



# PCAF Express

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## Food Safety in the Philippines: "Because it's Everyone's Concern"



Given the country's growing population, it is necessary that Filipinos practice Food Safety everywhere. Store owners prepare the rice produce to be sold at rural market (left), while proper handling of raw meat and vegetables is shown before being cooked (right) (1st photo c/o DA RFO VIII, 2nd photo c/o El Paso County Public Health website)

While everyone is concerned with providing adequate sustenance for the growing global population, it should be noted that the proper handling and preparation of food for consumption is of great importance as well.

In reference to the World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations (UN), having access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food is necessary towards promotion of good health and prolonging life expectancy.

This, as data indicates that there are around 600 Million reported cases of foodborne illnesses occurring annually around the world, with children being the most vulnerable sector.

The importance of Food Safety has prompted the UN's General Assembly to observe the first-ever World Food Safety Day on June 7, 2019.

The objective of this commemoration is to promote how food is being handled and prepared while prioritizing the health and welfare of the consuming public.

### Local Food Safety

In the country, the National

Government has been promoting the importance of Food Safety thru the implementation of Republic Act 10611 otherwise known as the Food Safety Act of 2013.

To ensure that this law is effectively carried out, concerned agencies handling regulatory functions such as the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Health (DOH) are given specific functions in line with their respective mandates.

For its part, the DOH has the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to serve as the regulatory body in overseeing that processed food stuffs and pharmaceutical materials being sold are safe for human consumption.

For the DA, the agency oversees the primary production and postharvest stages of food supply chains, as well as locally-produced and imported food products.

Primary production is referred to as the production, rearing or growing of primary products including harvesting, milking and farmed animal production up to slaughter as well as growing of fish and other seafood.

On the other hand, postharvest is described as stages in the food supply chain involving the minimal transformation of plant and animal foods. This includes slaughter of

animals, icing and freezing, and milling and storage of grain.

Backstopping the Department are its Food Safety Regulatory Agencies (FSRAs). These are: the Bureau of Animal Industry, Bureau of Plant Industry, National Meat Inspection Service, National Dairy Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, Sugar Regulatory Administration, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and the National Food Authority.

These FSRAs are overseen by the Office of the DA Assistant Secretary for Regulations.

### The Food Safety Act 2013

Serving as the legal basis for all food safety concerns of the country, Republic Act No. 1611 or otherwise known as the "Food Safety Act of 2013" provides the guidelines on strengthening the country's regulatory system in protecting consumer health.

The significant features of FSA 2013 are:

1) Delineated and linking of mandates and responsibilities of the government agencies involved

- Indicate the roles of DA,

DOH, FSRAs, Local Government Units (LGUs) and Food Business Operators (FBOs) in performing food safety-based actions

2) Provided a mechanism for coordination and accountability in the implementation of regulatory functions

- Establishing a Food Safety Regulation and Coordinating Board (FSRCB) will enable setting of policies and procedures for coordinating and food safety enforcement/regulatory functions

3) Established policies and programs for addressing food safety hazards and developing appropriate standard and control measures

- These include Good Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Animal Husbandry Practices (GAP,

GAqP and GAHP), Rapid Alert Systems, Traceability as well as other codes of practices/standards

4) Strengthen the scientific basis of the regulatory systems

- Involvement of the academe and key government agencies in developing science-based projects and studies aimed at improving existing regulatory systems

5) Upgraded the capability of farmers, fisherfolk, industries, consumers and government personnel in ensuring food safety

- Under Sections 31 and 32 of FSA 2013, it calls for the training of FBOs, especially those classified as micro, small and medium scale enterprises, on the requirements of food safety regulations such as codes of good practice and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)

### Local Government Units and Food Safety

Aside from the National Government, LGUs also play an important part in promoting food safety in their respective vicinities. Their responsibilities are:

- Sanitation particularly in public markets, slaughterhouses, micro and small food processing establishments and public eating places

- Codes of Practice for production, post harvest handling, processing and hygiene

- Safe use of food additives, processing aids and sanitation chemicals; and

- Proper labelling of pre-packaged foods

### Promoting Food Safety

Given its paramount importance, food safety should be observed by everyone, everywhere. Per the US FDA, the tips for promoting food safety are as simple as follows:

**Clean:** Keep everything clean particularly during the food preparation process. This includes hands and utensils such as boards and knives, etc.

**Separate:** Use separate containers for raw/uncooked food such as for meat and vegetables.








**Cook:** Thoroughly cook the raw meat. For example, cooked chicken meat is no longer pink inside and the meat juices run clear.

**Chill:** Some raw and cooked meats can be stored in the fridge for 2-3 days, but always refer to the package's "Best Before" date before storing food for some time.

Here are some tips on how to properly handle and prepare food to ensure that it is safe to consume (c/o US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website)

### Safety Tips for handling and preparing common foods

HELP Prevent Food Poisoning!

| Type of FOOD  | AVOID   | Better CHOICE   |
|---|---|---|
|  <b>MEAT &amp; POULTRY</b> | Raw or undercooked meat or poultry  | Meat or poultry cooked to a safe internal temperature. Use a food thermometer to check<br><a href="https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html">https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html</a> |
|  <b>SEAFOOD</b>            | Raw or undercooked fish, shellfish, or food containing raw or undercooked seafood, such as sashimi, some sushi, and ceviche.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seafood cooked to 145°F</li> <li>Canned fish and seafood</li> <li>Refrigerated smoked seafood in a cooked dish, such as a casserole</li> </ul>                           |
|  <b>DAIRY</b>              | Unpasteurized (raw) milk  | Pasteurized milk  |
|  <b>EGGS</b>               | Foods that contain raw or undercooked eggs, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homemade Caesar salad dressing</li> <li>Raw cookie dough</li> <li>Eggnog</li> </ul> | Use pasteurized eggs and egg products when preparing recipes that call for raw or undercooked eggs.   |
|  <b>SPROUTS</b>            | Raw or undercooked sprouts, such as alfalfa, bean, or any other sprout  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooked sprouts</li> <li>No sprouts</li> </ul>  |
|  <b>VEGETABLES</b>         | Unwashed fresh vegetables, including lettuce and salads   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Washed fresh vegetables, including salads</li> <li>Cooked vegetables</li> </ul>  |
|  <b>CHEESE</b>             | Soft cheeses made from unpasteurized (raw) milk, such as queso fresco, blue-veined, feta, Brie, Camembert   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft cheeses that are clearly labeled "made from pasteurized milk"</li> <li>Processed cheeses, cream cheese, mozzarella, hard cheeses</li> </ul>                         |



Accessible version: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/communication/foods-safety-tips.html>

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[www.cdc.gov/foodsafety](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety)