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Department of Agriculture
SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION
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MEMORANDUM ORDER NO. 4
Series of 2022

SUBJECT: ADOPTING THE SUGAR SAFETY MODEL IN STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION

WHEREAS, Republic Act 10659 or the Sugarcane Industry Development Act of 2015 states (SIDA 2015) that SRA shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the safety regulation on all forms and classifications of sugar derived from sugarcane;

WHEREAS, to attain the above, the SIDA requires the SRA to establish a supply chain monitoring system from sugarcane to sugar at the retail level to ensure the sufficiency and safety of sugar;

WHEREAS, Republic Act 10611 or the Food Safety Act of 2013 (FSA 2013) mandates the strengthening of the food safety regulatory system in the country by protecting the public from food-borne and water-borne illnesses and unsanitary, unwholesome, misbranded or adulterated foods; enhancing industry and consumer confidence in the food regulatory system; and achieving economic growth and development by promoting fair trade practices and sound regulatory foundation for domestic and international trade;

WHEREAS, FSA 2013 requires the establishment of policies and programs for addressing the food safety hazards and developing appropriate standards and control measures; strengthening the scientific basis of the regulatory system; and upgrading the capability of farmers, industries, consumers and government personnel in ensuring food safety;

WHEREAS, the sugar safety model is an integrated food safety mechanism of the SRA to mitigate the food safety risk associated with sugar in the supply chain:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DAVID JOHN THADDEUS P. ALBA, SRA Administrator, by the powers vested in me by law, hereby issue the Memorandum Order directing the adoption and integration of the Sugar Safety Model through the development and implementation of a sustainable sugar safety programs, projects and activities.

SECTION I
VISION

Safe and healthy sugar for the Filipinos

SECTION II
MISSION

Strengthen the food control system to protect, promote and support consumer health.

SECTION III
EXPECTED OUTCOMES

I. Strengthening Sugar Safety Control System
   a. Sugar industry stakeholders comply with sugar safety legislations and standards.
   b. Sugar safety control measures are conducted based on scientific evidence/risk-based
   c. Sugar safety incidents and emergencies are well-managed
   d. A functional coordination mechanism for sugar safety control is established at the national and regional levels.

II. Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Consumer Health
   a. Reduced incidents of food-borne illnesses
   b. Legal provision for consumer health protection
   c. Reliable sugar safety information available for consumer health protection
   d. Increased sugar safety awareness among consumers.

SECTION IV
STRATEGIC GOAL

Strengthen organizational capacity in managing sugar safety risk through integrated sugar safety control programs across the supply chain.

SECTION V
COMPONENTS

I. Policy and Legal Framework
II. Control Management
III. Risk-based Sugar Inspection
IV. National Laboratory System
V. Sugar Safety Communication and Education

SECTION VI
STRATEGIC ACTIONS

I. Policy and Legal Framework

1. Develop, review and regularly update sugar safety policies, legislations and standards to include all requirements of a risk-based sugar safety control system to address current emerging issues and to harmonize sugar safety legislations across various competent authorities in line with international requirements such as Codex Alimentarius Commission, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (WTO SPS) agreement and International Commission for Uniform Methods of Sugar Analysis (ICUMSA) where applicable.

2. Disseminate sugar safety policies, regulations and standards through various means, including tools such as official websites

II. Control Management

1. Facilitate cross-sectoral coordination, integration of sugar safety control services and synergy in actions at the national and regional levels to achieve common sugar safety goals.

III. Risk-based Sugar Inspection

1. Develop and implement risk-based inspection across the sugar supply chain.
2. Allocate adequate resources for inspection, including appropriate inspection tools and sampling plans.
3. Establish a monitoring program for specific contaminants and residues.
4. Develop guidance documents and tools for food business operators to develop sugar safety management systems such as good agricultural practices (GAP), good manufacturing practices (GMP), hazards analysis and critical control points (HACCP0, traceability, recall, labeling and sugar fraud vulnerability assessment and mitigation plan, and encourage them to conduct self-audit programs.

IV. National Laboratory System

1. Establish or have access to adequate laboratory services, including reference laboratories and regional laboratories.
2. Collaborate to develop a laboratory network at the national and regional levels to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
3. Develop and implement a sample management system.
4. Ensure that internal and external quality control/assurance systems (proficiency testing) for sugar testing are in place, including accreditation, where necessary.

V. Sugar Safety Communication and Education

1. Develop education and capacity-building programs on sugar safety for SRA personnel through various means, including online training.
2. Establish guidance documents for Food Business Operators (FBOs) to manage sugar safety risks in line with national requirements.
3. Identify training needs and provide assistance/encouragement to FBOs to deliver continuing education and sugar safety communication for all supply chain personnel.
4. Provide safety awareness and training for FNOs to improve hygiene and sugar safety practices.
5. Develop and implement consumer awareness programs promoting sugar hygiene practices.
6. Review and update sugar safety information regularly.
7. Design and provide tailored and specific sugar safety information targeting vulnerable populations.
8. Develop appropriate mechanisms to monitor public concerns and social media information on sugar safety and response.
9. Develop media and FBO sensitization programs on sugar safety.
10. Encourage the incorporation of sugar safety-related lessons and activities in training and seminars.

SECTION VII
INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

I. Policy and Legal Framework

1. Sugar safety legislations are in place, regulations are updated, and consistent definitions are applied across various sectors.
2. Sugar standards and safety regulations align with Codex, the WTO SPS/TBT, ICUMSA and other international requirements.
3. Regulations include the provision of the primary responsibility of sugar business operators in food control systems based on the Philippine context.
4. Legal provision for consumer health protection is in place.
5. National sugar safety policies and strategic plans, including priorities, are in place.
6. Sugar safety policies, regulations and standards are communicated and accessible to all stakeholders on official websites.

II. Control Management

1. The roles and responsibilities of the responsible units in the food control system along the sugar supply chain are clearly defined, including the responsibility of sugar business operators at all levels.
2. Responsible units involved in sugar safety are supported with adequate resources in terms of quantity and quality (e.g., human, financial, logistic, etc.) to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.
3. An integrated mechanism is formally established in the agency and is empowered with adequate legal authority to direct/manage the food control program at the national and regional levels.
4. The national food control system has developed measurable indicators to assess the effectiveness of sugar safety actions/measures.
5. A regional or local network has been established to create a platform for harmonizing standards and regulatory practices, mutual recognition of inspection and discussions on how to resolve issues related to sugar safety.
6. Internal audits are in place to review the effectiveness, transparency and independence of control programs.

III. Risk-based Sugar Inspection

1. Based on the Philippine context, national registration systems for FBOs, including e-commerce, are in place to facilitate risk-based inspections.
2. Risk-based inspection plans are available and being implemented.
3. Resources for risk-based inspection (trained personnel, protocol and equipment) are adequately available and are geographically distributed throughout the country.
4. Sugar inspection is conducted based on risk profiling, categories and priorities across the food chain.
5. Monitoring programs for specific hazards (contaminants and residues) are regularly conducted, the findings are shared with relevant stakeholders, and corrective actions are taken.

IV. National Laboratory System

1. A Laboratory network is developed and made functional at the national and regional levels.

2. There is the presence of (or access to) sufficient laboratories capable of delivering reliable laboratory services to support the sugar safety control system throughout the country.
3. National laboratory systems are connected with regional, competent laboratories and/or international reference laboratories.
4. Sample management systems are in place.
5. Internal and external sugar testing quality/assurance systems (proficiency testing) are in place.

V. Sugar Safety Communication and Education

1. Educational programs on food safety for SRA personnel through various means, including online training, are in place.
2. Guidance documents (e.g., Good Agricultural Practices, Good Manufacturing Practices, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points implementation, fraud, vulnerability management, traceability and recall) for FBOs are available.
3. Education and communication on food safety are delivered to all personnel involved in the sugar business through various means (structured training, team meetings, informal events, messaging via email and intranet, etc.).
4. Sugar safety awareness and training for sugar handlers – repackers, wholesalers, and retailers are in place to improve hygiene and sugar safety practices.
5. Continuous campaigns on sugar safety are being held.
6. Consumer awareness, education and protection of consumer health, including risk communications, are in place.
7. Awareness and training programs to increase consumer awareness are in place.
8. Reliable and updated sugar safety information is available on SRA's official website and social media, as well as on the websites of all major organizations related to food safety.
9. Mechanisms are in place to monitor and appropriately respond to public concerns and social media information on sugar safety.
10. Media and FBOs sensitization programs on sugar safety are developed.
11. Sugar safety-related lessons and activities are regularly organized in training, e.g., OPSI or Food Safety Week.
12. Specific sugar safety information for vulnerable target populations is available and accessible to them.

SECTION VIII
EFFECTIVITY

This ORDER shall take effect immediately and shall remain in force until revoked or amended.

Issued this 14 of September, 2022.

DAVID JOHN THADDEUS P. ALBA
Administrator