

1. Food Safety Crucial for Vietnamese Produces' Reputation Abroad

Foreign markets, especially Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement members, will take in Vietnamese fruit and vegetables in 2016, but the question now is how to supply enough volume while following strict safety standards.

Fruit and vegetables are among the commodities in which Vietnam has competitive advantages when it comes to the TPP. They made inroads into many demanding markets in 2015, including major TPP members like the US, Japan and Australia.

One of the most critical factors faced by Vietnam's export of fruit and vegetables is to control chemical residues.

Director of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development's Plant Protection Department Nguyen Xuan Hong said his agency will tighten control over the use of plant protection chemicals in 2016 while encouraging the use of advanced technology to reduce the need for those substances.

Eliminating the use of protective chemicals will help minimise not just production expenses, but also food risks due to pesticide residue, he said, noting that Vietnam aims to cut the spending on plant protection chemical use by half by 2020.

According to the General Statistics Office, Vietnam grossed US\$2.2bn selling fruits and vegetables abroad in 2015, a record annual increase of 47 percent.

The country is home to more than 100 fruit and vegetable processing factories, which can produce 300,000 tonnes of products each year. Vietnam exports fruits and vegetables to 40 countries and territories.

<http://vietnamnews.vn/economy/282204/food-safety-crucial-for-vietnamese-produces-reputation-abroad.html>



2. Revision of ISO 22000 on Food Safety Management is Underway

Ensuring food is safe along the entire food chain is a major concern in our modern societies, where products sometimes cross several borders before reaching the end consumer.

Since the first publication of ISO 22000 on food safety management in 2005, players in the food chain, including manufacturers, consumers and governments, have been facing new food safety requirements – spurring a need for the standard to be revised.

A consultation held in 2014 among users of the standard brought up gaps in the current version. Certain terms were found to be potentially confusing: unnecessary repetition was revealed and some concepts needed clarifying. Moreover, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)



were not sufficiently integrated and the understanding of risk evaluation still needed to be improved. These various points raised by users hopefully would contribute to the revision process.

Based on these feedbacks, an ISO working group (ISO/TC 34/SC 17/WG 8) in charge of the revision, has discussed and decided to tackle the following issues:

- Clarify certain key concepts, especially critical control points required to be managed, operational programmes needed, approach to risks, product withdrawal and recall, and a combination of external control measures
- Update terms and definitions
- Make the standard simpler and more concise
- Avoid making the content too prescriptive
- Ensure a greater coverage of SMEs

What's more, ISO 22000 will have the same format as other management systems standards (MSSs), which will now follow an identical structure with common texts, terms and definitions. This will make life easier for companies wanting to be certified to several MSSs, such as ISO 9001 and ISO 22000. The coordinated format will ensure coherence between the standards, simplify their integrated use and facilitate their reading and understanding by users.

While food industry experts may be especially involved in this revision, other users of the standard will be specifically targeted as necessary. These include SMEs, feed producers, pet food industry players, regulators looking for a model by which to develop regulatory requirements with a food safety management approach, even manufacturers who do not directly 'manage food' but whose activities fall within the scope of the standard, e.g. water.

Many companies and organisations do not use ISO 22000 on its own, but in conjunction with quality management standard ISO 9001, hence the desire to align the two standards and ensure their coherence.

The revised standard is expected to be published in 2017.

www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?Refid=Ref1951

3. Azerbaijan Reconsiders Food Standards

Azerbaijan is enhancing control over food products by introducing new standards for different types of products – from childhood nutrition to bread and flour products.

The new standards on childhood nutrition demand manufacturer to give information about the chemical composition, as well as information whether the basic ingredients are of animal or plant origin.

The main criteria were also determined for bakery products. The same regulation will apply to unpacked bakery products. The information should be available at the information paper presented at sales location.

The new standards were also presented to the wheat flour that should be safe and fit for human. The standard also contains information on the exact composition of the wheat flour and other specifications.

The country has also adopted a standard on the olive oil for the first time, naming the composition of the prime extra virgin olive oil, the extra virgin olive oil, and refined olive oil. The standardisation also touched alcohol beverages, which should also provide customers with complete information about the product.

Moreover, Azerbaijan continues to fight against genetically modified organisms by including the ban on Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) into standards and producing 'No GMO' label. Together with introduction of 'No GMO' label, Azerbaijan is fighting against fake labeling of food products with trustworthy eco-markings, prohibiting labeling food products with eco-friendly markings.

The standardisation process, based on international experiences, is expected to increase enlightenment of the population and decrease misleading.

www.azernews.az/azerbaijan/91441.html



4. SAARC Countries Fix Standards on Six Products

The South Asian Regional Standards Organisation (SARSO) has finalised the harmonisation of standards on six products including refined sugar and biscuits.

