

Questions and Answers-World Food Safety Day Celebration 05th June 2020

Q1. With need to increase standard of food safety, compliance becomes expensive and thus increase cost of operation- as such higher cost of produce or product. For SMME or SME how does DALRRD help and support to reduce this cost component including capacity and knowledge and systems to put in place? A serious barrier to entry and access to markets- yet, a good competitiveness. So, what is the framework as solution to help leverage for competitiveness?

The challenges highlighted above is acknowledged and identified as one of the biggest hurdles for SMME development and competitiveness. This is also highlighted in "The strategy on the development of agro-processors in South Africa"

In response to this challenge, the DALRRD has developed a multi-pronged intervention measures aimed at the following:

Training and capacitating SMMEs on various standards both mandatory and some voluntary standards such as HACCP, FSSC,

Providing assistance for SMMEs to implement applicable Food Safety Management Systems.

This is done in collaboration with other institutions such as SABS, SEDA and the provincial departments of agriculture

You are welcome to contact me for more details on the above intervention measures.

My contact details are as follows:

KoketsoS@dalrrd.gov.za

Office no: 012 319 8110

Q2. I am currently doing my master's thesis regarding food safety and am also an agricultural economist who works in economics and agro=processing division at WC Department of Agriculture. My question relates to the prices or sales data before and after food safety crisis (food

CONSUMER GOODS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

Block D | Pinmill Farm | 164 Katherine Street | Barlow Park | Sandton | Johannesburg | 2148
Tel: +27 (0)86 124 2000 | Fax: +27 (0)86 685 2751 | Web: www.cgcsa.co.za
VAT No 4510 10 11 34 | Reg No 1982/006710/08

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poisoning scandals). How can I get or where can I get historical food prices data for an implicated product due to the food safety crises? I am struggling to get this data in SA

I am not sure, but you can try the National Agricultural marketing Council (NAMC). I know that at some stage they were monitoring the prices of food in the country. Therefore, they might probably have the information you want.

Q3. How will regulatory compliance be monitored with relation to SMME's, school? My question relates to street vendors. The training and trainers available to educate street vendors, educators and scholars in food safety requirements, how will the information of available training be advertised especially to vendors and spaza shops in informal settlements. What can we do to help?

Disclaimer: I will be responding to this question without fully understanding of the last question, specifically not knowing who you are referring to by 'We'.

Although regulation of food safety is a shared responsibility, once food reaches the shelves of shops and other establishments where it is being used the responsibility of monitoring is mostly given to Department of Health and it is done through the Environmental Health Practitioners (EHP) from municipalities.

It is therefore the responsibility of the department of health to monitor compliance and create awareness of the various establishments you mentioned above.

You can contact the Ms Sherly Duplessis from the department of health for more details on what the department is doing to ensure compliance by various entities and to train and create awareness.

Please contact Ms Sherly Duplessis
012 395 8785.
E-mail address: Dupless@health.gov.za.

Q4. As youth interested in farming without land, how can we benefit from land leased to farmers and information on Agri Parks in rural areas, food processing and storage so that our products can get into retail

Issues related to access to land and the Agri parks project is managed by the former department of Rural Development and it not directly in my area of responsibility. So, I would advise that you contact your nearest office of the former department of Rural development for assistance.

Q5. Product traceability is key critical on that we agree. How practical will this be to implement in the rural areas? People grow, produce and trade on products that do not conform to any of the legislative or required food safety measures. Independent producers at rural level simply don't have the money or skills capacity to meet these standards. Sometimes just getting the Municipal R638 is a mountain to overcome. Once they have that, they cannot understand why Spar, Shoprite etc. will not buy from them. How do we address this from an education perspective?

The NRCS and other bodies have a Food Safety Inspectors and the Retailers also have Food Safety Support to all products coming into the market. The NRCS as well as nDoh also have mobilized groups that keep watch in instances of independent sellers, as you have stated government has to deal with the informal sector but CGCSA is also setting up an SMME support compliance program to support SMMEs who want to be compliant.

Q6. At what stage of company start-up should one have all products registered for bar-coding? What is the cost of bar-coding? Is GS1 available to help SMME's with bar codes? With the development of Big Data- should one go straight with FRID or stick with bar coding? Or are these to co-exist in the foreseeable future?

The moment your product concept is finalized and when you are ready to begin to print your packaging is the very moment for which you can apply for your barcodes, there is never a time too soon to start your barcode applications, call GS1 ZA now.

