

USE OF GUIDES FOR GOOD HYGIENE PRACTICE – A CERTAINTY FOR ACHIEVING SAFE AND HEALTHY FOOD: A REVIEW

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Abstract

European Union states encourage preparing national guides to good hygiene practice and application of HACCP principles. It is encouraged the dissemination and use of national and Community guidelines. However, food business operators may use these guides on voluntary basis. Guides to good health practice must include adequate information on the risks involved in primary production and related activities and measures to combat such risks, including the relevant set of national and Community law or national and community programs. Using of the guides to good practice may help food establishments to control hazards and demonstrate compliance. The best practice guidelines are usually a combination of good hygiene practices (GHP) and HACCP- based elements and include: practice guidelines for the implementation of mandatory requirements; requirements for a raw materials; hazard analysis; pre-establishment of critical control points in the preparation and processing of food; preventive hygiene measures for handling sensitive and perishable products and prepared food for groups of consumers with increased susceptibility to illness, the need for documentation and records, protocols for data validation of shelf life of the product. Guides of good sanitary practice represent a simple, but effective mean to overcome difficulties that may arise in certain food establishments to implement HACCP procedures. National and community guides must provide guidance on good practice to combat health risks in primary production and related activities. General guide may suggest common hazards and controls of certain food activities and help the manager or the HACCP team in making food safety procedures or methods and appropriate record keeping.

Key words: *guide, European Commission, Codex Alimentarius.*

INTRODUCTION

European Union member states encourage the establishment to implement national guides of good hygiene practice and application of HACCP principles. It is encouraged the dissemination and use of national and Community guidelines. However, food business operators may use these guides on a voluntary basis. National guidelines are being drawn as guides to good practice; they are made and distributed by the food business:

- in consultation with representatives of parties whose interests may be seriously affected, such as competent authorities and consumer associations;

- compliance with codes of practice applicable to the Codex Alimentarius.

Prior to completion of Community guides to good hygiene practice and application of HACCP principles, the Commission shall consult the Standing Committee guides, scope and theme (Savu, 2005).

In establishing the Community guidelines, the Commission shall ensure that they are prepared and distributed:

- by or in consultation with representatives of the resort community of food sectors, including SME's and other stakeholders such as consumer associations;

- in collaboration with parties whose interests may be seriously affected, including competent authorities;

- taking in account of codes of practice applicable to the Codex Alimentarius (Council Regulation 854/2004, Regulation (EC) no. 1244/2007).

Commission invites the Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health to regularly review of all guidelines. This analysis has the purpose to preserve practical guidelines and to take into consideration the scientific and technical progress.

National and Community guides shall provide guidance on good practice to combat health risks in primary production and related activities (Buhancă, 2007).

Guides to good health practice must include adequate information on the risks involved in primary production and related activities and measures to combat such risks, including the relevant set of national and Community law or national and community programs. These risks and measures may include, for example:

- control of mycotoxin, heavy metals and radioactive substances contamination;
- use of water, organic waste and fertilizers;
- correct and appropriate use of veterinary drugs and feed additives and their traceability;
- preparation, storage, use and traceability and litter;
- proper disposal of dead animals, waste and litter;
- protective measures designed to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases transmissible to humans through food, and must notify the competent authority;
- procedures, practices and methods to ensure that foods are produced, handled, packaged, stored and transported in adequate health, including effective sanitation and pest;
- hygiene measures for slaughter and breeding animals;
- measures on record keeping (Gonciarov, 2010, Council Regulation 853/2004).

The official controls shall be made on the basis of risks classification in the production of food. Inspection teams have the responsibility to classify units of food, based on the using of raw materials of animal origin and/or non-animal, production activities and the actual risk associated. Units classification is the basis for programming the control activity.

Guides of good sanitary practice are a simple, but effective mean, to overcome difficulties that may arise in certain food establishments to implement HACCP procedures. Representatives of various sectors of food and, in particular, of those sectors where many food establishments have difficulty in developing HACCP procedures, should consider these guidelines, and authorities should encourage sector representatives to develop such guidelines. In present, it is a constant need to assist the development of these guides to good practice for those food sectors that are insufficient or poorly organized.

Using of the guides of good practice may help food establishments to control hazards and

demonstrate compliance. They can be applied in any food sector and, especially, where food is handled according to well-known procedures that are often part of the training of operators in the usual sectors, such as:

- restaurants, including food facilities of transport, such as on ships;
- catering sectors delivering prepared a central unit;
- the bakery and confectionery;
- retail stores, including butchers (Popa, 2011).

For such units may be sufficient to describe a simple and practical method to control hazards, not mandatory to enter in details of the nature of the hazards and identify critical control points. However, these guidelines should cover all significant hazards in a unit and must clearly define the procedures to control these hazards and corrective actions to be taken in case of occurrence of problems.

Such guidelines may also emphasize the potential hazards associated with certain foods (egg: raw eggs and the occurrence of *Salmonella* spp.) and food contamination control methods (egg: purchase these raw eggs from a reliable source, and the combination time/temperature processing).

Best practice guidelines have been developed and evaluated by competent authorities for many food sectors, they are usually a combination of good hygiene practices (GHP) and HACCP- based elements and include, for example:

- practice guidelines for the implementation of mandatory requirements;
- requirements for a raw materials;
- a hazard analysis;
- pre-establishment of critical control points in the preparation, manufacture or processing of food identifying hazards and specific control requirements;
- preventive hygiene measures to be taken when handling sensitive and perishable products (such as, for example, products ready for consumption);
- development of several measures, if prepared food for groups of consumers with increased susceptibility to illness (children, elderly, etc..)
- the need for documentation and records;

-protocols for data validation of life (Gonciarov, 2008).

A special type of guide of good practice is a generic HACCP guide.

General guide may suggest common hazards and controls of certain food activities and help the manager or the HACCP team in making food safety procedures or methods and appropriate record keeping.

Food operators must be aware that there may be other hazards, e.g. those associated with the unit or process location that apply and that such hazards cannot be expected in a generic HACCP guide. When used generic HACCP guides exist, however, the necessity of further examination for the possible presence of these hazards and their control methods.

In those areas where there is a similarity between the activities, where the manufacturing process is linear and where prevalence may be high hazard, generic guidelines may be appropriate:

- for slaughterhouses, establishments handling fishery products, dairy units, etc.

- to units using standard food processing procedures, such as food preservation, liquid food pasteurization, freezing/ quick-freezing food, etc. (Piscoli, 2006).

CONCLUSIONS

1. GMP/GHP covers the basic requirements of hygiene and processing to ensure safe and healthy food production.

2. European Union states encourage preparing of national guides of good hygiene practice and application of HACCP principles. It is encouraged the dissemination and use of national and Community guidelines. However, food business operators may use these guides on a voluntary basis.

3. National and community guides must provide guidance on good practice to combat health risks in primary production and related activities.

4. General guide may suggest common hazards and controls of certain food activities and help the manager or the HACCP team in making food safety procedures or methods and appropriate record keeping.

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