LOCATIONS AND TASKS OF THE MAIN INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

Radomir Lásztity
Department of Biochemistry & Food Technology, Budapest University of Technology & Economics,Hungary

Marta Petró-Turza
Hungarian Standards Institution, Budapest, Hungary

Keywords: AFNOR, CAC, DIN, EEC, Expert Committees, FAO, FDA, IPPC, ISO, OIE, WHO, WTO

Contents

Summary

Food control and inspection (including export and import control) is realized primarily by different authorized national institutions (see *Inspection, Quarantine, and Quality Control Organizations*). Thus, success in production, export, and import of safe, high quality foods depends primarily on the structure and degree of control at the national level.

The government has a responsibility to provide a national food control system with a supporting infrastructure, to assume an advisory and regulatory role, and, when necessary, to enforce food law. The government's food control agencies need to assure consumers that they have set, and will enforce, standards for the quality and safety of foods.

With the increasing volume of trade of foods among different countries, and growing food safety problems at the international level, difficulties arising from the independent establishment of laws and standards in different countries became evident. It has become obvious that there is a growing need to harmonize food requirements globally, and there is a need for international guidelines and rules. This situation has stimulated efforts to establish international and regional organizations active in this field (see *International System of Food Quality Standards*).

In the framework of this chapter, the main national and some international organizations involved in standardization, and directly or indirectly in food control, will be briefly treated, including their tasks and in some cases their locations. This list could never be complete. Nevertheless, it could be suitable to give the reader an idea about the main fields of activity of these organizations.

1. Introduction

Assurance of the production of high quality, safe foods is primarily the responsibility of the food manufacturer and the government. The manufacturer is responsible for applying effective systems of modern manufacturing, including quality control. The government has a responsibility to provide a national food control system with a supporting infrastructure, to assume an advisory and regulatory role, and, when necessary, to enforce food law.

Among the tasks of governmental quality control organizations, the following should be mentioned: protection of public health, prevention of fraud and adulteration, trade promotion, and assistance in assurance of protection of the environment. Concerning the organizations included in food inspection, there are large differences between countries, depending on traditions, dimensions, population, and so on. In some countries a central institution (agency) operates, in others several state agencies are involved in inspection (see *Inspection, Quarantine, and Quality Control Organizations*).

Although food quality control is realized at the national level by national organizations, because of the growing international trade of foods, and several safety problems at the international level (e.g., BSE, foot and mouth disease, dioxin contamination in the EC), international organizations were established for harmonization of standardization of food quality, indirectly influencing national food control and food inspection systems.

In the following sections some of these institutions and organizations will be mentioned. In many cases, names and addresses will be given, noting that these could often be changed. Fortunately, the majority of organizations have Internet web sites, which give readers the opportunity to access their latest information.

2. Basic Data about Selected National Organizations

The establishment of national standards bodies started at the beginning of the twentieth century. Standards bodies of most European countries, Canada, the US, Russia, Japan, and China were established in the first 35 years of the twentieth century. Basic data about some of them follows.

2.1 Standardization and Quality Control Institutions in the UK

The first, and still one of the world's leading national standards body and quality services organizations, is the British Standards Institution (BSI), which was established as the Engineering Standards Committee in 1901, and incorporated under Royal Charter in 1929. In 1931, BSI received its present name. Independent of government, industry, and trade associations, BSI is a nonprofit organization serving both the private and public sectors, and working with manufacturing and service industries, businesses, and governments to facilitate the production of British, European, and international standards.

The first food standards were published in the 1930s. In April 2000 a Food Standards Agency was set up in the UK to "protect people's health, and the interests of consumers in relation to food." The Agency is a UK-wide, nonministerial government department, operating at arms length from Ministers. Its role is formulated:

- to protect consumers by effective enforcement and monitoring of food safety and standards, in partnership with local authorities,
- to support consumer choice through accurate and meaningful labeling, and
- to provide advice to the public and to Government on food safety, nutrition, and diet.

The governmental activity in food inspection is divided between central and local governments. The general, routine law enforcement in relation to labeling, weights and measures, hygiene, composition, additives, and contaminants is undertaken by local government, mostly county councils and metropolitan boroughs. The scientific support for enforcement is provided by 100 public analysts in 40 laboratories. The total number of people in the service is about 1500 to 2000.

2.2 German Standardization Organizations

The German standardization body, Deutsches Institut für Normung (DIN), was established in 1917. The department of DIN which deals with food and agricultural issues (Normenausschuss Lebensmittel und landwirtschaftliche Produkte (NAL)) was established more than ten years later, in 1930. The first standards developed by that department described agricultural equipment (DIN LAND 1000 and 1001); they were followed by the first food standards that contained classifications for wheat, rye, barley, and oats (DIN LAND 1010 to1014), and were published in 1932.

A private institution, DIN is independent from any ministries. Its fund is project related, which means that when a topic of private interest is dealt with (e.g., standards for the determination of quality, or detection of adulteration of fruit juices), it is the fruit juice industry that pays for the project. If questions of consumer health are dealt with (e.g., methods for the determination of pesticide residues, or biotoxins in foods), the state pays for it.

At present DIN does not work out any product specifications for foodstuffs; they are regulated in the German Codex Alimentarius. DIN elaborates standardized methods of

analysis for foodstuffs and methods used in the field of food hygiene. DIN also deals with hygienic and safety requirements.

2.3 French Standards Body

The French standards body, Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR), was founded in 1926. It is a state-approved organization, placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry and governed by the law of 1901. It groups together 3000 members representing all of the economic sectors.

