



REPORT

FIVE KEYS TO SAFER FOOD WORKSHOP

ORGANIZED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH
(FOOD CONTROL UNIT) WITH THE SUPPORT OF
THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



WORKSHOP HELD IN BOTSALO HOTEL,
PALAPYE, 29TH NOVEMBER 2005

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) country office has carried out food safety activities, one of them being awareness campaigns targeting mainly the business communities and food handlers in Governmental Secondary schools countrywide.

Recently, the Ministry of Health, Food Control Unit has adapted the WHO poster on “Five Keys to Safer Food” and started its promotion in Palapye. The target audience was composed by representatives of Primary and Secondary Schools (teachers in-charge of kitchens), representatives of Hospital kitchen, managers of restaurants and hotels.

1.2. The workshop in Palapye was held on the 29th November 2005 at Botsalo Hotel with a total of fifty-eight (58) participants. Each participant received copies of the poster (English and Setswana versions). The list of the workshop attendees is attached as Annex one (1).

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this workshop were:

- To promote food safety awareness through the dissemination of the poster “ FIVE KEYS TO SAFER FOOD”.
- To impart knowledge about good hygiene practices.
- To facilitate the voluntary application of food safety measures in the sector of mass catering (school and hospital kitchens and hotels).
- To minimize the occurrence of food borne diseases in the country through adherence to food safety practices.

It was expected that the participants would be able to train the cooks in their own institutions.

3. PROGRAMME

The programme is attached as Annex two (2). During the workshop some changes to the programme were introduced as follows:

- the Opening speech was given by Mrs. Angela Kashani, and
- the Group exercise was cancelled to allow extended discussions after the presentations.

3.1. Opening session

A participant opened the workshop with a prayer at 08:35 hrs.

The Chairperson, Mr. Letsholo, Senior Environmental officer from the Palapye/ Serowe Sub-district Council welcomed all participants to the workshop and thanked them for availing their time to this activity.

The Chairperson introduced the resource persons, allowed each participant to introduce him/herself and also explained the objectives of the workshop. He indicated that avoiding food borne diseases should be of best interest to all and that those involved in the food distribution chain should make a great effort to supply safe food to our communities.

The Chairperson urged all participants to fully participate and give comments or ask questions freely.

The Chairperson explained that the Representative of the World Health Organization country office could not participate to officially open the workshop, thus, Mrs. Angela Kashani would read the opening speech.

Mrs. Kashani indicated that access to safe, wholesome and nutritious food was a basic right to all consumers and the cornerstone to the prevention of many diseases such as diarrhoea. She said that it was the responsibility of all from farmers, food manufacturers, distributors, retailers and cooks to ensure that food was safe. The Government in collaboration with WHO was engaged in educating all food handlers on “good hygienic practices for food handling” through the promotion of the “FIVE KEYS TO SAFER FOOD”.

Mrs. Kashani said that this session would provide in-depth information about the FIVE KEYS TO SAFER FOOD, so that the participants would be able to train the cooks in their own institutions and even students so that the food safety message would spread fast around the country.

3.2. Paper presentation

3.2.1. Overview of Food Safety Problems in Botswana

Mr. Innocent Tshekiso indicated that food safety was considered an essential public health concern, worldwide. He mentioned that food contamination created an enormous social and economic burden on communities since many people become sick and consequently the work productivity is reduced.

Mr. Tshekiso informed that Food Control Unit of the Ministry of Health received some reports of food poisoning cases and they happened mostly in government institutions like primary and secondary schools, prisons and at the higher institutions of learning like UB, Technical Colleges and Colleges of Education. He added that other cases reported were from various districts where people have suffered illness after consuming food from restaurants, community gatherings and homes.

3.2.2. The Five Keys to Safer Food –Topics: “Keep Clean, “Separate raw from cooked food”

Mrs. Angela Kashani introduced the topic “Keep clean” by indicating that she would concentrate in cleanliness of the food handler and cleanliness of the kitchen. The topic of personal hygiene focused more on hand’s washing and also indicated that the Public Health Regulations addressed these issues. Concerning the cleanliness of the food

preparation area, Mrs. Kashani explained that adding to the washing/cleaning it was important to sanitize. She gave examples of sanitizing solutions and its uses and indicated the steps to create a cleaning schedule. Finally she discussed ways of avoiding pests in the kitchens.

