



STATUS OF FOOD SAFETY IN WEST AFRICA AND FOOD TRADE

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OUTLINE

Introduction

Current Status of Food Safety in West Africa

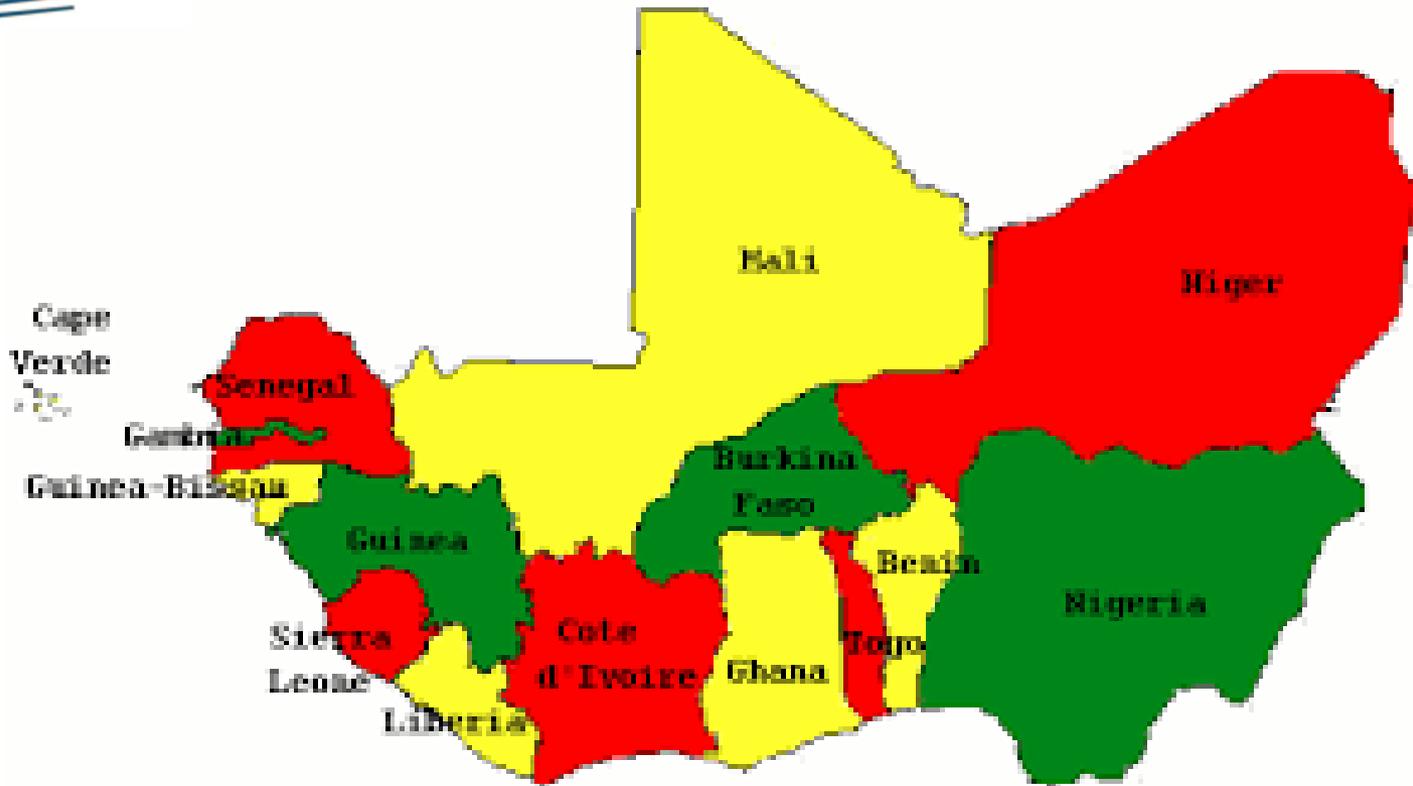
On farm Operations

Processed foods

Fork

Food Safety and Food Trade in West Africa

Conclusion



MAP OF WEST AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Many food manufacturers in West Africa don't really know if their products are safe.

Food companies (especially smaller ones) have no idea which food-safety procedures need to be in place because they have not received training in that area and don't know what a proactive approach towards hygiene and food safety might be.

Some struggle to find products to clean and sanitise properly and this increases the risk of food contamination.

Add to this the lack of proper protective gear, inconsistent water quality for factory cleaning and sanitising and no guarantee of clean equipment, contact surfaces or hands and you have a number of areas of potential hazard.

Many African countries do not have a culture of customer complaints, so if there is an outbreak of food poisoning, people would not be made aware of that and so the source would be difficult to trace.

There are certainly such outbreaks in Africa but, unlike the rest of the world, one seldom hears about them.



CURRENT STATUS OF FOOD SAFETY IN NIGERIA

On farm operation and management

Foundation to produce safe products free of antibiotics, growth hormone, and fecal contaminants



Poor Agricultural Practices



contaminated maize with mould

Poor handling



Poor Hygienic Practices



Processed Goat

Fruits for sale





Processed foods

Suya



- Popular local delicacy
- Grilled beef and chicken coated by mixture of spices
- But the problems are:
 - Roadside vending
 - Open environment
 - And...





Street Vended foods





Fufu

The roofless, wall-less “factory” ...





Cassava, inherently loaded with high cyanide content, is delivered by farmers throughout the region to the location



Skins are peeled off by skillful workers at different ages (the girl in the pic is less than 2 years old)



Peeled cassava soaked in wooden barrels with plastic lining, a much improved operation





The water used to soak cassava comes from the same stream the waste water is discharged to



The upstream cattle abattoir (too graphic to show) also discharges its blood etc. into the exact same stream





Fork





FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD TRADE IN AFRICA

Just as West African countries are beginning to overcome some major hurdles in their quest to expand trade with industrial countries, another is rearing its head.

As a result of agreements negotiated at the World Trade Organization (WTO), traditional trade protection measures such as tariffs and quotas are falling away.

But to some extent they are being replaced by domestic technical regulations that permit countries to bar products from entering their markets if the products do not meet certain standards.

These obstacles include measures ostensibly aimed at protecting citizens from everyday food hazards, known in WTO language as sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS).

In extreme cases, countries are denied access to export markets: their exports may be banned from other countries because they fail to meet food safety standards, or the costs of compliance may be prohibitively high.

Even when exporters can comply with food safety requirements, their competitiveness relative to other exporters may be diminished because of their relatively high compliance costs

There are many examples of SPS measures being used to restrict African goods from overseas markets.

For several years in the late 1990s, for example, European countries banned fish from Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda due to concerns about these countries' sanitary standards and control systems

Uganda lost \$36.9 mn in potential earnings during the ban.

In Tanzania, where fish and fish products accounted for 10 per cent of annual exports, fishermen dependent on EU sales lost 80 per cent of their income, the World Bank reports.

Some of the requirements are legitimate with respect to food safety

Many West African countries find it difficult to meet the standards because of technical and resource-capacity constraints. Studies in Kenya show that to comply with high EU standards, farmers would have to spend 10 times more than they currently do.

Conclusion/ Recommendation

The importance of food safety issues on livelihoods and consumer health needs to be higher on the political agenda of countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

There is a need to identify food safety hazards of main concern to consumer health and livelihoods and where they occur on the food chain.

Appropriate food safety legislation needs to be introduced in consultation with all players in the food production, processing, processing and catering sectors.

There is a need for national food safety control systems which can be supported by appropriate food laws, enforcement and support (for example accredited laboratories).

Consumers, food handlers and processors need to be educated in food safety issues. Food inspectors need appropriate training so that they can contribute effectively.

