Global Food Safety Fund Managed by World Bank

On November 12, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings in Honolulu, Hawaii, Undersecretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs Robert Hormats participated in an event marking the creation of the world’s first Global Food Safety Fund, hosted by U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk. Created with $1 million pledged by an innovative public-private partnership, the proposed fund will be managed by the World Bank and will leverage the tripartite approach pioneered in APEC that enlists a wide range of stakeholders in training programs designed to enhance food safety and to facilitate trade. These programs will enable more growers, producers, and food safety officials to understand and utilize preventive controls – resulting in safer food for consumers and fewer safety incidents in food trade.

The creation of a Global Food Safety Fund has been made possible by seed money from the private sector, including Mars Incorporated and Waters Corporation, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Once implemented, it will take forward the collaboration between the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum and the World Bank. This collaboration seeks to improve food safety competencies, laboratory proficiency, and risk-based management systems in APEC economies and, then, globally.

The APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum and its Partnership Training Institute Network have been working to develop reproducible training modules that address high priority food safety issues since 2008. The Partnership Training Institute Network was a U.S.-led initiative endorsed by APEC Leaders in 2008. Additional information is available at http://fscf-ptin.apec.org.

The fund will be based on a three-part model developed by the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum that involves government, industry and academic partners to focus on supporting broad global food safety efforts through three pillars:

- Developing, testing, and validating programs that will result in training modules for roll out in developing countries;
- Addressing high-priority food hazards, contaminants, and pathogens;
- Strengthening analytics and metrics, including laboratory competency and the evaluation of the performance of food safety systems.

The United States hopes the event will serve as a call to action for governments and industry partners to join in building a collaborative partnership model for public health and safety, in which training programs developed and tested in APEC economies can be deployed around the globe, particularly in the developing world.

The European Union Approves New Food Labeling and Packaging Regulations

The European Union Regulation No. 1169/2011 on food labeling and packaging was formally approved in November 2011 through publication in the Official Journal. The regulation sets forth new rules regarding mandatory information to consumers and is expected to provide more clarity about the elements contained in food products offered to European consumers.

Some of the provisions set out under the new regulations, include:

- Mandatory food information will appear in a language easily understood by the consumers of the member states where a food is marketed and shall be available and easily accessible.
- Mandatory food information shall appear directly on the package or on the label for pre-packaged food. Specifically, allergenic ingredients must be highlighted in the ingredient list on pre-packaged foods.
- Foods that have been frozen before sale, but are sold defrosted, must be labeled as “defrosted.”
- Companies must label food products to disclose the energy content (calories) as well as fat, saturated fat, carbohydrates, sugars, protein, and salt.
- Nutrition values must be stated in tabular form on the packaging and all information must be expressed per 100g or per 100 ml.
- Member states must decide the best method for alerting consumers to allergenic substances in non-packaged foods sold in restaurants.

While the majority of rules will be implemented within three years, the nutrition labeling rules will be enforced on December 13, 2016.

USDA Announces Proposed Rule to Streamline Generic Labeling Approval Processes

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is proposing a new rule that
will allow establishments to label a broader range of products without first submitting the label to FSIS for approval, should it become final. Under the proposal, FSIS will continue to verify that labels are accurate, not misleading, and, in compliance with all labeling features. This rule is expected to benefit consumers because it will get new products into the marketplace sooner while still ensuring that they are not misbranded. Also, by making the label approval process more convenient and cost-effective, the industry, especially smaller producers, is expected to benefit from the rule.

"It is important that we make the labeling process more effective and efficient, while still ensuring consumers have the best information available when shopping for food," said Dr. Elisabeth Hagen, Undersecretary for Food Safety at the Department of Agriculture.

The rule proposes to modify the agency’s generic label approval process. Under the proposal, the approval process would allow companies to use new labels or modify labels without first submitting them to FSIS. However, all mandatory label features would still need to comply with FSIS regulations.


Over the past two years, FSIS has announced several new measures to safeguard the food supply, prevent foodborne illness, and improve consumers’ knowledge about the food they eat. These initiatives support the three core principles developed by the President’s Food Safety Working Group (FSWG): prioritizing prevention; strengthening surveillance and enforcement; and improving response and recovery. Some of these actions include:

- Performance standards for poultry establishments for continued reductions in the occurrence of pathogens. USDA expects the new standards to prevent as many as 25,000 foodborne illnesses annually. This includes a tougher performance standard for Campylobacter.
- Zero tolerance policy for six Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) serogroups. Raw ground beef, its components, and tenderized steaks found to contain E. coli O26, O103, O45, O111, O121, or O145 will be prohibited from sale to consumers. USDA will launch a testing program to detect these dangerous pathogens and prevent them from reaching consumers.
- Test and hold policy that will significantly reduce consumer exposure to unsafe meat products, because products cannot be released into commerce until USDA test results for dangerous contaminants are known.
- Labeling proposals that provide better information to consumers about their food by requiring nutrition labels on single-ingredient raw meat and poultry products and by simplifying labeling language for raw meat and poultry products with added solutions that may not be apparent to the consumer.
- A Public Health Information System, a modernized, comprehensive database about public health trends and food safety violations at the nearly 6,100 plants FSIS regulates.

As part of its multi-faceted approach to prevent foodborne illness, USDA also launched Food Safe Families, a consumer education campaign with the Ad Council, FDA, and CDC. It is the first joint public service campaign to empower families to further reduce their risk of foodborne illness at home by checking their key food safety steps: clean, separate, cook, and chill. For more information, visit http://www.foodsafety.gov.

### Calendar

AIB is holding a variety of educational seminars throughout North America. To learn more about any of the seminars listed below, visit www.aibonline.org. All dates are subject to change without notice.

**March 6-8**
Food Defense Coordinator, Birmingham, Ala.

**March 6-8**
Exploring the BRC, SQF, and FSSC 22000 Food Safety Schemes, Atlanta (College Park), Ga.

**March 13-14**
Internal Audit Procedures for FSSC 22000 Certification, Chicago, Ill.

**March 20-21**
Equipment & Plant Design Workshop for Allergen/Pathogen Control, Chicago, Ill.

**March 20-22**
Food Defense Practitioner: Coordinator Level 2, San Antonio, Texas

**March 27-28**
Food Plant GMP/Sanitation Workshop, San Jose (Milpitas), Calif.

**March 29-30**
HACCP Workshop, San Jose (Milpitas), Calif.

**April 3-5**
Building Your HACCP Program, Nashville, Tenn.

**April 9-11**
Food Safety and Sanitation for Pest Food Manufacturers, Manhattan, Kan.

**April 17-19**
FSSC 22000 Introduction, Interpretation, and Implementation, Manhattan, Kan.

**April 24-25**
Food Plant GMP/Sanitation Workshop, San Antonio, Texas

**April 24-26**
Food Defense Coordinator, St. Louis, Mo.

**April 26-27**
HACCP Workshop, San Antonio, Texas

**May 8-9**
Food Plant GMP/Sanitation Workshop, Portland, Ore.