On the topic “Separate Raw and Cooked Food”, Mrs. Kashani explained why raw food should be separated from cooked foods, the benefits of using colour coded knives and cutting boards and gave some advise on storage of food products.

3.2.3. The Five Keys to Safer Food –Topics: “Cook Thoroughly”, “Keep Food at safe temperatures” and “Use safe water and raw materials”

Ms. Kefilwe Kabomo started with the topic “Cook Thoroughly”. She explained that cooking properly would result in the elimination of microorganisms present in the food. She listed the foods that require more attention during cooking and explained that leftovers should be well reheated until steaming and only once. Lastly, she cautioned the audience that it was safer to eat food steaming hot as soon as possible after its preparation.

On the topic “Keep food at safe temperatures”, Ms. Kabomo indicated the effect of different range of temperatures on the survival of microorganisms and that between 5 °C and 60 °C , the danger zone, microorganisms grow and multiply faster. She gave advise on the effective use of the refrigerators and freezers and showed ways how food can be kept hot.

Lastly, Ms. Kabomo mentioned the need to use safe water and fresh/wholesome foods.

3.3 Video Show

After all presentations and respective discussions, the facilitators run a video show called “Pests on the Menu”.

3.4. Vote of Thanks

One of the participants thanked the presenters and the organizers of the workshop for having offered to deliver so much important information on food safety. He also thanked all participants for attending and listening to the presentations. Finally he reminded that all should take food safety into practice, therefore participants should go and disseminate the information received.

3.5. Distribution of posters

Each participant received copies of the “FIVE KEYS TO SAFER FOOD” poster in English and in Setswana. Copies of the posters are attached as Annex 3.

4. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

4.1. One participant commented that it would be important for the Council to:

- control those butchers that do not have cold room,
- issue licenses to all selling cooked foods including street vendors,
- control regularly the safety of bottled water; it was mentioned that the source of these waters was not clear, and,
- monitor frequently street vendors and restaurants.

Mr. Letsholo representing Palapye/Serowe Sub-District Council explained that street vendors did not have a license and the Council was trying to educate them on Food Handling. He also said that the Council had tried unsuccessfully to remove street vendors from the bus rank and that Palapye did not have an abattoir and no Meat inspectors. Concluding, Mr. Letsholo reminded that “consumers” could control the market by selecting the appropriate places to buy their food.

4.2. A participant suggested that the Government should recruit trained Matrons for Primary schools because the teachers have a load of academic work and were still asked to supervise the kitchen. She said that the cooks at Primary schools were illiterate, not able to follow written instructions or read labels, therefore, it would be better to have a matron to supervise adequately the cooks helping them at all time.

4.3. It was also suggested that the cooks should receive an induction course.

4.4. A participant raised a concern in relation to consumption of Funa, powdered drinks, by school children. The meeting was informed that schools used to serve milk to children but due to its cost, the school budget was quickly exhausted.

4.5. The use of grey coloured uniform was discussed and it was agreed that it would be better to have cooks wearing white uniform. The Chairperson explained that in some cases it was difficult to apply this rule, e.g. Nandos Restaurant where they couldn't change the colour of their uniform because they had to abide to their franchise rules.

4.6. Some participants indicated that in schools without refrigerators or cold rooms, storage of food products was inadequate. Most schools had also no supply of soap for hand washing. The meeting recommended that the education authorities should be sensitised to give the adequate priority to food safety.

4.7. A participant raised a concern regarding the safety of fish from sewage ponds. The Chairperson explained that the Council was trying to monitor the activities of street vendors including those selling fish.

4.8. A question on what was the Government position on G.M.O's was also raised. The meeting was informed that a Committee was formed to prepare the National Policy on GMO's, and that this process would include wide consultation through stakeholder's workshops.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendations from this workshop were as follows:

- Council to monitor practices of food handlers in Palapye (butchers, street vendors),
- Matrons for primary Schools,
- Cooks for Schools should attend an induction course,
- School authorities to pay more attention to availability of white uniforms, soap and cold room or refrigerators in Primary Schools.