

Remarks on food safety in Finland and the European Union

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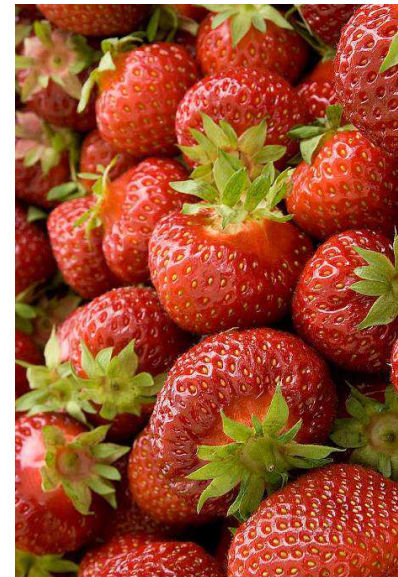


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Why is food safety a priority?

- To protect human life and health
- To protect consumers' interests and to help them make informed choices
- To get economic benefits by reduced costs (sick leaves, medical care)



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How is food safety assured?

By:

- Science based legislation
- Risk based effective control measures
- Operators' own checks and responsibility along the food chain
- Good cooperation between the authorities and operators
- Active communication to consumers including crisis communication



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Current food safety and quality challenges

- globalization
- long food chain
- wider definition of quality
- food choice related nutrition and lifestyle factors



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Globalization is a risk and an opportunity

- Risks include food frauds and mislabelling products
- Global legislation make local laws and statutes less effective
 - need for increased information exchange, eg. RASFF
 - need to participate into international legislative processes on food safety
- Opportunities are great
 - expanded food choice
 - local innovations
 - novel food-related, inc. safety, innovations



Food chain: a long network of specialized functions

- Elongated food chain challenges
 - traceability of the products
 - surveillance of food chain
 - responsibilities



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Food chain: a long network of specialized functions

- Managing the food chain
 - understand the full scope of food chain and activities to manage risks at all levels
 - increase the use of quality systems
 - encourage information sharing and guidance on food safety
 - novel technologies need risk assessment
 - environmental effects must be handled properly
 - food waste must be minimized at all levels of the food chain



Widening the scope of food quality

- Technical quality, incl. taste!
- Safety
- Good manufacturing practise:
 - traceability (origin, labelling)
 - ethical production (animal health and welfare, environmental effects e.g. pesticides, waste)
 - transparency (cooperation between operators and authorities, active communication)
 - consumers' confidence



Food choice related nutrition and lifestyle factors

- Obesity
- Aging population
- Life style factors
 - demand for nutrient dense and consumer preferred products
 - wide selection of products to meet different needs
 - health claims



Nutrition: food security but also an integral part of food safety

- all food-related policies must include health aspect
- sharing of information at all levels
- informed decision making
(international, national,
local and consumer based)
- cooperation in science



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