# Food safety and the COVID -19 pandemic: lessons learnt

AUDA-NEPAD Guidelines for harmonizing Food Safety Standards and Legislations: Technical Review Webinar



## Outline of the presentation

- Introduction: Potential transmission of COVID-19 via food
- Key lessons learnt
  - ✓ Application of a "One Health Approach"
  - ✓ Invest in building of safe food markets
  - ✓ New challenges to food safety authorities arising from COVID-19 Pandemic : reorient national food control systems
  - ✓ Strengthen existing Food Safety Management Systems in the food industry + additional measures



### Potential transmission of COVID-19 via food

Highly unlikely that people can catch COVID-19 from food or food packaging :

### How to grocery shop safely?

- When grocery shopping, keep at least 1-metre distance from others and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose. If possible, sanitize the handles of shopping trolleys or baskets before shopping. Once home, wash your hands thoroughly and also after handling and storing your purchased products.
- There is currently no confirmed case of COVID-19 transmitted through food or food packaging.



## Potential transmission of COVID-19 via food

Potential survival of SARS-CoV-2 in food environment:

### How to wash fruits and vegetables?

• Fruits and vegetables are important components of a healthy diet. Wash them the same way you should do under any circumstance: before handling them, wash your hands with soap and water. Then, wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly with clean water, especially if you eat them raw.



## Application of a "One Health Approach"

Food safety and COVID-19 – A One Health Issue: Reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals for food in traditional food markets

Interim guidance

XX May 2020



#### **Executive Summary**

Traditional food markets, rather than supermarkets, are the norm in many parts of the world. Such markets form part of the social fabric of communities and are a main source of affordable fresh foods for many low-income groups and an important source of liveloof of communities and rural dwellers from Asia to Africa. Europe and the America.

But significant problems arise when these markets allow the sale and slaughter of live animals in areas open to the public, sepecially wild animals. When wild animals' are held in cages and slaughtered and dressed in open market areas that become contaminated with body fluids, faeces, and other waste, a risk arises for transmission of the pathogens they carry to workers and customers alike, and can also result in a spill over to other animals in the market. Experience shows that these environments provide a location for animal viruses, including tomans.

The majority of moently-emerging infectious diseases have wildlife origins, among them Lassa, Marburg, Nipals and other viral diseases. Within the coronavirus family, zoonotic viruses have been linked to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) first detected in 2012. The COVID-19 pandemic stemmed from introduction of a novel coronavirus ("SARS-CoV-2") into human populations. While the specific mechanism of SARS-CoV-2 emergence has not been definitively identified, at some point or over time interactions occurred that allowed for cross- and perhaps multiple - species pathogen transmission. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) recognizes the repeated emergence of zoonotic diseases and the linkages of some of these along the value chain of the wildlife rande.

It should be noted that zoonotic disease risks vary amongst different animal species (e.g. terrestrial w aquatic animal species), different farming and marketing systems, thus risk assessment is required to determine appropriate risk management strategies.

Well-managed traditional food markets that separate areas for selling and slaughtering live animals from access to the general public, which operate under veterinary supervision with good hygiene and sanitation standards for workers and the animals, and that have adequate waste management systems in place, are safe environments for public shopping.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is working closely with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and other international agencies to ensure that the global food system is safe and secure, and that technical support is available for the strengthening national food safety control systems. In some parts of the world, there are traditional food markets where live animals are sold in designated areas as well as markets dedicated to selling live wild animals. WHO and OIE are committed to assisting governments to strengthen food safety regulations to prohibit the marketing and sale of captured live wild animals as food and to control the safety of all animals and animal products intended for human consumption.

In order to reduce the public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals for food in traditional food markets, WHO and OIE are recommending a number of urgent actions that national governments should consider adopting.

Upcoming - recommendation from WHO and OIE:

WHO and OIE are committed to assisting governments to strengthen food safety regulations to prohibit the marketing and sale of captured live wild animals as food and to control the safety of all animals and animal products intended for human consumption.



## Invest in building safe food markets

**Food markets** (traditional food markets, informal rarmers markets, street-food markets):

are an important source of affordable fresh for of people all over the world

have a **critical social function** and are a great and are a great But....

- Little consideration given to food safety and environmental health when building markets
- ➤ Lack of **basic infrastructure** (no running water, polluted water used, poor waste management, inadequate zoning)
- ➤ Live animals and raw food of animal origin **not separated** from ready-toeat food
- Lack of awareness of basic safe food handling behavior World Health Organization

## New challenges for food safety authorities: reorient national food control systems



WHO and FAO guidance to food safety authorities:

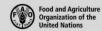
- New challenges for Food Safety
   Authorities: Teleworking, Protection of inspectors and premises, prioritization of inspections
- Working as usual not an option need to identify and prioritize critical areas of work
- Reduced capacity as laboratories relocated to clinical work
- Risk to the integrity of the food supply chain from food fraud
- Communication with stakeholders

https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/covid-19-and-food-safety-guidance-for-competent-authorities-responsible-for-national-food-safety-control-systems

Orientações provisórias

controlo da segurança dos alimentos

22 de Abril de 2020



COVID-19 e segurança dos alimentos: Orientações para as autoridades competentes responsáveis pelos sistemas de





## **Strengthen existing Food Safety Management** systems + additional hygiene measures

COVID-19 et sécurité sanitaire des aliments : orientations pour les entreprises du secteur alimentaire

