Food Safety and the Legal Framework in Papua New Guinea (PNG)

**Shortcomings and the Way Forward**

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**Introduction**

- PNG food laws
  - Fragmented
  - Cover only certain aspects of the food chain
  - Jurisdictions vary along the chain
  - No clear controls incomplete
  - Therefore not implemented
  - Food testing lab lacks capacity
  - HACCP Principles are non binding

**Current National Food Law**

- The Food Sanitation Act (1991)
  - Comes under the auspices of the Food Sanitation Council (Department of Health).
  - Oversees food processing, preparation, packing, distribution and sales component only.
- Supported by Food Sanitation Regulation (2007).
- Non binding instruments (standards, food safety codes, policy documents, etc)

**Deficiencies of Legislation**

- Scope and purpose of legislation too narrow
- Does not cover basic principles of food legislation
  - *Risk Analysis – as defined by Codex Standards
  - *Integrated farm to table approach
  - *Transparency - Decision making process to be transparent for better implementation
  - *Producer liability - FBO not registered, responsibilities not well defined
  - *Protection of consumers - not clearly stated

**Engagement of European Union (EU) Food Law Expert**

Serious drawback for Food Safety & international engaged a EU Food Law Expert to among other things to;
- Examine existing Food Laws
- Define problems in the national Food Safety System
- Devise improvement mechanisms
- Make recommendations for implementation

**Recommendations for new /Amended Act**

- Scope of the Act- Amended/new Law should cover both food and feed or ingredient.
- Guarantee of food chain. Whole food chain should be guaranteed from production to processing and distribution
- Integrated approach - Include basic principle of food law from *farm to fork E.g. Packing/handling

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Recommendations

- Risk Analysis - risk analysis to be the pillar of all food law. Risk include, risk assessment, risk communication, & risk management.
- Food Safety Requirements - Laws for producers on putting unsafe food on the market should be explicit which may also include storage or transportation.

Recommendations –

- Traceability - A food safety and control framework to include provision for traceability needs to be included.
- Official Control - Needs provisions for inspections, which will define admin structures of the new framework.
- Coordination/Cooperation-Amended Law should unit all agencies who collectively could decided on functions, composition, or role each could play. E.g. National Food Safety Council.

Action Plan

- Recommendations accepted for implementation.
- Action plan prepared. Process to be based on internationally accepted principles.
- Hope to learn from our colleagues in this room on their Food Safety Systems and thus Risk Benefit Analysis of Food, the subject of this workshop.

Animal Health/Veterinary Public Health & Food Safety

- The National Agriculture Quarantine Inspection Authority (NAQIA) is a Quarantine & Biosecurity organization.
- Provides & regulates the Veterinary service in PNG (Veterinary Authority).
- Better placed to play a major role in animal origin food safety legislation & its implementation including risk benefit analysis.
- Carries out Meat Inspection, License slaughter houses, and slaughtermen.

NAQIA Roles...

- Ensure standards in Animal Welfare and hygiene and sanitation are adhered to.
- NAQIA regulates the Meat inspection Act (Chapt 238) 1958, Animals Act (Chapt 329) 1952, & Animal Disease Control Act (Chapt 206) 1952.
- Meat Inspection - NAQIA responsibility starts once animals are unloaded to the time the carcasses leave the chillers in quarter form for processing.
- After carcass leaves chiller it comes under the jurisdiction of the Food Sanitation Act.

NAQIA Roles cont...

- NAQIA has no role in food safety in the production phase (farm).
- Controlling hazards (animal origin) at point of source not monitored. Hazards include, chemical, biological, & physical agents in meat which may have the potential to cause adverse health effects in humans whether or not it causes disease in animals.
**Actions for Food Safety of Animal Origin**

- Based on the recommendation and also as part of our functions as a regulatory authority we are:
  - Revising & developing a quality assurance system based on HACCP principles for animal slaughter and meat inspection (equivalent best practice)
  - Reviewing /drafting procedures and guidelines meat safety in the farm to control hazards at point of source
  - Train staff on food safety standards

**Summary**

- Shortfalls noted
- Recommendations noted
- Action plans put in place
- We will build our food safety systems
- Need support from our colleagues from the member countries

**Food laws - The basis for Risk Analysis**

One can not talk about Food Safety risk benefit analysis without having a working legal Framework on Food Safety to implement them.

I have therefore presented to you a candid assessment of PNG’s current food safety systems or lack of it.

**Acknowledgements**

- Most of the work presented here is sourced from the round table discussion presented to Stakeholders by the EU Food Law Expert in Port Moresby, 25 March 2011.
- Material for the Animal Health Section and NAIQA’s proposals are from the former Chief Veterinarian, Dr. Nime K. Kapo who is now a private consultant. He will review the animal origin food safety component of food processing (farm to fork) and current legislation to accommodate the ambiguous nature of the current laws.