

BRIEFING:

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL FOOD SAFETY COORDINATION COMMITTEE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD CONTROL AGENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA

13-14 NOVEMBER 2015



**agriculture,
forestry & fisheries**

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



the dti

Department:
Trade and Industry
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Outline

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Recap on the previously proposed interventions and report on actual actions taken to address challenges identified in food control systems
- ❖ Update on other progress made by Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
- ❖ Update on progress made by the Department of Health (DoH)
- ❖ Update on progress made by **the dti/NRCS/NCC**
- ❖ Conclusion

Introduction

- ❖ The Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF); Health (DoH); Trade and Industries (DTI) and National Regulator of Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) presented a comprehensive Action Plan to the Joint Portfolio Committees in June 2013 and reported on progress to the Joint Portfolio Committees in September 2013 and February 2014;
- ❖ The aim of the current presentation is to:
 - Provide the Committees with a report on some of the actions taken since the last update and highlight the challenges.

Recap on the previously proposed interventions in the Action Plan

| CHALLENGE | INTERVENTIONS | STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| High level decision to ensure the strengthening of Food Safety Controls | <i>Cabinet level approval to strengthen Food safety controls oversight in South Africa through reconfiguration of a Ministerial Cluster</i> | Foster an integrated approach to governance that is aimed at improving government planning, decision making and service delivery in food safety matters at national, provincial and local levels. |
| Fragmentation of food control authorities | <i>Establishment of Inter-Departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee (IDFSCC)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Systematic review of regulatory frameworks for food safety and food control; -Draft the National Food Safety and Food Control Policy document and a Road Map of Food safety and Food Control in South Africa; -Carry out a feasibility evaluation of an integrated model of governance for food safety and food control -Oversee development of norms and standards for Food Safety and Food Control. |

Recap from previous progress reports

- ❖ **In our previous update, we reported that:**
- ❖ A Cabinet Memo had been prepared for presentation by the Ministers to Cabinet; the Memo sought to request approval for the creation of (1) a Ministerial Cluster on Food Security and Food Safety and (2) the Inter-Departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee (IDFSCC) as precursors to the establishment of a Food Control Agency;
 - The IDFSCC consists of officials from the dti; DAFF; DoH; NRCS and the NCC.
- ❖ The Directors-General (DGs) had meetings in February and March 2014 and recommended that processes related with Cabinet to be halted to allow this matter to be thoroughly ventilated by the new Cabinet;
- ❖ The DG's had informally ordered that the Technical Working Group of the Inter-departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee (IDFSCC) be established and continue with the work of the proposed action plan towards the models for the creation of Food Control Agency.

Current progress status on the approval for the creation of a Ministerial Cluster on Food Security & Food Safety and establishment of IDFSCC

- ❖ The draft cabinet memo requesting the creation of the Ministerial Cluster on Food Security & Food Safety and establishment of IDFSCC have been prepared.
- ❖ The establishment of South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) by the DoH has gone through the parliamentary process (National Assembly and NCOP) and public hearings have been held in October 2015.
- SAHPRA will not include food control activities as the Medicines and Related Substances Amendment bill is about medicines control

Recap on the previously proposed interventions in Action Plan

| CHALLENGE | INTERVENTIONS | STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS |
|--|--|--|
| Lack of capacity to conduct animal species quantitative analysis | <i>Identify laboratories and institution responsible for leading on quantification of species DNA traces</i> | Design and carry out studies on the levels of species contamination that is achievable, detectable, and acceptable in RSA through partnerships with research institutions. |

Progress report on the actual actions taken

- ❖ DAFF has provided funds to South African Agricultural Research Council (**R5,4 million**) and Biotechnology Platform (**R3.39 million**) to improve Laboratory capacity, evaluate meat safety practices and strengthen efforts on detecting counterfeit or fraudulent meat products.
- ❖ Two research projects have been conceptualised and are currently running:
 - Profiling food borne pathogens in local and imported meat, and
 - DNA characterisation and species identification in order to provide for the acceptable levels of cross-contamination in normal production process, and to distinguish contamination from intentional food fraud/species substitution/adulteration.

