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Strategies for Improved Food Safety in Southeast Asia

Workshop, 5-6 November 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand

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List of abbreviations

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|----------|---|--------|---|
| ACFS | National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, Thailand | GAP | Good Agricultural Practice, Good Aquaculture Practice |
| ACCSQ | ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality | GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| ADCC | Aquaculture Development and Certification Center, Thailand | GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| AEC | ASEAN Economic Community | GIZ IS | GIZ International Services |
| AFSIP | ASEAN Food Safety Improvement Plan | GTZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (until 12/2010; now: GIZ) |
| AFSN | ASEAN Food Safety Network | HACCP | Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations | IAAC | InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation |
| ATFC | ASEAN Task Force on Codex | IAF | International Accreditation Forum |
| AQSIQ | General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, China | IEC | International Electrotechnical Commission |
| BfR | Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany | IPPC | International Plant Protection Convention |
| BIPM | Bureau International de Poids et Mesures | IQCS | International Quality Control System |
| BMELV | Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Germany | IRMA | International Raw Material Assurance |
| BMZ | Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany | ISO | International Organization for Standardization |
| BVL | Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety, Germany | MARD | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam |
| CB | Certification Body | MOA | Ministry of Agriculture, China |
| CBIA | China Beverage Industry Association | MOH | Ministry of Health, Vietnam and China |
| CFSA | China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA) | MOIT | Ministry of Industry and Trade, Vietnam |
| CFSAN | Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, USA | MRL | Maximum Residue Level |
| CFNA | China Chamber of Commerce | MQMP | Material Quality Management Process |
| CI | Consumers International | NCCC | National Consumer Complaint Centre, Malaysia |
| CTCF | Jinan Fruit Research Institute | NECRA | National Expert Committee for Food Safety Risk Assessment, China |
| DG SANCO | Directorate-General for Health and Consumers | NTWG | GlobalG.A.P. National Technical Working Group |
| EA | European Co-Operation for Accreditation | OIE | World Organization for Animal Health |
| EC | European Commission | OSMEP | Office of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion, Thailand |
| EFSA | European Food Safety Authority | PAC | Pacific Accreditation Cooperation |
| EHEC | Enterohaemorrhagic Escherichia coli | PCB | Polychlorinated Biphenyls |
| EU | European Union | PTB | Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (National Metrology Institute), Germany |
| FAMA | Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority, Malaysia | RASFF | Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | RCO | Recycled cooking oil |
| FRAPP | Fruit Risk Assessment Programme for Pesticides | SAIC | State Administration for Industry and Commerce, China |
| FOMCA | Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations | SFDA | State Food and Drug Administration, China |
| FVO | Food and Veterinary Office of the European Union | SGF | Sure Global Fair |
| | | SPS | Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures |
| | | TBT | Technical Barriers to Trade |
| | | VCS | Voluntary Control System |
| | | WTO | World Trade Organization |
| | | YLKI | Indonesian Consumer Organisation |

Greeting Notes

The globalisation and liberalisation of food trade has raised public concern about the issues of food safety since a failure on a food safety system in one country can cause a serious risk to the economy and public health, not only at a national level but also at a global level. Hence, Asian countries – global exporters of food and agricultural products – truly need to recognise the importance and emerging challenges of food safety.

While we are moving closer to the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, an integrated approach and a common strategy towards an effective and efficient food safety system needs to be formulated to ensure the availability of safe food and health protection for consumers as well in ASEAN member states and as in the global market.

The National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) plays a prominent role in monitoring, controlling and enforcing food safety in Thailand. As it is widely recognised that food safety is “a shared responsibility” among various stakeholders, the agency has been working in cooperation with other domestic and international actors involved – from consumers, private and public stakeholders to international organisations – on promoting food safety standards within Thailand and beyond. We have exerted every effort to achieve our primary goals, which aim to enhance the safety and quality of Thailand’s agricultural and food products and also to build our consumers’ trust and confidence in our products.

The workshop on “Strategies for Improved Food Safety in Southeast Asia” held from 5 to 6 November 2012 in Bangkok, provided a platform of fruitful and constructive discussions on a wide range of food safety issues. Participants learnt a valuable lesson from both positive and negative experiences from our distinguished guest speakers. Furthermore, through this they mutually explored ways and means of improving food safety system in the ASEAN region.

ACFS would like to thank our co-organisers the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Consumers International Office for Asia Pacific and the Middle East for the smooth collaboration in conducting this workshop. The success of this workshop would not have been possible without their support. We are looking forward to the strengthening of our capacities in the area of food safety.

Dr Sakchai Sriboonsue

Secretary General

National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), Thailand



Mr Sakchai Sriboonsue

Food safety is a vital element for consumer protection and also an essential public health function. “Safe food”, being the prime need of every human being, is expected by consumers, regardless of their socio-economic background. Consumers expect that food that is placed on shelves or offered in the markets is free of hazards that could cause injury to their health. Thus, they do expect that due diligence and safety assurance have, to some extent, been carried out necessarily, not only by the producers but also by the government, importers, exporters, distributors and retailers along the food market chains. Nonetheless, consumers, themselves, are also responsible for ensuring food safety by understanding the aspects of food and its handling while purchasing or preparing at home. For consumers, trustworthy markings, certifications or accreditations are the first clues that enable them to make wise and healthy choices. Consumers increasingly want to have helpful information about food to minimise risks of foodborne illnesses.

With the heightened industrialisation of food production, advancement in food and agriculture technologies and the increase in food and agriculture trade worldwide, food safety has become a prime concern. In the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), a market that serves around 600 million consumers, this is no exception. Thus, various efforts in achieving harmonisation of food safety standards and practices are being aggressively pursued by all relevant stakeholders, including consumer organisations.

This Workshop has provided the platform for sharing best practices and efforts in ensuring food safety within the context of the global dimensions of food and agricul-

ture markets. With strong consideration for all relevant stakeholders with the shared goal of achieving sustainable and integrated food-safety systems for the reduction of health risk along the entire food chain, the Workshop showcases how various actors in food safety, from ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries, are playing their roles, through exchange of information and experiences. From governmental front-lines, to private sectors, expert groups for technical assistance, and consumer organisations in Southeast Asia, it is obvious that there is a need to advance food safety and there is much room for improvement. Learning from a more developed country such as Germany, where consumer confidence on food safety is respectfully acknowledged, the participants of the workshop were able to capture essential elements in food safety and consumer protection policy.

Consumers International thanks the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) of the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, for successfully enabling this Workshop to take place at the right time for the people of Southeast Asia. The mutual understandings have also enabled consumer organisations to share their initiatives in raising awareness and participating in ensuring food safety.

Dato’ Indrani Thuraisingham

Head

Consumers International

Office for Asia Pacific and the Middle East



1. Foreword

As a result of increasingly international patterns of consumption and trade, food safety has become a global issue. Consumers and market players around the world react quickly to negative media reports on food safety, so a high level of food safety improves a country's competitiveness in international trade. Failing to comply with food safety standards triggers responses from trading partners ranging from additional controls to strong trade barriers. Consumers have the right to expect that the food they consume is safe, whether it is locally produced or imported. It is thus in the interest of all players to reinforce the system of food safety control already in the country of origin. Any country in the world can be hit by food safety problems. From Germany to the United States, or from China to Thailand, no country is immune to the risk. In fact, since food processed in one part of the world is likely to be linked to production in another, countries must cooperate in order to boost global food safety. Measures in single countries can only address parts of the problems. Policymakers increasingly see the need to look across borders and to establish harmonised food safety systems at regional and global level.

Asian countries have been gaining importance as global exporters of food. Considering that the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will be established by 2015, the development of a sound regional food safety management system is essential to ensure sustainable export growth as well as consumer protection. In preparation of the AEC onset, raising awareness among stakeholders about the importance of collaborative efforts is important.

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH conducted a workshop on "Strategies for Improved Food Safety in Southeast Asia" from 5 to 6 November 2012 in Bangkok. Representatives from government authorities, the private sector, civil society and academia met to discuss the challenges for upgrading the national food safety management systems to the new realities in regional and global markets. A number of speakers presented case studies on successful approaches to improve food safety in the region and beyond. The workshop thus established a platform for the discussion of collaborative efforts among stakeholders. National governments are primarily responsible to lay the ground for regional integration of markets and consumer protection policies. However, other stakeholders have to join the efforts as food safety is a shared responsibility among many players, both in the region and beyond.

We would like to thank our co-organisers, the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) of the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Consumers International Office for Asia Pacific and the Middle East for the successful cooperation and we look forward to future collaborative efforts to establish levels of food safety in accordance with the established needs.

Dr Gerd Fleischer

Sector Project Agricultural Trade and
Private Sector Cooperation in Rural Areas
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
(GIZ) GmbH



Dr Gerd Fleischer

2. Welcome Speeches

The workshop was opened by high-ranking representatives from each of the organising institutions who gave the participants their assessments of the current state and future development of regional and global food safety: The welcome addresses held by *Mr Sakchai Sriboonsue* on behalf of the Thai government, *Dr Ingo Winkelmann* on behalf of the German government, *Ms Indrani Thuraisingham* on behalf of the world federation of consumer organisations, Consumers International, and *Mr David Oberhuber* on behalf of GIZ Thailand set the tone for focused, in-depth discussions about food safety issues in Southeast Asia and beyond.

A common theme for the opening session was the global impact of national food safety problems: All four introductory speakers emphasised that in today's age of globalisation, failures in the food safety control system of one country simultaneously impact many regional and international trading partners. Therefore, food safety has to be viewed from an increasingly regional, if not global, perspective. At the heart of this new interconnectedness are not only production networks spanning various countries and world regions, but also changes in food handling and dietary preferences following the rapid urbanisation of developing countries. On the whole, the global nature of food production, processing and marketing has given rise to a number of new, complex challenges that require innovative and integrated responses from stakeholders worldwide.

However, another corollary of the increasingly globalised food system has been an expansion of the range of actors needed to establish workable food safety management systems – regionally and globally. “Food safety is a shared responsibility from farm to fork, i.e. from producers to consumers”, Ms Indrani explained and was echoed by her fellow speakers: Both Dr Winkelmann and Mr Oberhuber underlined the need for more cooperation between all stakeholders in the food system, while Mr Sakchai stressed the necessity of closer collaboration in view of the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015: An integrated approach to food safety management and a common strategy framework for all ASEAN member countries needs to be formulated in order to enhance the competitiveness of the region's food exports as well as the credibility of its control systems.

This assessment is further substantiated by data from the World Trade Organization (WTO) illustrating the enormous significance of food trade for and within the region: According to the International Trade Statistics 2012, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia have all increased their agricultural exports by close to 40% (compared to the previous year), whereby the export value of food products alone amounted to USD 31.5 billion for Thailand, 32.9 billion for Indonesia and 31.7 billion for Malaysia. These statistics illustrate that failure to comply with internationally recognised food safety requirements not only damages a country's reputation and potentially impacts consumers worldwide; it also has serious economic consequences for all the stakeholders in the exporting countries.



Mr David Oberhuber



Ms Indrani Thuraisingham



Mr Sakchai Sriboonsue & Dr Ingo Winkelmann

Another point of agreement between the speakers was the necessity to improve information sharing among all stakeholders in the food system. The globalised dimension of food safety refers not only to the possible spread of public health risks, but also to the greater information demands from consumers and relevant authorities: Public institutions are now presented with the challenge to, firstly, better inform national and international consumers about their efforts to prevent or – in the event of an incident – contain food safety risks. Secondly, they are faced with the task of effectively communicating among each other to ensure alignment and complementarity of precautionary measures and crisis response strategies.

The speakers all hoped for fruitful discussions on different approaches for improving food safety control mechanisms in Southeast Asia, and for the presentation of best practices and successful case studies. They emphasised that the emergence of guidelines for adapting effective systems from other world regions to the Southeast Asian context would be embraced by all.



GIZ

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As a federal enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. GIZ supports its partners at local, regional, national and international level in designing strategies and meeting their policy goals. GIZ's fields of operation include economic development, agriculture and rural development, health, education, environmental protection and resource conservation.

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ's thematic sector project 'Agricultural Trade and Private Sector Cooperation in Rural Areas' focuses on strengthening trade related capacities to support the integration of its partner countries into regional and international markets. GIZ facilitates capacity development related to agricultural trade strategies and policies and promotes public-private partnerships based on a value-chain approach.

Against the background of the worldwide integration of food supply chains and rising consumer demand for high quality and safe food, the assurance of food safety and food quality has become a major concern. Hence the project aims to support the improvement of quality and safety of agricultural products designed to strengthen the competitiveness of our partners as well as local, regional and international consumer protection.

3. Keynote Address

Prof. Dr Ulrich Noehle gave a wide-ranging, yet succinct introduction into the workshop's core topic of how to improve regional and international food safety: Guided by the question of how to improve international food trade, Mr Noehle elaborated on the most critical food safety risks along the global supply chain and highlighted central control mechanisms to safeguard the quality and safety of food products on a regional as well as global level.

The development of common food safety standards is a vital precondition for improving regional and international trade flows. Thus, the implementation of a framework for monitoring and managing these standards across a range of actors and national contexts is a basic necessity – and at the same time a supreme difficulty.

The fact that a common food safety system is still a very distant prospect is emphasised by recent findings from the European Commission: According to its Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) 2011 Annual Report, the number of original as well as follow-up alerts and border rejections has risen steadily over the past years. Even though this partly expresses the respective trade intensity, of the world regions, Asia has by far the highest number of notifications (see RASFF Report 2011, p. 43).

There are a number of weaknesses in exporting countries' food sectors that can affect international food safety and consequently, international trading in (safe) food products:

- Firstly, inadequate batch tracking systems often make it impossible to follow the producing firm's own production all the way down (and up!) the supply chain and thus to address critical issues at the source.
- Secondly, control points are often seen as simple inspection points, not as necessary intervention spots designed to manage and control production and marketing processes.
- Thirdly, a deficient audit management that does not delve deeply enough into faulty production processes and/or that lacks appropriate penalty mechanisms prohibits the exposure and, consequently, correction of food safety risks in the production chain. Then, sourcing raw materials based solely on the supplier's price without demonstration of his ability and willingness to adhere to quality standards can prove hazardous in the long run, namely, when flawed components from the supplier contaminate the procurer's own production. Furthermore, insufficient specifications with regard to the desired qualities in raw materials, for example concerning PCB, dioxins, heavy metals etc., can lead to substandard safety levels in the final delivery. Additionally, a short retention period for samples that does not reflect the shelf life of the marketed products often makes it impossible to localise and analyse risks once they have been identified. Consequently, the danger of continuing and reproducing a faulty production process remains.



Prof. Dr Ulrich Noehle

- Finally, the lack of a world-wide recall system and the national limitation of tracking and tracing procedures oftentimes lead to improper product recalls. Thus, unsafe food products find their way into regional and global distribution. In combination with poor communication between suppliers, customers, government authorities and the media, an error in a single production line can ultimately become a full-fledged food safety crisis that negatively affects all concerned parties.

Given that an estimated 90% of problems in international food trade stem from this set of faulty practices, the legislation in the European Union (EU) provides a useful reference point for a successful food safety management system. With the enactment of – among others – the General Principles for Food Safety in 2002 (Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002), the Government Inspection Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 and the RASFF, as well as the establishment of the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), the EU has created a legal and institutional framework capable of protecting EU citizens from major food-related health risks.

However, as recurring food safety crises within the EU have demonstrated, even the European Union's elaborate food safety scheme is not perfect. It exhibits, in fact, much room for improvement. This observation leads back to the central questions framing this workshop: Where do Asian countries stand with regard to food safety? Where do they see room for improvement? How can the cooperation between ASEAN countries and the EU in the field of food safety be shaped in the future? What can both sides learn from each other?

In raising these questions, the stage was set for multi-layered discussions, detailed examinations of best practices and profound searches for sustainable solutions, all in view of the workshop's key theme: Developing "Strategies for Improved Food Safety in Southeast Asia".



4. Official Control Systems in Southeast Asia

The workshop's first session centred on official food control systems in Southeast Asia. It was opened with a presentation by Mr Yuthana Norapoompipat of the Thai National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS). Following the descriptions of the ACFS approach to maintaining food safety in Thailand, Mr Ishak Abbas of the Malaysian Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) put forward his organisation's handling of the grading, packaging and labelling of agricultural products in the Malaysian food sector. A third example of a Southeast Asian country's food safety management was provided by Mr Seah Seng Choon of the Consumers Association of Singapore: In his talk, he outlined how Singaporean authorities have effected a systematic transformation of the country's street food industry from a sector marked by unhygienic conditions posing a risk to consumers' health to a safe and modern industry branch complying with state-of-the-art safety standards.

4.1. Yuthana Norapoompipat: Accreditation and Certification in Thailand

Mr Yuthana Norapoompipat focused on the legal structure and practical implementation of the certification and accreditation of agricultural products in Thailand. The main actor in this domain is the ACFS: Besides being the main standard setting, accreditation and regulatory body for agricultural products (directed at both domestic and international markets) in Thailand, the Bureau also acts as a national focal point in international trade negotiations, for instance with regard to trade disputes or measures to improve market access.

The main challenge is consistently meeting set standards and thus making consumers trust the quality and safety of food products. This, however, is not a purely national endeavour – meeting internationally recognised standards is an equally important factor in building consumers' trust.

Consequently, ACFS ensures that the standards it issues are in line with international conventions such as the Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) or the requirements of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE): Adopting and adapting these internationally recognised standards then fosters consumers' trust in the safety and quality of national food production.



Mr Yuthana Norapoompipat



The main challenge for exporting nations in Southeast Asia now consists in convincing consumers worldwide that their food is capable of consistently meeting expected standards. In achieving this goal, the certification of food products plays a pivotal role: Only a so-called “chain of verification” of goods certified by an accredited certification body will ultimately instil the necessary consumer confidence and ensure international recognition and acceptance for food produced in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Accredited means verified by an internationally recognised third party such as the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), and operating with impartiality, transparency and competency, i.e. in line with the International Organization for Standardization’s (ISO) General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies (ISO/IEC 17011:2004).

There is an international accreditation system or global “chain of verification” instituted to ensure worldwide food safety: Based on international standards set by the IAF, regional bodies such as the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) or the InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) oversee national accreditation organisations such as the ACFS. These, in turn, verify governmental as well as

non-governmental certification bodies that are ultimately tasked with assessing individual production and processing sites.

The ACFS has expressed its support for this global verification structure by being a member of both PAC and the IAF. Thus, countries looking for guidance in establishing their own standardisation schemes should follow the ACFS’s model of integrating oneself in the global verification and accreditation architecture.

4.2. Dr Waraporn Prompoj: The Official Control System in Thailand: The Example of the Fishery Sector

Exploring another facet of the official food control system in Thailand, *Dr Waraporn Prompoj* of the Thai Department of Fisheries presented her organisation’s strategy for safeguarding the quality of Thai fishery products. With an export volume of almost 2 million metric tons per year valued at USD 7.3 billion, the Thai seafood industry serves as a prime example of the vital importance of successful quality controls for one of the leading commercial sectors in an export-oriented economy.



ACFS

For further information please visit www.acfs.go.th/eng

The National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) is a Thai governmental agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and works in partnership with Government Departments, local authorities as well as national, regional and international organisations.

Food trade plays an important role in world food security and at the same time food safety has become a major trade requirement. Against this background ACFS makes every effort to ensure the safety of food and agricultural commodities produced in Thailand so that both local and international consumers can always trust and enjoy them. The core functions of ACFS are:

- Standard setting for agricultural systems, commodity and food items and food safety;
- Accreditation of certification bodies;
- Dialogue and negotiation with international trade partners on disputes concerning SPS/TBT issues;
- Food standard control;
- Promotion of standard compliance for farms and food establishments.

In addition, the Bureau is the national information centre for agricultural and food standards and also acts as the focal point for WTO-SPS/TBT, Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention.

The Thai Quality Shrimp Program best illustrates the national “from farm to table” approach to food control. Cornerstones of the shrimp programme are the Code of Conduct (CoC) and the Good Aquaculture Practice (GAP) enacted in 1997 and 2000. These codify not only standards referring to food safety and quality, but also to environmental protection, social responsibility, animal health and welfare, data collection and traceability. Since then, the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards has further developed these standards into GAP-7401 (ratified in 2009). This step was driven by the desire to establish equivalence and conformity between the Thai certification scheme and the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) Aquaculture Certification Guidelines which frame the implementation of a credible aquaculture certification scheme on the global level.

With regard to food safety, GAP-7401 – and the FAO guidelines, respectively – specify rules for establishing farm sites, farm management, the use of veterinary drugs, chemicals, hazardous substances and probiotics, farm sanitation, harvest and post-harvest handlings prior to distribution as well as record keeping procedures.

Besides defining criteria concerning core parameters for food quality, the FAO guidelines also include institutional and procedural requirements which are emulated by the Thai national standard: GAP-7401’s standard setting procedure complies with international transparency requirements. Its accreditation system is based on the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)/International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) provisions for conformity assessments (ISO/IEC 17011) and the Aquaculture Development and Certification Center (ADCC) – the authority responsible for the certification of fishery

products – has adopted corresponding ISO/IEC rules as the basis for its certification processes (ISO/IEC Guide 65).

Validating these efforts to meet international requirements are recent benchmarking results which demonstrated that the Thai Shrimp Certification Scheme exhibited compliance with the FAO guidelines on all three levels – standard setting, accreditation and certification – thus proving the rigor and reliability of Thailand’s national quality control system in the shrimp sector.

Furthermore, there are a number of supporting quality assurance measures directed at the fish industry as a whole: A drug residue control programme, for instance, has been implemented to ensure that fishery products do not contain harmful or toxic substances, to prevent environmental pollution and to maintain the water quality of the production areas. The programme further prescribes regular inspections of farms and hatcheries, and establishes controls on aquatic feeds (in line with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) rules) and on incoming raw materials. Moreover, a comprehensive traceability system along the entire supply chain – from feed to hatchery, farm, distributor and processor – has been instituted.

Finally, a long-standing, successful cooperation between the Thai Department of Fisheries and GIZ (formerly GTZ) has been a major factor in mastering the technical challenges of bringing the Thai shrimp sector up to par on international quality and safety requirements (as set forth by the FAO guidelines).



Dr Waraporn Prompoj

4.3. Ishak Abbas: The Implementation of Grading, Packaging & Labelling (GPL) Regulations to Improve the Development of the Agricultural Industry

Mr Ishak Abbas illuminated the background and origins of the grading, packaging and labelling (GPL) regulations in Malaysia: Starting as a programme aimed at enhancing the quality of agricultural produce, the rules now ensure that all products are graded, packaged and labelled prior to being marketed (domestically as well as for export purposes) and as such, have become accepted worldwide. Furthermore, the GPL regulations comply with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement, which requires the use of transparent, internationally compatible and trade-friendly standards.

Constitutive for national GPL regulations is the Malaysian Standards Act of 1996 (Act 549). The Act governs the Malaysian Department of Standards in performing its duties and functions and gives the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) the authority to enforce quality standards through GPL regulations. The GPL regulations are gazetted since August 2008 and will enter into force as of January 2013 for agricultural products from fruits and vegetables to beans, coconuts and grains. The target groups are importers, exporters, wholesalers and retailers alike.

The fact that the introduction and maintenance of such regulations has addressed a crucial topic in the Malaysian food sector is further highlighted by recent consumer awareness surveys: Therein, 96.4% of the respondents expressed concern about pesticide residues on fruits and

vegetables and 83.3% disclosed that they prefer high quality grades of fruits and vegetables, whereas only 12.5% of the respondents are indifferent about this matter. Against the background of these findings, the primary goal of FAMA's GPL regulations consists in facilitating traceability in the food chain. Recording the names and addresses of food producers, importers and exporters makes it easier to detect the source of standard violations and related health risks in the supply chain. Additional goals of the regulations are the adoption and promotion of international food standards, the backing of fair trading practices, the efficient dissemination of information between market players, the compliance with relevant WTO agreements, and the reduction of international trade restrictions.

GPL regulations also guide the practical aspects of marketing agricultural produce: As for grading, no importer/exporter is allowed to import/export any agricultural produce before an inspection by FAMA has established conformity with that product class' individual specifications. Regarding packaging, practical requirements include the provision to use materials that prevent damage to the shape and quality of the produce. Concerning labelling, lastly, it is imperative that labels of imported products are displayed in Malaysia's national language Bahasa Malaysia.

4.4. Seah Seng Choon: Transformation of the Street Food Industry in Singapore

Mr Seah Seng Choon began his presentation with a look at the problems plaguing Singapore's street food in the 1950s: Stemming from the fact that there were no regula-



Mr Ishak Abbas



tions in place, it was common to see things such as refuse dumps and dustbins close to the food booths, the use of the same water for cleaning throughout the day, or a general lack of water for properly cleaning utensils. These poor sanitary conditions caused serious hygiene deficiencies and contributed to the spread of diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Since it was easy to enter the sector without special skills or education, and due to growing consumer demand following the onset of industrialisation in Singapore, the industry thrived – and with it, considerable health risks for consumers.

