



# Webinar for INFOSAN Members

## COVID-19 and food safety

7 July 2020



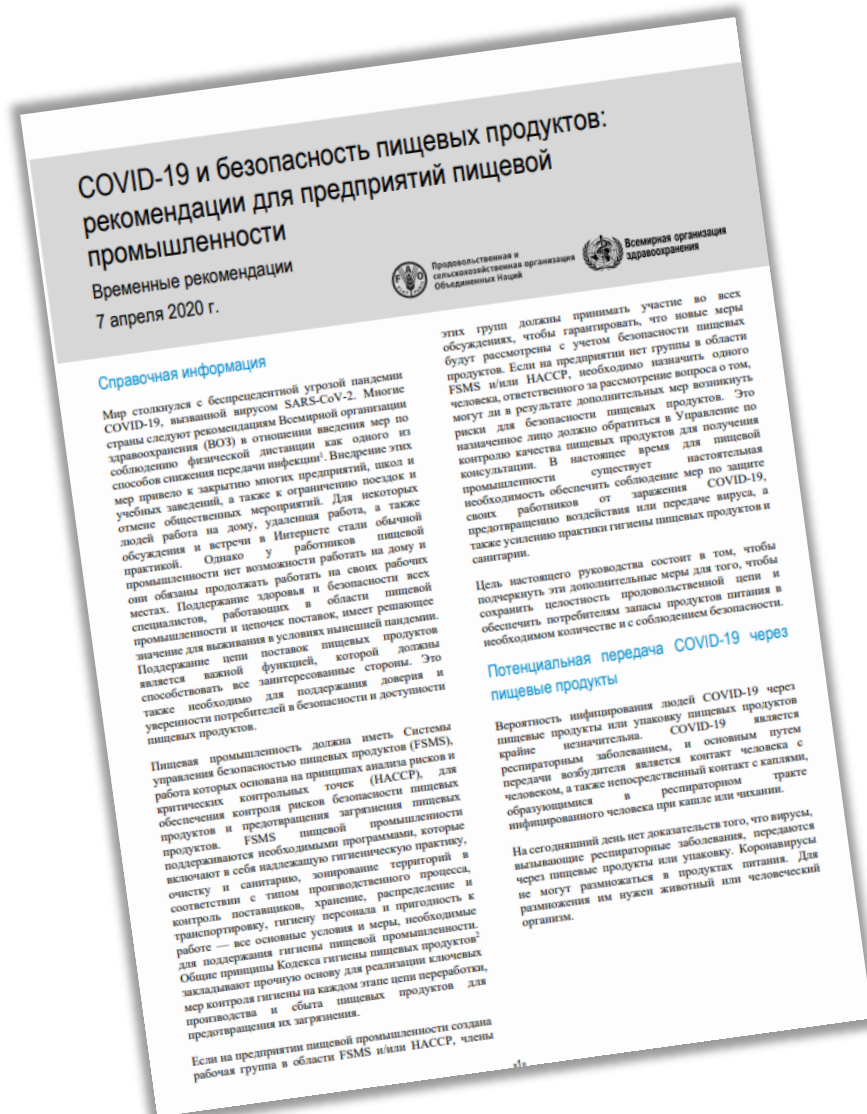
# Webinar for INFOSAN Members



## Content

- 1. Challenges and WHO/FAO guidance for food businesses**
- 2. Challenges and WHO/FAO guidance for food safety authorities**

# COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for Food businesses



**Guidance document available since  
April 7, 2020**

- ✓ Available in Russian
- ✓ Disseminated via email to all  
INFOSAN Members (usually located  
at National Food Safety Authority)

Several languages

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/covid-19-and-food-safety-guidance-for-food-businesses>

Russian [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331705/WHO-2019-nCoV-Food\\_Safety-2020.1-rus.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331705/WHO-2019-nCoV-Food_Safety-2020.1-rus.pdf)

# COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for Food businesses



- Food Processors and Food Retailers cannot work from home
- Frontline essential Service Providers: Maintaining the movement of food along the food chain is critical function
- Additional Hygiene and Sanitation Measures

# COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for the Food businesses

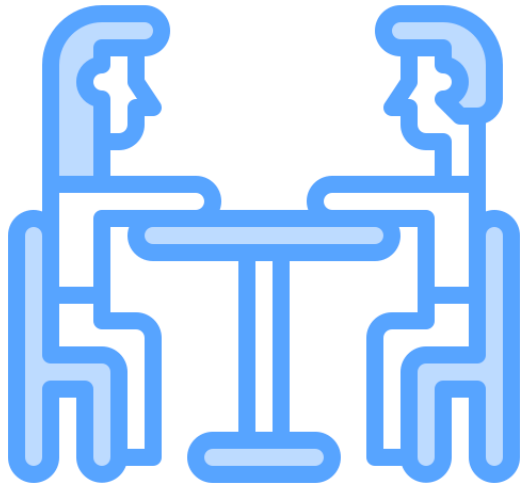
- Measures to protect food workers from contracting COVID-19 disease
- Prevent exposure to or transmission of the virus
- Strengthen existing food hygiene and sanitation practices



