



PROSAFE

Promoting Safe Food for Everyone



Know Your Food Law

Lao PDR PROSAFE Agri-Food Forum

March 9, 2021

Crowne Plaza, Vientiane

Background

An APEC report published in 2013 states that lack of trust in food safety legislation and enforcement officers, lack of motivation in dealing with food safety legislation, and lack of knowledge and understanding of food laws and legislation are some of the key barriers to trade.

In Asia, as evidenced by the above study, the lack of hygiene and sanitation and low awareness of good practices along the food chain, such as the five keys to food safety, led to the bulk of foodborne diseases (FBDs) being caused particularly by E.coli, norovirus, Salmonella spp. and Campylobacter spp. This is further exacerbated by malpractices such as adulteration, food fraud and accidental contamination as a result of poor health and safety protocols. The presence of physical contaminants (e.g. glass, metal, sawdust), undesirable biological populations (bacteria such as Salmonella and E. coli) and chemical contaminants (e.g. aflatoxins, pesticides, heavy metal and veterinary drug residues or pesticides above maximum residue limits [MRLs]) demonstrates the lack of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and low enforcement of regulatory measures throughout the supply chain. This does not only affect the health of consumers; they are likewise responsible for trade rejections at borders.

The Lao PDR economy remains highly agrarian, with 60.3% of the population living in rural areas (World Bank, 2016) and agriculture accounting for around 71.4% of employment in 2016 (ILO, 2016). As a landlocked country with significant infrastructure gaps, Lao PDR is heavily dependent on its neighbors for trade - with China, Thailand and Vietnam accounting for almost 90% of total trade in 2016 (MIT, 2016).

Agri-food sector studies recommended, among others, that the government should develop regulations on processed agricultural product information (e.g. product name, country of production, producer, contact, raw materials, volume, expiration date, preservation method, nutritional content, and usage instructions); design a product liability system (including the scope of liability, compensation, and insurance); and implement policies and programs to increase the effectiveness of food safety control agencies and private sectors.

The PROSAFE project being implemented by Mekong Institute with the generous funding support from the New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAP) aims to strengthen agri-food safety capabilities of agri-food supply chain stakeholders in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam – CLMV. The project's main goal is to promote food safety through a coordinated approach to knowledge and skills development.

Apart from addressing the country-identified training needs, the project promotes strong partnerships and collaboration between the public and the private sector and provides support in the application of knowledge and skills through a planned outreach. This event is the first in a series of multi-stakeholder events and activities planned for Lao PDR in 2021 under the PROSAFE project.

The PROSAFE project organized by Mekong Institute with the generous funding support from the New Zealand Aid Programme (NZAP) aims to strengthen agri-food safety capabilities of agri-food supply chain stakeholders in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam – CLMV.

The project's key features are:

- Promoting food safety along the horticultural value chain
- Involvement of the public and private sectors
- Addressing country-identified training needs
- Planned outreach to support the application of knowledge and skills
- Use of New Zealand and regional food safety expertise

the national multi-stakeholder events and activities such as fora and learning events are part of the planned outreach to support application of knowledge and skills among public and private sectors.

Forum Objectives

The forum, titled “Knowing Your Food Law” aims to:

- Increase awareness of Lao PDR Food Law and its implementation (including food import and export requirements) among agri-food private sectors;
- Strengthen engagement between food safety officials and agri-food private sector; and
- Provide knowledge exchange avenue for public and private sectors in the agri-food supply chain

Target Participants

The forum is targeted at a maximum of 50 agri-food private sector senior level employees and food safety officials.

At the end of the forum, participants are expected to have better knowledge and access to information related to:

- Lao PDR food laws and regulations
- Food law compliance mechanisms
- Technical support for agri-food sector to facilitate compliance
- Lao PDR food safety requirements and compliance procedures for agri-trade

Lao PDR PROSAFE Agri-Food Forum

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Time	Agenda	Note / Description
0830-0845	Registration	
0845-0915	Opening Remarks DG FDD Welcome Remarks Ms. Maria Theresa S. Medialdia, Director - Agricultural Development and Commercialization Department, Mekong Institute	
0915-0930	Group Photo	
0930-1000	Keynote Address: Building Momentum and Leadership in Lao PDR Agri-food Value Chain	Mr. Suriyan Vichitlekarn Executive Director Mekong Institute
1000-1030	Lao PDR Food Law 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic requirements and implementation - Enforcement and inspection - Regional involvement and updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Drug Department (FDD)
1030-1045	Coffee/Tea Break and Networking	
1045-1115	Lao PDR food crop production and food safety laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Agriculture
1115-1145	Lao PDR Quality Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National quality infrastructure and agri-food trade support - Regional involvement and updates in ACCSQ (MRAs, equivalence etc) and packaged food - Role of the new National Food Safety and Quality Centre and its services to agri-food sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Standards and Metrology (DoSM)
1145-1200	Question and Answers	Moderated by Mekong Institute
1200-1300	Lunch	
1300-1330	Lao PDR Consumer Protection and Food Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Internal Trade - MOIC
1330-1400	Lao PDR Agri-food Commercialization Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Agri-food Producer Representative (TBD)
1400-1515	Bringing down barriers for improved food safety compliance in Lao PDR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is working well? • What needs to be improved? • How can we improve it or them? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department of Agriculture 2. Food and Drug Department 3. Department of Internal Trade-MOIC 4. Lao Farmer Network 5. Agri-food Private Sector Representative
1515-1530	Coffee/Tea Break Networking	
1530-1600	Summary and Key Take-aways	