To tackle this problem, authorities first required all street food vendors (hawkers) to register and obtain a license, thus holding their numbers relatively constant. By 1974, special training squads to educate hawkers were formed, and the capacity of public health inspectors was strengthened. The parliament set a timeline for the establishment of hawker centres, where vendors are able to sell their food in well-equipped, hygienic surroundings and in accordance with specific food safety regulations. The key issue of getting hawkers to buy-in to this strategy was achieved by low stall rents (close to the amount charged for street stalls), health education programmes for hawkers concerning the importance and benefits of this new way of food marketing and, mostly, the provision of the necessary logistics at the hawker centres: a clean supply of water and a proper sanitary system, a piped gas system for cooking, good lighting and proper tables as well as a cleaning schedule for keeping premises clean. These measures ultimately ensured the full cooperation from the hawkers themselves.

After a major upgrading in 2001, for which 420 million Singapore Dollars were assigned to build new centres that better incorporate aesthetic and comfort-related aspects, the hawker centres are now an integral part of Singaporean daily life. With continuous health inspections by the government, an established accreditation scheme for ranking the compliance with hygiene requirements (and thus constantly pushing vendors to improve their food handling), as well as with programmes to encourage healthy consumption, e.g. through the use of more vegetables and less salt, the health-promoting impetus of establishing hawker centres has finally come full circle.

Nevertheless, the government of Singapore continues its efforts: In October 2012, it announced the construction of ten new hawker centres over the next three years, which will be run exclusively by non-profit organisations such as cooperatives. This forecast concluded an insightful and informative example of how a strong political will and deliberate, strategic government planning can succeed in overhauling an entire industry and thereby eliminating the country's major food safety risks and dangers.

4.5. Dr Duong Ngoc Thi: The Food Safety Control System for Fruit and Vegetable in Vietnam

Dr Duong Ngoc Thi of the Vietnamese Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development shared his insight into the structures and practices of food safety control in Vietnam's fruits and vegetables sector. This sector is of vital importance to the Vietnamese economy: In 2011, the value of exported fruit and vegeta-



Mr Seah Seng Choon



Dr Duong Ngoc Thi

bles from Vietnam amounted to 450 million Singapore Dollars, while the import value for the same product group was close to USD 300 million.

The enormous trade volume, however, also presents Vietnamese authorities with significant challenges. At present, the mandate to control and ensure the safety of locally produced fruits and vegetables is divided between several related governmental bodies: The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is responsible for controlling imported fruit and vegetable as well as all stages of the domestic production process; the safety of ready-to-serve meals and products is monitored by the Ministry of Health (MOH), and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT), in cooperation with MARD, is in charge of inspecting fruit and vegetable sold on the local market.

There is an extensive legal framework for food safety controls in Vietnam, including consumer protection laws, governmental policies supporting safe fruit and vegetable production, processing and consumption, the promotion of good agricultural practices (VietGAP), and institutionalised tests and inspections. Yet, this sector-based division of responsibilities hinders the effective implementation of legal provisions, especially at the grassroots level.

Further contributing to the practical deficiencies of food safety control in Vietnam are a lack of financial, physical and human resources to conduct inspections at the local level, thus preventing a comprehensive and synchronous control system. Also, fruit and vegetable production by small farmers and households is widely dispersed and therefore difficult to manage. Further, the cooperation be-

tween Vietnamese authorities and neighbouring countries – especially China – has improved gradually but it is difficult to measure progress for consumers due to the many remaining challenges to overcome.

Acknowledging the considerable challenges to maintaining food safety in the Vietnamese fruit and vegetable sector, Dr Thi offered several suggestions for improvement. With respect to production, he recommended training courses for producers, and the use of state-produced inputs as well as quality controls and certificates for agricultural products. Regarding packaging and processing, he advocated the registration of products and production technologies as well as the approval, certification and labelling of goods intended for marketing. With regard to consumer protection, he demanded a better warning system for unsafe food and called for an increased collaboration between government agencies and civil society stakeholders.

As far as Vietnamese import and export practices were concerned, Dr Thi suggested closer cooperation with China in setting border policies and in developing a common warning system for hazardous food already placed on the market. Moreover, the cooperation and sharing of experiences with other foreign countries should be intensified and standards and regulations harmonised. To bring these changes into effect, however, increased government investments, improved technical facilities and more professional training for staff working on food safety issues is necessary. National policies to support cooperatives and farmers' groups aimed at facilitating the management and monitoring of production would reinforce this process.



5. Sharing Experiences of Food Safety Systems in other World Regions

The second session of the workshop broadened the regional perspective on food safety approaches by presenting control systems in other world regions: First, Mr Volker Stoeppler of the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection described the legal and institutional framework safeguarding the quality and safety of food products in Germany. Then, Dr Georg Schreiber of the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety explained how national and supranational control mechanisms interlock to guarantee food safety at the European level. Finally, Mr Yu Yue of the Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau of Zhe Jiang Province illustrated the structure and functioning of China's system for ensuring that imported and exported goods comply with international safety requirements.

5.1. Volker Stoeppler: The Food Safety Management System in Germany and the EU: Legal and Institutional Pillars

Mr Volker Stoeppler outlined the legal and institutional pillars of Germany's food safety system and provided a brief introduction into the corresponding governance structures at the European Union (EU) level.

A distinctive feature of German federalism is the state's sub-division into 16 federal states, which have considerable legislative and executive powers that also extend to matters regarding food safety, animal and plant health and animal welfare. In practice, the federal states are responsible for quality and safety management along the entire food chain, e.g. through the regulation of animal feed, veterinary authorities, plant protection services and food surveillance, while

the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) assumes the task of coordinating, analysing and reporting on the resulting information. The BMELV is the only ministry dealing with food safety issues on the national level; whereas in many other countries, the responsibility for this topic is divided between different national level authorities.

There are several principles guiding the German food safety management system: First, a comprehensive "from field to fork"-approach based on EU (EC No. 178/2002) as well as international regulations (Codex Alimentarius). Furthermore, the precautionary principle, the principles of corporate responsibility and traceability, and the principle of transparent risk communication. These together set the foundation for Germany's continued success in protecting consumer health.



Mr Volker Stoeppler



These principles can be explained as follows: The precautionary principle requires taking prophylactic yet appropriate measures for minimising risks in cases of scientific uncertainty. The principle of corporate responsibility underlines the complementarity between official controls and companies' self-monitoring systems. The principle of traceability aims at the rapid identification of the source of problems through reliable documentation along the production chain. Finally, the principle of transparent risk communication requires both good networking between relevant authorities and the provision of adequate public information via media outlets.

A further defining characteristic of Germany's food safety system also found on the European level is the separation between risk assessment and risk management. Risk assessment, which is supposed to be scientifically based and independent, is carried out by the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) on the national, and by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the European level. Meanwhile, risk management is the responsibility of government agencies – the BMELV and the BVL (Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety) in Germany, and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) as well as the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the EU.

Together, these bodies constitute a comprehensive regional food inspection network, with private sector quality assurance systems at the base, controls by sub-national and national authorities in the middle and the monitoring of member states by the European Union at the top.

However, despite the overall success of this organisational structure in the past, the system has not been infallible: The EHEC (Enterohaemorrhagic Escherichia coli) outbreak in Germany in 2011 clearly highlighted the massive challenge of managing complex, unpredictable situations in the face of widespread public fear and uncertainty when there is little time and scope for devising response strategies.

Lessons learned from this crisis, consequently, include the need for public health and food control authorities to optimise their cooperation and accelerate informational exchange; the necessity to direct more resources to microbiological research and strengthen EU-wide testing capacities and, ultimately, the imperative to update and improve traceability systems and thereby enhance the capability of precisely determining the flow and delivery channels of potentially hazardous goods.

5.2. Dr Georg Schreiber: Risk-based Food Surveillance and Transparency Measures to Gain Public Trust in Germany

Building upon the preceding overview of the German food safety control system and its embedment in EU structures, *Dr Georg Schreiber* of the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) set about explaining the German food surveillance system in detail.



Dr Georg Schreiber

Within the national (and, subsequently, European) system for food safety control, the BVL serves two main functions: First, it is the EU Commission's national contact point in case of a food safety alert via the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, RASFF. As such, it is in charge of relaying relevant information to the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV), the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the German Federal States. The latter are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of national and EU food law.

Consequently, the German Federal States are responsible for controlling establishments which produce, process, transport or trade food, as well as for analysing food samples at all stages of the food chain. The defining characteristic of the surveillance activity is its risk-based format. Pertaining to the surveillance of food establishments, this means that the risk of each establishment is determined according to specific criteria. These criteria comprise e.g. the type of establishment and whether it is susceptible to microbiological risks, contaminations or physical dangers; the past record of the establishment regarding its compliance with legislation; the traceability of products, and/or staff training; the reliability of its self-monitoring; and finally, the quality of its hygiene management. The risk class assigned on the basis of this risk assessment then dictates the frequency of future controls.

With reference to the surveillance of food products, the risk-based approach primarily takes account of the following factors: the risk to public health (and whether it can or cannot be reduced); the significance to food surveillance (considering, e.g. past non-compliance data, future developments regarding new technologies, globalisation, new products, and regional particularities); and, lastly, dietary habits (i.e. the amount and frequency of consumption).

The German government has also enacted additional measures aimed at building trust in local food products among German consumers. The principal element of these measures is free access to and transparency of all relevant information as implemented by the Consumer Information Law, that came into force in May 2008, and which was amended in September 2012 to allow consumers faster and less bureaucratic access to information.

Secondly, authorities and producers are required by law to immediately inform consumers about potentially harmful, misleading or unsavoury products. This is done via an online portal administrated and managed by the BVL (www.lebensmittelwarnung.de). If such food has reached the consumer, all relevant media channels are informed by email and the consumer may follow such warnings via Twitter. Food-related complaints by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also taken up by the BVL, prompting responses such as the increase of controls and the initiation of multi-stakeholder-dialogues. Lastly, consumers themselves are encouraged to complain about misleading products on a consumer organisation website established specifically for this purpose.



All in all, these measures have helped to transform a culture of professional confidentiality guided by the principles of official secrecy and restricted file access into a system based on the freedom of information, transparent administrative processes and open access to files for every citizen.

Dr Schreiber thus concluded a detailed and comprehensive look at the design of food safety surveillance in Germany and its integration with overarching European structures. The ensuing discussion centred on the question of whether this structural setup could serve as a role model for the Southeast Asian context. Dr Schreiber and Mr Stoepler strongly advocated the adaptation of Germany's/EU's policy of concentrating all food safety-related responsibilities in one ministry since the division of competences among differing authorities often proves problematic in practice.

A second recommendation derived from the German experience and in connection with the European model was the institutional separation between risk assessment and risk management. A scientifically-based and independent risk assessment, it was argued, provides the best foundation for effective prevention as well as for credible response strategies in the case of a food crisis. Thus, the establishment of one risk assessment institute across Asia following the example of the EU's European Food Safety Authority would be hugely beneficial for improving regional food safety. A point which remained controversial was whether a regional surveillance structure should only be instituted after rigorous food control structures have been implemented at the national level in Southeast Asian countries.

5.3. Yu Yue: The System for Import and Export Control in China

Mr Yu Yue outlined that in recent years, China – like many other countries – has attached increasing importance to food safety issues, including the import and export of food. The surveillance system for the safety of imported and exported food has been built up according to SPS regulations, international routines and the Food Safety Law of the People's Republic of China.

The Ministry of Health (MoH), under the State Council is responsible for the comprehensive coordination of the Chinese food safety supervision system, including risk assessment, risk surveillance, risk management, and risk communication. There are four pillars of the Chinese food safety management system. (1) Enterprises, as the key stakeholders of food safety, should run their business according to the laws, regulations and standards. They should further assure food safety, accept social supervision and assume social responsibility. (2) Food industry associations should enforce self-discipline, guide producers and traders to conduct their businesses according to the laws, raise awareness to promote the credibility of the industry, and disseminate food safety knowledge. (3) Government departments assume the function of surveillance. (4) Civil society, NGOs and media are encouraged to publicize food safety issues and monitor the public opinion on illegal food-related activities.



Mr Yu Yue



In order to assure government surveillance along the different segments of the food chain, tasks are divided along the whole supply chain from production, processing and distribution to consumption. Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA); the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ); the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC); and the State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) share the responsibility for food safety in China. The overall coordination of the food safety management system is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health (MoH).

On the basis of risk analysis and international routines, China has established a surveillance system for the safety of imported food which monitors imported products in three segments, i.e. entry permit, entry control and domestic supervision. Overseas exporters or agencies register with the Exit-Entry Inspection and Quarantine

departments before exporting food to China. Sanitary registration is the precondition for foreign food producing enterprises to export food to China. Food is allowed to be imported only when it is proven to be qualified after inspection and quarantine at the port. Importers need to keep a complete record on imports and sales.

According to the principle “prevention first + whole process monitoring”, an administrative system of export food quality and safety has been established for the whole process from farm (raw material production) to factory (processing), and finally to the frontier (pre-export sampling test). Exporters of food from China need to register with the national inspection and quarantine departments. In addition, planting farms and animal husbandry farms should file a record of Exit-Entry Inspection and at the Quarantine departments in case they provide products for food exporters in China.