## PURPOSE

- Integrity of the food chain is maintained and ensure adequate and safe food supplies are available for consumers

# Potential transmission of COVID-19 via food?



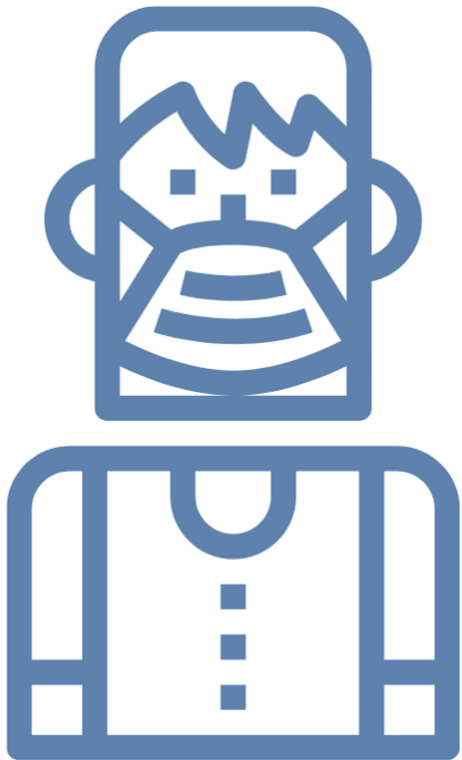
- Highly unlikely that people can catch COVID-19 from food or food packaging
- Respiratory illnesses are not transmitted via food or food packaging
- Potential survival of SARS-CoV-2 in food environment

# Reduce Risk of Transmission in Workplace



- Food workers: awareness of COVID-19 Symptoms
- Staff reporting of illness and exclusion from workplace
- Reinforce fitness-to-work protocols
- Minimise risk of transmission in workplace

# Protective Barriers to Transmission in Workplace



- Use of Personal Protective Equipment
- Physical distancing in food processing/retail
- Transport and delivery of foods/ingredients
- On-site security for receiving goods

# Challenges faced by Retail Food Premises



- Staff protection measures/use of PPE
- Handwashing/sanitizing "high touch points"
- Managing physical distancing/regulating customer numbers
- Open food displays and risk perception

# Food Workers: Staff Canteens



- Essential staff canteens remain open
- Managing physical distancing/regulating staff numbers
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Sanitation and disinfection of surfaces

# COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for Food Safety Authorities



**Guidance document available since April 22, 2020**

- ✓ Available in Russian
- ✓ Disseminated via email to all INFOSAN Members (usually located at National Food Safety Authority)

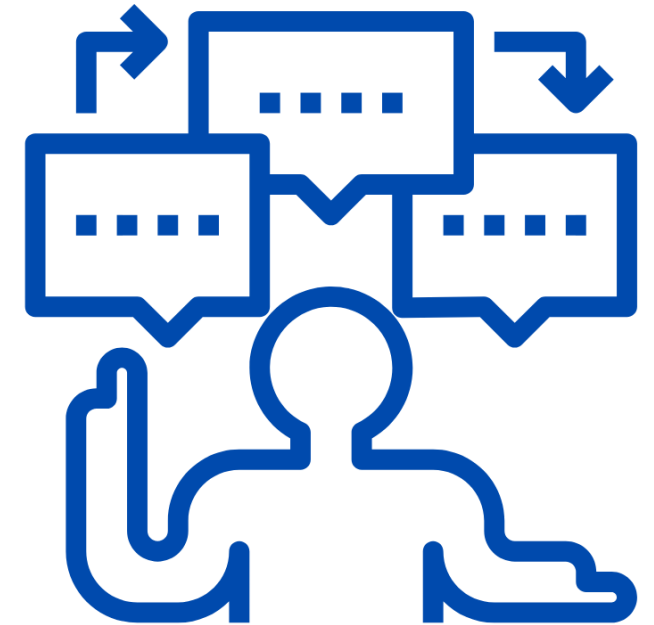
Several languages

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

**Russian** [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331842/WHO-2019-nCoV-Food\\_Safety\\_authorities-2020.1-rus.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331842/WHO-2019-nCoV-Food_Safety_authorities-2020.1-rus.pdf)

