

Summary of USAID Food for Peace Safety & Quality Assurance Feedback Loop Analysis

Maintaining the safety and quality of food aid products traveling across the long, often harsh, food aid supply chain is crucial. As part of its food aid quality improvement activities, **USAID is focusing on optimizing the effectiveness of its food safety and quality assurance (FSQA) measures. FSQA Feedback Loops are an essential tool to report and address incidents that may arise anywhere along the supply chain:** from the producers and suppliers, to the consumers/end users, and back.

Figure 1: Food Aid Supply Chain Overview



REVIEW OF FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

A review of six FSQA feedback loop systems were conducted. **Ease of use, timeliness, questionnaire and data type, data and trend analysis, storage, reporting threshold (U.S. dollar amount), and staff requirements were among the criteria used to evaluate each system.**

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The current USAID/FFP FSQA feedback system and its accompanying questionnaire are **underutilized and inefficient without a database of stored data.**
2. FFP staff estimate that they are **informed about and respond to only about ten incidents per year out of the 3.1 million metric tons** of food distributed annually.

THE TOP FOUR CATEGORIES OF REPORTED FSQA INCIDENTS:



Damages to commodities detected at the discharge port or primary storage facility. These included water damage, torn and dented packaging which occurred during international transport.



Loss of product detected at the discharge port (e.g., inaccurate quantity/weight of bulk or packaged commodity compared to the amount listed on the Bill of Lading).



Infestation of unopened commodities detected in warehouses. This can occur in any grain product that is not adequately protected by previous fumigation.



Organoleptic changes detected during or after distribution. The affected characteristics include changes in flavor, frequently presenting as bitterness, color change, or “off” odor.

SEVEN PILLARS OF AN EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK LOOP SYSTEM

1. Accessible and user-friendly for all stakeholders.
2. Shortened timeframe from incident reporting to agency response.
3. Collects relevant information about incidents and makes it available to users.
4. Automatic storage and archiving of data for easy retrieval.
5. Capable of combining and transforming data for trend analysis, when appropriate.
6. Lowering the product value requirement for reporting incidents to encourage reporting.
7. More staff is available to ensure resolution of incidents and manage data.

NEXT STEPS

It is recommended that USAID/FFP adopt a simpler FSQA Feedback Loop and pilot test the system with a couple of food aid products. **The new feedback loop should include the following components:**

TYPE OF TOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A multiplatform questionnaire that allows for easy transfer and sorting of information.
EASE OF USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A simple, streamlined, and user-friendly system that allows for easy completion of incident reports and uploaded content when necessary.
TIMELINESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Incidents/issues are reported quickly and instant notifications occur when reported, allowing for fast flow of information throughout supply chain.
DATA TYPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Contains monetary and food loss data, photographs, lot numbers, volume of affected product and other information critical resolving the issue.
DATA STORAGE, RETRIEVAL AND ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Data can be collected, stored automatically, and disseminated easily. Trend analysis can identify root causes and complete corrective actions.
REPORTING THRESHOLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Has little to no reporting threshold, as lowering value increases likelihood of incidents/issues being reported
STAFF REQUIREMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · At least one dedicated staff member to fully implement system, manage data, and provide necessary feedback for incident resolution.

FULL REPORTS

Schlossman, Nina; Bridges, Mandy; and Johnson, Quentin. November 2018. *USAID FOOD FOR PEACE Food Safety & Quality Assurance Feedback Loop Analysis. A report from the Food Aid Quality Review*, managed by Tufts University's Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. Boston, MA. ([Find Here](#))

USAID FOOD FOR PEACE Food Safety & Quality Assurance Feedback Loop: A Proposed Questionnaire and Database for Collection of Food Aid Quality Incidents. Boston, MA. ([Find Here](#))

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