

# Hygienic slaughtering and handling practices of meat in healthy cities



## 1. Background

Unsafe food causes many acute and life-long diseases, ranging from diarrhoeal diseases to various forms of cancer. The World Health Organization estimates that foodborne and waterborne diarrhoeal diseases kill approximately 2.2 million people annually; 1.9 million of them children. Therefore, foodborne disease imposes a significant burden on society in both developed and developing countries. The Fifty-third World Health Assembly in 2000 adopted resolution WHA53.15 to recognize food safety as a significant public health concern and encouraged Member States to develop and implement systematic and sustainable preventive measures aimed at significantly reducing the occurrence of foodborne illnesses.

Foodborne illness is commonly associated with meat and is caused by a range of potentially fatal pathogens including; *E.coli* O157:H7, *Campylobacter* spp, *Salmonella* spp and parasites including; *Trichinella spiralis* (causing Trichinellosis), and *Toxoplasma gondii* (causing Toxoplasmosis). Such illnesses can be eliminated or reduced via controls throughout the food chain continuum from farm to fork, including the hygienic slaughtering and handling of meat.

In developing countries, community access to local government owned or administered slaughtering facilities reduces the slaughtering of animals in backyards or inappropriate settings where unhealthy animals maybe slaughtered, handling practises are often poor, and meat inspection does not occur.

However, the standard of local government owned or administered slaughtering facilities and their meat handling practices, varies considerably. For example, in the Philippines, of approximately 817 slaughterhouses owned by Local Government, around 13 % comply with national standards for accreditation. Poor food safety standards can lead to critical public health concerns such as the contamination of meat with faecal matter and the slaughter of unhealthy animals.

Additionally, contamination of meat can occur during transportation and display for sale in wet markets. Temperature abuse, which is common during transportation and display, leads to the growth of pathogens already present on the meat. Contamination from dirty surfaces and flies are also frequent concerns.

The improvement of local government owned or administered slaughtering facilities, wet markets and the meat handling practices, will lead to an improvement of public health through the reduction of foodborne disease.

## **2. Good Practice Award**

The World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific calls for applications for good practice awards in Healthy Cities as follows:

### **Award:**

“Outstanding achievement by a Local Government Unit/Authority in improving hygienic slaughtering and handling of meat for the local community”

The two winning Local Government Units/Authorities will receive a winning plaque and financial support for the Mayor of each Local Government Units/Authorities to attend the Fourth Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities in Gangnam, Republic of Korea on 26-29 October 2010. Up to five meat inspectors or key officials in the winning Local Government Units/Authorities assisting in the improvements will be awarded certificates of acknowledgement and book vouchers to the value of USD150.

### **Eligible applicants:**

Local Government Units/Authorities in developing country members of the Alliance for Healthy Cities.

### **Materials to be submitted:**

A written report and photographs taken before and after the improvements, and other supporting materials, describing the approach and activities undertaken to improve hygienic slaughtering and/or handling of meat for the local community, and other information considered useful for evaluating the submission.

### **Deadline for submission:**

16 August 2010

## **3. Contact Information**

Applications to both awards and any queries should be sent to:

Regional Adviser in Food Safety  
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific  
P.O. Box 2932, United Nations Avenue  
1000 Manila, Philippines  
Fax: +632526 0279  
E-mail: [fos@wpro.who.int](mailto:fos@wpro.who.int) or [hazzarda@wpro.who.int](mailto:hazzarda@wpro.who.int)

