

## FOOD SAFETY – A CHALLENGE IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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### Abstract

In this paper studied the objectives and importance of food safety along the food chain, from producer to consumer, as well and the implications on human health and a guarantee high level of consumer protection.

Food safety is a multiple and complex process are based the conceptions that on advanced management system on the prevention, analysis and risk management microbiological, chemical and physical food found on the entire flow from raw materials to consumer food on the consumer table. This process of food safety is conditioned by existing gaps in legally, mismanagement and insufficient and inaccurate information. Food safety should be based on tracking, coordination, analysis and design of food technology, the initiation of management and marketing strategy along the food chain and on the design, implementation and monitoring of quality management systems.

European Union law contains a general approach related to the wide range of food, but also a special approach on food safety and correct information about food and animal welfare supplying raw materials for food industry. Thus, it can sustain and ensure the traceability of all food and feed produced and distributed in the European Union.

Protection of human health, animal and plants, for each operation of technological flow, represents a key- element priority of the economic strategies and public health of all citizens are assured that their access to healthy and safe food, from plants and animals healthy and, also, ensure the smooth and developer food industry, an industry which is the largest employer and manufacturing sector in Europe. European Union policy ensures the health every stage of production, from the farm to the consumer's table, prevents food contamination, promote food hygiene and provide consumers with accurate and transparent information about food..

**Key words:** food safety, consumer, trade, European Union

Providing superior food quality and quantity consistent with the increasing needs of the people, is one of the key themes and debate worldwide. A healthy diet involves both ensuring rational and nutritional requirements and ensuring healthy food and quality.

The demographic boom of recent decades has resulted in an imbalance between growing source of world population food needs and possibilities of obtaining it. This imbalance has caused the invasion of global market counterfeit food, unsafe, of poor quality, but at a price below the market at a price much diminished food than authentic.

Nowadays, consumers are becoming more and more concerned, more aware and informed of issues hygienic life and their diet and from this point of view, has become crucial for producers and processors in the food industry to meet both the requirements and parameters on food technology and sanitary requirements on the technological flow. Food safety is one of the most important factors that converge to health, to decrease sick people, and hence the cost of health

structures, as well as to optimize the quality of people's lives.

The terms "food safety" and "quality food" can sometimes be mistaken. The first is a concept that shows that food can not harm the consumer when prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use (Cecilia Răbonțu, 2010).

Food safety concerns the hazards and acute or chronic disease which may make food dangerous to consumer health. Therefore, food safety cannot be negotiated. The difference between safety and quality has implications for policies in the field and influence the essence and content control system, which must meet predetermined national objectives (Opopol N., 2014).

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

This paper studied the topic was conceived on the basis of bibliographical studies of European Union policies and strategies on food safety. Bibliographic material was analyzed and structured based on new concepts and approaches relevant to the food chain.

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Current lifestyles, modern and fast people XXI century, substantial changes have occurred globally, conceptually, in terms of addressing food style and practical, in terms of preparation and consumption of food. A consequence of the positive effects of these changes has been the rapid advancement and modernization of food technology flows.

Rapid advancement in food technology can determine the risk of food contamination through natural contaminants through the accidentally introduced through improper food handling or unfair trade practices. Most reported cases of acute illnesses are caused by food microbiological origin. The presence of chemical and physical factors in determining a limited number of foods acute health disorders, however morbid condition multiple chronic standings and premature deaths, negatively affecting quality of life and life expectancy (Opopol N., 2014).

The importance of the food chain is vital because the quality of the raw materials used in the subsequent technological flows, has a major impact on the quality and safety of the finished product.

Political strategies of the European Union regarding food safety ensure human health along the food chain, following every stage of food production, from farm - producer (raw materials) to the consumer's table.

Food policy of the European Union ("Să înțelegem politicile Uniunii Europene. Siguranța alimentară", 2014) suggested:

- guarantee of food and animal feed safe and nutritious food;
- ensuring a high level of health and welfare and plant protection;
- guarantee that adequate and transparency information about the origin, content, labeling and use of food.

Thanks to EU rules, european citizens benefit from some of the highest international standards in food safety. Along the food and agricultural chain were performed mandatory controls are in place designed to ensure that plants and animals are healthy and that food and feed are safe, high quality, properly labeled and conform to strict standards set at european level („Să înțelegem politicile Uniunii Europene. Siguranța alimentară", 2014).

In 1993, the Codex Alimentarius commission, and then World Health Organization (WHO) have established theoretical control through HACCP (Savu C., 2009).

According to the European Union and the World Health Organisation, food safety is everyone's responsibility, from their origin until they arrive on the table. To maintain the quality and safety of food throughout the chain recalled, it takes so procedures to ensure that foods are intact and monitoring procedures to ensure the outworking of operations in good conditions. The consumer is the end point of the food chain (Cara Daniela, 2014).