6. Private Sector Control Systems

While the first and second session of the workshop dealt with official control systems, the following part focused on food safety strategies employed by the private sector. The session was opened by Ms Annette Miller, Research and Development Director of MARS Petcare China, who explained her company's integrated approach to food quality and safety management. Next, Ms Orawan Kaewprakaisangkul of the National Food Institute illustrated the evolution of ThaiGAP, a private standard for good agricultural practices developed by the Thai Board of Trade. Finally, Mr Venkat Prahlad of the internationally active auditing organisation Sure Global Fair (SGF) presented SGF's voluntary control system for the fruit juice industry as an example of successful industrial self-control.

6.1. Annette Miller: Effective Control Measures to Address Critical Issues and Challenges in your Supply Chain

Ms Annette Miller's presentation pursued two objectives: firstly, to present an example of a framework that can be used to manage the risks inherent in a raw material supply chain; secondly, to demonstrate the need to integrate a material quality management process (MQMP) into the overall food safety management of a product and its production process.

This prioritisation is necessitated by the substantial impact of raw materials on overall product quality and safety: According to a survey by the US Food and Drug Administration's Center For Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), 62% of food safety recalls in the United States between 1999 and 2003 were related to raw-material non-compliance. Given that these figures referred to an industrialised country context, corresponding numbers in developing nations are assumed to be higher.

MARS' strategic approach to quality management was influenced in particular by two US-specific recalls: the Peanut Corporation of America recall of 2008 – which caused 9 deaths and 700 illnesses across 46 states – and the Sunland Inc. of America peanut butter recall of 2012, which – having led to 38 illnesses in 20 states – revealed that the first crisis had not induced better industrial self-control measures to effectively protect consumers from unsafe food. Thus, for MARS, the answer to the key lessons learned from the crises were (1) the requirement to really know your suppliers, (2) to regularly audit those suppliers, (3) to also audit your auditors and (4) to test your finished products. These practices now frame the company's strategy for material quality management.

The guiding principles of this strategy are a risk-based approach, the reliance on forward controls, the verification of partners' compliance and control effectiveness, and the continuous improvement of suppliers and materials. Together, these principles form one integrated, holistic



Ms Annette Miller



approach to food safety management, which is complemented by HACCP-based provisions at the site receiving the material.

In practice, the quality management process implemented by MARS comprises the assessment of the hazards and risks inherent to the material as well as those specific to the supplier. The material risk category is determined by assessing the severity of potentially hazardous health effects as well as the likelihood of their occurrence. The supplier risk assessment, on the other hand, has to take into account factors such as the sourcing region of the raw material, and the supplier's method of operation as well as his own sourcing practices and partners. A further necessity in this context consists in considering the entire up-stream supply chain (i.e. the entire product pipeline) in order to establish a rigorous forward quality control system.

However, since even forward controls have their limitations – i.e. sampling errors, insufficient resources, the contextual nature of audit data – building a strong and trustful relationship with one's suppliers is the most sustainable safeguard and therefore an integral part of MARS' quality management strategy. The final component of this strategy then consists in verification measures both in the form of internal programmes as well as external expert audits assuring a continuous improvement of material and supplier quality.

An exemplary MQMP along these guidelines thus starts with the identification and assessment of the material risk, followed by the drafting of an adequate specification of material properties. After a comprehensive supplier risk assessment, the material can then be approved for development and the material specification be finalised. After

these precautions, the final stage consists of the practical supplier management, i.e. performance reviews, requests for improvement and verification measures.

Ultimately, such a process exemplifies the rationale behind MARS' approach to quality management: Since an effective control system is not only essential to protecting consumers but also to solidifying the brand and asserting its business interests, strengthening overall quality management tools and processes is considered an indispensable, future-oriented investment, not merely an unpopular expense factor.

6.2. Orawan Kaewprakaisangkul: ThaiGAP – The Voluntary Private Standard for Safe and Sustainable Thai Agriculture

Ms Orawan Kaewprakaisangkul presented ThaiGAP, the Thai standard for Good Agricultural Practices, as it has developed over the years from its start in 2006 until today. Actually, the very beginning of ThaiGAP goes back to 2002, when four exporters, a few collectors, 90 farmers and five farmer group leaders from the Western Region in Thailand formed the “Cluster of Western GAP”. Their objective was to produce good quality and safe vegetables for export and for the domestic market. A research project granted by the Thailand Research Fund provided an opportunity for the Kasetsart University to support the promotion of Good Agriculture Practice among farmers within the “Cluster of Western GAP”.



Ms Orawan Kaewprakaisangkul

The official start of ThaiGAP was in 2006, when the standard was developed by the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Thai Board of Trade and the Thai Fruit and Vegetable Producers' Association. ThaiGAP also received substantial funding from the Office of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion (OSMEP), which is part of the Ministry of Industry. The aim was to establish a food safety and quality standard for Thai agricultural products that is internationally recognised as equivalent to the GLOBALG.A.P. standard. The underlying assumption was that such recognition would improve small farmers' access to higher value markets worldwide. ThaiGAP is a voluntary standard applicable to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Kasetsart University remained actively involved in the process and has become the key training provider of ThaiGAP for farmers, advisors and internal inspectors/auditors.

Since 2008 GIZ and PTB (the German National Metrology Institute) have cooperated with several institutions in Thailand to strengthen the national quality infrastructure, particularly in the area of fresh fruits and vegetables.

An internal control system for the certification of producer groups as required for the group certification option of GLOBALG.A.P. was developed in order to reduce certification costs. Also, work with Thai retailers resulted in greater awareness of the necessity to raise the level of domestic standards in order to avoid a huge gap between levels of protection for domestic consumers and those abroad.

The National Technical Working Group received assistance in adapting GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations and control points/criteria to the situation in Thailand, resulting in a

modified checklist for achieving GLOBALG.A.P.'s approval of equivalence. The first benchmarking of ThaiGAP was successfully completed in 2010, the re-benchmarking in 2012. However, ThaiGAP is still a provisionally approved standard. All benchmarking documents have undergone the assessment process and have been acknowledged as GLOBALG.A.P. equivalent. The corresponding benchmarking agreement has already been signed. The only missing link is the formal accreditation of the responsible Certification Bodies (CBs).

In 2011, the first farm to receive ThaiGAP certification was Jiraporn farm, which produces asparagus for the KC Fresh export company. Jiraporn farm was one of the participating producer groups in the aforementioned GLOBALG.A.P. group certification project.

National Technical Working Groups (NTWG) that have been set up by GLOBALG.A.P. members in several countries have played an important role in helping to adopt GLOBALG.A.P.'s universal standard to local conditions. NTWGs, which are composed of all relevant stakeholders under the leadership of the industry, identify specific local adaptation and implementation challenges and develop guidelines, known as National Interpretation Guidelines. These guidelines provide guidance to certification bodies and producers on how to best implement GLOBALG.A.P. Control Points and Compliance Criteria at the national level. The working groups are also a valuable source of qualified information for GLOBALG.A.P. By tapping into national networks of experts and stakeholders, GLOBALG.A.P. gains extensive knowledge about the different legal and structural conditions that exist around the world. The NTWGs work in close cooperation with the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat and the Technical Committees,



which approve the guidelines developed by this growing number of groups. Thailand has established two National Technical Working Groups, one for fruit and vegetables and one for aquaculture, both hosted by the Thai Board of Trade.

The experience of ThaiGAP has shown that developing countries can successfully connect to internationally recognised standards – not only as standard takers, but also as standard setters – if there are powerful drivers such as the Thai Board of Trade and Kasetsart University which are able to absorb targeted government and donor support.

6.3. Venkat Prahlad: The Concept of Industrial Self Control in the Fruit Juice Industry

Mr Venkat Prahlad highlighted the relevance of food growing and processing in feeding an ever increasing world population. One third of world food production is lost or wasted every year and hence not available for consumption. In developing and emerging countries, the main reasons for the loss of fresh fruits and vegetables are missing storage, cooling and processing facilities along with weak transport infrastructure and market linkages. Business opportunities for farmers and processors and livelihood in rural areas can likewise become much more attractive once investment is undertaken to overcome these challenges.

Mr Prahlad presented the „Concept of Industrial Self Control in the Fruit Juice Industry“, which is run by Sure Global Fair (SGF International e.V.). As a non-profit organisation SGF is funded by currently more than 600 members

worldwide from all areas involved in the production and trading of fruit and vegetable juices, nectars and other products based on fruit and vegetables.

SGF is supporting their members in ensuring compliance with legal and industrial standards and protecting them against unfair competition. This is particularly challenging against the backdrop of increasing competition on the international fruit juice market, which has led to lower business growth and declining margins. On the other hand, consumer purchasing behaviour increasingly focuses on top quality, healthy and sustainable food, which offers new market opportunities for enterprises in the fruit juice branch.

Since 1986, SGF has been using its Voluntary Control System (VCS), which aims at ascertaining irregularities, anomalies and adulterations of products during the initial production and processing phases rather than waiting until these are detected during market monitoring activities. The VCS is one element in a broader system of quality and safety control, in which quality management systems of companies, mandatory official controls and consumers' watch dog activities complement each other.

The control of semi-finished goods within the VCS is called International Raw Material Assurance (IRMA). SGF auditors check processors, blending stations, traders, brokers, warehouses, cold stores and transport companies; and take samples from semi-finished goods for corresponding testing, together with hygiene audits of the plant facilities. IRMA members are audited at least once a year and examined for socially and ecologically sustainable management according to the SGF/IRMA code of conduct. Finished goods are subject to the SGF/International



Mr Venkat Prahlad



Quality Control System (IQCS) with a focus on safety and authenticity of the product, correct labelling and proper production practices. SGF strives to achieve full control and traceability of a juice from the tree to the bottle and retailer shelves. Regarding primary production, instead of introducing an in-house system for controlling fruit growers, SGF builds on collaboration with the GLOBALG.A.P. certification scheme to ensure compliance with good agricultural practices and hence minimise risks which occur at an early stage of the chain.

SGF has been present in Asia since 1996, with 21 % of SGF members being Asian companies, while European companies make up 53 %. Companies in a number of Asian countries (China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam) adhere to the VCS. SGF has started a fruitful cooperation with different partners in China, e.g. with the China Chamber of Commerce Foodstuffs and Native Produce (CFNA), the China Beverage Industry Association (CBIA), the Jinan Fruit Research Institute (CTCF) and the Chinese Citrus Research Institute in Chongqing. In 2012, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and SGF started the project “Qualythai” as a public-private development partnership in Thailand with the objective to establish a national control system for the fruit juice industry which can count on competent national auditors, laboratories and control bodies.

Mr Prahlad sees the main reason for the successful dissemination of SGF’s Voluntary Control System in its direct benefits for raw material producers, bottlers/blenders and traders. Primary producers are made familiar with internationally accepted standards including trends in standard development and also receive support to comply with customers’ requirements. Through participation in the Fruit Risk Assessment Programme for Pesticides (FRAPP), they are on the safe side regarding pesticide use. Producers of semi-finished goods also get a better estimate of production capacities, the performance of their suppliers and benefit from a reduced number of audits. For retailers, finally, buying IRMA-certified produce is a proof for their compliance with due diligence obligations. For all stakeholders, the VCS provides greater security regarding the products’ quality.



7. Consumers' Perspectives

The workshop's penultimate session was titled "Consumers' Perspectives" and focused on the food safety-related rights and responsibilities of consumers and the organisations representing them. The speakers were Ms Mohana Priya Veerabarathi of the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations, Ms Ilyani Sudarjat of the Indonesian Consumer Organisation, Ms Kingkorn Narintarakul of the Thai Food for Change programme and Ms Li Li of the environmental protection organisation EnviroFriends China. In their presentations, the speakers illustrated both the struggles as well as the achievements of their organisations' advocacy for better consumer protection regarding food products.

7.1. Mohana Priya Veerabarathi: Building consumers' trust and confidence in food safety issues in Malaysia

Ms Mohana Priya Veerabarathi focused her presentation on the activities and role of the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (FOMCA) in ensuring food safety for Malaysian consumers. FOMCA includes a variety of diverse organisations specialising in specific aspects of food safety. The National Consumer Complaint Centre (NCCC) and the Malaysian Association of Standards Users (Standards Users) are two such bodies. The NCCC receives complaints and queries from consumers in various sectors, including food. Standards Users advocates the importance of safety standards for products and services by participating in various standardisation activities in Malaysia, regionally and internationally. This is a positive example of consumer advocacy whereby each of the organisations under FOMCA anchors each other and provides leverage in terms of consumer protection.

