U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act Standards Now Being Applied to Food Aid Products for Nutrition and Humanitarian Response

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BACKGROUND

Over the last 8 years, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) transformed the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) food safety and quality assurance regulations for farmers, manufacturers and importers by shifting focus from *responding to* cases of foodborne illness to the *prevention* of foodborne illness in both the domestic and international food supply chain.

OBJECTIVE

Introduce modern food safety and microbiology standards into specifications for food aid products to address and prevent moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) as part of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) efforts to improve nutrition and safety of food aid products distributed worldwide.

METHODS

Research standards and apply them to the manufacturing specifications for each product, Starting with the micronutrient fortified blended flour (FBF) products. The deoxynivalenol (DON) test for vomitoxin has been developed and added to the specifications for all grain-based food aid products.

RESULTS

Specifications for Corn-Soy Blend Plus, Super Cereal Plus (SCP), and Fortified Milled Rice now include FSMA-appropriate microbiological testing. Improved formulations deliver bioavailable forms of Iron and enhanced micronutrients, and SCP includes a dose of animal protein from dairy. These foods are widely consumed as part of a humanitarian ration and targeted to mothers and children in the first 1,000 days to address MAM. These vulnerable populations will benefit most immediately from improved food aid safety measures.

A CASE STUDY IN U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL INTERAGENCY HARMONIZATION

2013

Begin in-plant inspection of RUSF and RUTF

2014

FSA solicitations for RUSF and RUTF allow U.S. Government audits in place of in-plant inspections, Suppliers switch to U.S. government audit protocol

2015

AMS lead audits at RUSF and RUTF supplier facilities with USAID, UNICEF and MSF

USAID harmonized specification for RUSF and RUTF with input from industry and U.S. Government

2016

AMS lead audits at RUSF and RUTF supplier facilities with USAID, UNICEF and MSF

2017

Transition to USAID-based comprehensive audits with follow-up protocol
Team made up of all orgs UNICEF, MSF, USAID, FSA

2018

CONCLUSIONS

International guidelines for the food aid products distributed by organizations such as WFP, USAID, USDA, and MSF are important for ensuring simplified requirements for verifying quality and safety at the source. The application of FSMA to the food aid supply chain, including DON testing can be applied globally will be essential to ensure safety as more and more local and regional manufacturers supply the humanitarian food aid basket.

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