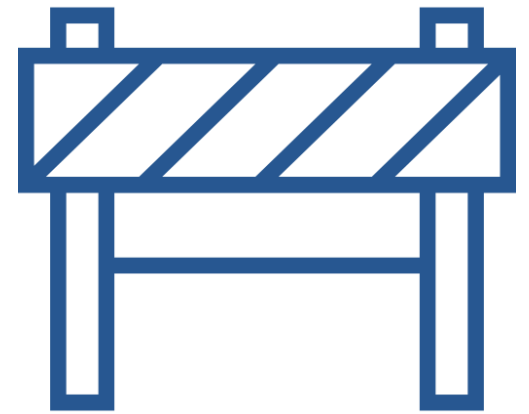
# COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for Food Safety Authorities

- New challenges for Food Safety Authorities arising from COVID-19 Pandemic
- Working as usual not an option - need to identify and prioritize critical areas of work
- Both internal and external pressure points



# What and Where are the Challenges?

- Contingency Planning (Food Safety Emergency Response Plans)
- Reduced staff resources due to reallocation of staff/illnesses
- Reduced food laboratory capacity
- Risk to the integrity of the food supply chain from food fraud
- Communication with stakeholders



# Routine functions of Food Safety Authorities

- Food Inspections - export certification - import inspections
- Monitoring and surveillance of the safety of the food supply chain
- Sampling and analysis of foods
- Managing food incidents
- Advice to the food industry on compliance with food regulations
- Communication with the public on food safety and COVID-19

# Contingency Planning - Business Continuity

- Working from home (IT Systems, teleworking, online meetings)
- Interagency cooperation and collaboration
- Staff training (recognition of COVID-19, how to respond?) (Staff working in dedicated small teams)
- Communication: information analysis and dissemination



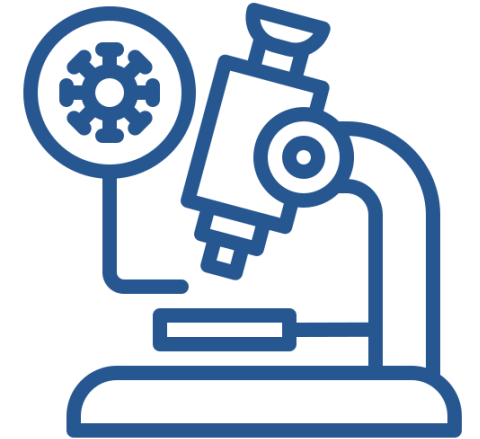
# Risk-based Food Inspection

- Reduced frequency of inspecting food business based on risk
  - suspend inspections of low to medium risk food premises?
  - temporary authorization of private sector bodies?
- Identify critical areas where inspection of food businesses must continue (ante and post mortem inspections, others?)
- Electronic exchange of documents (official certificates)?
- Flexibility of enforcement of food labelling rules?



# Food Laboratories

- Reduced capacity as laboratories relocated to clinical work
- Need to maintain a minimum capacity to investigate food incidents and complaints
- Temporary authorization of private laboratories?
- Staff training - working practices (minimise risk of infection)



# Risks to Integrity of Food Chain - Food Fraud

- Temporary reductions in food control functions
- Supply line disruption/ identification of new suppliers
- Increase in e-commerce
- Food businesses require FFVA and Fraud Mitigation Plans



# Communication Challenges

- Provision of accurate and credible information
- Dedicated web sites (regularly updated)
- Food industry liaison (regulatory updates)
- Consumers information (linked to PH agencies)





# Further guidance on COVID-19 to come soon



## Reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals for food in traditional food markets: a One Health Issue

Interim guidance  
3 June 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 livelihoods for millions of urban and rural dwellers from Asia to Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

But significant problems arise when these markets allow the sale and slaughter of live animals in areas open to the public, especially wild animals. When wild animals are bought and slaughtered and dressed in open market areas, they are contaminated with body fluids, faeces, and other materials that can give rise to transmission of the pathogens they carry to workers and customers alike and can also result in the transmission of pathogens to other animals in the market.

Most emerging infectious diseases, including SARS, MERS, and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV-2), have emerged from wild animals. Within the coronavirus family, the SARS-CoV-2 virus is closely related to the SARS-CoV virus, which caused SARS in 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2012. The COVID-19 pandemic stems from the introduction of a novel coronavirus ("SARS-CoV-2") into human populations. Although 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 Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) recognize the repeated emergence of zoonotic diseases and the linkages of some of these along the value chain of the wildlife trade.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that zoonotic disease risks vary among different animal species (e.g. terrestrial vs aquatic animal species) and different farming and marketing systems.

<sup>1</sup> Means an *animal* that has a phenotype unaffected by human selection and lives independent of direct human supervision or control.  
[https://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&1=6&8&inFile=global\\_sire.htm#term\\_animal](https://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&1=6&8&inFile=global_sire.htm#term_animal)

Therefore, a risk assessment is required to determine the appropriate risk management strategies. However, captured wild mammals carry the highest risk of infectious going undetected and affecting humans who are exposed to them.

