CCGP32 Side Event
on Food Safety and SPS Measures in Africa

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Opportunities to leverage existing data and expertise, information sharing and regulatory collaboration based on Codex standards

Overview

- Context: 2018 World Bank Report

- Recognition of Importance of Food Safety, Codex, and Collaboration

- Africa as a Key User and Contributor to Codex

- Examples of Resources and Collaborative Programs

2018 World Bank Report

- *The Safe Food Imperative: Accelerating Progress in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*

- Much of the burden of unsafe food can be avoided through practical and often low-cost behavior and infrastructure changes at different points along food value chains, including in traditional food production and distribution channels

- Clear case for increased investment:

  - ➢ Unsafe food costs low- and middle-income economies US$ 110 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses each year

  - ➢ Preventive measures—including greater investment, better regulatory frameworks and measures that promote behavior change—can help countries avoid food safety problems

  - ➢ Most effective approach: food safety as a shared responsibility among government, farmers, food businesses and consumers

Africa Recognizes the Importance of Food Safety and Codex Standards

- Cosponsored global Food Safety Conference with FAO, WHO and WTO: food safety is essential to food security

- Supported 2020 WHA Food Safety Resolution, endorsed by CCAFRICA

- Recognized opportunities and challenges under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

- Proposed new work approved by CAC43 to develop Guidelines to support the development of harmonized food laws

- Anticipated contributions to upcoming Food Systems Summit

- Active participation in key Codex committees and CCEXEC

- Opportunities to leverage resources, information sharing and collaboration in capacity building programs

Collaboration and Codex Standards Promote Food Safety and Fair Trade Goals

- Use Codex Standards (e.g., General Principles of Food Hygiene, pesticide maximum residue limits/MRLs, CCFICS texts) to achieve both goals, and build credibility with consumers and customers

- Work to identify and develop standards that meet the needs of African producers and enhance acceptance of exported foods (MRLs, crop groups, additives for production and safe storage, Codes of Practice)

- Contribute data needed to support standards and participate in expert consultations

- Mobilize political leadership support by communicating value of Codex to sustainable development

- Prioritize Codex and food safety in joint programs and capacity building proposals (FAO, WHO, CTF, STDF, bilateral programs)

- Reach out to regulatory counterparts and adapt risk assessments as appropriate to Africa

Examples of Available Resources and Programs

- USDA has 14 offices and a presence in 52 African countries serving as the lead foreign agricultural affairs. Can draw on the expertise of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulatory agencies: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

- Joint USDA/U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Resilience and Food Security support for African Union work to strengthen SPS systems and harmonize measures for animal and plant health and food safety

- Data development projects, for example, to support the establishment of Codex Maximum Residue Limits for pesticides of potential importance to African producers

Training Events/Capacity Building Tools (1)

- USDA-supported collaboration in response to requests from the African Union Commission's Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE):

  - Multi-country scoping study in support of the AU's effort to create a new continental Food Safety Agency (submitted to STC in October 2019). The study aimed to identify value-added functions a new continental food safety agency could provide, building on the 2016 assessment completed by the African Union - Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR).

  - SPS Policy Framework for Africa, adopted by the STC in October 2019 and approved by AU Heads of State in February 2020, to assist AU Member States in harmonizing and strengthening their SPS systems to reach commitments consistent with AfCFTA SPS chapter.

  - USDA/FAS continuing support to facilitate the development of an AU food safety strategy, requested from the STC meeting in October 2019 and scheduled for delivery in October 2021.

Training Events/Capacity Building Tools (2)

- 2018 Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA) / Preventive Controls for Human Food (PCHF) Qualified Individual (QI) and + Lead Instructor (LI) courses. Back-to-back courses alongside workshops on Food Safety Standards and Harmonization in both East and West Africa. The creation of Lead Instructors initiates a multiplier effect to spread knowledge.

- SPS regulatory needs assessments (with a focus on food safety) in Senegal, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya in 2018, and in 2019 in Niger in 2019.

Training Events/Capacity Building Tools (3)

- Support for the development and enhancement of national and regional pesticide regulatory systems, building flexible and risk-based regulatory systems to facilitate the trade of crops inter- and intra-regionally:
  - Support for "Healthy Crops, Safe Food, and Thriving Trade: Opportunities for Africa" webinar organized by AU-IBAR in September 2020
  - Support towards the establishment of a harmonized MRL adoption system in the East African Community and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and a series of pilot field trials
  - Efficacy field trials in several countries including Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania. In 2019, data were submitted for for sulfoxaflor use on mango.
  - Strong technical collaborations with scientists and regulators

Additional Opportunities for Collaboration: Food Safety and Nutrition

- USAID: over 60 country and regional missions covering 44 countries. Portfolio of food safety capacity building projects, leveraging investments across sectors to support of the USG Global Food Security Strategy and USAID's Multisectoral Nutrition Strategy

- Multi-sectoral approach to food safety that contributes to priorities related to:
  - increasing access and affordability of safe, nutritious food to the most vulnerable
  - increasing consumption of safe, nutritious food
  - facilitating an enabling environment that supports sound food systems.

Additional Opportunities for Collaboration: Food Safety and Nutrition

- Examples of programming approaches include
  - Empower consumers to demand safe, nutritious food, holding governments and industry accountable
  - Build small/medium enterprise capacity to manage food safety risks through food systems
  - Support governments to establish and enforce clear guidelines and regulations, and invest in infrastructure that protects against food borne disease
  - Scale risk-based food safety approaches that reduce harm to consumers
- US FDA: offered assistance at CCFH51 with Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) to address outbreaks
  - Sharing/leveraging U.S. scientific resources with South Africa during the recent Listeriosis outbreak

Conclusion

- Many opportunities to increase collaboration and leverage resources to achieve goals under AfCFTA

- Science-based Codex standards offer a sound foundation

- Collaboration in Codex is essential to ensure standards that will meet growing needs

- Build on existing resources and programs and adapt to new environment

- Exciting and promising times ahead!