

PROSAFE FORUM

Ensuring Trust and Safety: Regulatory Framework and Food Safety Standards in Packaging and Labeling

CONCEPT NOTE

13:30-17:00, June 9, 2023
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam



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PROSAFE Forum

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Venue: Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City
Date: June 9, 2023 (13:30-17:00)

Introduction

Food safety is paramount for individuals, communities, and nations worldwide. Packaging and labeling are crucial in ensuring the food's safety and integrity. Food packaging and labeling in Viet Nam are regulated to ensure consumer safety, facilitate trade, and promote transparency. Efforts are being made to align with international standards, address emerging challenges, and encourage sustainable practices in the food industry.

Packaging materials must meet specific safety and quality standards, such as being free from harmful substances and suitable for food contact. Additionally, packaging facilities and processes must comply with hygiene and safety requirements to prevent contamination and maintain the integrity of packaged food. At the same time, labels on packaged food products must include mandatory information such as the product name, ingredients, net weight or volume, production and expiry dates, storage conditions, and the manufacturer's or importer's name and address. Nutritional information, allergen declarations, and country of origin labeling are also required when applicable.

Various regulations, including the Law on Food Safety and the many other relevant Food Safety Decrees and national standards govern food packaging and labeling in Vietnam. These regulations set requirements for packaging materials, packaging processes, and labeling. The Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Industry and Trade, and Ministry of Health are key regulatory bodies to implement and monitor the policy and standards.

Food packaging and labeling in Vietnam face several concerns that need to be addressed to ensure consumer safety and improve industry practices. Key concerns include misleading or inaccurate labeling, absence of allergen management and declaration, inconsistent compliance, unsustainable packaging, and lack of awareness and understanding of food packaging and labeling practices.

With support from the New Zealand Aid Programme, Mekong Institute (MI) is implementing the project Promoting Safe Food for Everyone (PROSAFE) to strengthen the food safety capabilities of agri-food supply chain stakeholders in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV). One of the targeted outputs is to increase public and private partnership to an integrated approach to food safety by setting a stage for them to meet, discuss and share experiences to promote food safety in their respective countries.

In conjunction with the Celebration of World Food Safety Day 2023 on the theme of “**Food Standards save lives**”, Mekong Institute collaborates with the Institute of Biotechnology and Food Technology, Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City to organize a PROSAFE Forum on “**Ensuring Trust and Safety:**

Regulatory Framework and Food Safety Standards in Packaging and Labeling” to explore the significance of effective packaging and labeling management and practices in protecting consumer health and building trust in the food supply chain. This forum will bring together experts, industry professionals, regulators, and stakeholders to discuss challenges, innovations, and best practices regarding packaging and labeling for safer food.

Objective

The Forum on **“Ensuring Trust and Safety: Regulatory Framework and Food Safety Standards in Packaging and Labeling”** aims to:

- Raise awareness about the importance of trust and safety in food packaging and labeling to protect consumer health and well-being.
- Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices among experts, industry professionals, regulators, and stakeholders in food packaging and labeling.
- Identify and discuss the current challenges and emerging issues related to food packaging and labeling, including regulatory compliance, technological advancements, sustainability, and consumer communication.
- Promote collaboration among industry stakeholders, regulatory bodies, consumer advocacy groups, and other relevant parties to drive collective efforts in improving food safety standards for packaging and labeling.
- Contribute to the 2023 World Food Safety Day Celebration by PROSAFE Food Safety Network.

Forum Content

Session 1: Importance of Packaging in Food Safety

This session will emphasize the fundamental role of packaging in maintaining food safety. Experts will discuss the key functions of packaging, including containment, protection, preservation, and communication. The session will highlight the impact of proper packaging practices in preventing contamination, extending shelf life, and reducing food waste.

Session 2: Regulatory Framework and Standards for Food Packaging and Labeling

Effective regulations ensure food packaging and labeling meet the highest safety standards. This session will focus on the national and international regulatory frameworks and standards governing packaging and labeling. Regulatory authorities will discuss harmonization efforts, compliance monitoring, and the enforcement of packaging and labeling regulations.

Session 3: Innovations in Food Packaging

Packaging technology advancements have revolutionized how food is protected and presented to consumers. In this session, industry leaders and innovators will showcase cutting-edge packaging solutions to enhance food safety. Discussions will cover topics such as active and intelligent packaging, antimicrobial packaging, modified atmosphere packaging, and sustainable packaging materials.

Participants will also explore the latest advancements in packaging materials. The session will also address the challenges and opportunities associated with adopting innovative packaging solutions in SMEs/MSMEs and large scale enterprise.

Session 4: Ensuring Accurate and Informative Food Labeling

Accurate and informative food labeling is vital for consumers to make informed choices about the food they purchase and consume. This session will focus on labeling requirements and best practices, including allergen labeling, ingredient lists, nutrition labeling, and claims and certifications. The discussion will also address challenges such as readability, clarity, and standardization of labeling formats to ensure that consumers can easily understand and interpret the information provided.

Panel Discussion: Collaboration for Safer Food Packaging and Labeling

Effective stakeholder collaboration is crucial in promoting food safety through packaging and labeling. This session will bring together industry representatives, consumer protection groups, research institutions and academia, and regulatory bodies to discuss public-private partnerships, information sharing, regulation and standard updates, and the role of consumer feedback in driving improvements in packaging and labeling practices.

Forum Participant

The forum will gather participants from various sectors, including food manufacturers and processors, packaging manufacturers and suppliers, regulatory authorities and government agencies, research institutions and academia, consumer protection associations, trade-promoting organizations, and PROSAFE alumni network. The number of attendants is expected at 40.

Expected Outcomes

The Forum on “Ensuring Trust and Safety: Regulatory Framework and Food Safety Standards in Packaging and Labeling” is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased awareness among participants about the significance of food safety in food packaging and labeling
- Valuable insights, experiences, and best practices food packaging and labeling discussed among experts, industry professionals, regulators, and stakeholders
- Development of partnership and collaboration among stakeholders in policy recommendations, practices monitoring, research and technology application contributing to the development of safer and more transparent food systems, and protecting consumer health and building trust in the food supply chain.
- PROSAFE contribution via its activity outputs to the 2023 World Food Safety Day Celebration.

Tentative Programs

Time	Program	In-charge
13:00	Technical preparations and registration	
13:30	Welcome Remarks	Dr. Nguyen Ba Thanh Dean, Institute of Biotechnology and Food Technology, IUH
13:40	Opening Remarks	Ms. Maria Theresa Medialdia Director, Agricultural Development and Commercialization (ADC) Department, MI
13:50	<i>Photo opportunity</i>	
14:00	Importance of Packaging in Food Safety	Industrial University of HCMC
14:20	Regulatory Framework and Standards for Food Packaging and Labeling	Food Safety Management Authority of Ho Chi Minh City/ Viet Nam Packaging Association
14:40	Innovations in Food Packaging	Private Sector
15:00	<i>Network exchange and break</i>	
15:20	Ensuring Accurate and Informative Food Labeling	Consumer Protection Associations/ Private Sector
15:40	Panel Discussion: Collaboration for Safer Food Packaging and Labeling	Industrial University of HCMC Food Safety Management Authority of Ho Chi Minh City Consumer Protection Associations Private Sector
16:20	Forum synthesis and closing	Ms. Maria Theresa Medialdia ADC, MI