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 animals, and that have adequate waste management systems in place, are safe environments for public shopping.

Working closely with OIE and other international organizations, national governments should ensure that the global food system is safe and that technical support is available for the development of national food safety control systems. In many parts of the world, there are traditional food markets that these environments provide the opportunity for animals to be sold in designated areas as well as viruses, including coronaviruses, to be transmitted to new hosts, including humans.

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 actions that national governments should consider adopting urgently:

- WHO and OIE call for national competent authorities to:
1. Suspend the trade in live wild animals of mammalian species for food and close sections of food markets selling live wild animals of mammalian species<sup>2</sup>;
  2. Conduct a risk assessment to provide the evidence base for developing regulations to control the risks of transmission of zoonotic microorganisms from farmed wild animals that are intended to be placed on the market for human consumption. Regulations should ensure the

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our\\_Scientific\\_expertise/docs/pdf/COVID-19\\_A\\_OIE\\_Wildlife\\_Trade\\_Statement\\_April2020.pdf](https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our_Scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/COVID-19_A_OIE_Wildlife_Trade_Statement_April2020.pdf)  
<sup>3</sup> Discussion on wild animals in the present document refers to wild animals of mammalian species.

## Guidance for managing traditional food markets during the COVID-19 pandemic – A One Health response

### 1. Exec Summary

### 2. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is being driven by human-to-human transmission. The virus is commonly passed on either directly, through contact with an infected person's body fluids (for example, droplets from coughing or sneezing), or indirectly through contact with surfaces that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on. There is no evidence that food is implicated in the transmission of this disease. Similarly, there is no evidence that any animal is responsible for the current COVID-19 pandemic is carried by domestic food-producing animals such as poultry, pigs, sheep or cattle.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that the virus which causes COVID-19 is a zoonotic virus, as it belongs to a group of coronaviruses which are normally found in wild animals, as the hypothesis is that the virus was initially transmitted to humans through contact with a wild animal that is as yet unknown. A second possibility is the direct transmission of the virus from an animal to humans.

COVID-19 is now a human health issue. A coordinated response at the interface between humans, animals and the environment must most effectively be achieved through a One Health approach. This approach is closely connected to the health of animals and the environment. Multi-sectoral collaboration between animal, human and environmental health sectors is needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and minimize the impact on the health of rural and urban populations. One Health approaches can address issues at the animal-human-environment interface with interventions to successfully tackle the COVID-19 pandemic will require the cooperation of food safety, human, animal, and environmental health partners.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued guidance for the public<sup>2</sup> on how to reduce the risk of infection with COVID-19. FAO/WHO have issued guidance for food businesses<sup>3</sup> on measure to be taken during this pandemic so that the integrity of the food chain is maintained and that adequate and safe food supplies are available for consumers.

This guidance are specifically targeted at those traditional markets where live animals are sold and slaughtered. A One Health farm-to-fork approach is used (in this guidance) where interventions are targeted (i) at animal health issues from primary production, transport, slaughter and marketing of animals and animal food products; (ii) at environmental health concerns associated with poor hygiene and sanitation standards in traditional food markets and live animal slaughter; and (iii) risks

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oie.int/en/for-the-media/press-releases/detail/article/covid-19-and-veterinary-activities-designated-as-essential/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/231705>



# For more information:

The screenshot shows the WHO website's dedicated page for the COVID-19 pandemic. At the top, the WHO logo and navigation menu are visible. The main heading is "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Pandemic". Below this, there are several key sections: "Public Advice", "Country & technical guidance", and a "Donate" button. A "Latest updates - Live press conference (Geneva)" section features a video player showing Dr. Michael J. Ryan speaking. Below the video, it notes the date as 13 April 2020 and provides a link to "Rolling updates on coronavirus disease (COVID-19)". A sidebar on the right contains links to "Your questions answered", "Travel advice", "Situation reports", "Media resources", "Research and Development", "Mythbusters", and "EPI-WIN".

The screenshot displays the INFOSAN Community Website. The header includes the INFOSAN logo, language options (English, Français, Español, العربية), and logos for the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. A search bar is present with the text "INFOSAN Secretariat" and a "Log out Help" link. Below the header, there is a navigation bar with links to "Home", "My Page", "INFOSAN Secretariat", "Find Members", "Discussion forums", and "Groups". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "Latest information from INFOSAN Secretariat", lists three events: a recall of frozen spring roll sheets from Singapore (18 February 2020), an outbreak of Listeria monocytogenes in the United States (13 March 2020), and a recall of infant food in France (13 March 2020). The right column, titled "Latest Discussion Forum Posts", lists three posts: "Your questions about COVID-19 answered" (8 April 2020), "Sus preguntas sobre COVID-19 contestadas" (10 April 2020), and "Les réponses à vos questions sur COVID-19" (10 April 2020).