* is a request/requirement to return to the maker or a withdraw from the market, a batch or an entire production run of a product, usually due to the discovery of safety concerns.

For ***food products***, the recall is meant to effectively and efficiently remove from the market any food product that is unsafe for human consumption.

A ***food recall*** also includes any corrective action by a company needed to protect consumers from potentially adverse effects of a contaminated, adulterated, or misbranded product



Types of food recalls

Food recalls can be classified basing on:

- The extent of the recall:
 - Voluntary recall which is initiated by food business (that is producer, processor, manufacture, distributor or retailer). This is sometimes called A **trade/industry** recall which involves recovery of the product from distribution centres and wholesalers, as well as from production premises, hospitals, restaurants, and other major catering establishments, as well as outlets that sell food manufactured for immediate consumption
 - **A consumer recall** initiated by regulatory authorities and involves recovery of the product from all points in the production and distribution network, including consumers. This is **a more extensive recall**



Example of Voluntary product recall

Notice Of Product Recall - Press Statement on 2 June 2010

Product: Rhodes Brand Mild and Hot Chakalaka

During a routine pre-labeling quality inspection, Rhodes Food Group technical personnel detected a pH variation, which was beyond specification, in the product Rhodes Chakalaka. This was in all probability caused by a variation in the natural pH of carrots used in the product and/or an over application of carrots in the product made at that time.

But as pH control is a critical parameter for this product, and deviation from specification could cause microbiological spoilage, Rhodes Food Group has decided to recall all Rhodes Chakalaka from the market place. This recall is voluntary and there have been no customer complaints regarding this product. Although the affected product is only from production dates September and October 2009, Rhodes Food Group prefers to recall all Rhodes Mild and Hot Chakalaka as a precautionary measure. The product can be identified by the printing on the can end.

Product affected will have B/BEF SEP 2012 or B/BEF OCT 2012 printed on the top of the can. While the risk of harmful spoilage is extremely remote, Rhodes has, in line with best practice and internal Rhodes quality procedures, elected to initiate a full product recall. In the remote event of spoilage occurring, the effect of eating this product could range from nothing to a mild stomach upset to food poisoning.

Consumers are requested to call the Rhodes Food Group's customer care line 0800 746337 to arrange for the product to be returned and compensation to be provided. This line is open from 8:00 to 4:30.

We apologize for the inconvenience caused by this recall to all of our customers. We want to assure them that we will replace all recalled goods.

Says Gerhard Kotze, Divisional MD, "Although the risk of spoilage is extremely remote, Rhodes Food Group prefers to do the Chakalaka product recall as a precautionary measure to protect our valued customers."

Contact for press enquiries:

Gerhard Kotze (MD Rhodes Foods)

www.au-ibar.org



Example of Compulsory recall

CDC: 22 Illnesses and 4 Deaths Now Linked to Listeria Cheese

By [News Desk](#) | October 27, 2012

Two more cases have been added to the multistate outbreak of listeriosis linked to imported Frescolina Marte brand ricotta salata cheese, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

As of Friday, CDC said a total of 22 persons infected with the outbreak-associated strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 13 states and the District of Columbia.

Of the known cases, 20 people were hospitalized. Four deaths have been reported. Listeriosis contributed to at least 2 of these deaths, according to the CDC's update. The agency also said that one fetal loss has been reported.

Health officials investigating at the local, state, and federal level have found that [imported ricotta salata cheese](#) is the likely source of the outbreak.

CDC is reminding consumers to be on the look out for the products: "Cheese retailers should not sell or serve recalled Frescolina Marte brand ricotta salata cheese distributed by Forever Cheese, Inc., regardless of any expiration coding."

The recalled cheese should be off store shelves now — the recall began on Sept. 10 and was expanded on Sept. 14., but CDC said that more ill persons may be reported because up to 2 months can elapse between eating contaminated food and developing listeriosis.

Food Safety News <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/>

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Types of food recalls cont..

Food recalls can be classified basing on:

- **the seriousness of the health hazard associated with the product.**
 - **Class I recall**, involving a health hazard situation where there is a reasonable probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death.
 - **Class II recall**, involving a potential health hazard situation where there is a remote probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food.
 - **Class III recall**, involving a situation where eating the food will not cause adverse health consequences.



Types of food recalls cont..

Class I, II recall, involving a health hazard situation where there is a reasonable probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death.

