

Foreword

The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system is a food safety management tool developed in the early 1970s by the food industry. Since it enhances the safety of food, it is of considerable public interest and, thus, some 20 years ago the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized HACCP as an important concept to prevent foodborne disease. Several publications and documents were issued to help disseminate this information (see list of Additional References). Together with the food industry and other relevant partners, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the principal contribution of WHO was to promote the development, international harmonization, and facilitation of the HACCP system.

Appreciable progress in the recognition of HACCP as the “new” method of food safety assurance was made in 1993 when the *Codex Alimentarius Commission* (CAC) adopted the Guidelines for the Application of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System. This text was revised following a report of a WHO consultation, convened in close collaboration with the FAO and the Industry Council for Development (ICD), as a representative of the food industry. Consequently, in 1997 the CAC adopted a much improved document Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application (Annex to CAC/RCP 1-1969. Rev. 3 (1997)), as the presently best available guidance on this system.

With the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the introduction of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), the Codex text on HACCP and the General Principles of Food Hygiene have become the points of reference on these subjects.

As a consequence of the increasing application of HACCP in the food safety management of food industries, the traditional role of food control agencies is evolving. Today, food control measures must include new responsibilities such as assessing HACCP systems that have been designed and implemented by industry. Because different interpretations of the HACCP system have caused confusion, training materials are required to provide a clear and consistent application worldwide. In addition, there is a growing need to promote HACCP to governments and the food industry, particularly in developing countries.

These considerations have led WHO and ICD to develop this training package. It is intended as a general introduction to HACCP and as a practical guide in countries at all stages of development. Since we believe that the responsibility for food safety should be shared by governments, industry and consumers, this internationally available training material addresses food operators, inspectors and consumers. The knowledge acquired from the course can be applied to all situations where food is processed or prepared.

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