After a final nod from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries in March 2016, the process will begin for SAARC standards to be followed in the case of these products in regional and international trade.

It has also finalised a general code of hygiene for products of South Asian countries. This will remove bottlenecks and facilitate smooth regional trade among South Asian countries.



www.en.prothom-alo.com/economy/news/91647/SA-countries-fix-standards-on-six-products

5. Korea to Set Traditional Herbal Medicine Standards

South Korea's traditional herbal medicine – currently sold in packs of prepared herbs or decocted herbs in drinkable pouches – will be made into tablets and syrup as part of the government's efforts to standardise their quality.



Some of the major proposals include publishing standardised guidelines for traditional doctors to use for a total of 30 most common health conditions among patients who choose to visit traditional clinics. For the publication of guidelines, the Health Ministry of South Korea will launch a three-year clinical research for each of the 30 conditions. All university textbooks used for traditional medicine programmes will be standardised as well.

The Ministry is also coming up with a system where patients can be treated by both physicians and traditional doctors at the same time, especially at state-run medical facilities such as the National Medical Centre.

www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160113000989

6. Straws Get a Sip of Standardisation

Colorful, functional and fun, both kids and adults love them. Billions of drinking straws are produced each year; yet despite their worldwide use, plastic (polypropylene) straws had never been the subject of standards and specifications.

A recently published International Standard, ISO 18188:2016, *Specification of polypropylene drinking straws*, will provide general requirements for dimensions and performance properties of plastic straws. This will help manufacturers to produce consistent, quality products.

ISO 18188 was developed by ISO technical committee ISO/TC 61, *Plastics*, Subcommittee SC 11, *Products*, whose secretariat is held by JISC, the ISO member for Japan.

www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref2047



7. Canada-Korea to Strengthen Trade Relations

The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and the Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that reinforces the important trade relationship between Canada and South Korea. The MoU is an important building block to help reduce technical barriers to trade following the January 2015 signing of the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, Canada's first bilateral free trade agreement in the Asia-Pacific region.

This MoU will ensure that further cooperation on standardisation issues between SCC and KATS continues to strengthen this trade relationship and opens doors for Canadian industry in the region.

Through this MoU, SCC and KATS have reinforced the value of adopting international standards to assure that national standards do not present technical barriers to trade. Both organisations have agreed to continue to exchange information and facilitate collaboration between Canadian and Korean standardisation experts.

www.scc.ca/en/news-events/news/2016/canada-and-korea-collaborate-strengthen-trade-relations-through-standardization



8. Japan Looks to Lead Creation of Global Standards



The Japanese government aims to help the country's nursing care industry by taking a leadership role in efforts to formulate international standards.

The International Organisation for Standardisation, or ISO, could announce early basic guidelines toward the creation of global standards for nursing care products and services. These are expected to cover areas ranging from walking aids and home care services to businesses dispensing advice based on an individual's medical history.

Japan has presided over the drawing up of the basic guidelines, motivated by a fast-aging population. The UK, which has a strong focus on dementia-related research, has been playing a supporting role.

After the guidelines come out, the ISO is expected to set up multiple technical committees as early as spring to draft concrete global standards. Tokyo wants to send bureaucrats, as well as officials from industry and academia, to the panels to make the standards friendlier to Japanese technologies. The ISO will likely approve global standards based on proposals from the technical committees in around three years.

<http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Policy-Politics/Japan-looks-to-lead-creation-of-global-standards>

9. Ethiopia Meeting Standardisation

The deal of standards could be taken as giving opportunity to penetrate market and deliver qualified product and service for the public at large in all perspectives. The ultimate goal should be to safeguard the community and realise sustainable development.

At this very time the leadership in Ethiopia is showing strong commitment towards meeting international standards in exporting all sorts of goods and items to the world market.

Standards should be strictly observed for healthy and sustainable development, all commercial transactions and international trade could not take place without the support of measurement, standards and conformance infrastructures because each involved institutions will take such practice for granted.

Standards will strongly lean on accurate units of measurement to express specifications and conformance methodologies. Each component has a key role to play in ensuring that nation's measurement. Standards and conformance infrastructure delivers a high level of quality and accuracy; and will be consistently accepted with confidence by the community, to boost partners relation and make safe development endeavours.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201602220946.html>



10. Turkmenistan Improving on Standardisation

Turkmenistan works on development of normative acts in the field of standardisation and certification of products and services with national mark of conformity.



It was determined under the provisions of Turkmenistan's Laws 'About standardisation' and 'About certification' that the competent authorities approve state standards and technical conditions, and also determine the order of their registration.

Currently, measures are being taken to improve the competitiveness and quality of the country's export products and services in international markets, the organisation of work on assignment of national mark of conformity to certified products by taking into account the world practice.

<http://en.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/2497868.html>