



## **SPECIAL ORDER**

No. 605

Series of 2023

### **SUBJECT : CREATION OF WORKING COMMITTEES FOR FOOD SAFETY ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA)**

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In the exigency of service and to further strengthen initiatives and expedite responses to food safety issues and concerns as mandated by the Food Safety Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10611), Working Committees anchored on the defined Five (5) Pillars of Food Safety, is hereby created. The Office for the Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulations (OUPPR), having oversight functions in the implementation of the Food Safety Act of 2013, through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Regulations (OASR) and the Food, Agriculture and Fishery Policy Division of the Policy Research Service (FAFPD-PRS) shall oversee all Committee activities.

The DA Food Safety Focal Group (FSFG), the internal consultative body on food safety within the jurisdiction of the DA, comprised of members from all the DA Food Safety Regulatory Agencies (FSRAs) and Food Safety Support Agencies (FSSAs), shall form the Working Committees with the primary task to discuss, plan and recommend policies and relative activities on the following Pillars of Food Safety:

#### **1. Rules and Regulations**

The Working Committee shall deliberate and recommend policies on relevant and enforceable food laws and regulations, consistent with Codex Alimentarius and other regional and international standard setting-bodies and international trade obligations and/or commitments. When deemed necessary, the committee may deliberate and prepare country position on food safety issues as may be requested by the various sub-committees of the National Codex Committee for further presentation to international and/or regional Codex bodies.

Lead: Food, Agriculture and Fishery Policy Division of the Policy Research Service (FAFPD-PRS)

Vice-Lead: Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS)

Members:

Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)

Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)  
Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA)  
Food Development Center (FDC)  
National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS)  
National Dairy Authority (NDA)  
Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA)  
Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA)  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Regulations (OASR)

## **2. Food Control Management**

The Working Committee shall be responsible for policies on the process of integrated planning, organizing, monitoring, coordinating, and communicating broad ranged risk-based decisions and actions to ensure food safety of domestically produced, imported and exported food.

Its core responsibilities include provision of overall policy guidance on the national food control program which includes recommendations on the establishment of regulatory measures; performance monitoring system; clear management and operating system to ensure accountability for the development, implementation and enforcement; and, in securing funds or allocating resources for the purpose.

Lead: BAI

Vice-Lead: BPI

Members: FAFPD-PRS, BAFS, BFAR, FDC, FPA, NDA, NMIS, PCA, SRA, OASR

## **3. Inspection Services (Enforcement and Surveillance)**

The Working Committee shall focus on policies and activities relative to the establishment of risk-based inspection system for the control of primary and postharvest foods and their raw materials, minimal processing, distribution, including in-process and finished product testing, to verify compliance with food safety requirements.

The committee shall provide guidance to FSRAs in the development, establishment and enforcement of appropriate inspection protocol with integrity, performed by competent (i.e. honest, qualified, trained) inspection service personnel. This particularly pertains to inspection and monitoring for compliance to safety; sanitary and hygienic conditions; conduct of risk-based audits; and, certification of food for domestic consumption and import/export purposes.

Activities encouraging voluntary compliance include, among others, risk-based inspection and monitoring of hygienic requirements based on Good Agriculture/





Animal Husbandry/Aquaculture Practices; Good Manufacturing Practices; evaluation of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) Plans; sampling food in the food chain; recognizing different forms of food decomposition; collecting and transmitting evidence when breaches occur and, when necessary, appearing in court to assist the prosecution of violators.

Lead: NMIS

Vice-Lead: BPI

Members: BFAR, BAI, FDC, FPA, NDA, PCA, SRA

#### **4. Official Control Laboratory Service and Epidemiological Data Collection**

The Working Committee shall deliberate on and recommend policies on the effective coverage of the food and epidemiological analyses performed by official laboratories for physical, chemical, and microbiological contamination to verify compliance to relevant standards and regulations. The committee shall further discuss and recommend policies on the maintenance of a DA central reference laboratory equipped for sophisticated and reference analysis.

Lead: FDC

Vice-Lead: BAI

Member: BFAR, BPI, FPA, NDA, NMIS, PCA and SRA

#### **5. Capacity Building/Information, Education and Communication (IEC)/ Advocacy**

The Working Committee shall focus on activities relative to the development, packaging, dissemination, and delivery of information, education and advice to relevant stakeholders across the farm-to-table continuum to increase their knowledge, skills, and motivation to make decisions that enhance food safety and quality. These include the provision of information to producers, processors, consumers, key government officials and players in the food industry, the development of train-the-trainer programs and the provision of reference literature. The committee shall also spearhead the organization of activities for the Food Safety Awareness Week, Food Safety Month, and other Food Safety advocacy campaigns.

Lead: ATI

Vice-Lead: FDC

Member: all FSRAs, BAFS, FAFPD-PRS and OASR



Lead Agency/Vice-Lead of each Working Committee shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

1. Convene members to participate in meetings and other collaborative activities;
2. Designate from among its members, the Committee Secretariat who shall further be in-charge of generating the final reports, major agreements and other relevant outputs ensuing from all activities conducted by the Committee, for submission to the over-all Lead of the Food Safety Focal Group;
3. Plan and program activities which shall be undertaken by respective Working Committee;
4. Monitor and ensure the effective implementation of planned activities; and
5. Prepare and submit pertinent reports to the OASR to form part of the over-all FSFG Report to the different DA Authorities.

The Working Committees shall have the following general functions and responsibilities:

1. Present and discuss issues and concerns specific to assigned Food Safety Pillar Committee
2. Provide venue for consultative meetings to initiate necessary actions and design a feedback mechanism to respond to various food safety issues and concerns within the assigned the Food Safety Pillar;
3. Review the specific policies, plans, policies, programs and activities of FSRA and FSSA within the Food Safety Pillars assigned for final inclusion to the Food Safety Strategic Plan; and
4. Recommend to the Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and Regulations. through the OASR and the DA FSFG, specific actions to be taken on food safety issues and concerns.

The hosting and sponsorship of meetings, workshops and related activities shall be scheduled among the Food Safety Focal Group Agencies. Expenses to be incurred in the conduct of all relative activities by each Working Committee including travel expenses shall be chargeable against the funds of the concerned member agencies of the Committee, subject to the usual government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

This order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in force until revoked in writing. All orders inconsistent herewith are deemed revoked.

Done this 17th day of May 2023.

**DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN**  
Senior Undersecretary