Q7. Now that the "naked isle" has been launched, to help with the plastic situation, how will packaging be done now with fresh produce? With the pandemic, consumers would rather want to buy food that is covered in packaging. This is also now the time for packaging to step up in bio-degradable design in order to stay sustainable for our environment

With regards to the "Naked Isle" and customers wanting to buy food that is covered. Currently there is no evidence that the Corona Virus (Covid-19) is transmitted through food. We need to ensure that all suppliers and our stores and customers wash their hands and wash the produce prior to eating or using the product.

All suppliers need to manage their staff, ensure hand washing and sanitisers are available. We have signage up in the Fresh Produce department advising customer to wash open product before using the Produce.

With regards to sustainability and packaging, we are not encouraging Bio-degradable packing be used as currently there are no recycling plants in South Africa who have the capacity to recycle bio-degradable packaging, this packaging goes to landfill. We are encouraging packaging for items of produce that are sold in packaging for the packaging to be recyclable or to contain a percentage of recycled content. This is in line with the Packaging reduction commitment made by Pick n Pay.

Q8. On the funding for Agric- and Agro- processing both my request for funding at SEDA and SEFA are not given attention for I'm told all programs are closed as all activities and funds are looking at existing business and not supporting any new business in the context of Covid-19. Now what does it mean with the funding at hand from EDSE?

The funding under EDSE Programme is also managed through government systems because it is a budget support programme. As indicated during the presentation, the money is programmed through the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (sefa).

Q9. Is there a way that started small farmers can be funded in this programme ? There are lots of small farmers who have land but do not have money to buy seed and other necessary farming equipment to start. Is there a way that DALRRD can assist these many small starter ups quickly from your organizations?

The ultimate expected outcome of the EDSE programme is market access, with a focus on linking those already in business to the supply chains of supermarkets, manufacturers, government departments and SOEs. The programme partners are currently working on financing mechanisms to test some approaches and models to ensure inclusion of those who do not access finance.

Q10. When will there be a webinar about promoting organic seeds instead of GMP's/Monsato seeds?

As an industry association we usually host discussions or sessions on matters pertaining to various technical and regulatory issues including organic and Genetically Modified Organisms. Organic (GMO) products are well regulated products in South Africa by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform. We will look into partnering with the relevant stakeholders to educate the sector in the future.

Q11. After how many days after the use by date is a product still safe to consume?

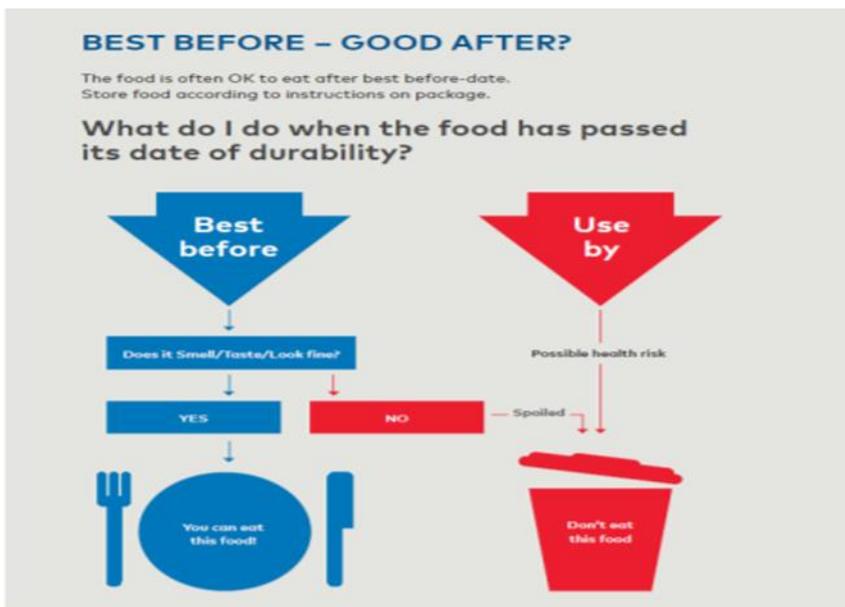
Consumers and the supply chain are guided by date marking definitions as outlined by the global and national standards bodies such as Codex Alimentarius and local regulations. Codex Alimentarius (Codex) has recently updated and adopted the following date marking definitions (Codex Alimentarius Commission, July 2018):

“Date of Manufacture” means the date on which the food becomes the product as described. This is not an indication of the durability of the product.

“Date of Packaging” means the date on which the food is placed in the immediate container in which it will be ultimately sold. This is not an indication of the durability of the product.

“Best Before Date” or “Best Quality Before Date” means the date which signifies the end of the period, under any stated storage conditions, during which the unopened product will remain fully marketable and will retain any specific qualities for which implied or express claims have been made. However, beyond the date the food may still be acceptable for consumption.

The below infographic may help consumers decide if food is safe to consume



**Nordic Council of Ministers
-Best before - Good After?
Infographic, 2017**

