

# WFSD WEBINAR 2024: Food Safety-Be Prepared for the Unexpected



## ROLE OF FOOD CONTROL

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# POLICY CONTEXT

## What are the IHR?

- The International Health Regulations (IHR) represent an agreement between 196 countries, including all WHO Member States, to work together for global health security.
- Under the IHR, all countries must report events of **international public health importance**.
- We share a responsibility to protect our world from outbreaks of **infectious diseases and other health threats**.
- The goal of the IHR is to stop events in their tracks before they become international emergencies
- **Food Safety Incidents, Emergencies and Food Borne Illness & Outbreaks** constitutes or forms part of such events that must be looked at in order to avoid a Public Health Emergency of International Threat.

INTERNATIONAL  
**HEALTH**

REGULATIONS

(2005)

THIRD EDITION



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# HOW DO WE NEED TO LOOK AT IT- I.E. BE PREPARED

**Food Safety Incidents, Emergencies, and Food Borne Illness & Outbreaks** constitutes or forms part of the **events** that must be looked at in order to to avoid a Public Health Emergency of International Threat under the IHR, 2005

**Prevent – Detect - Respond - Report**



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# SOME DEFINITIONS

- **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** - An extraordinary event which is determined to: 1) constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease; and 2) potentially requires a coordinated international response public health risk.
- **Public health risk** - The likelihood that an event may adversely affect the health of human populations, with an emphasis in the IHR on events that may spread internationally or may present a serious and direct danger.
- **Event** - Manifestation of disease or an occurrence that creates a potential for disease as a result of events including, but not limited to, those that are of infectious, zoonotic, food safety, chemical, radiological or nuclear in origin or source.
- **Food safety incident** - Unintentional Act with Unintentional Harm – Poses a Public Health Threat as product is in distribution (may or may not be in trade or at

Consumer level)

# SOME DEFINITIONS

**Food safety alert** - Government Notification to Industry/Competent Authority about a food safety incident/emergency/recall/withdrawal

**Risk** - Situation in which there is a probability that the use of, or exposure to an agent or contaminated product will cause adverse health consequences or death.

**Risk assessment** - Qualitative or quantitative estimation of the likelihood of adverse effects that may result from exposure to specified health hazards or the absence of beneficial influences.

**Recall** – Industry action to take product off shelf or from Consumers

**Withdrawal** - Government action to take unsafe product off shelf/ out of distribution.

**Horizon scanning** - The systematic examination of potential hazards, opportunities and likely future developments which are at the margins of current thinking and planning

# SOME DEFINITIONS

**NOTIFICATION** - Official communication of a disease/health event to the WHO by the health administration of the Member State affected by the disease/health event or national notification of an event to the national surveillance system, occurring at the country level, and not subject to notification to WHO.

**OUTBREAK SCIENCE** - Recent progress in the detection and response to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

**FOODBORNE ILLNESS/OUTBREAK** – The occurrence of more cases of a disease than that which is normally expected, within a specific place or group of people, over a given period of time;

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

## FOOD SAFETY LEGISLATION – FOOD CONTROL

- Foodstuffs Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, (Act 54 of 1972)
- **Section 2** relates to Safety and places the onus on the Manufacturer/Seller/Importer/Exporter to ensure that a foodstuff is Safe irrespective of a Regulation being in place.
- Approximately **50 sets of Regulations**
- Regulations Governing General Hygiene Requirements for Food Premises and the Transport of Food (R.638 of 22 June 2018)
  - Regulation 10(18) - **traceability system - recall plan/procedure – report to the local inspector and the National Directorate: Food Control.**
- Labelling Regulations, R146/2010 - **Supplier Ingredient File**



# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

- **FOOD SAFETY EMERGENCIES/ INCIDENTS/ EVENTS/ RECALLS/ FOOD SAFETY ALERTS - FOOD CONTROL**
  - **International** - EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) Contact Point
  - **International** - INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point
  - **Local** - Food Safety Alert Contact Point (R638/2018 reporting)
- **FOOD BORNE ILLNESS/OUTBREAKS** - NICD/CDC/EH/Surveillance
- **INDUSTRY VOLUNTARY NOTIFIED OR RECALL AS A RESULT OF CONSUMER COMPLAINT OR AT THE REQUEST OF A COMPETENT AUTHORITY (SECTION 60)** – National Consumer Commission (NCC)
- **INDUSTRY:** Notification/Recall
- **COMPETENT AUTHORITY:** Inform (Notification) and/or Withdraw



# HOW IS THE FOOD SAFETY ALERT SYSTEM INFORMED / ACTIVATED

## International Information

- EU RASFF
- WHO INFOSAN Emergency
- Media

## Local Notifications

- Industry- Recalls R638/2018
- Competent Authorities own Monitoring
- Laboratories
- Consumers
- Media

