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INFOSAN



ACTIVITY REPORT

2014/2015



International Food Safety Authorities Network

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Foreword

The 2014/2015 biennium has been marked by a number of high-profile occasions that have emphasized the significance of food safety for public health, good nutrition and food security.

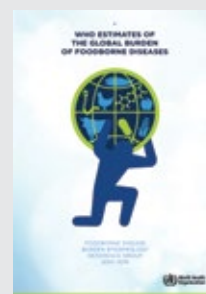
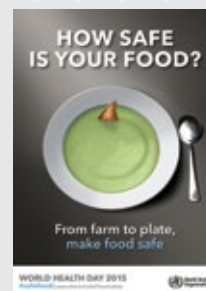
At the second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in November 2014, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and national governments reiterated the importance of food safety in ensuring healthy diets. ICN2 also provided a forum for FAO and WHO to underscore the importance of exchanging food safety information between government authorities nationally and across borders in order to prevent foodborne diseases. A few months later, in April 2015, World Health Day was dedicated to food safety to catalyse collective government and public action to put measures in place that will improve the safety of food from farms, factories, street vendors, and kitchens alike. Many countries around the world marked this special day by staging diverse activities to raise awareness about food safety. Most recently, in December 2015, WHO released estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases for the first time. These global and regional data illustrate the considerable impact that foodborne diseases are having on individuals of all ages, particularly children under five years of age and persons living in low-income regions of the world.

Each of these occasions have shone an international spotlight on food safety and reminded us that everyone involved in the production, distribution and preparation of food — from farm to plate — must play his or her part to make it safe. In addition, it is now widely recognized that making food safe requires international and national cross-sectoral collaboration among those working in human health, animal health, agriculture, environmental health, education, tourism, trade and other fields.

For more than 10 years, the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) has been strengthening food safety systems by fostering communication across sectors and disseminating important food safety information of global relevance.

INFOSAN has continued to grow and develop in 2014/2015, forging functional links with regional food safety networks and initiatives, and building on a strong global reputation for efficiency and effectiveness, especially in the context of international food safety emergency response. Then again, more can always be done — active participation and support for INFOSAN should be a priority for Member States to safeguard the global food supply.

Safe food is critical, not only for better health, improved livelihoods and food security, but also for economic development, trade and the international reputation of every country. Efforts to improve food safety should, therefore, be strengthened through public health and development policies, especially as we look towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We must capitalize on the momentum created during the 2014/2015 biennium to scale up and mainstream food safety in national and international political agendas. Enhanced participation in INFOSAN is just one of the many ways in which national government agencies can demonstrate their dedication to improving food safety around the globe.



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Abbreviations

ACHIPIA	Chilean Food Safety and Quality Agency
AMRO	WHO Regional Office for the Americas
ANVISA	Brazilian Health Surveillance Agency
DG SANTE	The Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission
ECCP	European Commission Contact Point
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EMPRES Food Safety	The FAO Emergency Prevention System for Food Safety
EREN	Emerging Risks Exchange Network
EU	European Union
EURO	WHO Regional Office for Europe
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICN2	2nd International Conference on Nutrition
IHR (2005)	International Health Regulations (2005)
INFOSAN	International Food Safety Authorities Network
MFDS	Ministry of Food and Drug Safety, Republic of Korea
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
RASFF ECCP	RASFF European Commission Contact Point
SAGARPA	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, Mexico
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SENASICA	National Service of Animal and Plant Health, Quality and Food Safety, Mexico
SEARO	WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
United Kingdom	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
USA	United States of America (the)
US FDA	United States Food and Drug Administration
WHO	World Health Organization
WPRO	WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Executive Summary

INFOSAN in 2014 and 2015

Since the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) was launched in 2004, 186 Member States¹ (plus 10 Associate Member States, areas or territories) have joined the Network. While the process to designate INFOSAN members (i.e. an Emergency Contact Point and Focal Points) at the national level has been an important focus during the biennium, the active participation of designated members through registration and participation on the INFOSAN Community Website is vital. Members are expected to respond to requests for information and take the initiative to share and disseminate food safety information of potential international relevance. Overall, 73% of all Member States had registered an active INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point by the end of 2015, which represents a 17-point increase over the biennium. The largest gains were made in the African and Americas regions as a result of targeted actions there. Efforts will be sustained during the 2016/2017 biennium to ensure that new INFOSAN members are well informed and empowered to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and actively participate in Network activities. The INFOSAN Secretariat undertook new activities during the 2014/2015 biennium, such as using webinars to train new members. These online presentations were made in English, French and Spanish, and provided an opportunity for new members to familiarize themselves with INFOSAN operations and the INFOSAN Community Website, and to pose any questions directly to the INFOSAN Secretariat.

The INFOSAN Community Website is the main platform through which members communicate with each other and the INFOSAN Secretariat. It now supports 440 users around the globe and the user interface has been translated into French and Spanish to facilitate the participation of members who are more comfortable making contributions in those languages. A review of website usage patterns indicates that 75% of Emergency Contact Points and 64% of Focal Points accessed the website over the past year. Compared to previous years, there was a marked increase in the utilization of the discussion forum; members asked questions and shared information, particularly on food safety events of international concern. Monitoring website usage enables the INFOSAN Secretariat to prioritize follow-up actions for those members who, while still

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