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# AGRILINKS WEBINAR: ADDRESSING FOOD SAFETY IN ANIMAL SOURCE FOODS FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS TRANSCRIPT

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## PRESENTERS

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## MODERATORS

Jennifer Lane, Land O'Lakes International Development

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*Jennifer Lane:*

Thank you so much, Dennis and to all of our presenters. This is Jennie again from Land O' Lakes. We're gonna go now into the question and answer session. There's been an incredibly rich discussion and questions going on in the chat box, so thank you to everybody. We don't have a lot of time so we won't be able to get to everyone, however hopefully there's maybe an option that we'll be able to have kind of an online chat on another date that Agrilinks may also be able to host on this topic and our speakers might be able to respond with some written responses to some of our questions as we group them.

I do want to before we go to the questions just flag. There have been a few questions regarding mycotoxins and aflatoxins. As Andrew mentioned earlier, Agrilinks has had multiple webinars and there are a lot of resources on aflatoxins and mycotoxins in not just animal sourced foods but all sorts of crops. That is outside of the scope of this talk. We do know with very good science from the World Health Organization that the global burden of disease of foodborne illness in animal sourced foods is primarily from bacterial and parasitic infections, so that's why we chose to focus on the management strategies, those issues, in these talks.

I encourage you to look at Agrilinks for resources for mycotoxins and aflatoxins going forward. Our first question that we're going to go to is for Hung and he is going to ask him to speak to the data collection and how you address the issue of lack of data, for instance is this maybe a reason why there's limited antibiotics in food of origin? Is that a data problem or is it because you know there's data there and it's just not kind of coming out in what you've found? So back to you, Hung.

*Hung Nguyen-Viet:*

Good evening again from Hanoi. This is Hung speaking. Thank you very much for the interest and the question. I can see here some concern from colleagues about the data, a lack of data in real assessment \_\_\_\_\_. As I mentioned from the beginning, risk assessment is not new to \_\_\_\_\_ not in terms of implementation, application of risk assessment for food safety has been rather recent for Vietnam. In this type of context we need to really adapt to the local context but also to develop kind of a new approach to conduct this assessment.

So coming back now to the lack of data, for example we look for the data of meat consumption for example and specifically for pork in Vietnam. You don't really have \_\_\_\_\_ for pork specifically. You have meat consumption for every type of meat included. So in this \_\_\_\_\_ things either we conduct it ourselves away from the study side, by for example you see convening focus group discussions to really involve partners and stakeholders of value chain to provide information for our \_\_\_\_\_ model for that.

The second question is about the low level of antibiotics \_\_\_\_\_ in pork in Vietnam. That is actually \_\_\_\_\_ themselves from our study. So I think we need to make this clear, in fact the \_\_\_\_\_ of AMR, anti-microbial resistance is quite important in increasing in developing countries including Vietnam, and that actually we didn't – that in the \_\_\_\_\_ study, however the antibiotic resistance seemed to be quite low in our surveys, and I think that one of the reasons for this low level of antibiotics \_\_\_\_\_ in fact maybe the livestock sector can get \_\_\_\_\_ from that side, but also the vet \_\_\_\_\_ point of view withholding a period for antibiotic treatment is quite nicely kept for this area of study in \_\_\_\_\_ two provinces north and center of Vietnam. Over to you. Jennie.

*Jennifer Lane:*

Super. Thank you very much for that. Okay, the next question is for Silvia. Silvia, we have a listener inquiring about milk certification and if customers were willing to pay a higher price, and how much did that price increase? Kind of trying to get to the question of balance between affordability of the product and product quality.

*Silvia:*

Thank you, Jennie. So yeah, that's a very relevant question. When the training and certification was implemented ten years ago, the beginning actually the \_\_\_\_\_ just laid into an increasing price. The price of informal sector is very, very determined by the market. It's a very competitive market. There's so many retailers and traders selling raw milk that obviously a trader that might go through a training cannot allow himself to just increase the price. So this is not \_\_\_\_\_ that.

What if people would be willing to pay a premium in terms of higher price for better quality milk? I do believe that in the long-term they may. Obviously you saw the \_\_\_\_\_ capacity of the customers, which in certain contexts is very low, but I mean from our talks to traders they seem to report that their customers were clearly happier with the quality of the milk that the traders were selling. The traders were very happy with that. They could see that the customers were coming to them.

So while it might not be immediate, a customer might not be just waiting to be \_\_\_\_\_ after the trade straightaway, they may all the time when they get used to that higher quality and they learn to sort of appreciate it in the long term, that might result in customers to be willing to pay smaller, very small amounts of higher price for that better quality of raw milk. That is something we actually did \_\_\_\_\_ . So yeah, so to me that is the key. I'm not sure the second part of the question, Jennie, you can repeat it, or was that answering what the question was?

