

Workshop Issue 2:
**Identifying Existing Resources and Programs and Fostering
Collaboration and Partnership Development**

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Discussion:

- Concerns were expressed about not being able to accomplish the workshop objective without first gaining a firm understanding of what the FSIA's mission is and how the organization will stand apart from other international food safety initiatives pursued over the last 10 years.
- The workshop participants agreed that if the objective is to ensure that U.S. food imports are safe, then the resulting plan is considerably different than what is required if the objective is to improve the overall food safety infrastructure in the Americas.
- We must be able to answer a question common to all prospective constituents and collaborators: what will I get from FSIA that I cannot get elsewhere?
- The scope of the organization must encompass food safety and bio-security activities conducted by government, industry, non-government organizations (NGOs) and academia.
- The FSIA must not lose sight of its focus on people; changing consumer behaviors is essential to improving public health outcomes.
- Industry support for FSIA will follow from a comprehensive marketing effort to convince prospective private-sector participants of the benefits of associating with the organization.
- With a clear mission and goals established, the potential of FSIA is tremendous. It can help improve the effectiveness of hemispheric food safety and bio-security capacity-building efforts, and in doing so play an important supporting role in the facilitation of hemispheric trade agreements.
- The FSIA and its partners must be able to function as a cohesive unit.
- The workshop participants agreed that a similar approach is needed for the Western Hemisphere as that which exists for the European Union with respect to food safety standards (i.e. Codex): the EU acts together. With the FSIA serving as a platform for a common food safety strategy for the Americas, this is a viable and achievable goal.
- The workshop participants acknowledged that it is not possible during this meeting to adequately and completely inventory all food safety research and education programs conducted by government, industry, NGOs and academia.
- Instead, a needs assessment should be conducted to determine the extent to which existing food safety and bio-security programs have already been inventoried. A survey mechanism should then be designed to canvas for program information not documented elsewhere.

- Programs identified in survey responses should be analyzed to determine the extent to which they have been evaluated for effectiveness in meeting their stated food safety and bio-security objectives.
- A program evaluation mechanism will be needed for those programs about which little or no performance-measurement information exists.
- Once a comprehensive body of program assessment information is available, decisions can be made regarding how to prioritize unmet needs and how to marshal resources (financial, institutional or otherwise) to address them.

Recommendations:

- **Conduct a needs assessment.**
 - The needs assessment is to determine what survey research has been done on existing food safety and bio-security programs and what is still needed. The needs assessment should focus on programs related to: (1) traceability, (2) product certification, (3) audit training, (4) harmonization of food safety standards, (5) worker hygiene and health, (6) water sanitation, (7) HACCP, (8) Good Manufacturing Practices and Good Agricultural Practices, (9) risk analysis and mitigation, (10) emerging pathogens and (11) analytical methods.
- **Partner with contract universities, trade associations and public health and agriculture ministries in the hemisphere to design survey instruments.**
 - The survey instruments should be designed to inventory academic, industry, government and NGO food-safety and security programs according to their target audiences.
 - The goal should also be to determine the extent to which those programs have been evaluated.
- **The survey should cover the following five basic questions:**
 - What programs are offered?
 - Where are these programs offered?
 - To whom are these programs offered?
 - How are these programs delivered?
 - How are these programs evaluated?
- **Survey presentation and design should consider and reflect sensitivity to ethnic and cultural traditions associated with food preparation, consumption and economics.**
 - An idea posed was to consider having different countries develop different components of survey instrument and question design.
- **Partner with professional and trade-umbrella organizations throughout the Hemisphere to target the surveys to appropriate respondents.**
 - This could include such organizations as the Institute of Food Technologists; National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC); National Institutes of Agricultural Security, Pan American Health

Organization (PAHO); Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), and the *Instituto panamericano de Proteccion de Alimentos y Zoonosis (INPPAZ)* (Food Safety and Zoonosis Institute), Organismo internacional regional de sanidad agropecuaria (OIRSA).

- FSIA should engage umbrella organizations in formal dialogue regarding FSIA prior to enlisting them in a survey distribution.

- **Based on survey responses, determine where unmet food safety outreach needs remain.**

- **Prioritize unmet needs and develop an action plan.**

- **Identify, solicit and secure cooperators and resources to implement the action plan.**