



**SECOND FAO/WHO GLOBAL FORUM OF FOOD SAFETY REGULATORS**  
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**Enhancement of management of the official control system  
of food safety programme in Iraq**

**Introduction**

Food is a human right according to religions and the international law of human rights in 1948. At the World Food Summit in Rome 1996 it was announced that safe food is the one of the human rights and should never be used as a weapon against people. High standards and safe food participate in human health and its physical growth.

**Current management system of food safety programme in Iraq**

1. The present system is a multi agency system.
2. The Food Control Department was established during the thirties of last century.
3. A risk-based system was implemented in 2004.
4. We are now looking forward to the implementation of an integrated and coordinated food control system.

**Current situation of food safety in Iraq**

- Food laws and regulations exist but are not updated and not enforced;
- Human resources available have lost contact with modern food safety science and technology and need professional development packages;
- Most food related infrastructures need rehabilitation and upgrading;
- Rapid assessment survey of food control services at entry point in July 2003;
- Food control at the entry points was no longer carried out after March 2003 due to conflict;
- Borders were no longer controlled and customs facilities were damaged or looted.

**Some transitional measures in place**

- The Health audit department has developed a plan to control imported food at the entry points;
- Customs warehouses were replaced by private warehouses;
- All food importers were requested to provide the border outlet where the shipment will come through;
- Recently a food safety audit survey has been conducted in all 18 governorates.

### Food Safety Auditing Survey: Results

Category of business	Number surveyed	% of the total establishments	% of non compliance
Food –related shops	786	1.9	49.5
Food Industries	271	33	57.7
Ice factories	351	???	42.3
Environmental health auditing	432	???	55.9
Hospitals	91	65	49.3

### Food Safety programme objectives

- 1. Protect consumers health
- 2. Protect consumers interest
- 3. Underpin food trade

### Food Safety Authority

Mission Statement

Consumers' health protector

How and by whom

Ensuring that food consumed, distributed, marketed or produced meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene:

1. Educated consumer: By risk communication
  - A) Increase awareness
  - B) Raise level of knowledge
  - C) Change attitudes
  - D) Change behaviours
2. Effective control of suppliers (HACCP)
3. Training
  - A) Improve performance
  - B) Achieve Intersectoral work
  - C) Change professional attitudes

HOW?

1. By strengthening Iraq's national food control system
2. Iraq should have a food safety body through these guidelines

## **Guidelines**

- 1. Risk reduction
- 2. Plan for contingent situation
- 3. Follow food chain from farm to fork
- 4. Science-based risk management
- 5. Priorities–based on risk assessment
- 6. Multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach
- 7. Shared responsibilities –All stakeholders
- 8. Openness and Transparency

## **Building blocks of the national food safety programme**

- 1. Funding and investment
- 2 Food law and regulation should support programme
- 3 Strengthen food inspection services
- 4. Enhance food monitoring and surveillance
- 5 Enhance food borne disease surveillance
- 6. Human resources development

## **Strategies for Iraq**

- Overall objective: consumer protection against food borne disease and other hazards associated with unsafe food and contribute to economic development;
- Improve coordination of food safety controls at national level;
- Develop and enforce food law, requirements and standards at national and local level;
- Enhance food borne disease surveillance;
- Information gathering through contaminant monitoring and risk assessment;
- Increase the adoption of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) within the food industry;
- Iraq to strengthen its links with the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- Develop and strengthen integrated and coordinated laboratory services for food monitoring and epidemiological data;
- Develop and implement programme for human resource development for food safety.

## **Immediate action (6 to 12 months)**

- Review national food control means and data;
- Public awareness campaign for unsafe food in the market;
- Imported food:
  - Restrict the number of outlets
  - Sign an MOU with neighbouring countries
- Stress on responsibility for food safety by food handlers and retailers
- Review public health laws/food control regulations

**POA for Immediate actions (6-12 months)**

- Monitoring and risk assessment of food establishments and specific foods (i.e. list of food items, tests, no. of samples per month);
- Implementation of food safety standards in large food plants;
- Promote food safety quality assurance programmes coupled with intensive training programmes for health inspectors and food handlers;
- Provision of portable kits for rapid inspection of hazardous food;
- Strengthen coordination between key stakeholders;
- Enhance food borne surveillance.

**Long term actions (1-3 years)**

- Empower national food expert committee to lead the process of developing an independent Iraqi Food Safety Authority;
- Develop and enforce Public Law/Food laws and regulations;
- Adopt the principles of HACCP within Food Industry;
- Promote food safety quality assurance Programmes;
- Human resource development;
- Strengthen laboratory resources;
- Promote Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP);
- Promote food safety research.

**Stake holders and support**

- Implementing partners:  
MOA, MOT, MOI, MOEnv, Mo Municipalities and Public works, Ministry of Plan,
- Supporting Agencies:  
WHO, FAO, UNIDO, USAID, EC, JFDA and NGOs