In recent years, food safety has become consumers’ health awareness and major concerns in the world market. This reflects in many food import countries such as the United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia etc., as they have been constantly rectifying or imposing new legislations or measurements on food safety. Export countries always face with these new challenges and trade barriers. There are also some obstructed factors like insufficient scientific proofs, no close and strong relationship within government agencies, and between government and private sector etc. These have led to enormous loss in incomes from food imports in the world arenas.

This report presents Thailand’s food safety management framework in the last five years in attempts to ensure consumers’ health protection and confidences, and catch up with the imposed and global challenging food trading.

Institution Responsibilities

Prior to 2003, authorized agencies responsible for food safety were fragmented and did not work in networking and systematic manners since they had multiple jurisdictions, fragmented regulations, as well as worked independently and inconsistently. Each agency collected its own information, which was distinctive for agency’s internal use and not linked to other agencies, particularly those involved in technical aspect and regulatory aspect such as inspection and certification, quarantine, and negotiation bodies. Hence, food safety and SPS was not harmoniously managed.

To deal with these problems, The National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) under the Ministry of Agriculture was established in 2002. It’s main responsibility is to set up policies and regulations, coordinate and collaborate with other agencies focusing on exported food.

There are also other agencies involved playing proactive roles in exported food safety. For instance, Department of Livestock and Department of Fisheries, responsible for checking chemical residues in exported shrimp products. In addition, they address problems and constraints that lead to R&D, as well as monitor and assess global trend in regulatory or measure changes imposed on international trade.

The Ministry of Public Health proposed Food Safety Road Map focusing on domestic consumption. Tasks and responsibilities are clarified and given to concerned agencies within the Ministry. There are 6 contaminate substances in food are banned, i.e., Salbutamol, Borax, Hydrosulfide, Salicylic Acid, Formalin and Phosphate Carbonate. Government logos are certified for food safety and hygiene. “Food safety” label is granted to hygienic and safe processing food, and “Clean Food Good Taste” emblem will be given to standardized restaurants and food stalls.
Procedures for food safety and SPS control can be categorized into 5 systems as follows:

1. **Imported products control and inspection**
   The import processed foods, raw materials, pharmaceutical products and veterinary medicines have to be inspected and control by the Office of Thai Food and Drugs Administration, Minister of Public Health. The import agricultural products, chemical substance, pesticide, and quarantine procedure are controlled and inspected by the Ministry of Agriculture. Any imported items found not to meet the set standards would be thoroughly analysed and monitored for products being imported.

2. **Domestic trade and distribution control**
   The registering and control systems have been enforced for pharmaceutical products, agricultural chemical substances, veterinary medicine, animal feeding products, seeds, and livestock.

3. **Farming system control**
   Production methods, farm-inputs and raw materials, animal welfare and residue control in farming system have been focus. Ministry of Agriculture controls farming system through registering and certifying standardized farms followed GAP standards, targeting 500,000 farms.

4. **Food processing control**
   Licenses issued for food processing factories are needed. They have to follow the good manufacturing practice criteria as prescribed by law. Exportations have been emphasized to follow GMP, HACCP and other international standards, e.g. Halal, ISO 9000, ISO 14000. Inspecting, monitoring and random checking are continuously conducted.

5. **Standardize and certify food and agricultural products**
   Domestic consumption of food and agricultural products are testing, and monitoring by Ministry of Public Health. Thailand has developed 15 test kits for food monitoring. For exportation, food safety and SPS system are certified by Ministry of Agriculture. “Food safety” and “Q” Logo were established and certified as government labeling to assure the equivalent standard and qualities for domestic consumption and exportation. Government has encouraged the role of private sector and provided accreditation for non-governmental laboratories.

### The country’s Experiences

**Main Problems**

Higher and new standards from import countries have been issued increasingly and imposed as non-tariff barriers for food trade. To comply with international standards, the country needs to have specific guidelines, scientific data and researches as well as risk assessment technology. At the same time, food processing and agricultural products have adopted various new substances and techniques in production methods, which need to have intensive monitoring and control system. In addition, inadequate resources and fragmented operating food safety control can still be found. As for global trade negotiations, developing countries played defensive rather than proactive role. They need to have more skilled and international laws knowledge to cope with the global situations and complexity of trade barriers.
Main achievements

• There has been a strong commitment from government to meet consumers’ need both domestically and internationally and to achieve the country’s strategy, “Kitchen of the World”.
• National Food Safety Road Map was established in 2003. This can reduce duplication of role and responsibilities of various agencies concerned, including regulatory activities.
• Cooperation between Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant agencies has been improving and leading to systematic management for food safety.
• An introduction of the government logo, “Q” complied with CODEX standards has gained domestic and international markets acceptances and reduced customers’ confusion.
• Key indicators were set to cover 9 livestock, 27 plants, and 8 residue substances.

Proposed Measurements

Research and Data Base Development

• Scientific proofs, information networking and database system for food safety have to be developed to prepare for emerging issues and technologies and to provide preventive measure in trade negotiations.

Close Consultation between Government and Private Sector

• Trade associations should be promoted to actively play their roles of information dissemination on trade barriers, progress in trade negotiations, and gathering any feedbacks from all private sectors.
• Effective participation and interaction between government and private sector should be enhanced in food safety control system and trade negotiation.
• Consideration on mitigation of cost compliance should be focused to assure the competitiveness in world trade arena.

Development Partnership within the Region

• Cooperation among the exporter countries and scientific knowledge sharing and exchanging should be promoted so as to create production, marketing and management innovations.
• Regional partnership should play proactive role to food safety standardization in the world market.