Orientations provisoires 7 avril 2020

#### Contexte

Avec la pandémie de COVID-19 causée par le virt CoV-2, le monde est aujourd'hui confronté à une me. précédent. De nombreux pays à travers le monde conseil de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé préconise la mise en place de mesures de di physique, l'un des moyens de réduire la transmi pnysique, aun des moyens de teames a maladie. L'application de ces mesures a fermeture d'un grand nombre d'entreprises, d'établissements d'enseignement, et des restricts o etavissements o enseignement, et des restricts aussi les voyages et les rassemblements. Pour aussi les voyages et les fassemorements. Fou télétravail et les discussions et les réunions e désormais partie du quotidien. Les employés d alimentaire, eux, n'ont pas la possibilité de trav leur domicile et doivent continuer de se rendre travail habituel. Pour traverser cette pand indispensable de préserver la santé et la sécurit moispensante de preserver la sante et la securit qui travaillent dans la production alimentaire chaînes d'approvisionnement en denrées. Les m produits doivent se poursuivre le long de la cha et toutes les parties prenantes doivent cont contion essentielle. C'est une nécessité aussi

#### COVID-19 and food safety: guidance for food businesses

Interim guidance 7 April 2020





The world is facing an unprecedented threat from the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (referred to as the COVID-19 virus). Many countries are following the advice from the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding the introduction of physical distancing measures as one of the ways in which transmission of the disease can be reduced.1 The application of these measures has resulted in the closure of many businesses, schools, and institutes of education, and restrictions on travel and social gatherings. For some people, working from home, teleworking, and on-line or internet discussions and meetings are now normal practices. Food industry personnel, however do not have the opportunity to work from home and are required to continue to work in their usual workplaces.

The numose of these guidelines is to highlight these tional measures so that the integrity of the food chain is maintained, and that adequate and safe food supplies are available for consumers

#### Potential transmission of COVID-19 via food

It is highly unlikely that people can contract COVID-19 from food or food packaging. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and the primary transmission route is through person-toperson contact and through direct contact with respiratory droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes

There is no evidence to date of viruses that cause respiratory illnesses being transmitted via food or food packaging. oronaviruses cannot multiply in food; they need an animal

he most recent advice from the WHO3 is that current ridence indicates that COVID-19 virus is transmitted during ose contact through respiratory droplets (formed on oughing or sneezing) and by fomites. 4-10 The virus can read directly from person-to-person when a COVID-19 ise coughs or sneezes, producing droplets that reach the nose outh, or eyes of another person. Alternatively, as the spiratory droplets are too heavy to be airborne, they land on bjects and surfaces surrounding the infected person. It is assible that someone may become infected by touching a

## مرض كوفيد-19 وسلامة الأغذية: ارشادات لقطاعات الأعمال في



ارشادات مبدنية

COVID-19 e inocuidad de los alimentos: orientaciones para las empresas alimentarias

Orientaciones provisionales







7 de abril de 2020

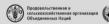
La pandemia de COVID-19 causada por el virus SARS-CoV-2 ha puesto al mundo frente una amenaza sin precedentes. Muchos países están siguiendo el consejo de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) de aplicar medidas de distanciamiento físico como una de las formas de reducir la transmisión de esta enfermedad. 1 Como consecuencia de ello. se han cerrado muchas empresas, escuelas e instituciones educativas, y se han restringido viajes y reuniones. Para algunas personas, el teletrabajo y las conversaciones y reuniones en línea se han convertido en parte de la vida cotidiana. Sin embargo, el personal de las empresas alimentarias no puede trabajar desde su domicilio y se les pide que sigan desplazándose a sus lugares habituales de trabajo.

evalúe si las medidas adicionales que se puedan adoptar ponen en riesgo la inocuidad de los alimentos. Esta persona debe estar en contacto con los organismos de reglamentación pertinentes y seguir sus recomendaciones. Las empresas alimentarias deben aplicar urgentemente las medidas necesarias para impedir que los trabajadores del sector necesarias para impedir que fos tatospatores de sector contraigan la COVID-19, evitar la exposición y la transmisión del virus causante y reforzar las prácticas de higiene y saneamiento de los alimentos.

La finalidad de las presentes orientaciones es explicar la medidas adicionales que se pueden adoptar para preservar la integridad de la cadena alimentaria y garantizar el acceso de los consumidores a alimentos que satisfagan sus necesidades sin poner en riesgo su salud.

#### со ир 40 .. = эзопасность пищевых продуктов: для предприятий пищевой

ации





тной угрозой панлемии M SARS-CoV-2. MHOTHE Всемирной организации шении введения мер по таншии как одного из фекции<sup>1</sup>. Внедрение этих их предприятий, школ и

этих групп должны принимать участие во всех обсуждениях, чтобы гарантировать, что новые меры будут рассмотрены с учетом безопасности пищевых продуктов. Если на предприятии нет группы в области FSMS и/или НАССР, необходимо назначить одного человека, ответственного за рассмотрение вопроса о том могут ли в результате лополнительных мер возникнуть риски для безопасности пищевых продуктов. Это назначенное лицо должно обратиться в Управление по контролю качества пищевых продуктов для получения

#### **WHO** and **FAO** quidance food businesses:

- How to protect food workers
- How to shop safely
- Safety in retail sector

https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/covid-19-and-food-safety-quidance-for-foodbusinesses



## Thank you

