



ASSURING SAFE FOOD SYSTEMS: Policy Options for a Healthier Food Supply

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Why food safety matters?

Food systems are rapidly changing, bringing greater attention to issues of food safety. Growing international connectivity of markets involves the lengthening of supply chains and a proliferation of actors involved in bringing food from the farm to the consumer. Consequently, the detection and elimination of foodborne risks is becoming both more complex and more difficult.

The broad impacts of foodborne hazards, on nutrition, health, income and trade, argue for integrated solutions across the entire food system. A comprehensive and integrated set of policy actions is needed, backed up by regulation, surveillance, and training of individuals and organizations involved in all segments of the food environment.

Policy recommendations

The Global Panel recommends that policymakers consider:

Actions across the Food System

- Integrate food safety with agriculture and nutrition policymaking to achieve greater policy coherence.
- Strengthen national research on the extent and cost of foodborne diseases and the effects on malnutrition. This should include international research on the role of mycotoxin exposure on key nutritional mechanisms and outcomes.
- Strengthen food safety information systems, taking into account the different segments and actors of the food systems, to have access to timely, quality information on the food safety situation.
- Establish context-appropriate regulatory and programme frameworks.

Food Production Domain

- Provide support in the production domain of the food system, for example advice on good manufacturing processes and support for high quality agricultural inputs.
- Efforts by governments to better understand the extent and nature of the sources of contamination of their domestic food supply, with for example mycotoxins and harmful pesticides. They should promote enhanced awareness and application of practices to prevent and mitigate such hazards. Governments should establish appropriate protocols for protecting poor consumers from eating commodities rejected by exporters due to high contamination levels.
- Promote improved knowledge and practices related to on-farm storage.

Trade and Markets Domain

- Enhance the timeliness of trade in perishable foods through investment in road infrastructure, regional warehousing and improved information systems relating to market prices.
- Support inclusive and progressive formalisation of markets.
- Improve storage facilities, reduced perishability through cold chain and other storage technologies as well as effective quality control.

Consumer Domain

- Support enhanced consumer awareness of the importance of food safety in ensuring access to high quality diets.
- Promote and support greater dietary diversification with a view to reducing exposure to some foodborne contaminants, while also enhancing diet quality.
- Promote greater public awareness of the importance of food handling and storage, particularly in relation to nutrient-dense foods.

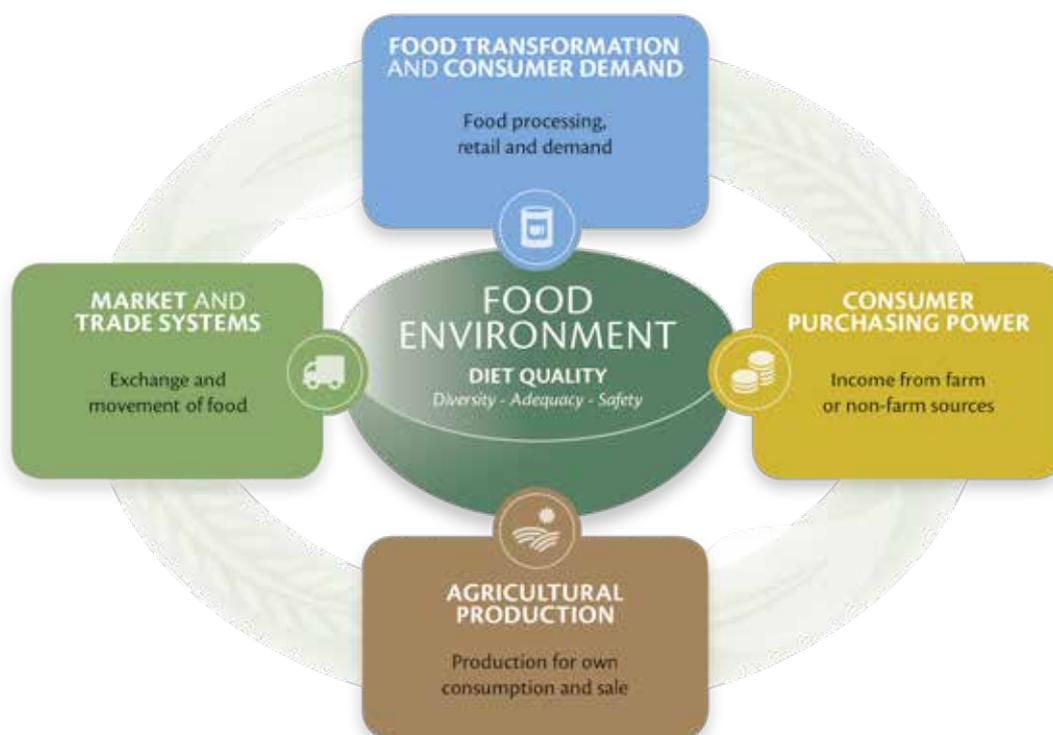


Global Panel
on Agriculture
and Food Systems
for Nutrition

How can Agriculture and Food System Policies improve Nutrition?

The multiple burdens on health created today for low- and middle-income countries by food-related nutrition problems include not only persistent undernutrition and stunting, but also widespread vitamin and mineral deficiencies and growing prevalence of overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases. These different forms of malnutrition limit people's opportunity to live healthy and productive lives, and impede the growth of economies and whole societies.

The food environment from which consumers should be able to create healthy diets is influenced by four domains of economic activity:



In each of these domains, there is a range of policies that can have enormous influence on nutritional outcomes. In the Global Panel's Technical Brief, we explain how these policies can influence nutrition, both positively and negatively. We make an argument for an integrated approach, drawing on policies from across these domains, and the need for more empirical evidence to identify successful approaches.

Find out more here: <http://glopan.org/food-safety>

Assuring safe food systems provides policy options within the agricultural production, market and trade systems and food transformation and consumer demand domains to protect the safety and quality of consumers' diets.

Download Policy Brief No. 5 here: <http://glopan.org/food-safety>

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