Food safety has always been an issue of interest among consumers around the world, and Malaysian consumers are no exception. During the past five years, consumers have suffered a welter of food scandals, safety issues and global recalls which has obliged local and international agencies to intervene and carry out corrective action in order to control the risk to consumers. The melamine scandal is one of the largest safety issues in history and has resulted in a major loss of confidence in food safety among many consumers. In Malaysia, despite the existence of a highly regulated mechanism in the food industry, consumers still face many challenges when it comes to food safety. FOMCA, through its affiliates, has facilitated many comparative tests related to food safety. The results have not only shocked consumers but also forced regulators to call for amendments of the existing food safety act as well as examine the need for new food safety standards. FOMCA has identified the following important issues for consideration by stakeholders in their attempt to build consumer trust and confidence in food safety in Malaysia: a) information sharing and risk communication, b) stakeholder consensus and transparency, c) accreditation and



Ms Mohana Priya Veerabarathi



standardisation in the area of food safety, d) standards, guidelines and regulations on food safety, and e) enforcement, regulation, monitoring and research.

It is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the food supply chain to ensure food safety from farm to fork. Regulators are responsible for formulating policies, guidelines and standards as well as market surveillance in order to ensure food safety. However, stakeholder consensus and collaboration plays a pivotal role in ensuring that safety is addressed holistically. Industry is responsible for producing safe products for consumers by complying with mandatory as well as voluntary standards. Consumers, on the other hand, need to play a pro-active role in flagging up safety issues to the relevant agencies, creating demand for safe food and making informed decisions in choosing safe products. A transparent approach by regulators and industry will not only act as a safety buffer for the food supply chain but also create confidence among consumers when it comes to food safety. Consumers will have more trust in a product when a company strives hard to improve its supply chain not only in terms of transparency but also by taking into consideration other voluntary measures that benefit consumers such as traceability and labelling. Apart from complying with the basic labelling requirements, a company that takes extra initiatives to include, for example, “traffic light” or “dolphin safe” labels, which promote confidence, will gain support from consumers, who will perceive the company as a model of both integrity and social responsibility in ensuring food safety.

7.2. Ilyani Sudardjat: Consumer Advocacy in Ensuring Food Safety in Indonesia

With a population of around 240 million, Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia. It has a unique geography, consisting of approximately 17,500 islands, which poses specific challenges regarding food related infrastructure and trade.

According to the Indonesian Statistics Bureau around 35 million people still live below the poverty line; the middle class accounts for round 170 million people and the upper class for around 35 million.

Indonesian consumers base their food choices on a variety of factors, from disposable income, the availability of food in the market and knowledge on food quality and safety to exposure to food advertising in the media – many Indonesian consumers are easily attracted by television campaigns. Consumer awareness of food quality and safety is generally low – most consumers are not well informed on these issues.

At the same time food safety problems are a regular occurrence – common issues include chemical residues, illegal additives, expired products, unhygienic street food etc. The latter constitute the most predominant food safety problem.



Consumers International

For further information please visit www.consumersinternational.org

Consumers International (CI) is the world federation of consumer groups. Working together with its members, CI serves as an independent and authoritative global voice for consumers.

CI works in four key areas: food safety and nutrition, financial services, consumers in the digital age and consumer justice and protection. As well as being the leading international advocate for action to support consumers in choosing a healthy diet, CI monitors international processes relating to food prices, and supports members in doing so at national level. CI seeks stronger international food safety standards, particularly in relation to ractopamine, antibiotic resistance and food labelling, and accredits members with the expertise and resources to represent CI at international fora such as Codex Alimentarius. CI also helps its members in developing countries to participate in the development of effective national food safety systems, improve food safety standards in shops and restaurants, and provide consumer education on the safe preparation and handling of food.

For many years the Indonesian consumer organisation Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia (YLKI) has been engaged in consumer protection around food safety. YLKI has found that street food in particular often contains hazardous additives, e.g. Rhodamin B or Metanil Yellow. Both are used to colour food, despite being prohibited for use in foodstuffs. As children in particular are attracted by colourful drinks and food products, this kind of food is predominantly sold outside schools. At the same time, various Indonesian hospitals, specialising in cancer treatment and paediatrics, report a growing number of children diagnosed with cancer.

Against this background, YLKI has amplified its activities in this field: these began with awareness raising activities to educate teachers, school masters, parents, street food vendors and government representatives. It also conducted research and surveys and collected secondary data from university and media reports, in order to use the information for consumer advocacy. Furthermore, YLKI offers consumers the chance to submit complaints regarding food safety, either through their website, the social media or by telephone. The various data collected are used for awareness raising campaigns and consumer education. YLKI has also organised public dialogues in schools and focus group discussions with key government representatives.

However YLKI has had to face severe obstacles in its efforts to improve food safety: There is no single competent food safety authority – the responsibility is spread among several government agencies at both central and local levels. Coordination between institutions at these two levels is very weak, as is law enforcement. In addition, the food

monitoring system is malfunctioning and there are few regular inspections.

To strengthen the Indonesian food safety system and consumers' rights, YLKI has called for a strengthening of law enforcement with systematic and regular food monitoring and inspections, including appropriate sanctions. Coordination between various government departments at different levels needs to be improved. Consumers and producers need to be made aware of food safety issues and must be educated accordingly. Consumer organisations should use their extensive networks of media, key stakeholders and relevant organisations and institutions to enforce their activities and put pressure on government representatives.

7.3. Kingkorn Narintarakul: Consumers' Participation in Ensuring Food Safety in Thailand

Ms Kingkorn Narintarakul started her presentation by highlighting the ongoing challenges in Thai food production: In Thai agriculture, especially in the vegetable sector, there is still a great deal of pesticide application – even chemicals prohibited in the European Union and other industrialised countries are still being used. This can cause serious problems for Thai consumers.

The extensive use of agrochemicals is the main reason why Thailand is the country with the most notifications in the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed – in 2010 the system noted 55 chemical pesticide residue alerts in food imported from Thailand. Considering that the noti-



Ms Ilyani Sudardjat



Ms Kingkorn Narintarakul

fied produce in question was especially produced for the export market – which usually has higher quality demands – the contamination of food produced for the local market may be even worse.

This raises a number of questions about the Thai food control system. Within two ministries – the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives – there are several units concerned with food safety issues, among them the Bureau of Food, the Bureau of Quality and Safety of Food, the Department of Health, the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) and the Department of Agriculture. For Thai consumers this multiple responsibility makes it difficult to obtain accurate and up-to-date information on food safety. Furthermore, although there is a domestic food safety alert system, the information given to consumers is often outdated.

Studies conducted in recent years by the Department of Agriculture Extension and the Thai Agricultural Research and Development Office have investigated the problem of pesticide residues in Thai fruits and vegetables: Between 2003 and 2004 3,115 samples were analysed, of which 36% contained chemical residues. Between 2008 and 2011 4,338 samples were analysed, of which 20% were found to contain residues.

Food for Change set out to investigate the problem of these contaminations and also questioned how consumers can be better informed and assured that the food they consume does not threaten their health. As a first step, Food for Change analysed figures regarding the import and use of plant protection products. Import data reveal a

continuous increase in Thai imports of insecticides, fungicides and especially herbicides over recent years. After China, Thailand recorded the highest number of pesticide imports in Asia in 2000. Compared to other Asian countries agricultural production in the Thai Central Plains is characterised by the widespread use of pesticides, which account for the highest share of overall production costs.

Similarly problematic is the insufficient regulation of pesticide use: Thai authorities have issued only a small number of Maximum Residue Levels (MRL) for selected products; in addition, compared to the EU's MRLs, these are much higher, thus providing less protection for consumers. Moreover, there are several particularly harmful pesticides, which have been banned from use in most industrialised countries but are still permitted for use in Thailand. Efforts should be made to ban these pesticides in Thailand, or better still, in all ASEAN member countries.

Ms Kingkorn concluded with the claim that consumers must be informed about the quality and safety of the food they consume. Access to trustful and transparent information is inevitable for informed consumer decision making. One single agency should be responsible and accountable for food safety and related communication. Furthermore consumers and their organisations should be involved in the design of the food safety control and monitoring system, including participation in policy making. The control system itself needs to be improved, including systematic and routine random tests and regular reports to the public. At the same time, there must be adequate consumer awareness raising and education to enable meaningful participation and a functioning check-and-balance system based on a strong civil society.



7.4. Li Li: Challenging 'Recycled Cooking Oil' – Chinese Environmentally-friendly NGOs are Taking Action

Ms Li highlighted the important role that cooking oil plays in Chinese traditional food culture and dishes. However, significant quantities of recycled cooking oil (RCO) are being re-used in the food chain, thus endangering people's health. 'Gutter' oil that is taken from kitchen waste of restaurants and other eating places and then resold to users is not only tainted with food waste, it can also contain dangerous substances such as aflatoxin, a mold known to cause cancer.

According to a small-scale survey by students from China Agricultural University, it is estimated that at least one in every ten meals in China is contaminated with potentially harmful RCO. Furthermore cooking oil from kitchen waste is regularly polluting the environment. Therefore there is an urgent need to find a safe and environmentally-friendly approach to deal with used cooking oil.

In 2011, the Chinese non-governmental organisation EnviroFriends submitted an application for a non-reimbursable aid project to the Embassy of Japan. The project "Environment NGO Aid Plan in Beijing Chaoyang District—Sino-Japanese Effort to Make Soap from RCO" started in early 2012. Currently, one canteen, one school and one resident community in Beijing participate in the project. NGO staff members purchase and install facilities for soap making, motivate residents (or students) to send discarded cooking oil and RCO to designated places,

make soap, and send soap to families, students and canteens. With assistance from Japanese organisations and the China Agricultural University, technical methods for oil deodorisation, decolourisation, desalination and decontamination have been tested, and a set of facilities has been designed and tested accordingly. This means that standards for quality control were implemented. A significant number of local volunteers have been trained to promote awareness on the safe disposal of cooking oil and to motivate residents to deliver their discarded cooking oil to the newly established processing facilities.

The primary objective of the project is to develop and test a business model for the collection of RCO and its subsequent processing into soap in an environmentally-friendly and safe manner. EnviroFriends supports the efforts of the government to issue regulations for monitoring the disposal of discarded cooking oil and RCO from restaurants. In addition, it also advocates for favourable policies related to taxation, and credit for environmentally-friendly enterprises using RCO to produce cleaning products or diesel. Ms Li reported that the project has been widely accepted and that many NGOs are preparing themselves to carry out similar activities after their staff has been trained.



Ms Li Li



8. Regional Cooperation and Lessons Learned from Technical Assistance

The workshop's final session had a more integrated theme than the previous ones: Following the examination of official food safety control systems, private sector approaches and consumers' perspectives, the last session centred on regional cooperation and international technical assistance. An example of successful regional cooperation was provided by Ms Usa Bamrungbhuet of the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards who presented the work of the ASEAN Food Safety Network. Then, Dr Clemens Sanetra, an advisor to the German National Metrology Institute (PTB), explained the importance and the complexities of establishing an internationally recognised quality infrastructure, before the two last speakers gave an insight into the practice of technical assistance: Dr Li Ning of the China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA) reported on the collaborative effort of establishing the Center together with GIZ. And Dr Robert Bambauer gave an account of his work assisting the establishment of the national Food and Drug Authority in Saudi Arabia.

8.1. Usa Bamrungbhuet: Regional Cooperation within the ASEAN Food Safety Network

Approaching the topic of food safety with a distinctly regional perspective, *Ms Usa Bamrungbhuet* presented the tasks and activities of the ASEAN Food Safety Network (AFSN). The Network was created in 2003 in the context of ASEAN's overarching goal of reaching a more closely integrated union by 2015 – the ASEAN Economic Community. Cooperation on

food safety is part of the economic cooperation pillar supporting the Community, while the other two pillars deal with political and socio-cultural cooperation.

The Network's main purpose lies firstly, in coordinating and disseminating information about food safety-related barriers to trade among ASEAN members. Secondly, the Network serves as a platform for facilitating bilateral and multilateral discussions and information exchanges. To



Ms Usa Bamrungbhuet



fulfill these functions, the AFSN primarily relies on web-based information tools. It has established several websites, mailing lists and online discussion forums to support the work of relevant ASEAN bodies, for instance the ASEAN Task Force on Codex (ATFC): Here, the network facilitates members' discussions and exchanges of views prior to Codex Alimentarius meetings so ASEAN can present strong, unified positions at the meetings. The ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) Product Working Group on Prepared Foodstuffs are supported by the network in a similar manner.

Another major contribution the Network makes to regional collaboration on food safety relates to the work of the ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety: This Committee has the mandate to not only improve food safety in ASEAN countries, but also to formulate a strategic plan to address important regional food safety issues. Thus, it has developed the ASEAN Food Safety Improvement Plan (AFSIP), which has information sharing as one of its top priorities. The AFSN is an integral part of this agenda because it serves as the primary information sharing programme under AFSIP and hosts the Expert Group's collective resources.

