



Advancing Food Safety Initiatives

Strategic Plan for Food Safety Including Foodborne Zoonoses 2013–2022

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**Strategic Plan for Food Safety
Including Foodborne Zoonoses
2013–2022**

Advancing food safety initiatives: strategic plan for food safety including foodborne zoonoses 2013-2022.

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INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan in this document builds on World Health Assembly resolution WHA63.3 (May 2010) and provides a coherent framework for taking action on priority issues in the area of food safety and foodborne zoonoses for the period 2013–2022.

The Plan was developed with the close collaboration of food safety experts from the three levels (global, regional and country levels) of the Organization, taking into account strategies developed at the regional level and resolutions on food safety that have been adopted by regional committees of WHO. Documents that provided a basis for the Plan are listed in Annex 1. The final draft was reviewed by external experts from regulatory authorities and academia from different WHO regions. WHO is grateful for the constructive comments of the reviewers.

The Plan sets out three global strategic directions and objectives together with more detailed activities needed to reduce the burden of foodborne illness. Its three strategic directions are inter-linked - actions defined under one strategic direction contribute to the achievement of the objectives under another strategic direction. The scope of the Plan covers food safety in all ramifications, encompassing the farm-to-table approach and including foodborne diseases of zoonotic origin. Therefore, all references to “food safety” or “foodborne diseases” comprise aspects or diseases of non-communicable and communicable origin, including foodborne zoonoses.

The implementation of this strategic plan is through biennial work plans that will be developed at the three levels of the Organization by the respective offices (Headquarters, Regional Offices, Country Offices), in alignment with the WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work (2014-2019). This 10-year plan will be reviewed in 2018-2019 to evaluate its implementation and achievements against performance indicators and ensure consistency with the next General Programme of Work. Internal and external reviews will also be performed to verify that the scope and priorities are still pertinent and that work undertaken contributes to achieving the stated overall goal and outcomes.

FOOD SAFETY: A PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY

Access to sufficient and safe food is a basic human necessity and essential for creating a world without hunger and for achieving poverty reduction worldwide. While everyone is exposed to foodborne health risks, it is the poor who are most exposed and vulnerable to these risks. Foodborne and waterborne diarrhoeal diseases kill an estimated 2.2 million people annually, most of whom are children. Diarrhoea is the most common foodborne illness caused by pathogens, but other serious consequences include kidney and liver failure, brain and neural disorders, reactive arthritis and death. Chemical food contamination may cause non-communicable diseases, in particular cancer, and can also affect reproductive health and the immune system.



Serious outbreaks of foodborne disease have been documented on every continent in the past decade, illustrating the public health and social significance of these diseases. Foodborne diseases not only adversely affect people's health and well-being, but also have negative economic consequences for individuals, families, communities, businesses and countries. These diseases impose a substantial burden on health-care systems, trade and tourism, markedly reduce economic productivity and threaten livelihood. Yet, the full spectrum of the burden of foodborne diseases has never been quantified on a global basis, since foodborne illnesses are often under-reported. Policy makers at the local, national and international levels need science-based, reliable estimates on the burden of foodborne disease to inform their decisions and mobilise resources.

Traditionally, the term "foodborne disease" has been used for illnesses caused by microorganisms, with often acute reactions, such as diarrhoea. However, in order to address the full scope of causative agents —of a bacterial, viral, prionic, parasitic or chemical nature— and acute, sub-acute as well as chronic diseases, the term foodborne disease is used here in a wide, all-encompassing sense. It includes foodborne zoonoses and other risks associated with food along the entire food chain, as well as new and emerging health issues associated with food.



The past decade has seen new challenges to food safety. More people expect a wider variety of foods than in the past; they want foods that are not in season and often eat away from home. The integration and consolidation of agricultural and food industries, new dietary habits, the globalization of the food trade and human movements are modifying the patterns of food production, distribution and consumption.

The globalization of the food trade

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