

PHILIPPINES

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BACKGROUND

With the increasing concern of the food safety worldwide, the mandatory implementation of Hazard Analytical Critical Control Point (HACCP) in the processing of fish and fishery products have been imposed by regulatory authority of the seafood importing countries, such as US, EU, Australia and Japan. Philippines is among the Southeast Asian's net exporters of fish and fish products in the international seafood market. In order to maintain the Philippines' significant position in the fish export market, the government and private sectors have taken the bolder steps to adapt this trend.

The food control program of the Philippines is primarily regulated by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to ensure that foods traded meet the quality and safety requirements of the consumers. However, as other departments are involved in the implementation of laws, rules and regulations pertaining to food, DA maintains a coordinative link and networking with such other departments i.e. the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The DA Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is the agency mandated under

Republic Act 8550, known as the Fisheries Code of 1998, to be responsible for the conservation, management and development of the country fisheries and aquatic resources. As such, it takes the lead in implementing the legislations pertaining to fish and fish products traded domestically and abroad.

The Fisheries Code of 1998 promulgated several Fisheries Administrative Orders (FAO) to support the implementation of the HACCP system through the fish inspection and quality and safety management programme of the Philippines. Among them are FAO No. 211 s of 2001, FAO No. 212 s. of 2001 and FAO No. 214 s. of 2001 that regulate processing SSOP, implementation of HACCP system and Code of Practice for Aquaculture.

The government takes a coordinative approach in implementing the country's food safety and quality control program in order to maximize the resources available among all other government agencies that are likewise mandated to implement this program.

Currently, the BFAR implements the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) Program for Fisheries for 2002-2004. This program provides the national directions and framework to develop and manage the country's

fisheries resources, in order to ensure food security and the socio-economic upliftment of the fisherfolk. Under this program, development efforts are focused on the expansion and revitalization of productivity programs and the provision of support systems through

appropriate technology, research, extension and adequate financial and marketing assistance. The participation of the private sector is vital to the realization of the goals of this program.

ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME FOR HACCP IMPLEMENTATION

BFAR, as the regulatory agency for fish and fish products for export, has initiated a mandatory accreditation programme for fish processing plants based on verified HACCP compliance in conformance to international requirements for the export of fish and aquaculture products. This accreditation is carried out to enable the fish processors to continue their exports to EU and US and other export markets where mandatory implementation of HACCP is required.

The mandatory accreditation programme requires the company to submit its Licence to Operate (LTO), Quality/ Safety Assurance Programme, which include the HACCP plan for the specific products to be exported as well as Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP). LTO, issued by the Department of Health-Bureau of Food and Drugs, will be released to the company on the basis of their compliance to GMP and SSOP.

BFAR conducts on-site inspection to validate the implementation of the submitted documents and to verify compliance to the relevant international and national legislations. A certificate of accreditation with a validity of 6-12 months and a notice of approval of HACCP program will be issued to those that meet the requirement. The validity of the accreditation varies depending on the plant rating obtained after each inspection. A certificate of implementation on the HACCP will be given to the company as requested.

Monitoring/ inspection of the plants is conducted at least twice a year to ensure compliance to the requirements. For those that fail to sustain their accreditation, official sanctions are applied accordingly, based on legal provisions of applicable rules and regulations.

PROGRESS ON HACCP IMPLEMENTATION

The progress of HACCP implementation in the country is shown in the increasing number of HACCP-certified plants from 2000 to 2003. In 1995, there was only 9 fish processing plants that are HACCP-certified. These plants were export-oriented plants with products

such as canned tuna and frozen aquaculture shrimps that are for export to EU market. The number of HACCP-certified fish processing plants has since increased significantly (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of HACCP certified fish processing plants and their location

Geographical location	Number of HACCP certified processing plants, 2000-2003			
	2000	2001	2002	2003
Luzon	14	14	15	19
Visayas	3	3	4	7
Mindanao	21	24	32	41
TOTAL	38	40	51	67

In 2002, a significant number of fish processing plants have been added to the list of HACCP-certified plants. This can be attributed to increased number of trainings and technical assistance made available to the private sector. Moreover, the industry has increasingly realized the importance of implementing the HACCP system. The new products added to the HACCP-implemented list include frozen tilapia, smoked marinated milkfish and sardines in glass.

More and more plants are applying for HACCP certification. Currently, there are about 20 plants applying for certification. Most of them are located in the Mindanao and a few in Luzon. The products consist mainly of frozen fish and aquaculture products, value-added products, pasteurised crabmeat and traditional products, such as pasteurised shrimp paste.

Products manufactured under the HACCP system

Table 2 shows the types of fisheries and aquaculture products that are processed by the HACCP certified plants and their major markets from 2000 to 2003.