Furthermore, the AFSN is used as a communication tool under the project for "Strengthening ASEAN Risk Assessment Capability to Support Food Safety Measures." This project seeks to provide scientific experts with training and hands-on experience in the preparation of systematic risk-assessments. Also, it supports a more effective communication between risk assessors and risk managers. With the results of this project, a directory of ASEAN's risk

assessors and risk managers on chemical and biological hazards in foods, and other relevant information, will be disseminated through the AFSN website.

As the ASEAN region is moving towards the realisation of ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, in which the free flow of safe food products will play a vital role, the sharing of information about standards harmonisation across Southeast Asia will remain a central focus of AFSN's approach to regional cooperation in the future.

8.2. Dr Clemens Sanetra: Quality Infrastructure for Food Safety

Competitiveness in a globalised economy depends more and more on the quality of the products and services, rather than on their price. However, competitiveness is often limited because products, services and procedures do not comply with the minimum quality requirements that are nowadays imperative in commercial transactions, whether national or international. The existence of an internationally recognised Quality Infrastructure (a systemic approach of standardisation, metrology, testing, certification and accreditation) is hence a prerequisite for participation in international trade and additionally serves environmental conservation and consumer protection.

Using the examples of furniture and canned tuna, *Dr Clemens Sanetra* demonstrated how the services provided by the different quality infrastructure institutions help boost competitiveness and allow production to be based on a division of labour. Standards define properties



Dr Clemens Sanetra

of goods and services; metrology guarantees that measurements are exact and reliable; and testing enables analyses and proof of properties. Quality management, meanwhile, has two main components: certification of conformity with the requirements of the applicable standards and the formal recognition of the technical competence of laboratories or certifying bodies through accreditation.

How can you ensure that a kilogram of fish or 0.05 milligram of Cadmium per kilogramme fish measured in Thailand are measured with identical results all over the world – independently of the operator, equipment or environmental conditions? This is made possible by a clearly defined structure and measurement hierarchy applied in every country worldwide, which is harmonised through regional organisations and coordinated by the Bureau International de Poids et Mesures (BIPM), as a worldwide metrological system with mutual recognition of measurement results performed by its members. The importance of having reliable test results was illustrated by the example of a comparison of measurement of trace elements in water: If equivalent samples are tested by different laboratories with different results and nobody knows who is right or wrong, this leads to a lack of confidence between buyers and sellers.

National food safety systems are made up of different components. These aim at compliance with national and international legal requirements as well as with additional requirements from the private sector (e.g. ISO, GLOBALG.A.P. etc.). These interface with national quality infrastructure bodies (national standards institute, national metrology institute, testing/calibration laboratories,

certification bodies and national accreditation body), whose institutions need to demonstrate equivalent technical competence to the corresponding institutions at regional and international level. Only when this is the case can trust be built up. Thus, national quality infrastructure has to be put into the context of global value chains, which can be illustrated by the examples of shrimp, fruits and vegetables, and canned tuna.

In the case of shrimp, there may be several local ministries involved in legislation and official controls (e.g. health, agriculture, and environment). For export, the shrimps must also comply with the requirements of the importing country (e.g. product standards, hygiene, and specific analyses). Thus, the shrimp farm must undergo testing (e.g. control of water, aeration, feeds and fertilisers, weight, and temperature). The shrimp farm may also strive for certification (ISO, GLOBALG.A.P., etc.). The same applies for the packing house and other actors in the value chain. This example illustrates the many aspects in which quality infrastructure services play an important role. If these services are not available in a country, or if they are not reliable, the results will be additional costs or loss of market access.

Given that the value chain approach is used by both PTB and GIZ, with mutually complementing activities, there is much room for cooperation. In Thailand's fruit and vegetables sector, for instance, PTB supports pesticide testing laboratories and the design of an inspection system. Likewise, GIZ supported the implementation of GlobalG.A.P. at the farm level in Thailand, and achieved group certification of smallholder farmers.



8.3. Dr Li Ning: Food Safety Risk Surveillance and Assessment in China

Following a series of severe food safety incidents, the Chinese government has issued a new comprehensive National Food Safety Law.

After the promulgation of the new law in 2009, a national surveillance system for food safety risks was established to monitor food-borne diseases, food contamination and other food-related hazards. The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with other relevant departments of the State Council, has formulated and issued national surveillance plans in three consecutive years, i.e. from 2010-2012. The plan includes surveillance of chemical pollutants in food, pathogenic microorganisms, and food-borne diseases. Additionally, special surveillance is done in case of emergencies or public concerns. The health departments at different levels (e.g. at province level) are responsible for the implementation of the surveillance plan.

Regarding risk assessment, the China National Expert Committee for Food Safety Risk Assessment (NECRA) was established in December 2009. The committee is comprised of 42 experts from different scientific backgrounds. NECRA proposes priorities for risk assessment to the Ministry of Health and provides a review of the quality of risk assessment reports. *Dr Li Ning* highlighted that since its inception, NECRA has proposed 12 prioritised risk assessment projects and reviewed the assessments of the dietary exposure of substances such as cadmium and aluminium.

Over 100 scientific suggestions were made to relevant government departments. Related to emergency risk assessment, studies were done on dietary iodine consumption in China, melamine contamination in milk powder, and manganese migration from stainless steel cookware.

In October 2011, the China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA) was founded. The mandate of CFSA includes risk assessment, risk surveillance, issuing food safety alerts, risk communication, research and training. Additionally, CFSA undertakes the routine work for the Secretariat of the NECRA as well as the Secretariat of the National Food Safety Standard Review Committee.

The establishment of NECRA and CFSA was achieved in close collaboration with GIZ. Dr Li Ning explained that challenges remain in terms of fulfilling capacity building needs in the areas of science-based risk assessment, risk surveillance and risk communication.

Since 2009, GIZ has supported the Ministry of Health to improve its performance and follow international best practice, based on expertise provided by German government institutions at the federal and federal state level. Activities in China have been carried out at the national and provincial level to provide training events, and to conduct national and international workshops and conferences. Between 2010 and 2012 more than 20 experts have been sent to the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) to attend training seminars on risk assessment. By signing a memorandum of understanding between CFSA and BfR in August 2012, an international cooperation platform for risk assessment was established.



Dr Li Ning



Furthermore, GIZ mobilised experts from the German Federal Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) and control authorities in North-Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony to assist in formulating risk surveillance plans and improving quality control.

8.4. Dr Robert Bambauer: Managing and Controlling Food Safety in the Gulf Region

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the quality and safety of food products has long been a widespread concern amongst consumers and responsible authorities. The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA), which was established by the Saudi Council of Ministers in 2003, aims at ensuring food and drug safety at the highest level, comparable to the standards effective in most developed countries. In complying with this, SFDA strives to act as a key player in the region (especially in the Gulf Cooperation Council) for the safety of foods, drugs, and medical devices. As Saudi Arabia is a net importer of food, the food import control system at the border inspection posts and the qualification and accreditation of its laboratories are at the forefront of the efforts.

SFDA contracted GIZ International Services (GIZ IS) for assistance in setting up a modern organisational and operational structure for a target-oriented food control system, based on internationally recognised principles. Among other things, the cooperation especially considers the build-up and strengthening of border inspection, local inspection and high and state-of-the-art laboratory capacities with internationally recognised accreditation. The

project “Development of the Food Sector of SFDA” started in 2009 and has recently been extended until 2014.

Dr Bambauer provided insights on how a process and science-based food control system according to international best practices has been designed and implemented. The system of food safety control is based on the Codex Alimentarius working principles for risk analysis: (1) risk assessment (hazard identification, exposure assessment and risk characterisation), (2) risk management (appropriate prevention and control options), and (3) risk communication (interactive exchange of information and opinions). Those working principles for food safety are internationally recognised and state-of-the-art. Another principle of a modern food safety system – namely that operators in the feed and food business have the primary responsibility for food safety – is implemented in the Saudi Food Act. Monitoring, enforcing and verifying this responsibility through the operation of national surveillance and control systems at all stages of production, processing and distribution are the main tasks of the SFDA. Given that on average 80% of Saudi Arabia’s food is imported, it is quite understandable, that the effective operation of border inspection posts is one of the biggest concerns of the SFDA.

The support project consists of five components, namely a) headquarter tasks, b) border inspection posts, c) laboratories, d) local inspection units and e) information technology. Staff of SFDA, local inspection units, border inspection posts and laboratories have been trained, coached or otherwise supported to use appropriate techniques for specific purposes in official controls, including routine surveillance checks and more intensive controls such as inspections, verifications, audits, sampling and testing of



Dr Robert Bambauer and Ms Indrani Thuraisingham

samples. The techniques of risk assessment have been used to support the build-up of appropriate sampling and to set inspection frequencies of official controls. Staff members have been trained to carry out controls when businesses are suspected of non-compliance with feed and food law on the basis of documented procedures. These procedures ensure that these controls are carried out uniformly and are of consistently high quality. Efforts are also made to ensure that laboratories involved in the analysis of official samples work in accordance with internationally approved procedures; and that to the extent possible, they

use methods of analysis that have been validated. So far, four laboratories have been accompanied to the stage of accreditation. In addition, several packages of supplementary legislation have been drafted. Over the last three years, the project management has mobilised around 60 international experts with different degrees of specialisation, amongst them chemists, veterinarians, microbiologists, laboratory managers, lawyers, and custom officers. Summing up, SFDA has made good progress in strengthening its prominent position regarding food safety in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region.



Ms Indrani Thuraisingham

9. Panel Discussion: Shared Responsibility of Actors in the Food Chain – a Realistic Concept?

Up until now, the workshop had centred on presenting different actors in the food system and their individual approaches to food safety. The concluding segment, in contrast, sought to bring all stakeholders together to explore the prospect of further and more extensive cooperation with each other.

Under the heading ‘Shared responsibility of actors in the food chain – a realistic concept?’, *Ms Usa Bamrungbhuet* of the Thai National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, *Ms Indrani Thuraisingham* of Consumers International and *Dr Georg Schreiber* of the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety came together for the concluding panel discussion on behalf of their respective organisations. They were joined by *Mr Pathom Taenkam*, Vice President of the Thai Fruit & Vegetable Producer Association, representing the region’s export industry and *Dr Uwe Scholz*, Senior Planning Officer at the GIZ, who spoke for the international technical assistance community.

Professor Noehle, the panel moderator, opened the discussion with a simple yet far-reaching question: ‘Can we (as actors in the food system with a stake in the production and distribution of safe, high-quality food) really trust each other?’ The problem of trust, it was implied, hampers not only current collaboration on food safety but also affects the progress of ASEAN economic integration as a whole. Consequently, the speakers used the question as a starting point for assessing the feasibility of a single market – the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) – by 2015.

Despite their different organisational affiliations, nearly all discussants regarded the timetable set for the AEC with a considerable amount of scepticism: *Dr Schreiber*, referring to European experience, argued that only a common, supranational auditing structure could create the necessary level of trust among the trade partners. Unfortunately, such a structure, akin to the EU Commission’s Food and Veterinary Office, is not an immediate prospect in South-east Asia.

Mr Pathom agreed that ASEAN states need to create one representative, impartial body – similar to the EU Commission – with the authority to make and enforce laws concerning food standards. Yet, from the perspective of producers and exporters, the setting of binding rules by legitimate authorities addresses only part of the problem. The other problem lies in ensuring that producers actually have the capacity to comply with these rules. This requires not only a substantial amount of time, but also an enormous political commitment. This, according to *Mr Pathom*, is the major obstacle to forming the AEC: that each country has its own political agenda undermining the common goal of achieving greater regional food safety.

Ms Indrani also voiced doubts about the willingness of ASEAN countries to pool and centralise important food safety related competencies. She identified an especially glaring lack of collaboration in the area of risk communication and deplored the fact that consumers still remain mostly in the dark about the health hazards inherent in their food. Consequently, she reasoned that ‘at this point in time, ASEAN countries are not ready’ to establish a single market.



Countering the previous statements, Ms Usa expressed a more optimistic view: she pointed to the substantial successes already achieved – such as the development of common requirements regarding food hygiene, food controls and food labelling and the continuing implementation of the ASEAN GAP standard – and viewed them as clear examples of progress.

Another problem increasing the distrust among stakeholders, however, was brought up by Dr Scholz: having been in charge of technical assistance projects in the fisheries sector for many years, he has found that ‘as long as you can make money (in a certain industry), some individuals or companies will be willing to sacrifice safety in order to make (more) profit’. Thus, Dr Scholz saw the establishment of reliable quality control systems – either through voluntary agreements or through government action – as the most pressing need for ASEAN countries. With regard to the timetable set for the AEC, he agreed that the region was not quite ready for abolishing all border controls in 2015. He reminded the discussants that the corresponding process in Europe had taken almost 50 years to develop.

The following part of the discussion was then devoted to the question of whether the EU can serve as a model for the political and economic integration of the Southeast Asian region at all. Debating the issue, all panellists recognised the desirability of an EU-like structure for ASEAN, but retained major caveats as to its achievability in the near future.

