

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS REGULATORY IN SAFETY FOOD FIELD

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Abstract

The paper aims to present the main international organizations with responsibilities in food safety. Not incidentally, these organizations issue legal regulations in this area. Even if they are very popular, few know their responsibilities and competencies. The main international organization that develops food safety regulations, some of them have exclusive competences in the field of food safety, as European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) or the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and others have only a component of food safety, such as World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), United Nations for Food and Agriculture (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Trade Organization (WTO).

Key words: food safety, regulation, standards, international organization.

INTRODUCTION

First organizations that aim to defend public health arise as a necessary objective, after the Second World War, in a world of poverty and food resources scarce, where the risks were major. Thus, under the aegis of the United Nations was founded World Health Organization, which aims from the beginning to analyze the risks for human in consumption of animal foods by functioning and by the statistics they make as an organization of epidemiological surveillance of zoonoses that are transmitted to humans through consumption and handling. Also, created under the aegis of the UN, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), serves as a knowledge network. The organization, uses the expertise of its own - agronomists, foresters, fishermen, nutritionists, economists, statisticians and other professionals - to collect, analyze and disseminate data where required. FAO also published newsletters, reports, books, magazines and created numerous electronic forums. FAO uses the experience of member countries in agricultural policy, supporting planning, drafting effective legislation and creating national rural development strategies. FAO provides methods and in a few cases is a limited source of funds.

In crisis situations, it is working with the World Food Program and other humanitarian agencies to protect rural areas and to help people rebuilding their lives. In 1963, after a series of meetings of representatives from FAO and WHO, has been created an organization that aims to develop and unify standards in the food industry. This organization will be called Codex Alimentarius Commission, the most important international organization in this field at the moment, and joined by most countries accepting its standards. The World Trade Organization has been created in 1994 as forum where to propose solutions and to resolve trade disputes. Later, taking into consideration the findings of these organizations, the European Union through the European Commission has initiated a series of laws, trying not to leave uncovered any area of food safety. Last step was to generate an organism to deal with food risks and to notify them to Member States in real time (Gonciarov, 2008).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main objective of this study is to analyze the appearance and development of the main international organizations dealing in food safety field, because in the present are many organizations that are dealing with this subject

without knowing the real importance of this. After I discovered which one they are, I have analyzed their work from the beginning until today. Very important is the legal regulations that they are elaborating, of their activities and how they are involved in every field of activity, trying to develop clear legislation and to help those involved in food safety.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has indirect responsibilities in food safety, developing regulations regarding international trade in animals and animal products and the development of standardized diagnostic methods for the diagnosis of infectious and parasitic animals. It has established collaborations with major international organizations like EU, FAO, WHO, Codex Alimentarius Commission, the WTO and other(OIE/WTO,1995). OIE has its own structure which ensures representation at governmental level, undeniable and complete independence in action. Specific structures allow access to all scientific data that serve as a basis for making decisions and implementing them very quickly in case of emergency. OIE retains today three main missions, namely:
-information on animal diseases,
-the study of methods to control these diseases,
-regulating international transport of animals and animal products (Gonciarov, 2008).

World Health Organization (WHO) is the leading international organization for human epidemiological surveillance, prepares statistical reports on health status in the world that are carried in particular by the EU and used in regulatory action. Inside WHO was created a section of "Veterinary Public Hygiene," which addressed these issues since its establishment:

- preventing and combating zoonoses,
 - hygiene of food of animal origin and in particular the prevention of infections and food poisoning in humans,
 - preventing and combating pollution of the environment by animal sources,
 - increase knowledge of human diseases using veterinary medical sciences accumulated gains.
- The organization shall establish, based on statistical data, quarterly and annual reports of health status in the world (Nastase, 2000).

United Nations for Food and Agriculture (FAO) uses the experience of the member states in elaboration agricultural policy, supporting the development of effective legislation and creating national strategies for rural development. Organized by the United Nations, FAO serves as both the developed and developing, in a joint effort to overcome hunger. FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations negotiate agreements and subject of political debate. FAO is also a source of knowledge and information. FAO helps developing countries and countries in transition to modernize and improve their agriculture, forestry and fisheries. From its inception, FAO has focused attention on developing rural areas of the planet, given that over 70% of the world population lives in poverty. In recent years, FAO has analyzed the impact of urbanization on agriculture and nutrition, and animal health issues such as, avian flu (Gonciarov, 2008).

European Union (EU) protects the quality of food in different ways, through measures to enhance food safety and hygiene, clear labeling the rules by regulations on animal and plant health and animal welfare, by regulating pesticide residues and food additives as well as providing information on the nutritional qualities of food. The method used by the EU includes strict monitoring and control systems, while ensuring the effective functioning of the European single market (Council Directive 662/89).

Contribution of Agricultural Policy Commune-CAP-in veterinary field.

Ensuring food safety and high standards of animal health and welfare, is not just a matter of legislation. Improving food quality has always been one of the objectives of the CAP, since the introduction of quality wine label in the 80s and continuing with its further expansion in olive oil, fruit and vegetables. These efforts are currently the focus of agricultural policy and in all areas the CAP efforts are made to improve food quality (Fuerea, 2003).

Here are some examples:

- cattle identification systems and rules for labeling beef are designed to allow full traceability of meat from the store and back to the origin,

- financial incentives in rural development policy for farmers in order to improve the quality of products,

- specific measures to encourage conversion to organic farming. EU wants to ensure that all its citizens consume food with high quality standards. Food safety policy underwent a major reform as response to a series of crises such as BSE related (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and feed contaminated with dioxin. The objective of this reform was to ensure that EU legislation on food safety is as complete as possible, and consumers have information about potential risks and measures would be taken to minimize them. Food safety begins on the farm. EU rules apply to "from farm to fork", whether the food is produced in the EU or imported from elsewhere in the world (Council Directive 425/90).