Table 2. Types of product manufactured under the HACCP system and their major export markets, 2000 - 2003

Year	No. of HACCP certified plants	Type of products exported	Major export markets
2000	38	Canned tuna, fresh frozen octopus, shrimps, tuna products, milkfish products, pasteurised shrimp paste, squalene capsule, canned sardine, fish sauce, fermented anchovy	US, EU, Canada
2001	40	Canned tuna, canned sardine, fresh frozen octopus, milkfish products, pasteurised shrimp paste, fish sauce, canned abalone	EU, US, Canada, Singapore
2002	51	Canned tuna, canned sardine, fresh frozen octopus/ shrimp, tilapia, tuna products, tilapia, IQF abalone, canned abalone, squalene capsule, pasteurised shrimp paste, fish sauce, fish paste, fermented anchovy, smoked Round scad	EU, US, Australia, Canada, Singapore, China
2003	67	Canned tuna, canned sardine, fresh frozen octopus, milkfish products, smoked Round scad, IQF abalone, canned abalone, squalene capsule, pasteurised shrimp paste, fish sauce, fermented anchovy, fish sauce, seaweed powder, sardine in glass jars, value-added fish products, pasteurised crab meat and seaweed powder	US, EU, Canada, Australia, Singapore, China

Export of fish and fish products

Tuna remains the country's top export product. The tuna export increased from 56,752 MT in 2001 to

72,296 MT in 2002 (Table 3). Shrimp exports also increased from 12,757 MT in 2001 to 16,919 MT in 2002.

Table 3. Seafood export quantity (MT), 2000 – 2002

Commodity / Kind	2000	2001	2002
1. Tuna Fresh/ chilled/ frozen/ canned/ smoked/ dried	80,108	56,752	72,296
2. Shrimp Prawn Fresh/ chilled/ frozen	12,061	12,757	16,919
3. Octopus Fresh/ frozen	10,239	41,267	31,098
4. Seaweeds Carrageenan, kelp powder, seaweed and algae	56,841	41,267	31,098
Grand Total	159,249	122,582	132,134

HACCP training conducted

Many training courses related to HACCP have been conducted by BFAR as well as other agencies for both government regulatory officers and industry personnel. In fact, BFAR has been actively conducting the HACCP training under its Fish Quality and Safety Management Programme.

The training courses conducted for the regulatory officers and local government units include: the Principles and Application of HACCP, the Review of the

Requirements for the Export of Fish and Fish Products, and the Regulatory Audit of Fish Processing Plants. The HACCP training for industry personnel include: Training on HACCP Concept and Application in the Fish Processing Industry, Requirements for the Accreditation of Fish Processing Plants, Training on Proper Fish Handling On-Board the Fishing Vessel, Trainers Training on HACCP and HACCP Competency for Line Workers. Table 4 shows the number of participants of HACCP training conducted from 2001 – 2003.

Table 4. Number of participants attending HACCP training courses, 2001 – 2003

	2001	2002	2003 (as of Jul 2003)
Government officers	35	38	41
Non-government officers	250	340	325
Total	285	378	366

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HACCP IMPLEMENTATION

During the past years of HACCP implementation, the industry has begun to realize the significant socio-economic advantages of HACCP implementation. Since HACCP is meant to ensure the safety of the products, it has somehow form part of product promotion to some processors, thus encouraging them to comply with the food safety requirements of their buyers to sustain continued consumption of their products.

HACCP implementation also enables the processors to expand their markets, thereby giving

a continuous employment security and job opportunities for the people. Such advantages are demonstrated in the manner each accredited processor has put value in to the system and continued to support its implementation.

Since the implementation of HACCP has become a partnership between the government and the industry sectors, maintaining and sustaining its implementation has become a continuing challenge towards global competitiveness on seafood trade.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS ON HACCP IMPLEMENTATION

While the significant of HACCP implementation cannot be over-emphasized, there are certain issues and concerns that affect the industry and government as well. The primary issues are:

From the industry:

1. Limited technical qualification of some HACCP team members. This leads to many deficiencies occur during recording data for CCP monitoring, as well as incorrect identification of hazard and CCP
2. Lack of scientific information or standards for specific products, leading to inconsistency in the setting of critical limits for some products
3. Lack of financial capabilities needed for upgrading premises and implementing HACCP, particularly in small and medium establishments

From the government:

1. Lack of trained manpower and financial resources at the regional and local government level
2. Limited manpower capacity, resulting in low frequency of inspections of the fish processing establishments at the regional level
3. Lack of communications and transport services to support to fish inspection activities (internet connectivity and transport vehicle).
4. Limited budget and politics situation leading to non-implementation of planned activities
5. The stringent requirements of the fish importing countries
6. The inadequate resources available in Philippines to cope up and meet such requirements from importing countries
7. The need for external technical assistance

NEW STRATEGIES AND DIRECTIONS

1. Raw material control program

To ensure that products are free from chemical contaminants and marine biotoxins, the safety 'From Water to Table' concept has been adopted and is now posing a problem among the aquaculture fish producers and suppliers. The government has commenced implementing Fisheries Administrative Order no. 214, known as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Aquaculture to ensure the production of high quality broodstocks, seeds and fingerlings. The exporters are now required to observe proper control of raw materials from the source through the provision of suppliers' guarantee, product tests for antibiotics, and other contaminants. Production sites are subjected to regular monitoring and surveillance.

2. Advocacy and information and educational campaign (IEC)

Continuous training on HACCP, GMP and SSOP and on the marketing of fish and other fish products, in order to create awareness on food safety and on export market requirements for the key players from production to processing and distribution.

3. Technical and advisory assistance

Collaboration with fish processors on proper plant design and process layout in order to address the hygienic and sanitary aspects in plant construction.

4. Inter-agency collaborations for mutual technical and financial assistance from international bodies

5. Promulgation of additional legislations to further support the fish inspection and fish product quality and safety management system

6. Review of the current organizational structure within the BFAR to further strengthen the fish product safety and quality management implementation

7. Involvement of the local government units in the inspection of fish markets and other ancillary fish post harvest facilities such as fishing ports and fish markets, in order to ensure safe fish supplies