HAZARDS MANAGEMENT FOR TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS

OANA BRÎNZAN[1], EUGENIA TIGAN[1]
[1]Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, oana.brinzan@uav.ro

Abstract: *Traditional food products are insufficient capitalized value of the Romanian rural space. Certification methodology of such a product existent documentation mentions the need to present the method of production and how is ensured the food safety. Here arises confusion between the notion of quality and safety. Safety is an explicit requirement of quality, is included in the quality assurance system, but does not overlap. Processors must find all resources needed to respect the traditionalism, but to guarantee that the product is safe for consuming.*

Key words*: Management Systems for Food Safety, hazard, traditional food products, rural space*

INTRODUCTION

In order to qualify as a traditional specialty guaranteed (TSG), an agricultural product or foodstuff shall comply with a product specification. The traditional aspect shall refer to a way to obtain the raw material, product composition or the type of processing/production.

The raw material (species and/or varieties) or primary product, either alone or as an ingredient, which has been used in identifiable geographical areas and remains in use today and its characteristics are in accordance with current specifications of national and European Union legislation.

The uniquely identifiable composition (in terms of ingredients) and when necessary is differentiated from the composition defined by the generally recognised characteristics of the wider food group to which the product belongs.

The traditional production and/or processing of a food that: has been transmitted from generation to generation, despite its adjustment to binding rules from national or EU food hygiene regulations or the incorporation of technological progress, under the condition that production and/or processing remains in line with methods used originally and that the food's intrinsic features such as its physical, chemical, microbiological or organoleptic features are maintained [2].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To appear in the register of attestation of traditional products, the product must be manufactured from traditional materials, to present a traditional composition or a mode of production and/or processing reflecting a traditional type of production and / or processing.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Registration is not permitted for a product whose traditionalism is due to [5]:
a) origin and its geographical area;
b) application of technological innovations;

To be registered, the traditional product must be traditional itself and express traditionalism.

To be certified as a traditional product, the product must conform to a specification. The specifications shall contain at least the following:
a) the name of the product;

b) the method of production, including the nature and characteristics of the raw material and / or ingredients used and / or the method of preparation of the product, with reference to the traditionalism;
c) elements to provide traditional character assessment;
d) the description of the product by indicating its main physical, chemical, microbiological and / or organoleptic related to traditionalism;
e) minimum requirements and procedures for verification and control of traditionalism.

Specifications required in technical documentation:

- Description of the nature and characteristics of raw materials and / or ingredients used,
- Describe the method of preparation of the product with respect to traditionalism, all operations description including storage and carrying in order preserve the product (mixing, boiling, pasteurization, fermentation, aging, cutting, smoking, packaging, storage, etc.) covering the traditional aspects,
- Description of the traditional aspects due technological process: recipe, preparation, certain types of ingredient,
- Description of product characteristics, weights, packaging (vacuum, natural packages, etc.), indication of organoleptic, physical, chemical and microbiological characteristics,
- Indication of organoleptic, physical, chemical and microbiological: technological parameters (time, temperature, properties, organoleptic) aprouved by agricultural bodies, physical - chemical and microbiological parameters aprouved by sanitary-veterinary bodies,
- Acomplishing minimum requirements and procedures for verification and control of traditionalism.

European health and hygiene regulations require food operators to elaborate, implement and maintain a permanent procedure based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. The HACCP concept is science-based and systematic by identifying specific hazards and measuring their control to ensure the safety of the food. The accent is on prevention rather than the final product testing, preventing is safer and cheaper than finding out that our final product is not safe [1].

HACCP plan has to be flexible, adaptable and suitable for traditional food products too. Each food operators should have the proper instruments, proportional with the size and complexity of their business, to proof that their product is safe and to be able to provide proper documentation to sustain their information to the customers and administrative bodies.

HACCP is designed to be applied throughout the food chain and its implementation guided by scientific evidence of risk to human health.

Specifications required in technical documentation emphasis the quality of the food products and not to much the safety issue. The food quality is determined by a number of factors which are undergoing standardization or related to specific consumer requirements. The quality is a subjective criteria determined by the culinary and food culture that we have. A few years ago food safety concepts were quite in an early stage, currently is a big part of the quality requirement and it cannot design the quality food that does not meet minimum food safety requirements required by law.

Of course, for a better functioning of a quality system, the communication between suppliers and producers, and between producers and consumers is essential for traceability of the information system to increase transparency and thus contributing to improving the image and consumer confidence in the food product [3].

Traceability is the ability to follow the movement of a feed or food through specified stage(s) of production, processing and distribution. Traceability systems should be able to document the history of the product and locate a product in the feed and food chain. Traceability systems contribute to the search for the cause of nonconformity and the ability to withdraw and/or recall products if necessary. Traceability systems can improve appropriate use and reliability of information, effectiveness and productivity of the organization [4].

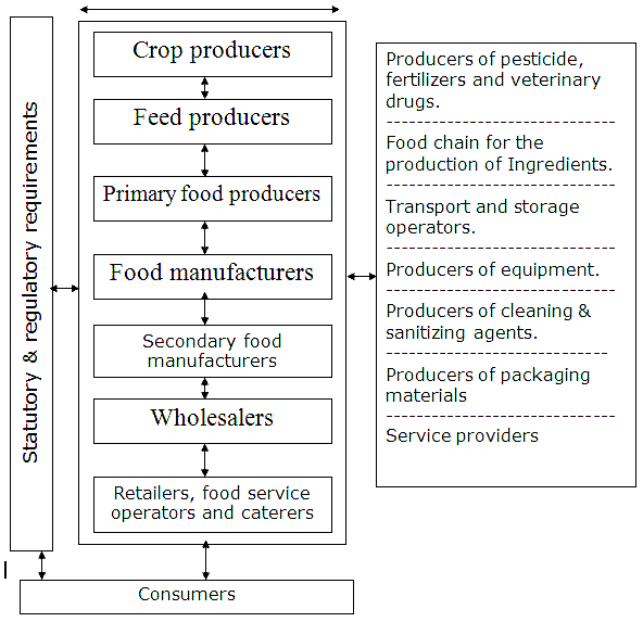

Fig. 1 Example of communication alongside food chain according to ISO 22000 standard

Therefore, the quality of the food product cannot be projected just at the process level and would be insufficient and impossible. Its quality begins with the source of raw material and the type of technology, clean environment and the possibility to choose a variety specific location. Follow a strict management of farm work and of how the harvest, transport and conditioning. This information will be stored and available processor or customer checks is made through the audit procedure. Processor will design a company that can guarantee a safe food and that through a series of control measures can prevent the occurrence of food risk, so it will monitor all production parameters' and manage this information for the client. Qualities characteristics as psycho-sensorial, nutritional and aesthetic, combined with food safety can be guaranteed only when all factors along the product chain are controlled. The production environment should be projected taking in consideration information from raw material processor, supplier of equipment and machinery, packaging manufacturer, hygiene substances, all of these information for the good of the clients and for the business operators opportunity.

CONCLUSIONS

The requirements for a traditional food product should take in consideration these aspects, a better system project would low the food risk probability and give the possibility to producers to respect the production traditionalism without compromising the safety of their results. Rural space has the possibility to offer local varieties for raw materials, a clean environment, integrate farm systems, short distances alongside food chain, and low impact upon the environment, a better communication along food chain operators.

REFERENCES

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