*Jennifer Lane:*

I think you captured most of it. We can go on to Dennis. Thank you, Silvia. So for Dennis there was multiple questions regarding incentives for

producers to bring their milk to the collection centers rather than going through more informal channels, and what are the benefits for people that are participating in the milk collection centers? In that same vein there was also a question regarding kind of these milk collection centers and how they're financed as standalone business entities or where they get their funding from if they were part of the project or if they're gonna continue on after the project. Over to you, Dennis.

*Dennis Karamuzi:* Yeah. Thank you very much, Jennie, and a very good question at that. Of course this whole structuring of the data business has happened in the midst of a chaotic kind of environment where the whole country is only trying to rebuke across different sectors. So over the years government has invested quite largely in two different mechanisms and established what we call the milk collection center, and they have struggled quite frankly with the actual functionality of the MCC because the ownership is at this point with the milk cooperative. So what you have seen I would like to go back to that slide, the structures, and the market. What you have seen as I navigate back, I don't know if the host is holding anything.

What you have seen is a mechanism that has been structured to be able to target incentives at different points. All the way from the producer as you saw that quite clearly, helping the producer to understand the needs for their business to be able to improve, to be able to grow. So over the time of the project what we have focused on has been mainly trying to package around the entire chain. If you are a producer you have received training, you have received the package of input, you have received the proper extension care, and you feel obliged and connected to your cooperative, which is facilitating the provision of \_\_\_\_\_.

So what happens is the services around the milk collection center become the motivation for farmers, for producers to be able to enroll and supply their milk through this point. So it has been essential in our BBS training to emphasize service provision to the farmers because that is the second point. But on the other end too, the informal market, which is the traders around the different collection points that will usually cause people to buy \_\_\_\_\_ the milk collection centers, they are poorly regulated. They are not properly listed as business entities and farmers always risk losing all of their produce.

Over the years they have seen the difference between working in a structured market through a cooperative, through a recognized trader, and across the chain on the other end proper supply to a buyer who can guarantee payment. In addition what we have done is to structure finance within this \_\_\_\_\_ chain. So a transporter who has a steady relationship with a cooperative is able to \_\_\_\_\_ funding from the bank or a

grant from the project, or even a long-term kind of contract with a milk buyer to be able to supply this milk gradually over a long period of time.

So all of those incentives combine to help the farmer to see, to kind of \_\_\_\_\_ to actually formalize if you like. So what we call it is really more graduated formalized milk trade by providing incentives that don't necessarily – well they \_\_\_\_\_ sense, but nobody \_\_\_\_\_ to get into this chain. In simple terms, the real motivation is a combination of pricing from the pool end, a combination of service provision, improved BDS services around the milk collection centers.

That's a very important aspect. If there is an enterprising proposition to the other end, to the farmers, the farmers will gradually go away and end up with a trader who pays cash. Now the last and most important I think has been the structure in \_\_\_\_\_ around this same value chain. So while you are achieving equality across the board, you're also achieving a lot of value addition to this entire business at different points. The \_\_\_\_\_ is able to acquire funding to grow their budgets. They are also able to pay back in time to the supplier.

The supplier is able to pay back to the contracted milk collection center and so on and so forth. So there is a combination of forces to make the incentives across the chain, but as a project our soft contribution \_\_\_\_\_ in the training, in the mentorship that provide both the cooperatives and the individual producers around \_\_\_\_\_ to appreciate the long-term value in actual \_\_\_\_\_ structure. I think that's the most important that I needed to say. Thank you. Over to you, Jennie.

*Jennifer Lane:*

Thank you very much, Dennis. Okay, we're gonna go to a few more questions, but in the meantime we're gonna pull up the polls for your voting on how this webinar went. The webinar is not over. We're gonna keep on answering questions, but please answer those polls while you continue to listen. The last question is going back over to Vietnam and Hung. Is there anything that you could share about your experiences from working with the informal pork sector to mitigate the food safety issues since the order and command approach did not work, and was it because of ineffective enforcement of food safety laws and regulations?

*Hung Nguyen-Viet:*

Thank you very much for this very interesting question. I have to say that our Indian partner has been working a lot on assessment phase, so you can see some of the evidence in this assessment on how \_\_\_\_\_ pork, fish \_\_\_\_\_. We are moving now to a new phase of introducing innovative interventions to \_\_\_\_\_ improve food safety in general in Vietnam, and that is actually part of the upcoming project \_\_\_\_\_ pork, so-called \_\_\_\_\_ pork, moving from pretreat as I showed to the new project \_\_\_\_\_ here.