Profiling, Quantification and Characterization of Bacterial Foodborne Pathogens Isolated From Meat and Meat Products in South Africa

- ❖ The projects are being conducted by Agriculture Research Council (ARC) Laboratories
- ❖ DAFF in collaboration with DoH and Municipalities is collecting and testing samples of meat and meat products for the presence and prevalence of antimicrobial resistance of the targeted nine foodborne pathogens¹
- ❖ 871 meat and meat products have sampled from Gauteng, Free State, Western Cape, Limpopo, and KwaZulu Natal provinces for analysis for presence of foodborne pathogens.

¹The foodborne pathogens of focus are: Shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (O157 and non O157), *Salmonella* spp, *Listeria* spp, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Yersinia enterocolitica*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Clostridium botulinum* and *Campylobacter* spp.

Profiling, Quantification and Characterization of Bacterial Foodborne Pathogens Isolated From Meat and Meat Products in South Africa conti.....

NEXT-GENERATION DNA SEQUENCING FOR MEAT SPECIES IDENTIFICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

- ❖ A pilot survey on 500 animal products samples is being conducted in provinces targeting the diverse abattoirs, processors and retailers to:
 - Determine their management practices and levels of contamination;
 - Establish thresholds to use as standards for acceptable levels of contamination;
 - Develop and optimize protocols for routine quality control and management of species composition in meat products.
- ❖ Samples have been collected from food production facilities and have been submitted to the ARC laboratory for analysis.
- ❖ **Estimated date of completion:** August 2016

Recap on the previously proposed interventions in Action Plan

| CHALLENGE | INTERVENTIONS | STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| Fragmented Food Inspections and lack of Independent meat inspection compromising enforcement and compliance | <i>Review food inspection system within DAFF, the dti and DoH</i> | Finalize independent meat inspection proposal. |

Progress report on the actual actions taken for the finalization of a meat inspection (MI) service at abattoirs

- ❖ DAFF consulted the provinces on the implementation of a meat inspection (MI) service.
- ❖ In March 2015, the DAFF Minister approved the principle of independent meat inspection as envisaged in the “Final proposal for meat inspection service.
- ❖ Due to the delays in finalization of the MI proposal and to speed the Implementation phase, a court order was granted to RMIF against DAFF.
- ❖ DAFF has issued an implementation plan in response to the court order.
- ❖ Assignment of service providers to conduct meat inspection to be carried out in July 2016
- ❖ Plan for the government meat inspection service to be implemented as from 2017.
- ❖ The meat inspection service model to be implemented is a combination of government meat inspection service and assignees.
- ❖ A meat inspection scheme for the assignment of service providers has been drafted in terms of the Meat Safety Act, 2000 (Act 40 of 2000) and consultations are ongoing with the various industry stakeholders.

Progress report on the actual actions taken for the implementation of a meat inspection service

- ❖ The meat inspection service will be implemented in phases, with phase 1 consisting of:
 - the authorization of meat inspection personnel (**2015**),
 - followed by assignment of meat inspection service providers (**2016**)
 - and finally the deployment of government meat inspection inspectors at all abattoirs for oversight and supervision-starting in **2017**.
 - The total cost of Independent Meat Inspection service for the government meat inspection service will start at **R171 million** in 2017 and escalating over the years (2018/2019) to **R636 million**.
- ❖ A request to National Treasury has been made.