The most common types of **Class I** and **Class II recalls** are for food that contains an undeclared allergen or contain a pathogenic microorganism--such that a consumer of the food might experience a very serious adverse reaction or illness.

Class I and II are cause of **mandatory or regulatory recall**



Types of food recalls cont..

Class III covers any instance in which a food is adulterated or misbranded in a way that does not present any danger to the consumer. These cases require some judgment in deciding whether a recall is necessary. For example, if a food is labelled as containing a colour additive that is not actually present, the food is technically misbranded.

In this case, is a recall necessary? Probably not. A manufacturer facing that situation might sensibly decide to correct the problem without actually recalling any food that is already outside its control.



Rapid food and feed alert

- ❑ **Rapid Food and Feed alert** - a quick and effective exchange of information between **competent authorities** when risks to human health are detected in the food and feed chain

Competent authority invariably takes measures against the product(s) concerned- which could include:

- withholding,
- recalling,
- seizure
- or rejection

NB The quick exchange of information allows all members of the network to verify immediately whether they are also affected by the problem.

Whenever the product is already on the market and should not be consumed, the authorities are then in a position to take all urgent measures, including giving direct information to the public, if necessary.



Rapid food and feed alert

- ❑ **Competent Authorities - Notified National Authorities responsible for food safety in the countries in the network.**
- ❑ **Network members**
 - ❑ Notified National Authorities responsible for food safety in the member countries
 - ❑ Central network manager
 - ❑ Reference risk assessment body
- ❑ **NB FOOD CONTROL AUTHORITIES** - Roles and responsibilities
 - food control is shared between several authorities and various components including Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Trade and Industries, Local Administrations (Districts, Cities, Municipalities, Towns), National Standards Bodies



Objectives of a Rapid food and feed alert

- ❑ Is to quickly exchange of information about food and feed-related risks to ensure coherent and simultaneous actions by all network members with the view of protecting consumer health from eminent public health risk
- ❑ Contributing to economic development by maintaining consumer confidence in the food system and providing a sound regulatory foundation for trade in food.



RAPID FOOD AND FEED ALERT FOR AFRICA

Institutional legitimacy

AUC ?

Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) ?

The African Union's Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) ?

At Member State level

Competent Authorities

Food Safety

Food of plant origin

Food of Animal origin including fishery products

Forestry products – honey, game meat, herbs

Animal Health

Plant Health



RAPID FOOD AND FEED ALERT IN AFRICA

Procedural legitimacy

– Networking

- Central manager (Some degree risk management activity)
- Central manager (Communication)
- Central or decentralized (centers of excellency) risk assessor
- Members of network – competent authorities
 - Credibility
 - Transparency
 - Risk assessment
 - Risk management
 - Risk communication
- Members of network – INFOSAN Focal Points – 44 Africa Countries
- WHO Foodborne diseases surveillance/monitoring national contacts
- WTO – SPS/TBS Enquiry and Notification



INFOSAN AFRICA FOCAL POINTS

Angola ,Burkina Faso,Malawi, Mali, Mauritania,
Cameroon , Cape Verde,Mauritius, Morocco,
Central African Republic (the),Mozambique, Namibia,
Chad, Comoros, Congo (the) ,Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal,
Côte d'Ivoire, (the),Seychelles, Sierra Leone,
Democratic Republic of theSouth Africa, Sudan,
Congo (the), Egypt, Ethiopia,Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia,
Gabon, Ghana, Guinea,Uganda, United Republic of
Guinea-Bissau, Kenya,Tanzania (the), Zambia,
Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan ArabZimbabwe
Jamahiriya (the), Madagascar,



RAPID FOOD AND FEED ALERT IN AFRICA

- ❑ **Substantive legitimacy** – relates to the out come of the procedural legitimacy including norms, guidelines, recommendations (**WG**)(see EFSA example but in Africa context)



THREE WGs TO:

- ❑ THE WGs ARE TO COME UP WITH OPERATIONAL MODALITIES OF AFRICA FOOD FEED RAPID ALERT MECHANISM TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CONSIDERATIONS ENUMERATED ABOVE. THE EXAMPLE OF EFSA CAN BE USED BUT IN THE AU CONTEXT
- ❑ THE WGs ARE TO COME UP WITH PROPOSAL FOR ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF AFRICA FOOD FEED RAPID ALERT MECHANISM TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CONSIDERATIONS ENUMERATED YESTERDAY. THE EXAMPLE OF EU RASFF CAN BE USED BUT IN THE AU CONTEXT



Thank you



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