Rapporteur Note

Session: **Cutting Health Risks Along the Value Chain**

Rapporteur **Danielle Nierenberg**
Senior Researcher, The Worldwatch Institute, and Co-project Director, Nourishing the Planet, USA

Chair: **Maximo Torero**, Director, Markets, Trade, and Institutions Division, and Director, Latin America, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA

Overview: **Pippa Chenevix Trench**, Research Fellow, Market, Trade, and Institutions Division, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA

Panelists:
Perspective on "Health Risks Related to Agriculture and Markets"—**Leszek Borysiewicz**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge, UK
Perspective on "Certification Schemes"—**Bhushana Karandikar**, Agribusiness Strategist, Mahagrapes, India
Perspective on "Incentives to Develop Consumer Demand for Quality Food: Supply Perspectives"—**Apollo O. Owuor**, Agronomy Manager, Kenya Horticultural Exporters Ltd., Kenya

Overview

- Whether the agricultural value chain is simple or complex, it carries multiple risks, and the chain is only as strong as its weakest link.
- Risks coming from multiple drivers: growing population and increased disturbance of natural habitats; increased urbanization; and changing diets (higher demand for perishable foods more likely to have microbial of microbial contamination increases).
- Various costs for rich and poor producers alike, including lost access to markets, cumbersome food safety regulations, impact of panic from media on producers' incomes as sales go down. As a result, significant potential impacts on income and livelihoods—where producers are unable to meet standards or through health and nutritional impacts.
- The poor suffer the most from costs of regulation, but also have the most to benefit: poor farmers can benefit from better information and education about the risks of misusing agro-chemicals or other practices; producers need to see the benefit early on of compliance to food safety practices, so that they will stay engaged in the practices; testing needs to be less cumbersome and less expensive for small farmers.
- We need to respond to government failures—We cannot rely on private standards and market forces alone to deliver food for the poorest consumers, who are most in need and most vulnerable to unsafe food. There is a clear need to improve content and access to information, support to develop local capacities and policies appropriate for local realities.

- Need both horizontal and vertical coordination both to make sure that farmers share information and costs and that consumers (including producers) are protected.
- A risk based approach is needed in which solutions take into account social, cultural, economic and political realities of the market and of stakeholders all along the value chain

Health Risks Related to Agriculture and Markets

- Importance of recognizing the triangulation of food producers, communities, and health—this triangulation creates a fragile dynamic, when one suffers, all suffer. It requires inter-disciplinary thinking among scientists, producers, consumers, and academics.
- Universities and academia have an important role to play in reducing health risks, if they can work effectively with local organizations, academics, and institutions.
- Growth in non-communicable diseases will require a change in how practitioners address illness and health risks.

Certification Schemes

- Certification programs in India are thriving, but they exist only for the international, not the domestic, market.
- Strong producer associations creates a vehicle for the effective dissemination of information and farmer to farmer dialog about best practices; but there is still a "missing market for information" and a growing need for better information about regulations and compliance measures.
- International regulations for food safety changing "too fast" for Indian farmers—in 1999, farmers only had to test for 18 chemicals on grapes; today they are required to test for 163 chemicals.
- Benefits of certification, include safer food for European consumers, increased income for domestic farmers, and likely better nutrition as a result of higher incomes from selling higher value produce.
- Great potential for domestic certification schemes (which are based on the lessons learned from international certification), especially as incomes rise, and consumers demand better food safety.

Incentives to Develop Consumer Demand for Quality Food

- There's a growing need to look at food safety regulations not only from the consumers point of view, but also the producers.
- Lack of knowledge needs to trickle down to farmers so that they can better protect their own health, as well as the health of their customers. Many farmers lack an understanding about how to meet food safety regulations for international markets and agribusiness has stepped into to fill that knowledge gap. Branding and labeling (food safety, animal welfare, and environmentally friendly labeling) by major supermarkets is complex and farmers need more information and resources from the private sector, academics, and business to understand food safety and health.
- Farmers and consumers both need a better understanding of how certification can cause huge amounts of waste in the system, when products don't comply with particular standards (apples all the same size, beans that are consistent in length and curvature, for example).
- Growing awareness of how farmers' practices can help protect biodiversity and the environment—increasingly a selling point for consumers who are not only concerned about their own health, but also the health of the planet.

Conclusions

- Food safety is evolving to be something that all consumers—both rich and poor—are willing to pay for and seek out making domestic markets for certified products more important than ever before. This

will not only provide safer food to communities, but also diversify diets and improve nutrition and increase incomes.

- We need a value chain approach to the problem, especially because some food safety problemsstart in the soil and be resolved, but then appear again during storage. Food safety needs to be attacked on all fronts.
- Food safety shouldn't just be an issue restricted to exports, but also for local consumption. Certification could help to signal safety attributes of food.
- Identifying the risks and doing a risk assessment and cost effectiveness analysis is of central importance to prioritizing solutions.
- There is a triangulation of production, communities and health. This triangulation is complex, dynamic and unpredictable multiple disciplines are needed and requires the involvement of multiple players (public, private, researchers, civil society, etc) to resolve the market failures that currently exist.
- Need greater—and better—interaction between farmers associations, industry, government, media, and academia to ensure that regulations are enforced and that farmers get the information they need to institute best practices on their farms.
- Food safety is not scale neutral, and there is minimum fix costs, creating a challenge to smallholders and is where horizontal (rural producer organizations) and vertical coordination (contract farming) can help.
- Finally, there is a need to improve the knowledge on the links between agricultural health risks and human health.