

# Safe Food, Fair Food: from capacity building to implementation. Risk-based approaches to improving food safety and market access in smallholder meat, milk and fish value chains in four African countries

International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

## The challenge

In Sub-Saharan Africa, millions of small-scale farmers efficiently supply the great majority of meat, milk and fish. Animal products have a high nutritional value which enhances public health, while the production, transportation, processing and retailing of these products provide income and employment to millions. On the other hand, animal source foods are single most important source of food borne disease. About 80 % of the animal source foods are distributed through informal markets without adequate safety inspection, and as a result, most of the people living in the region are exposed to a variety of food-borne agents which can cause diarrhoea, fever, chronic wasting, abortions, or even epilepsy and cancer. These infections can have severely negative impacts on the population, including a higher infant mortality, and may contribute significantly to the region's poverty. Conventional food safety policies often try and ban any product with germs (hazards) in it which can prevent small-scale farmers from marketing their products.

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Lead executing agency	International Livestock Research Institute Contact person: Delia Grace d.grace@cgiar.org
German cooperation	Freie Universität Berlin (FUB); Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)
Duration	03.2012 – 12.2015

## Our approach

The Safe Food, Fair Food project adapts risk-based methods for food safety in informal markets. Risk analysis or risk-based decision making is the gold standard for food safety management in developed countries and is based on evidence, not perceptions. Structured analysis often shows that the risks of informally marketed food are not as high as



*L. to r.: ILRI staff and collaborators briefing local enumerators before field sampling efforts, Kamuli district, Uganda, Collecting information about pig farming in Uganda, Locally made beef stew sold in Bagnon market at Yopougon, Abidjan, Ivory Coast*

they are perceived. For example, in urban East Africa where almost all consumers boil their milk, the presence of germs in milk presents little risk. Moreover, when a sector gives a large amount of benefit to livelihoods and nutrition a small amount of risk may be tolerable. Risk-based approaches allow us to identify what are the points on the 'farm to fork pathway' where control is most useful. This often allows cheap and highly effective ways of making the food bought and sold by the poor safer. In developing countries, where data on disease occurrence is scarce, participatory methods generate information that is critical for effective risk management.

## The benefits

- A generic set of tools for an integrated assessment of food safety and nutrition was applied in five selected high-potential livestock value chains and identified constraints to and opportunities for improving food safety.
- More than twenty facilitators were trained to conduct participatory rural appraisals on animal health, food safety and nutrition.
- More than fifteen postgraduate students are undertaking thesis work and research projects.

- On-going dissemination of results from the previous phase to inform food safety decision-makers.

## Expected impact

If promoted widely, the approach of participatory risk analysis can be applied and easily adopted to local needs and contexts in other developing countries. The current project builds directly on work supported by BMZ from 2008-2011. The partnerships established coupled with the integration of the project into high-potential value chains together with improved policy and practice will lead to tangible benefits for smallholders and other small-scale value chain actors including poor consumers.

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