## Horizon Scanning

- International trends/media
- Countries Monitoring/border rejections
- Countries Recalls



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# Examples of Food Safety Alerts

**EU  
RASFF**

Metal fragments in chocolate cookies to SA

Ochratoxine A in dried white mulberries to SA

Muesli with undeclared Cashew nuts from SA

Unauthorised use of colour E 104 - quinoline yellow in soft drinks from SA

**INFOSAN &  
FC-OFFICIAL  
LAB**

Melamine in Milk and Dairy products

**LOCAL**

Aflatoxin in Peanut butter

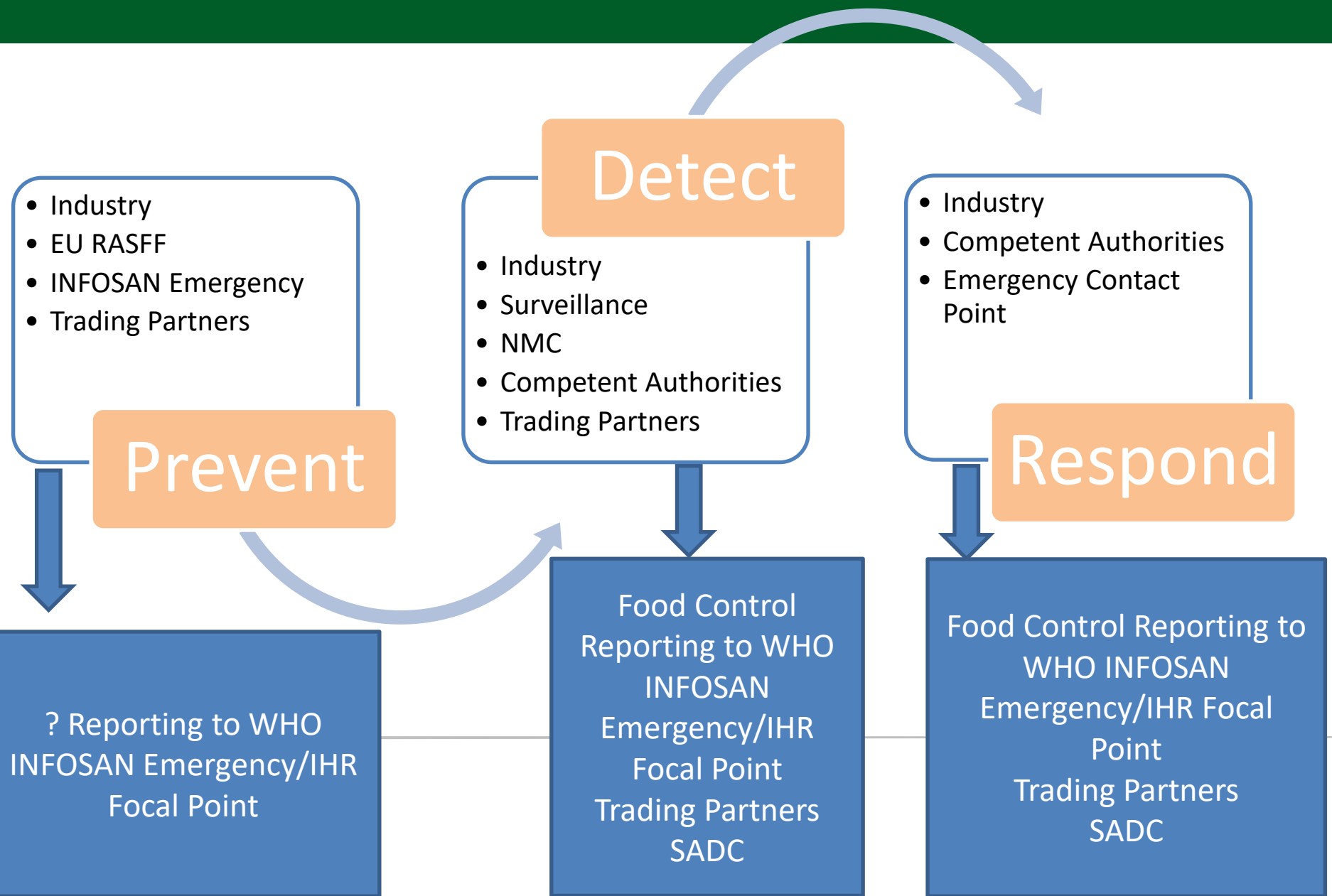


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# BACK TO IHR & RELEVANCE TO FOOD SAFETY



# CONCLUSION

- Food Safety Events/Alerts come in all shapes and sizes
- Commonality is that they are:
  - unpredictable,
  - may cause harm &
  - huge economic consequences
- **Preparedness & Response is Critical!!**

# A Long and Healthy Life for All - Using Food, for Health

## Thank You!!

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