Mr Pathom stated that the European Community started with only six member countries and that the enlargement to nine, 12, 15, 25 and finally 27 nations had been a very slow and incremental process. Moreover, any accession to the EU is conditional on the proper functioning of the candidate’s market economy, whereas the economies of the AEC countries are so vastly different that it is difficult to imagine all ten nations joining together at the same time. The EU can therefore be a model for ASEAN only insofar as the AEC should likewise start as a union of only a few countries with similar economies and then slowly, gradually accept more members.

This assessment was strongly endorsed by Dr Schreiber: when countries’ economic conditions vary considerably, he argued, it is counterproductive to open borders unconditionally. Accordingly, he recommended that the AEC initially admit no more than three or four equally productive countries, but also help the remaining states in the region to bring their economies up to par. Here, the EU’s ‘twinning’ programme, where member states team up with candidate countries to help prepare their accession, could be a useful model.

Ms Indrani reinforced the reservations about making current EU structures the blueprint for the emerging ASEAN Community by pointing out critical deficiencies in ASEAN’s decision-making procedures. While the EU has the legal framework to ensure countries’ compliance with rules and regulations, ASEAN is still a consensus body based on the principle of non-interference. As long as the community’s legislative authority isn’t paired with effective sanctioning powers, ASEAN will not be able to emulate the EU’s history of successful (economic) integration.



Mr Pathom Taenkam

The final portion of the discussion was open to the audience and touched upon a variety of topics. Mr Seah, who had presented Singapore's street food control system during the workshop's first session, revisited the problem of ongoing distrust among major stakeholders. He warned that any country's legislation is designed to protect that country's own citizens first and foremost (not those of other countries). Therefore, when goods are designated for export markets, there is a high likelihood of the country of origin not imposing any restrictions on the producer – the government will take a 'hands-off' approach and pass the responsibility for food safety controls on to the importing country.

In reaction to this concern, Ms Indrani emphasised her demand for greater government involvement in the establishment and maintenance of credible food safety guarantees, including, as in this case, guarantees of national export goods.

Dr Sanetra, the speaker on quality infrastructure in the session on 'lessons learned from technical assistance', then presented the view that a reliable, commonly accepted testing system under the motto 'tested once, accepted everywhere' could go a long way to building trust among relevant actors. Unfortunately, as long as the region has not solved the problem of harmonising food safety standards, there is no proper basis for testing their implementation.

Finally, Dr Khalid Almurshed of the Saudi Drug and Food Authority offered an assessment that was as sobering as it was noteworthy: using the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), rather than the European Union, as a reference point, he stated that the organisation has been in existence since 1980, its members have exceptionally similar economies and common GCC food standards have already been implemented. However, there is still no single market for agricultural products and no free food trade between the GCC countries. On that account, he concluded, it is more realistic to expect the integration process of ASEAN economies to take place in several stages, over a very long period of time.



10. Conclusion

The two-day workshop brought together experts from various national and institutional backgrounds with a common interest in a functioning food safe safety system in Southeast Asia: representatives from government authorities, the private sector, consumer organisations as well as universities and research institutions shared their experience and opinions on the topic.

Against the background of the ASEAN Economic Community to be established by 2015, participants and speakers were asked to assess the most important food safety issues to be resolved by that date. The respondents agreed on four priority areas: (1) food safety standards must be harmonised; this applies to standards relevant for local consumption and for export as well as to the harmonisation of standards among ASEAN member countries; (2) an ASEAN-wide common system for food control, warning and risk management needs to be established; (3) awareness raising and adequate education of (small) producers and manufacturers on the importance of food safety, Good Agricultural Practices and Good Manufacturing Practices needs to be strengthened; and (4) consumers and their organisations need to be adequately informed on food safety issues and empowered to participate in the design of food safety policies.

After presentations by stakeholders from various backgrounds and a panel discussion on the shared responsibility of actors in the food chain, the speakers and participants concluded that the establishment of an ASEAN Food Safety Agency could make an important contribution to the production and trade of safe food within ASEAN member states. This agency could, for example, perform risk assessments and manage an ASEAN Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed including the communication of outcomes. It could also supervise and communicate public recalls as well as consumer health issues concerning food and feed. To ensure global cooperation, the Agency could communicate food safety issues from and to relevant agencies in other world regions (e.g. the European Food Safety Authority or the United States Department of Agriculture). Furthermore, the ASEAN Food Safety Agency could be the competent authority for training and licensing of food inspectors and laboratories.

Thus, an ASEAN Food Safety Agency that merges the disparate national control systems has the potential to become a building block for greater regional integration in the economically and socially ever more important area of food safety.



11. Annexes

Annex I: Workshop Programme

| Day 1 – Monday, 5th November 2012 | | |
|---|--|---|
| 8:00-9:00 | Registration and Welcome Coffee | |
| 9:00-10:15 | Welcome Address by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sakchai Sriboonsue, Secretary General National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), Thailand • Dr Ingo Winkelmann, Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bangkok • Indrani Thuraisingham, Head Consumers International Office for Asia Pacific and the Middle East • David Oberhuber, Country Director GIZ Thailand | |
| 10:30-11:15 | Keynote Address: “Trends in the Global Food Safety System” | Prof. Dr Ulrich Noehle |
| COFFEE BREAK | | |
| Session A: Official Control Systems in Southeast Asia | | |
| 11:35-12:00 | Accreditation and certification in Thailand | Yuthana Norapoompipat National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, Thailand |
| 12:05-12:30 | The official control system in Thailand: the example of the fishery sector | Dr Waraporn Prompoj Department of Fisheries Thailand |
| LUNCH BREAK | | |
| 13:30-13:55 | Implementation of Grading, Packaging & Labelling (GPL) Regulations to Improve the Quality and Safety of Agricultural Produce | Ishak Abbas Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority, Malaysia |
| 14:00-14:25 | Transformation of the street food industry in Singapore | Seah Seng Choon Consumers Association of Singapore |
| 14:30-14:55 | The Food Safety Control System on Fruit and Vegetable in Vietnam - Practice and Suggestion | Dr Duong Ngoc Thi Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam |
| 15:00-15:20 | Discussion | |
| COFFEE BREAK | | |
| Session B: Sharing Experiences of Food Safety Systems in other World Regions | | |
| 15:40-16:05 | The food safety management system in Germany and the EU: legal and institutional pillars | Volker Stoeppler Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Germany |
| 16:10-16:35 | Risk-based food surveillance and transparency measures to gain public trust in Germany | Dr Georg Schreiber Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety, Germany |
| 16:40-17:10 | The system for import and export control in China | Yu Yue Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau of Zhe Jiang Province, China |
| 17:15-17:35 | Discussion | |
| 18:00 | COCKTAIL RECEPTION | |

| Day 2 – Tuesday, 6th November 2012 | | |
|--|--|--|
| Session C: Private Sector Control Systems | | |
| 9:00-9:25 | Effective control measures to address critical issues and challenges in the supply chain | Annette Miller Mars China |
| 9:30-9:55 | ThaiGAP – the voluntary private standard for safe and sustainable Thai agriculture | Orawan Kaewprakaisangkul National Food Institute, Thailand |
| 10:00-10:25 | The concept of industrial self-control in the fruit juice industry (SGF) | Venkat Prahlad Sure Global Fair |
| 10:30-10:50 | Discussion | |
| COFFEE BREAK | | |
| Session D: Consumers' Perspectives | | |
| 11:10-11:35 | Building consumers' trust and confidence in food safety issues in Malaysia | Mohana Priya Veerabarathi Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations |
| 11:40-12:05 | Consumer advocacy in ensuring food safety in Indonesia | Ilyani Sudardjat Indonesian Consumers Organisation |
| LUNCH BREAK | | |
| 13:15-13:40 | Consumers' participation towards ensuring food safety in Thailand | Kingkorn Narintarakul Food for Change |
| 13:45-14:15 | Awareness raising and consumer education: the example of recycled cooking oil in China | Li Li EnviroFriends China |
| 14:20-14:40 | Discussion | |
| COFFEE BREAK | | |
| Session E: Regional Cooperation and Lessons Learned from Technical Assistance | | |
| 15:00-15:25 | Regional cooperation within the ASEAN Food Safety Network | Usa Bamrungbhuet National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, Thailand |
| 15:30-15:55 | Quality infrastructure for food safety | Dr Clemens Sanetra Physik.-Techn. Bundesanstalt |
| 16:00-16:30 | Improving food safety for domestic consumers - experiences from China | Dr Li Ning Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment, China |
| 16:35-17:00 | Development and management of food control in the Gulf region | Dr Robert Bambauer Saudi Food and Drug Authority |
| Panel Discussion | | |
| 17:00-18:15 | Shared responsibility of actors in the food chain: a realistic concept? | |
| 18:15-18:30 | Closing Ceremony | |

Annex II: Speakers' Overview

Keynote Speech:

Prof. Dr Ulrich Noehle

Interim and Crisis Manager, Germany
ulrich.noehle@web.de

Prof. Dr Ulrich Noehle is a food industry professional with extensive first-hand experience in the area of food quality and safety: After earning his PhD in Biochemistry from the Technische Universität Berlin, Germany, Prof. Noehle held various high managerial positions in international food companies, including that of Director of Quality Management, Procurement and Supply Chain Management for Nestlé Deutschland and that of Head of Quality Management for Rowntree Mackintosh GmbH. Since 2008, Prof. Noehle has worked as an Interim Manager for the Food and Feed Industries where his scope of functions includes executing crisis management measures, developing communication strategies and conducting fraud investigations, as well as instituting operational excellence programmes during limited time periods of specific necessity.

Prof. Noehle holds an honorary professorship from the Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany, in Quality Management and has published over 270 papers and lectures.

Session on 'Official Control Systems in Southeast Asia':

Yuthana Norapoornpipat

National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), Thailand
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Mr Yuthana Norapoornpipat has acquired comprehensive expertise on accreditation assessment during almost 30 years of work in the Thai public health and agriculture sector: He held several positions at the Thai FDA (Ministry of Public Health), including that of Lead Auditor as well as Head of the Export Production Development Group, before moving to the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), where he currently serves as Expert on Accreditation Assessments and Lead Assessor for Food and Agricultural Commodities in the Office of Commodity and System Standards Accreditation (CSSA).

Mr Yuthana holds a BSc in Food Science from Kasetsart University, Thailand and an MSc in Public Health Management from Mahidol University, Thailand. Besides his position with the ACFS, he also acts as an instructor for the science faculty at Mahidol University International College, responsible for food law and standards of commercial food products.

Dr Waraporn Prompoj

Department of Fisheries, Thailand
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Dr Waraporn Prompoj, currently serving as a Senior Expert on International Fisheries Affairs in the Thai Department of Fisheries, is an authority on national and international standards. In working with the fisheries department for more than 25 years, Dr Waraporn has been a major contributor to the development and advancement of internationally compatible regulations for the Thai fishing industry: she has helped develop and implement the Thai Quality Shrimp Programme, the Thailand Shrimp Culture Certification Scheme, the ASEAN Shrimp GAP and the ASEAN Fisheries Consultative Forum. Besides her role in national policy-making, she regularly participates in international meetings and conferences concerning fisheries and aquaculture, including the Codex Alimentarius meetings.

Dr. Waraporn holds an MSc in Aquatic Ecology from Kasetsart University, Thailand and a PhD in Planning from the University of Waterloo, Canada.

Ishak Abbas

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Mr Ishak Abbas is a long-serving governmental expert on food quality and safety in Malaysia: employed with the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) since 1983, he currently serves as the Senior Director of the Regulatory Department.

Mr Ishak holds a degree in Agribusiness from the University of Putra, Malaysia.

Seah Seng Choon

Consumers Association of Singapore
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Mr Seah Seng Choon is a prominent advocate for consumers' rights in Singapore's governmental and non-governmental sectors. He is a member of the Genetic Modification Advisory Council which oversees the introduction of GM products into Singapore, the Food Standards Committee of Singapore which deliberates on setting standards for food processors and the Certification Advisory Council, which is tasked by the Ministry of Trade and Industry with helping build trust in Singaporean products and services. As the Executive Director of the Consumers Association of Singapore, Mr Seah primarily focuses on protecting and enhancing consumers' interests through information and education as well as promoting fair and ethical trade practices in Singapore.

Dr Duong Ngoc Thi

Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam
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Dr Duong Ngoc Thi is the Vice General Director of the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD) and a leading researcher on agricultural and food policies in Vietnam: he has headed research groups on small enterprises and quality management of agro-products, on measuring the impact of Free Trade Agreements between ASEAN and China and on policies to improve the rice harvest in the Mekong Delta. He is currently coordinating a project on policy advocacy on food safety and serves as a national consultant on public-private partnerships in agriculture.

Dr Thi holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the National Economics University, Hanoi. He also participated in a post-graduate training programme co-organised by the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam and the National Institute of Agriculture in France, and has attended a variety of professional training courses in Japan, South Korea, Australia and Egypt.

Session on 'Sharing Experiences of Food Safety Systems in other World Regions':

Volker Stoeppler

Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Germany
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Mr Volker Stoeppler, who currently serves as a counsellor for food, agriculture and consumer protection at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bangkok, brings substantial practical as well as administrative experience to his appointment: after an apprenticeship as a farmer, Mr Stoeppler studied Agriculture at the University of Giessen before starting his career in the civil service. Here, Mr Stoeppler was first employed by the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE), Germany, where he served as Deputy Head of Division for, amongst other things, the section on researching the development of milk quality. He then moved to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV), where he served as Deputy Head of Division in several sections including that of Development in Rural Areas. Altogether, Mr Stoeppler has 20 years of experience in public sector work in the areas of agriculture and consumer protection.

Yu Yue

Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau of Zhe Jiang Province, China
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During his almost 30 years of public service, Mr Yu Yue has held several positions of high responsibility in the field of import and export control and is especially knowledgeable on the topic of food inspection. His professional background includes positions as Deputy Director for Supervision on Certification at Zhejiang Entry-Exit Inspection & Quarantine Bureau, Director of Division for Law and Supervision on Certification and, currently, Director of Division of Frontier Health Quarantine & Food Inspection at Hangzhou Entry-Exit Inspection & Quarantine Bureau. Mr Yu holds a BSc in Agriculture/Animal Science from Hangzhou Commercial College, an MSc in Food Science from Zhejiang University and also received technical training under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cochran Fellowship Programme. Mr Yu also serves as an instructor for assessor training courses and is the editor of the China Canned Food Industry Journal.

Dr Georg Schreiber

Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety,
Germany
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Dr Georg Schreiber is a well-versed specialist in food and consumer safety at national as well as European level: after studying food technology and biochemistry and earning his PhD in biological dosimetry, Dr Schreiber worked for the Federal Health Office in Berlin before joining the European Commission in Brussels where he oversaw EU legislation regarding contaminants, flavourings, food additives, and pesticide residues in food intended for infants and young children.

Dr Schreiber has also served as head of the unit in Germany's Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety responsible for, amongst other things, managing the import-export regulations on food. Currently, he is heading a unit managing and coordinating national surveillance programmes and leads several projects designed to improve food safety systems in EU candidate countries as well as third countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and China.

Session on 'Private Sector Control Systems':

Annette Miller

Mars China
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Ms Annette Miller, the Research and Development Director of Mars Petcare China, is an accomplished food safety specialist with 17 years of experience in optimising quality results for food manufacturing and packaging operations. With a BSc in Premedicine Biology and a BSc in Chemistry from Bowling Green State University, USA, Ms Miller has managed the quality and food safety operations at 25 Mars co-manufacturing locations in North America and the Caribbean, provided technical leadership and quality food safety expertise in the design, construction and commissioning of new factories as well as direction and framework for new product innovation. At Mars Petcare China, she has been in charge of driving continuous product improvement through monitoring, verification and reporting processes to direct and assess the effectiveness of corrective and preventative actions.

Orawan Kaewprakaisangkul

National Food Institute, Thailand
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Ms Orawan Kaewprakaisangkul, currently serving as the Executive Vice President of the National Food Institute, Thailand, has outstanding expertise in the technical aspects of standard development and accreditation: she was the lead assessor of the Thai Industrial Standard Institute, has managed and advised laboratory quality systems and has contributed to the preparation and implementation of Codex Standards and the HACCP system in the food industry. Additionally, she has been the lead researcher in a number of studies on the sources of contaminants in fruits and vegetables and has carried out quantitative residue analyses on fruit products.

Ms Orawan holds a BSc in Chemistry from the Prince of Songkhla University, Thailand and an MSc in Food Processing from the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand.

Venkat Prahlad

Sure Global Fair
venkatprahlad@gmail.com

Mr Venkat Prahlad is an internationally active and highly sought-after management consultant for the food processing industry: as CEO of SNP Associates, a consultancy for high tech food processing and packaging in India, Mr Prahlad has carried out over 400 plant inspections and audits for Sure Global Fair (SGF), the worldwide voluntary certification system for the fruit processing industry. He has also carried out third party supplier assessments for European bottlers in China and India and conducted training and skill development programmes for staff at processing plants across India and Africa. Besides his consultancy services, Mr Prahlad has executive experience in the food processing industry as Senior Sales Officer for Tetra Pak. His educational background includes a BSc in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, a Post-graduate Diploma in Marketing & Sales Management and a Diploma in Business Application Languages and System Analysis.

Session on ‘Consumers’ Perspectives’:**Mohana Priya Veerabarathi**

Malaysian Association of Standards Users

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Ms Mohana Priya Veerabarathi is a proven expert in the field of product safety and accreditation: besides her position as Senior Manager in the Malaysian Association of Standards Users, she is a member of the National Standards Committee which advises the Malaysian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation with regard to consumer protection. In her role as Senior Manager for Product Safety and Social Responsibility Compliance in the Malaysian Association of Standards Users, Ms Mohana is responsible for facilitating consumer representation in standards development at the national and international level, coordinating comparative testing of consumer products to ensure compliance with standards, developing education material, publications and events related to standards and standardisation issues and monitoring the progress of all standards and health related activities.

Ilyani Sudardjat

Consumers Association of Singapore

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Ms Ilyani Sudardjat is a leading figure in Indonesia’s largest consumer organisation, Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia (YLKI), which deals with a wide array of consumer issues ranging from public utilities such as electricity and water to basic needs such as health and food safety. Besides being a member of the Board of Directors, Ms Ilyani is YLKI’s lead researcher, in charge of product testing (e.g. for the formaldehyde content in fish and tofu and the quality of genetically engineered food). Policy studies under her responsibility have included topics such as national legislation on biosafety, consumers’ rights to a healthy environment and the quality and safety of street foods. Ms Sudardjat appears regularly in YLKI publications and other print media and has contributed to several books on health, medicine and food. She holds a BSc in Environmental Science from Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia.

Kingkorn Narintarakul

Food for Change, Thailand

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Ms Kingkorn Narintarakul is a practiced and dedicated advocate for sustainable food and agriculture policies in Thailand: after holding leading positions with the Northern Development Foundation (NDF), an NGO committed to capacity development in the rural Upper North of Thailand, the Thai Action on Globalisation network and Oxfam’s Thailand Programme, she now serves as Assistant Director of the BioThai Foundation. This NGO works with farmers’ groups and networks to develop an understanding of organic and agro-ecological farming systems and practices. Similarly, her current project, the ‘Food for Change’ campaign, aims at raising awareness of the diversity and importance of locally sourced, healthy food and traditional agricultural practices amongst consumer groups in urban areas.

Before committing herself to supporting smallholder agriculture and agrarian reform in Thailand, Ms Kingkorn studied Economics at Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand and holds an MSc in Rural & Regional Resource Planning from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

Li Li

EnviroFriends China

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Ms Li Li is a pioneer of environmental and ecological protection advocacy in China: she is the Director of EnviroFriends, which was established with her personal funding in 2005 and has long been a home for NGO front-line staff, providing training and internships to NGO representatives from remote and underdeveloped areas. As the person responsible for the East Asia Environmental Information Exchange Network on the Chinese side, she has contributed to building communication platforms for environmental information among NGOs, private sector companies, government organisations and scholars in China, Japan and Korea. Ms Li also runs environmental protection awareness training in over 20 Chinese provinces and cities and organises environmental research programmes for middle school and college students.

Having published several books on environmental protection, her recent work has focused on climate change, energy conservation, water and health, as well as green choice issues.

Session ‘Regional Cooperation and Lessons Learned from Technical Assistance’:

Usa Bamrungbhuet

National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS), Thailand
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Ms Usa Bamrungbhuet, currently working as a Standards Officer for the Fish and Fishery Product Standard Group, is an authority on international food standards, especially with regard to the ASEAN context. In this capacity, she has participated in the ASEAN Task Force on Codex and the ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety and serves as the focal point of the ASEAN Food Safety Network. On the global level, she has been active in the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP), on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS), on Meat Hygiene (CCMH) and on Residue of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF).

Ms Usa holds a BSc from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

Dr Clemens Sanetra

Consultant to Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB), Germany
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Dr Clemens Sanetra is a consultant for technical cooperation projects in Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Central and South America with wide-ranging competence in the area of quality infrastructure: his field of activity encompasses the core of quality infrastructure (e.g. metrology, standardisation, testing and quality), as well as its national applications (e.g. food, environment, energy, etc.) and regional collaboration.

Prior to his consulting activities for PTB, Dr Sanetra worked as a scientific researcher at the Environmental Institute CUTEK in Clausthal, Germany. His educational background includes studies in Mechanical Engineering as well as a PhD in Materials Sciences and Testing from the Technical University of Clausthal, Germany.

Dr Li Ning

China National Centre for Food Safety Risk Assessment
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Dr Li Ning is a renowned researcher in the field of food safety in China, with a special focus on food safety surveillance and risk assessment. Having gained a PhD in Food Toxicology, she currently serves as the Assistant Director of the China National Centre for Food Safety Risk Assessment (CFSA), the Deputy General Secretary of the National Expert Committee for Food Safety Risk Assessment, Standing Director of the Chinese Institute of Food Science and Technology and the General Director of the Food Toxicology Expert Committee of the Chinese Society of Toxicology. Furthermore, she has worked for the government in formulating and revising food safety standards and regulations and has published more than 100 scientific papers.

Dr Robert Bambauer

Saudi Food and Drug Authority
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Dr Robert Bambauer is a distinguished expert in the area of veterinary medicine and food safety – both nationally and internationally – with over 20 years of experience in food control programmes: with graduate and post-graduate degrees in veterinary medicine and tropical veterinary medicine and epidemiology, Mr Bambauer has worked as a governmental officer in Germany and as a trainer for food inspectors and laboratory personnel in various European and non-European countries. He has been involved in the preparation and implementation of food safety strategies on behalf of the FAO and the EU. His practical experience with regard to food safety control includes strategy development, project design, legislation drafting, capacity building and institutional strengthening as well as programme implementation in countries as diverse as Turkey, Poland, Lithuania, Macedonia Serbia, Uganda, Peru and Saudi Arabia.

Panel Discussion:**Dr Uwe Scholz**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Germany
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Dr Uwe Scholz is a globally active practitioner in the field of development cooperation with comprehensive technical expertise in aquaculture and sustainable fisheries: he has been with GTZ/GIZ since 1987, mostly on long-term assignments in Zambia, Malawi and Cabo Verde. He has just returned from a five-year assignment in the Philippines and currently works as Senior Planning Officer in the GIZ division on Rural Development and Agriculture, providing backstopping and advice for a total of 25 programmes all over the world. The latter also include aspects of certification, in particular Naturland, Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standards.

Dr Scholz holds an MSc and PhD from the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Germany, both in Fisheries and Marine Science and is a member of the MSC stakeholder council.

Indrani Thuraisingham

Consumers International, Office for Asia-Pacific and the Middle East
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As Head of the Regional Office for Asia-Pacific and the Middle East – Consumers International (CI) in Kuala Lumpur, Ms Indrani Thuraisingham is a pre-eminent voice for consumer rights and consumer protection in Southeast Asia and beyond: leading more than 65 member organisations in CI's overall objective of building a consumer movement to help protect and empower consumers worldwide, her responsibilities include – besides overall management and direction setting – overseeing CI's regional campaigns and research activities and strengthening CI members in the region through information provision and capacity building. Besides her commitment to CI, she also serves as the chairperson of the Southeast Asian Council for Food Security and Fair Trade, better known as SEACON, which conducts research-based advocacy on issues relating to small-scale farmers.

Prior to her work for CI, Ms Indrani was an executive board member of Transparency International Malaysia and the Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations; this adds up to almost 20 years of experience in the field of consumer rights and protection.

Pathom Taenkam

Thai Fruit and Vegetable Producer Association
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Mr Pathom Taenkam, currently serving as Managing Director of the Thai Fresh Produce Exporter P. Prime Co. Ltd., Vice President of Western Cluster GAP and Vice President of the Thai Fruit & Vegetable Producer Association, has acquired substantial in-depth knowledge of food hygiene and food safety issues throughout his career. Besides his main occupations, he has received training from worldwide operating certification companies such as SGS and BSI Inspectorate, participated in GLOBALG.A.P.'s Train-the-Trainer Programme and completed courses on risk assessment and agri-food exporting at the National Food Institute and the Asian Productivity Organisation. Mr Pathom holds a BA in Economics from Ramkhamhaeng University, a BA in Agriculture from Sukhothai Thamathirat University and an MA in Economics from Thammasat University, all in Thailand. He also acts as a speaker on food safety topics relating to produce and Thai produce exports and as a trainer on quality assurance for GLOBALG.A.P., GAP, GMP and HACCP.

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