

Safe food, fair food



From capacity building to implementation: Risk-based approaches to improving food safety and market access in smallholder meat, milk and fish value chains in four African countries.

Background

In sub-Saharan Africa, millions of small-scale farmers efficiently supply the great majority of the meat, milk and fish markets. Animal-source food products have a high nutritional value which enhances public health, while the production, transportation, processing and retailing of these products provide income and employment to millions.

On the other hand, animal-source foods are the single most important source of food-borne disease. About 80% of the animal-source foods are distributed through informal markets without adequate safety inspection. As a result, most of the people living in the region are exposed to a variety of food-borne agents which can cause diarrhoea, fever, chronic wasting, abortions or even epilepsy and cancer. These infections can have severely negative impacts on the population, including a high infant mortality, and may contribute significantly to the region's poverty. Every year, about 1.5 million children under five years of age die from diarrhoeal diseases worldwide, with 80% of these child deaths occurring in South Asia and Africa.

These statistics show that current food safety management seems to be neither effective nor efficient. Moreover, there is a tendency to adopt international food quality standards without considering local contexts. As a result, conventional food safety policies often ban any product with germs (hazards) in it. Small-scale farmers often find it difficult to comply with these standards and could therefore be prevented from marketing their products.



Traders in beef and pork at the Xipamanine traditional market in Maputo, Mozambique (Photo credit: ILRI/Stevie Mann).

Approach

The *Safe Food, Fair Food* project adapts risk-based methods for food safety in informal markets. Risk analysis, or risk-based decision-making, is the gold standard for food safety management in developed countries and it is based on evidence

not perceptions. Structured analysis often shows that the risks of informally marketed food are not as high as they are perceived to be. For example, in urban East Africa where almost all consumers boil their milk before drinking it, the presence of germs in raw milk presents little risk. Moreover, when a sector gives a large amount of benefit to livelihoods and nutrition a small amount of risk may be tolerable. The other advantage of risk-based approaches is they allow us to identify the points on the 'farm-to-fork' pathway where control would be most useful. This often allows cheap and highly effective ways of making the food bought and sold by the poor safer.

Safe Food, Fair Food 2 (2012–2015) builds directly on the work of the first phase of the project (2008–2011), which was supported by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and the German Agency for International Cooperation (BMZ/GIZ), where we used a combination of approaches:

- Food safety risk assessment
- Participatory methods to collect data in a rapid and cheap way which is very appropriate for developing countries
- Capacity building in food safety risk assessment

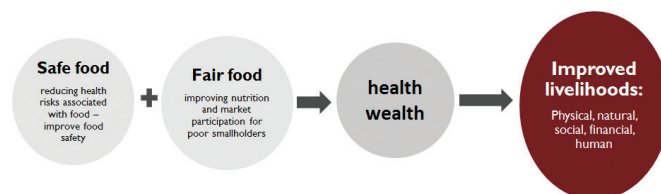


Consumption of raw milk in Mali (Photo credit: Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques/ Valentin B. Koné).

The achievements of *Safe Food, Fair Food* will be consolidated and expanded through addressing selected high-potential value chains and regional policy and education. Together, improved policy and practice will lead to tangible benefits for smallholders and other small-scale value chain actors including poor consumers.

Expected outputs

- Linked food safety and economic assessment in five value chains in four countries: dairy in Tanzania; pigs in Uganda; and small ruminants in Senegal and Ethiopia.
- Action research on priority food safety issues in these chains to pilot and test best-bet interventions.
- Findings, recommendations, methods and tools disseminated to national and regional stakeholders.
- Engagement with regional economic communities, the private sector, and research and training institutions for a more enabling environment.



The goal of the project: Improved livelihoods for poor producers and consumers of livestock products in sub-Saharan Africa.

Countries

Ethiopia, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda

Duration

March 2012 to February 2015

Collaborating institutions

- Addis Ababa University
- Biosciences eastern and central Africa Hub
- Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques en Côte d'Ivoire
- Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany
- Freie Universität Berlin
- Makerere University
- Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique
- Rakuno Gakuen University
- Sokoine University of Agriculture
- University of Ghana
- University of Nairobi

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