Its missions are to:

- pilot and coordinate the preparation of standards
- represent and defend French interests within all standardization bodies
- approve standards
- promote and facilitate the use of standards
- develop NF (Norme Francaise) certification and products, services, and systems certification

Within each of their respective sectors of activity, the standardization bureaus of AFNOR have, among others, the mission of piloting French standardization committees and expert groups (irrespective of the standardization system: French, European, or international), of formalizing draft standards, and of forwarding them to AFNOR for public enquiry and approval..

2.4 Hungarian Standardization Institutions

Although the first traces of standardization in Hungary date back more than 120 years, the first standardization committee was set up in 1921, when the expansion of industrial production required it. The Hungarian Standards Institute was established in 1933 as an independent, autonomous body of standardization. After World War II, this Institute was reorganized and carried out its national standardization activities as a state organ having public authority. As a result of the political changes that took place in 1989 in Hungary, the Government began to give up its former role, step by step, which generated changes in the national economic system. In 1995 the Hungarian Parliament enacted a law on national standardization by which a new body was established. The Hungarian Standards Institution (MSZT) is an independent, nonprofit, self-governing body of public interest, with registered membership.

The first Hungarian standards related to agriculture and dealt with agricultural tools (e.g., different types of hoes). They were published in 1936. However, food standardization started only after World War II, when the standardization committee for canned food was set up. The first food related standard (MOSZ 1800) contained general requirements for canned food and was published in 1947. This was followed by standards for concentrated tomato juice, canned green peas, green beans, asparagus, and so on. At present 16 national technical committees deal with food standardization, and about 1600 national food standards exist; among them about 250 are adopted ISO or CEN standards.

Governmental food inspection is the responsibility of agencies of the Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development and the Ministry of Health. The analytical and microbiological laboratory service system includes a central laboratory in Budapest and several regional laboratories.

The development in other European countries is similar to the general trend, which can be deduced from the above examples. The development in other regions has some specific features, too.

2.5 Danish Food Control Organizations

Danish food control is the responsibility of three ministries, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Fisheries. The National Food Agency works with such subjects as food additives, material and articles in contact with food, chemical contamination of food, toxicological evaluation, dietary supplements, and human dietetics. General food control is placed decentrally; the municipalities cooperate on the administration of 38 municipal environment and food control units.

2.6 Japanese Industrial Standards Committee (JISC)

The Japanese Industrial Standards Committee (JISC) consists of many national committees and plays a central role in standardization activities in Japan. In essence, the task of JISC can be summarized as follows, the establishment and maintenance of JIS; administration of accreditation and certification; participation in and contribution to international standardization activities; and development of measurement standards and technical infrastructure for standardization.

However, JISC does not deal with standardization of foodstuffs, agricultural, or forest products designated under the Law Concerning Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products. The Japanese Food Sanitation Law was published in 1947.

-
-
-

Bibliography

Huy Y.H. (1986). *United States Food Laws Regulations and Standards*. New York: John Wiley and Sons. [An excellent, unique book about the food control system of the US.]

ISO (2000). *ISO Catalogue 2000*, pp. 7–8. Geneva: International Organization for Standardization.

Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program. (2000). *Codex Alimentarius Commission, Procedural Manual*, p. 185. Rome: FAO.

National Standards Body of France. <www.afnor.fr>. [Web site of the Standards Body of France.]

National Standards Body of Japan. <www.jisc.org>. [Web site of the National Standards Body in Japan.]

Ponyai, Gy., ed. (2000). *Hungarian Standards*, p. 5. Budapest, Hungary: Hungarian Standard Institution.

Biographical Sketches

Radomir Lásztity, D.Sc., Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Food Technology at Budapest University of Technology and Economics, was born in 1929 in Deszk, Hungary, and completed his studies in 1951 at the Faculty of Chemical Engineering of the Technical University of Budapest. Dr. Lásztity received his M.Sc. degree in Chemical Engineering in 1951 and his D.Sc. degree in Chemical Science in 1968.

Dr. Lásztity is honorary president of ICC (International Association for Cereal Science and Technology). He was Chairman of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling of the FAO/WHO Food Standard Program during the period 1975–1988. Dr. Lásztity is a member of the Food Division of the Federation of European Chemical Societies, and a member of the editorial boards of several international scientific journals. He was Vice-Rector of the Technical University from 1970 to 1976.
Among other awards, he has received the Bailey and Schweitzer Medal of the ICC, the State Prize of the Hungarian Republic, and the Golden Medal of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Lásztity's main research activities are the chemistry and biochemistry of food proteins, food analysis, and food control. The results of his research work have been published in more than 700 papers in foreign and Hungarian journals. He is the author of more than 20 books and textbooks (among them: *Chemistry of Cereal Proteins*, First and Second Editions in 1984 and 1996, respectively; *Amino Acid Composition and Biological Value of Cereal Proteins*, 1985; *Use of Yeast Biomass in Food Production*, 1991; *Gluten Proteins*, 1987; *Cereal Chemistry*, 1999.

Dr. Martha Petró-Turza, chemical engineer, graduated in 1966 and received her doctor's degree in 1975 at Budapest Technical University, Hungary. Between 1966 and 1990 she worked as a researcher for the Central Food Research Institute, Budapest. In the last 13 years of this period, she was head of the Analytical Chemistry Division of the Institute. Her main research areas were flavor research and the detection of adulteration of fruit juices. Between 1990 and 1995 she was the director of quality assurance of the Canning Research Institute in Budapest.

Since 1996 she has worked for the Hungarian Standards Institution as secretary of the ISO Technical Committee, TC 34, "Food Products," and its Subcommittee, SC 4, "Cereals and Pulses."