

"Climate change and its effects on food safety"

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ABSTRACT

Food safety authorities need to work continuously to address a range of critical food safety and quality issues. Despite being well understood critical food safety issues, microbiological or chemical in nature, still present challenges in many contexts. Food safety hazards can arise at any stage of the food chain from primary production through to consumption, and risk-based approach in food safety management are important. Being cognizant of emerging food safety issues is also an integral responsibility of food safety authorities to ensure a robust food control system, and ensure that efforts are focused on issues that pose the greatest risk.

It is likely that climate change will have negative consequences for food safety ranging from changes in the environment (environmental contaminants), changing profiles of pathogens (both human and animal diseases), increased contamination from mycotoxins and marine biotoxins, as well as the increased hygiene risks leading to an increased burden of unsafe food. Extreme weather events linked to climate change require improved capacities for food safety emergency preparedness. Assuring food safety requires the active involvement of a number of stakeholders from the public and private sectors. The adaptation of food safety strategies to a changing climate should be based on evidence, therefore there is a need for more research and data sharing as we look at changing patterns and emerging food safety risks. FAO has a key role in assisting developing countries to assess the changes to their food safety situations and to promote international cooperation in improving the understanding of food safety implications of climate change. The FAO Strategy on Climate Change endorsed in 2017, refers to the most relevant food safety considerations in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The presentation will discuss the more likely changes in hazards and look at climate change as it relates to food and agriculture. FAO work and initiatives will be covered at global and regional level, and ongoing work to better address any emerging risks due to climate change.