


<p>Argument</p> <p>A5</p>	<h1>Food safety</h1>
	<p>Social</p>

Date (17/08/2010)

<h2>WHAT IS</h2>	<p>Food safety is a scientific discipline describing cultivation, handling, preparation and storage of food commodities and food in such a way as to prevent contamination and foodborne illnesses. Food contamination can occur in all kinds of food commodities (plant, animal, seafood etc.). In plant food commodities, plant pathogens and their products (such as mycotoxins caused by <i>Fusarium</i> spp) and pesticide residues above Maximum Residue Levels are the contaminations which may impair human health.</p> <p>The European Union (EU) is taking a broader view of what food safety is. Rather than concentrating only on contamination, EU authorities are now extending the scope of their checks to look more systematically at whether products comply with consumer information requirements and with the rules on what foodstuffs may or may not contain. Thus the EU's strategy for food safety is to follow food from the place where it was produced through to the place of consumption, in other words 'from farm to fork'. In the EU, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is the keystone for risk assessment regarding food and feed safety.</p>
<h2>WHY</h2>	<p>Consumers in the EU want to eat high quality food that is uncontaminated by inappropriate treatment during cultivation, storage or subsequent processing. This expectation from consumers is supported by General Food Law (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002), which imposes general obligations to provide safe food for consumers.</p> <p>Integrated Production (IP) is a farming system which secures sustainable production of high quality food and other products through ecologically preferable and safe technologies. Integrated Production aims to produce high quality agricultural products mainly through ecologically sound techniques. The EU supports production of high quality food, including IP. This approach is seen as the best means of combining a number of objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reasonable incomes for farmers ▶ Fair prices and safe food of high quality for consumers ▶ An acceptable cost to the taxpayer ▶ Allowing other countries fair access to EU markets for their produce and food ▶ A competitive food industry. <p>Integrated Pest Management is also in line with the above objectives. Since food, food ingredients and feed labels must indicate all essential information on the composition of the product, the manufacturer, methods of storage and preparation, products are carefully tracked from farm to fork. This is also an issue: why it is essential for farmers to produce high quality food.</p>

HOW	<p>In the EU there is a comprehensive set of standards regarding food safety. Legislation regarding food safety 'General Food Law' was set up in 2002. You can work on this law with participants (methodology sheets Info hunt or Highlight hierarchy could be the right method trainees need to explore the text). This law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sets out the principles applying to food safety ▶ Introduced the concept of 'traceability', which means that foodstuffs, animal feed and feed ingredients can be traced right through the food chain, from farm to fork. This is a so called 'one step back and one step forward' approach ▶ Set up the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to bring under one roof the work previously done by a range of scientific committees and to make the scientific risk assessment process more public ▶ Reinforced the rapid alert system (RASFF). RASFF is used to act quickly in the event of a food and/or feed safety care.
SOURCES	<p>Relevant information about food safety can be found from the following sources:</p> <p>Satin, M., Food Alert: The Ultimate Sourcebook for Food Safety, Facts on File, Inc., September 2008, 2nd ed.</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/publications/booklets/move/46/en.pdf</p> <p>http://www.efsa.europa.eu/</p> <p>http://www.efma.org/PRODUCT%20STEWARDSHIP%20PROGRAM%202008/images/EXPLAINING%20INTEGRATED%20FARMING-final.doc</p> <p>http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/en/</p> <p>http://www.iobc-wprs.org/ip_ipm/01_IOBC_Principles_and_Tech_Guidelines_2004.pdf</p> <p>http://www.foodallergens.info/Legal/General/General.html</p>