Strengthening Scientific Capacity in the area of Sanitary and PhytoSanitary (SPS) on Food Safety, Animal Health and Plant Health Risk analysis

| CHALLENGE | INTERVENTIONS | STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Limited capacity for appropriate scientific inputs in decision-making processes | Appoint a Scientific Advisory group | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-To advice the IDFSCC and coordinate or carry out interdepartmental food safety risk assessments.-Research and risk assessments on emerging issues.-Harmonization of food imports risk assessment- To advice on food safety |

Strengthening Scientific Capacity in the area of SPS (Food Safety, Animal Health and Plant Health) Risk analysis

- ❖ A formal submission by DAFF for the research chair on SPS (Food Safety, Animal Health and Plant Health) risk analysis capacity building under the current South African centre of excellence in Food Security have been approved by the Department of Science and Technology/National Research Foundation (DST/NRF) at a cost sharing of 60:40 between DST/NRF and DAFF.
- DAFF executive management are finalizing the approval of the project funding agreement as well as the paperwork for the transfer of **R5 million** to DST/NRF.
- The targeted date of implementation of the SPS (Food Safety, Animal Health and Plant Health) risk analysis chair project is January 2016.
- ❖ DoH has established a Food Legislation Advisory Group (FLAG) which consist of government departments, industry, academia, research institutions and consumer organisations to provide scientific advice on the development of legislation in food safety.

Progress report on the work of the dti/NRCS) - Processed Animal products

- ❖ The work by the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) on a proposed new Compulsory Specification for Processed Meat Products have been halted due to a stalemate on levies with the Industry;
- ❖ The levy sub-committee comprising of members from the manufacturers (South African Meat Processors Association - SAMPA), retailers, Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA), South African National Consumer Union (SANCU) and NRCS met with the dti, requested to consult with DoH and promised to give feedback to NRCS/DTI.

Progress report on the work of the dti/NRCS - Processed Animal products continued..

- ❖ SAMPA presented at the FLAG (Food Legislators Advisory Group) meeting where they indicated that the focus was on the industry policing (SAMPA/CGCSA) in conjunction with DoH.
- ❖ At the FLAG meeting (August 2015) the DoH announced that they will convene a meeting to further elaborate on the SAMPA proposal with DAFF and the NRCS.
- ❖ Establishment of the modalities on how processed meats are going to be regulated by DAFF and DoH are still underway.

Progress report on the National Consumer Commission Investigation

Meat Labelling and potential Food Fraud

- ❖ The National Consumer Commission (NCC) work in relation to red meat industry investigation started in 2013 have been completed.
- ❖ A final report with recommendations has been made available to the Minister of Trade and Industry.
- however the finalised investigation has given rise to another sensitive investigation into amongst other things, the possible importation of Kangaroo and Water Buffalo Meat into the South African consumer market.
- releasing the Investigation Report pertaining to the finalised 2013/14 red meat value chain investigation could invariably scupper the recently commissioned investigation.

Progress report on the National Consumer Commission Investigation Continued....

- ❖ In its recommendation, the NCC identified the need to unify all relevant Directorates from different Departments mandated with responsibilities for Food control should explore the establishment of a National Food Authority to ensure a whole chain food safety from farm to fork.
- ❖ NCC's view has also been noted in the recent Performance of Veterinary Services Gap Analysis (PVS GAP) report from the World Organisation for Animal Health,

Progress report on the actual actions taken by the Department of Health

- ❖ As intervention to strengthen controls of importation of consignments through Points of Entry, the DoH has finalized the incorporation of Port Health Services into the National Department Health from the Provincial departments with effect from April 2014.
- ❖ Department of Health (DoH) published the Draft Regulations relating the Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs.
- ❖ DoH is finalizing the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the DAFF to ensure collaboration relating to legislation and regulations in terms of the Foodstuffs Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act (Act 54 of 1972)
- ❖ The draft MoU with NRCS is also being developed to address similar and other overlapping Food Control issues

Progress report on the actual actions taken by the Department of Health

- ❖ The initial proposed change to the current MCC was to allow for the establishment of a South African Health Product Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) in terms of the Medicines and Related Substances amendment Bill that will expand its regulatory function to include food control.
- The current status is that Food Control regulatory functions will not be included under in terms of the amendment bill.
- ❖ DoH is also assessing the capacity of the Environmental Health Services within municipalities to monitor and manage Municipal Health Services.
- The focus areas of the assessment are food safety, water safety, sanitation, medical waste management and vector control, a preliminary baseline report highlighted areas requiring attention per Municipality.
- The assessment is expected to be completed in March 2016.

Thank You