

# BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD

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## About this newsletter

This newsletter contains information on training activities organised within the Better Training for Safer Food initiative of the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers. It also gives details of all other issues related to the initiative.

Further information on Better Training for Safer Food can be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/training\\_strategy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/index_en.htm)

## BTSF Africa

### Africa programme breaks new ground for initiative

Training within Better Training for Safer Food in Africa begins in 2009 and runs throughout 2009-10. A high-level opening conference takes place in Addis Ababa on 3 April in the presence of EU Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou.



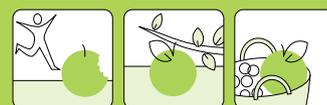
The programme is aimed at strengthening the capacity of African countries in the area of health and plant health. This should help them to improve application of international sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) standards and consequently to produce and distribute agricultural and food products which comply these standards. Increased access to the global food market will in turn contribute to economic development and poverty alleviation.

Capacity building in this field will also help to ensure that food sold in Africa is healthy and so protect consumers. This should reduce the likelihood of food-borne disease and related social and economic burden.

Beneficiaries of the training are to include public authority staff, farmers and agro-food processors, distributors and retailers.

A range of activities are running within the programme focusing on more specific aims. These include increasing SPS expertise and food security, evaluating veterinary services and improving their legal framework, enhancing laboratory capacity and training Chief Veterinary Officers and National Focal Points.

An intensive training session is scheduled for 30 March-2 April, prior to the opening conference and also in Addis Ababa. This is to train officials from the African Union, regional economic communities and specialist bodies in harmonisation of the legal framework related to SPS standards.



## Training programmes

### HACCP training remains a priority

The EU considers high standards of food and feed safety to be essential for ensuring protection of consumer and animal health. The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system (HACCP) is a preventative safety approach and is internationally accepted as the system of choice for food and feed safety management. EU legislation thus requires its implementation by food and feed businesses in almost all areas of the food chain.



Better Training for Safer Food has, from the outset, recognised the importance of this system and has devoted a considerable amount of time to training national authority staff on HACCP principles. Courses on this subject are continuing for a fourth year in 2009, following the success of the training in the first three years of the initiative.

A total of 19 workshops are scheduled for the whole year. Six of these are to cover the implementation and maintenance of procedures based on HACCP principles. A further 13 are on audits verifying implementation of HACCP systems by businesses.

### Recognising the need for hygiene and controls

Good hygiene practices are at the same time the most basic and the most important of all food safety measures. At the same time, proper controls are vital in order to verify that these and other such practices contributing to food quality and safety are implemented by food producers.

In accordance with these principles, the Commission launched training on food hygiene and controls within Better Training for Safer Food in 2008 and is continuing this programme in 2009. The training covers three main sectors: meat, dairy and fishery products. Reflecting the importance of this subject, a total of 15 workshops are being organised during the year of which five are to focus on each product type.

### Protecting plants from harmful organisms

The EU established its Community Plant Health Regime in 1977 with a view to preventing the introduction into and spread within the EU of organisms which are harmful to plants. The Regime lays down specific requirements for imports of all plants and some plant products into the EU and for internal movement of a limited number of plants within the EU. The fully harmonised Regime allows free movement of consignments produced within the EU or, after import inspection, imported into the EU. At the same time, it enables the demarcation of protected zones that are free from specific harmful organisms occurring elsewhere in the EU.

In 2009, the plant health regime is again supported by training on plant health issues. This follows on from the work done in this area during 2008. Main subjects of modules within the programme include the EU's import control provisions and internal plant quarantine regime. In the light of Food and Veterinary Office reports which brought to light shortcomings in the implementation of potato control directives in some Member States, a third module on the EU plant quarantine regime for potatoes is also to run.

## Upcoming events

30 March-2 April: Better Training for Safer Food in Africa opening conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

30 March-3 April: Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), Port Louis, Mauritius

20-24 April: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles, Stratford upon Avon, UK

20-24 April: Hygiene and controls on fishery products and live bivalve molluscs, Vigo, Spain

20-24 April: Hygiene and controls on milk and dairy products, Brescia, Italy

For more information on all 2009 training programmes see: [http://ec.europa.eu/food/training\\_strategy/training/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/training/index_en.htm)