By working with informal pork sector in Vietnam in particular and as a country I would say that \_\_\_\_\_ has the kind of experiences in this informal market in Africa and in Southeast Asia. I think the evidence shows a great issue of food safety in Vietnam now is really the \_\_\_\_\_ communication issue in the country. I mean consumers don't perceive very correctly the risks that they would have from consuming the foods they buy.

We have also kind of flowing up by the media about the risks coming from food systems. So I think we need to work more on that risk communication and improving the task of consumer to \_\_\_\_\_ food. Some of the studies showing that formalizing markets like central markets leads to a very essential food in some of the markets, and from traditional way. Like Silvia said, we need to really have people to improve the food safety standards in \_\_\_\_\_ for the market. For example, showing that the \_\_\_\_\_ and branding came from the \_\_\_\_\_ house to the market to make people aware that food is safer, but they need also to pay premium to get safer food.

In some cases you bring the safer food and that mixes with the less hygienic food or meat, so that \_\_\_\_\_ problems. It creates \_\_\_\_\_ an intervention to \_\_\_\_\_ measure for that needs to be promoted more and more. Finally, you are very right. You say that the reinforcement of regulation is quite weak in developing countries. For example, if you compare the human resource of food inspector of the whole country in Vietnam for example if you go into the number of food inspector of Bangkok City in Thailand.

So you see some drawbacks and weakness in the system. So that's why I think we need to really approach this thing from both ways. In the long-term point of way I think the reinforcement of regulation is particularly important for development in future, but in the meanwhile we need really to find those solutions like our speakers talked about in the context of Africa or here in Vietnam really to help people to improve the food safety. I hope that I can give some element to answer the question. Over to you, Jennie.

*Jennifer Lane:* Thank you very much for that. Okay, we're gonna work on wrapping up, but Dennis has something to add from Rwanda so we're gonna pass it over to him.

*Dennis Karamuzi:* Yeah. Thank you very much, Jennie. An important aspect I wanted to make sure to bring up is the restructuring of the market and cleaning up the \_\_\_\_\_ has been strongly complimented with a program, a national \_\_\_\_\_ production kind of education process, which I think is something

that Silvia talked about. In fact, it is adopted from some of the idea work that \_\_\_\_\_ has done in Nairobi, and we adopted it for Rwanda in the way that these new collection centers that are participating in the cleanup process are recognized first of all through the different incentives that I talked about but also strongly through a national certification by the Ministry of Agriculture, which we call the Rwanda Agriculture and Livestock Inspection Party.

So we have worked with the government, with the department, to develop criteria for evaluation of these new collection centers, and they are heavily packaged around the different aspects of milk quality, right from the \_\_\_\_\_ through into the business itself and how \_\_\_\_\_ to given, the kind of value they provide back to the farmers, and all of that comes together to provide what we call a seed of quality certificate. So combine the set of best practices across the board that are all aimed at improving the quality of the milk and also the quality of the business at the milk collection center.

And as we concluded the program at the end of December we were privileged to commence the first certification event of 27 dairy businesses out of a network of about 77 milk collection centers that we worked with. We have 27 of them award the national certificates, and these will last up to a year, the license, but we allow them to operate and an advantage over the other for trading in a product that is already guaranteed of high quality.

And an ongoing compliance check will happen at different points during the year, and that for us has been a major success in the sense that it has \_\_\_\_\_ the primary producers to be able to trade, because in any case they were trading, but in this case to be able to trade higher quality, higher value kind of product. We wanted to be sure that we can allude to the fact that Silvia \_\_\_\_\_ something around training and education, in this case from dairy business. Thank you. Over to you again.

*Jennifer Lane:*

Thank you, Dennis. I think that's an important thing that you had to add. Okay, everybody, that's it for questions. I think I'd like to thank the speakers again and Agrilinks. This has been a really valuable webinar. I think that the listeners have probably heard some really good examples from diverse fields and regions on how both the informal and the formal sectors can play a role in this, and we need to find a balance working all along the value chain.

In watching the chat box there's also been kind of discussion about behavior change communications and linking this to actually improve consumption of animal source foods to improve nutrition in the most vulnerable populations. We're on the edge of some cool new work and I hope that we can continue to lead some conversations around this with

other partners both here in the United States and around the world. Thank you very much to everybody. All of the resources are available. I'm gonna pass this over to Carla to wrap up.

*Carla F. de Castro:* On behalf of USAID's Bureau for Food Security I would like to thank all of our participants for a really engaging chat today as well as all of our speakers: Silvia, Dennis, Hung, Jennie, and Andrew. Thanks to all.