Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Food safety is everyone's business in aquaculture

The importance of food safety

Aquaculture products are an important source of nutritious food, contributing with 88 million tonnes (49 percent of the global production of aquatic animals) to food security and are expected to continue their expansion. These products provide nutrients for millions of people all over the world, including landlocked regions. Food safety is a key component of good aquaculture governance, which is necessary to enhance the sector' s contribution to the achievement of related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Hazards associated with aquaculture products are broadly the same as those occurring in wild-caught fish and seafood varieties. However, the inputs to aquaculture, such as feed, medication, stock and water and the practices and production environment, for example, proximity to other farming systems, all have the potential to introduce new hazards. For instance, the misuse of antimicrobials during aquaculture production can lead to the presence of antimicrobial residues in food and water bodies, as well as for the selection and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

For World Food Safety Day (7 June), reveal an insider' s perspective by making a video of the food safety practices used on your fish farm.

What are the benefits of food safety?

Reduced zoonotic and foodborne diseases;

Reduced spread of antimicrobial resistance;

Improved consumer trust;

Improved food security and livelihoods;

Improved uptake of important micronutrients from aquaculture products.

How to achieve food safety in the aquaculture sector

AUTHORITIES

Establish appropriate regulation, including inspection and enforcement, in aquaculture products using an integrated food chain approach. This is key to preventing foodborne and zoonotic diseases, enhancing food security and strengthening the economy.

Implement monitoring systems using an integrated food chain approach for chemical or biological agents. For example, marine biotoxins and certain microorganisms, such as *Vibrio* spp., especially for filter feeders. For more information see the FAO/WHO **Technical guidance for the development of the growing area aspects of Bivalve Mollusc Sanitation Programmes**.

Establish fish health management practices in fish farms to promote animal health and animal welfare to the extent possible.

Encourage disease surveillance and monitoring in fish farms. Fish should be routinely monitored for disease using the methods described in the World Organization for Animal Health' s **Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals**.

Implement National Action Plans on AMR to reduce and contain foodborne AMR.

AQUACULTURE BUSINESS OPERATORS

Follow good aquaculture practices in compliance with the recommendations of the **Five keys to safer aquaculture products to protect public health** and the **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries**. The Code provides guidance on important aspects such as site selection, water quality, feed supply, source of fry and fingerlings, transport of fish, including live aquatic animals, and the use of veterinary drugs that should be in accordance with the Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of National Regulatory Food Safety Assurance Programmes Associated with the Use of Veterinary Drugs in Food Producing Animals (CXG 71-2009).

Use the **Codex Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products** – which also applies to aquaculture production.

Report unusual morbidity and mortality in farmed aquatic populations to support rapid response to emergencies, disease control measures, health certification and international trade.

Implement a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, when possible, for farming operations and at later stages of the value chain.