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**Training of staff for official food safety control services**  
*(Prepared by Thailand)*

**1) Introduction**

According to the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) stipulated by the World Trade Organization (WTO), Thailand has encouraged all related organizations to arrange on food safety control services. The established measures are based on international standards under Codex Alimentarius, International Office of Epizootics (OIE) and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). Additionally, the Government of Thailand has promoted the year 2004 to be Food Safety Year and has recognized the importance of the food control operations conducted by official staff to effectively implementation. The application of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and risk analysis in the food chain are the key practices to be widely implemented. The competent authorities under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Public Health cooperate together in implementation the strategies of food safety control along the food chain from farm to table. The government has recognized human resource development in food safety control services and set up national training programs, moreover encouraged on participating with other regional and international training program.

**2) National training on food control from farm to table**

Thai official staff has been promoted for extensive knowledge to international level. Training programs for food safety control address in the areas such as:

2.1 GAP, GMP, HACCP applications for official staff and producers. These programs are for the benefit of all stakeholders in food production and processing areas. The producers could update information for operating practices and the official staff could conduct the regulation comply with international standards.

2.2 Training programs for official auditors in farm production and food processing certification systems compliance with ISO guide 62.

2.3 Training efficiency of laboratory staff in analytical techniques and quality laboratory management system follow ISO 17025.

2.4 Training in analysis of chemical contaminants for official staff at the ports of entry and export.

2.5 Training of evaluating the sanitary of food and fresh products in local markets and retailers for official staff in charge of domestic food safety control.

2.6 Training courses on risk analysis covering risk assessment, risk management and risk communication have been set up. In the year 2004, an intensive risk assessment training program has been conducting on microbiological and chemical hazards in food and animal feed in seven areas encompassing risk from pathogenic microorganism (*Salmonella* spp., *Campylobacter* spp. and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*), chemical contaminant (3-MCPD, ochratoxin and cadmium) and food additives (sulphite). Each risk assessment group is composed of a specialist in the related fields and 5 – 10 trainees that will learn from the team by on-the-job training technique. It is expected to have more than 40 trainees able to apply risk assessment on their related responsibilities.

### **3) International cooperation on food safety training**

Thailand has successfully augmented numbers of rigorous programs and has actively participated with other regional and international training and workshops for cooperation and sharing data. Consequently, Thailand has been entrusted as the center for a number of food safety control programs such as,

- The Institute of Nutrition Mahidol University (INMU) has been appointed by the Food and Agriculture Organizations as a “Center of Excellence” for developing and applying new knowledge on the subject of food quality, safety and nutrition improvement as well as having the commitment to share such knowledge with neighboring countries and the global community. Moreover, the INMU has been selected by the World Health Organization to be the Collaboration Center for Community Nutrition and Food Safety, of which INMU is responsible for augmenting nutrition related trainings programs on food safety, public health, and other areas.
- The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Chulalongkorn University has been selected by WHO as a “Center of Excellence in Antimicrobial Resistance”.
- Laboratories of the Department of Animal Husbandry (Animal Medicine Division) and the Department of Medical Science (Heavy Metals Division) have been appointed to participate in the project of establishing of “ASEAN Reference Laboratory” (ARL). These two ARL laboratories are responsible for training arrangements and providing consultation services to the ASEAN members.

### **4) Exchange of experience during the training program**

During the years 2000 to 2004, Thailand and JICA have organized the program “Strengthening of Food and Sanitation” by designating Thailand as the training center. The program is designed to train and increase the performance of staff on food safety control services from Thailand and neighbouring countries. There are delegates from countries such as Myanmar, the People Republic of Lao, the Social Republic of Vietnam, as well as Thailand. The objective of this program is to share knowledge on food safety control and the analysis of food products.

## 5) **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The successful of training programs for food safety control in developing countries are based on global knowledge, especially the scientific data needed for related risk assessment process. Reliable risk assessment database depends mainly on data from international organizations as well as data generated within country. As risk factors vary among different regions, risk assessors should have enough knowledge and experience to be able to effectively perform their own risk assessment.

To strengthen the food safety control systems in the developing countries, it is important that the authorities responsible for food safety control provide extensive training programs for the involved parties. Because of limitation of resources, developing countries should assess their training needs and prioritize their training program.

Although Thailand has been entrusted as the center for some food safety related programs, experts are limited in some specific areas especially in update microbiological risk assessment. The training media and handbook still need to be developed or revised in order to update to the international level. To accomplish this goal, experts and technical guidance from international organizations and developed countries are undeniably.

The fully developed food safety control system and training programs require both regional and international cooperation. Therefore, specialist exchange programs, at the regional and international levels, with the support from FAO and WHO would be beneficial to the development of risk assessment programs in Thailand.

Expanding long term support from FAO/ WHO on technology transfer, specialist exchange, training and other funding programs are necessary for the vitality and encourage the success of food safety control in developing countries. In addition, programs such as “Center of Excellence” should be further promoted to reach the national and regional levels and continuously technology transfer.