EU food safety strategy is based on four key elements:

- rules on the safety of food and animal feed,
- independent and publicly available scientific,
- enforcement of the rules and process control,
- recognize the consumer's right to choose on the basis of full information on the origin and content of the food. If you want food to be healthy, it must come from healthy animals. Keeping animals healthy through good veterinary practice and prevent the occurrence of epidemics of contagious diseases such as foot and mouth disease; swine or bird flu is a priority for the EU. But if an outbreak does occur, it is carefully monitored and steps are taken to prevent its spread. All animals and animal products must meet strict health requirements before they can be imported or marketed in the EU (Popa and Gonciarov, 2010).

Community legislation on animal welfare is based on the principle that animals should not suffer unnecessarily; this principle is reflected in clear rules on the conditions of the farming and the conditions in which farm animals can be transported and slaughtered. These rules are regularly updated in the light of new scientific data and are among the most stringent in the world. Research shows that farm animals are healthier and produce better quality food if they are properly treated (Gonciarov, 2008)

Organic farming is a production method that preserves soil structure and fertility, promotes a

high standard of animal welfare and avoid using products authorized in conventional agriculture, such as synthetic pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers or growth stimulators such as antibiotics, or bodies GM. Farmers resort to techniques that help maintain ecosystems and reduce pollution. The processing of organic food can only use a limited number of additives and processing aids. EU rules are guaranteeing the authenticity of organic products wherever they are produced and ensure accurate labeling. By law, use of the word 'organic' and its equivalent in any other language for food classification is reserved exclusively for organic products. The exclusive use is a guarantee for consumers about the quality and reliability of organic products they buy. EU organic logo was made available to farmers and organic food manufacturers to voluntarily use and its meaning is:

- at least 95% of the product's ingredients have been organically produced,
- the product comply with the official system of control,
- product bears the name of the manufacturer, the processor or vendor and the name or code of the inspection body (Gonciarov, 2008).

Special products.

These are natural and exceptional quality products which shows where were produced and the production methods used. Consumers and traders of food are increasingly interested in the geographical origin of food. Traditional Specialty Guaranteed logo (TSG) is used for products with distinct properties which either have traditional ingredients or are made by traditional methods. The indicators of quality provide the following advantages:

- guarantee of origin and production methods;
- send efficient commercial messages about products with high added value;
- supports companies in rural areas which receive quality products by protecting the label against fraudulent imitation (Gonciarov, 2008).

World Trade Organization (WTO) deals with the rules of trade between nations at a global level. It is a free trade organization for the commercial, a forum for governments to negotiate trade agreements, a place for them to settle trade disputes in which operates a system of trade rules. WTO began life on 1 January

1995 but the trading system is half a century old. Since 1948, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) provided the rules of the system. Over the years, WTO GATT evolved through several rounds of negotiations. Last round of GATT and the largest was the Uruguay Round which lasted from 1986 to 1994 and led to the creation of the WTO. (WTO Uruguay Round Final Act, 1994).

Codex Alimentarius Commission (CCA) was born from an objective necessity. United Program FAO/WHO Food Standards, main purposes are:

- protecting consumers health and the right to food trade,
- promoting the coordinating standardization activities in the field of whole food made by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Harmonization of food standards is generally seen as a prerequisite for consumer health protection and facilitates best international trade. For this reason, the general arrangements for application of Uruguay Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) encourage international harmonization of food standards. Harmonization can only be achieved when all countries adopt the same standards. General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius specific ways in which countries can "accept" Codex standards. An increasing number of countries align their food standards or parts of them (especially safety) with the Codex Alimentarius. This generally happens for additives, contaminants and residues. Published volumes of the Codex Alimentarius are available in English, French and Spanish (Gonciarov, 2008)

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), provides scientific advice and technical assistance to EU legislation and policies in all fields which have a direct or indirect impact on food safety and animal feed. It provides independent information on all matters within these fields and communicates risks. Authority, the Commission and the Member States shall cooperate to promote effective coherence between risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. EFSA searches, collects,

analyzes and summarizes relevant scientific and technical data in its fields of competence, such as:

- food consumption and exposure of individuals to risks related to the consumption of food,
- incidence and prevalence of biological risk,
- contaminants in food and feed,
- residues (Council Regulation 178/2002).

EFSA contribute to a high level of protection of human life and health, and in this respect take account of animal health and welfare, plant health and the environment, in the context of the functioning of the internal market. The Authority shall collect and analyze data to allow characterization and monitoring of risks directly or indirectly impact on the safety of food and feed.

Competencies of EFSA also include:

- scientific advice and technical assistance on human nutrition in relation with Community legislation and, at the request of the Commission, assistance concerning notification regarding nutrition issues in the community health program,
- scientific advice on issues related to animal health and welfare and plant health,
- scientific opinions on products other than food and feed related to genetically modified organisms (Council Regulation 178/2002).

CONCLUSIONS

The main international organization that develops food safety regulations, have on one hand exclusive competences in the field of food safety, as European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) or the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and others have only a component of food safety, such as World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), United Nations for Food and Agriculture (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Trade Organization (WTO).

All recommendations, standards, general statistics developed by these organizations, are taken by the European Commission through the two DG Agriculture, DG SANCO and DG Agriculture and Food, in the elaboration of normative acts concerning food safety and others.

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