

## Abstract

Prevention and reduction of microbiological contamination, considerations from throughout the food chain.

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Food safety issues are dealt with by a national authority according to international and national laws, treaties and agreements, regulations and directives. For food authorities in the EU-member states the framework is laid down by the World Trade Organisation ( SPS- and TBT-agreements), Codex Alimentarius (standards and guidelines), EU and national regulations and directives.

A common denominator in existing texts is the demand or recommendation that businesses along the food chain shall work with HACCP- programmes to ensure safe foods.

HACCP, as it is described by Codex Alimentarius ( Annex to CAC/RCP 1 – 1969, Rev. 3, 1997), is internationally accepted as the most efficient, current available system to produce safe food, and the number of food businesses around the world implementing HACCP-programmes is steadily increasing. Indeed, with an ever increasing global trade, increased tourism, changing eating habits, etc., it is necessary to achieve a world-wide acceptance and use of HACCP-programmes if the number of food-borne illnesses is to be reduced.

To perform a HACCP-study and to implement a HACCP-programme is no easy task and for small and less developed businesses it is often an almost impossible task. Lack of competence and resources are major obstacles in developing as well as in developed countries. In many developing countries further problems for these small businesses are caused by no or weak legal structures and competent authorities, by a low level of technical knowledge in the food sciences, and, of course, by economic constraints. If we are to achieve our aim of increasing the use of HACCP-programmes we must realise the importance of these problems and do whatever we can to solve them, in our own countries as well as abroad.