Food safety policy in the European Union is considering regulations and rules enlarged highlights the responsibility of producers and suppliers regarding their participation in providing a quality food supply. From this point of view, European Union regulations are among the strictest in the world.

Food quality and safety is based on the efforts of all those involved in the complex chain that includes agricultural production, processing, transportation and consumption. Most reported cases of food-borne illnesses are of microbiological origin. The germs are present everywhere and can enter the food chain at any point (Bondoc, I., 2002).

Quality assurance systems are designed to minimize the risk of microbiological contamination. However, since most foods are not sterile, if not handled properly, there is a risk of contamination. Food safety is an intrinsic quality of the food and the consumer's right to use products safe for consumption (Bondoc, I., 2002).

International law and that in Romania the food industry provides for all units involved in the food chain from primary producers to the distribution of food (production, transport, storage and trade of food), the principles of a management system of food safety (Răboțu Cecilia, 2010).

The three main systems that apply more broadly, are:

- Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). This requires conditions and procedures processing, which have been shown to provide consistent quality and food safety sustainable.
- Risk Analysis in Critical Control Points (HACCP). HACCP is the latest technique, proactive, focusing on identifying potential risks and their control during the production process and ask implemented at all manufacturing enterprises.
- Standards for Quality Assurance. Adherence to the standards set by the International Organization for Standardization and the European Standards contribute to enhancing food safety, the fact that the processes of food processing, catering and other food-related industries conform to prescribed procedures priori. These quality management system used by food processors,

although in its infancy, include relationships with suppliers (farmers and wholesalers of raw materials), transport agencies, sellers of goods wholesale and retail to ensure quality high on every level (Cara Daniela, 2014).

ISO 22000 is the new international standard developed to ensure food security. Developed with the participation of specialists from domain food, ISO 22000 contains the principles HACCP and integrates requirements key standards developed worldwide (Popescu D.V., 2005).

Food sector is the second largest economic sector in the European Union, with a total of 48 million employees and an annual contribution of 750 billion euros to the European Union economy

(”Să înțelegem politicile Uniunii Europene. Siguranța alimentară”, 2014).

Starting from this premise, guarantee consumer access to clear information about the contents and origin of food is paramount and necessary.

It must thus ensure food security globally, giving citizens access to sufficient and quality food, as it is expected that by 2030, we will have to feed a world population consists of 8 billion people, whose needs nutrition will lead to increased consumption of meat products. To meet these needs, global food production will be 40% higher than today, and 80% of this growth will have to come from intensive agricultural production (”Să înțelegem politicile Uniunii Europene. Siguranța alimentară”, 2014).

Manufacturers must put on the market products which comply with the general safety requirement. In addition, they must:

- To provide the consumer with useful information to evaluate the risks inherent in a product when they are not directly obvious;

- Take appropriate measures to avoid these risks (eg, withdrawal of products from the market, warning consumers, recall from consumers products already supplied etc.) (Standardul SR EN ISO 22000:2005 Sisteme de management a siguranței alimentelor).

In the market economy, characterized by a complex mix of food, there is a fierce competition between manufacturers and retailers in terms of meeting at the highest level of requirements, which are in constant change, but without the achievement of economic efficiency and, ultimately, profit is unlikely. Therefore, in a competitive market with such a scale, consumers seek not only general and particular characteristics

of the existing product range, but also the possibilities they have in relation to choice of quality food and goods that is safe for consumption (Manole, V., 2003; Mirela Stoian, 2005).

Should be implemented in each plant food processing, various procedures and control mechanisms, to ensure that products arriving on the table consumers are qualitative, with a risk contamination reduced to zero, so that population to be healthier ago benefits of safe food healthy.

It can be said that a trade niche which aims to clear harmlessness and quality of food is represented by bio or premium products for which the because of the difficult economic situation, consumers are less willing to spend given that they have prices higher (Popescu, D.V., 2005).

Even though food products quality, have a safety guaranteed by the very composition ecological, footprint defining the development of trade in such products rather only, has the purchasing power of end consumers (Răboțu Cecilia, 2010).

## CONCLUSIONS

There are four major components that make up the food safety strategy:

1. regulations on food and feed safety;
2. assurance available and independent scientific information to consumers;
3. the verification process control mechanisms;
4. recognition of the rights of consumers to make decisions based on sources and comprehensive information regarding the origin of the food and its content.

Food safety approach as prominently in European Union directives and standards.

Through the system of food safety management, food suppliers declare their compliance with legal regulations, requirements competent control authorities, professional associations, industry-specific food chain and orientation communication problems the food safety of existing or potential in order to prevent illness and consumer fraud in the food.

Whatever constraints, food safety must remain the primary objective of a civilized society.

Promotion management performance and increase product quality food makes you grow competitiveness on the national and international.

In conclusion, food safety should be a responsibility of all those involved in food, from professionals to consumers.

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