'Food safety, everybody's business' - the first World Food Safety Day 2019

Everyone has the right to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. Still today, almost one in ten people in the world fall ill after eating contaminated food. When food is not safe, children cannot learn, adults cannot work. Human development cannot take place.

The first ever World Food Safety Day (WFSD) is being celebrated on 7 June 2019 to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks, contributing to food security, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, tourism and sustainable development.

For this inaugural World Food Safety Day, food safety organisations are raising global awareness about food safety in general and highlighting that everyone involved in food systems has a part to play.

1. Ensure it’s safe - Governments must ensure safe and nutritious food for all

National governments are critical in guaranteeing that we all can eat safe and nutritious food. Policy makers can promote sustainable agriculture and food systems, fostering multi-sectoral collaboration among public health, animal health, agriculture and other sectors. Food safety authorities can manage food safety risks along the entire food chain, including during emergencies. Countries can comply with international standards established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

2. Grow it safe - Agriculture and food producers need to adopt good practices

Farming practices must ensure a sufficient supply of safe food at a global level today while at the same time mitigating climate change and minimizing environmental impacts for tomorrow. As food production systems transform to adapt to changing conditions, farmers must carefully consider optimal ways to address potential risks to ensure that food is safe.

3. Keep it safe - Business operators must make sure food is safe

Preventive controls can address most of food safety problems. Everyone involved in food operations – from processing to retail – must ensure compliance with programmes like HACCP, a system that identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significant for food safety from primary production to final consumption. Additionally, good processing, storage and preservation help retain nutritional value and food safety as well as reduce post-harvest losses.

4. Check it’s safe - All consumers have a right to safe, healthy and nutritious food

Consumers have the power to drive change. They need to be empowered to make healthy food choices for themselves and support sustainable food systems for the planet. Given the complexity of food safety, consumers need access to timely, clear and reliable information about the nutritional and disease risks associated with their food choices. Unsafe food and unhealthy dietary choices swell the global burden of disease

5. Team up for safety - Food safety is a shared responsibility

The diverse group that share responsibility for food safety – governments, regional economic bodies, UN organizations, development agencies, trade organizations, consumer and producer groups, academic and research institutions and private sector entities – must work together on issues that affect us all, globally, regionally and locally. Collaboration is needed at many levels – across sectors within a government and across borders when combatting outbreaks of foodborne illness globally.

Background

The United Nations General Assembly declared 7 June 2019 the first ever World Food Safety Day, in a December 2018 resolution. The UN food and health bodies – Codex Alimentarius, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – are leading efforts across the globe to raise awareness of food safety issues and contribute to the UN’s development goals.