



World Food Safety Day 2022: A Nigerian Point of View

Eugenia Ishaku*

Department of Technical Team, KSA-Agrolog Consortium, Nigeria

***Corresponding Author:** Eugenia Ishaku, Department of Technical Team, KSA-Agrolog Consortium, Nigeria.

Received: November 11, 2022

Published: November 21, 2022

© All rights are reserved by **Eugenia Ishaku.**

The United Nations established The World Food Safety Day in 2018 to raise awareness on Food Safety, and its Slogan is “Food Safety is Everyone’s Business”. This serves to remind us that we all play a role in keeping food safe. We need to prioritize food safety throughout the whole supply chain, 'From Farm to Table'. Therefore, every 7th June marks the World Food Safety Day.

The theme for this year is “Safer Food, Better Health”. The guide created to help in commemoration of the special day explains the reason for the theme as it is only when food is safe can we fully benefit from its nutritional content. Safe food guarantees good health. One in ten people globally suffer from food borne illnesses every year but this can be avoided by creating safer, better and sustainable food systems on all levels of the food supply chain which translates to better health. All concerned stakeholders must promote food safety for human development and achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Food is a conversation that never leaves the table hence the importance of this topic. The internationally recognized standard for ensuring consumer safety from food hazards is the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles. It is expected that every food producer/food-producing company or any partaker in the food supply chain has a HACCP plan guiding their activities. This is the attainable standard in the First World. Sadly, this isn't the case in Nigeria. Most producers/farmers/distributors are not aware of such a standard and sometimes it's hard to blame them because we are still battling food insecurity, but still, we must hammer on Food Safety if we are to truly benefit nourishment from food.

The Agency tasked with enforcing the HACCP principle is the National Agency for Food Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) but limited resources, lack of manpower are a few challenges

facing the agency. There are also some other supporting agencies such as the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), Consumer Protection Council (CPC), Ministries of Agriculture and Health etc. They all have a role to play in ensuring that the proper standards are upheld by partakers in the food supply chain.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Slogan “From Farm to Plate, make Food Safe” implies that food safety is applicable at every stage, from production to processing to distribution down to consumption and so is the HACCP principle. But here in Nigeria, we still go by very archaic and poor standards at all levels of the food supply chain and it shows that we do not care about public health that is why we are seriously battling menaces such as Antibiotic Resistance, Food borne Illnesses etc. The unhygienic state of our abattoirs is a topic that could be explored for months. This is unacceptable for a country that cares about the state of health of her citizens.

“Do we care about our state of health?” - Food for thought.

Poor food systems do not tell by the associated health hazards alone by the way, but also by the economic implications. As a country we need to do better, we need to do more, we need to improve our food safety standards.

A few recommendations would be to improve government policies guiding food safety and also, enforce its implementation because when there's no law, there's no crime and we must all see the danger in unsafe food. We need to also improve our systems of production by moving towards new and upgraded methods. Funds and other beneficial resources should be made accessible to farmers so as to boost their morale to adopt better and safer practices.

Also very important is the need for continuous sensitization and advocacy on food safety especially amongst key players in the food supply chain as they need to understand the health and economic implications involved. We should also advocate for great political advancement because when we have a system that cares about its citizens, more than 80% of our problems would be squashed.

Let us remember to be ambassadors of food safety wherever we find ourselves.