

Research on Solutions to China's Food Safety Control Based on Innovative Society Management Background

Li Xiaoqin

School of Society and Public Management, Chongqing Technology and Business University, Chongqing, P.R.China, 400067

(E-mail:xiaoqingli@ctbu.edu.cn)

Abstract: China is facing various kinds of public crisis in its transition period. Food safety crisis is the most important one among these public risks. The food safety issue in China is very serious and needs an instant solution. This paper analyzed current existing problems in food safety control and the difference compared with foreign countries' food safety control, purposed solutions to China's food safety control, and concluded that food safety control is a systematic problem. It can be solved only under the effort and public governance of government, enterprises and society. To create a safe and harmony living environment for consumers, we should legislate in food safety crime, build up a market regulatory system of group prevention, speed up China's food safety standards system building and encourage food manufacturers to demonstrate their social responsibility.

Key words: Food safety; Control solutions; Solution analysis

1 Introduction

Food safety refers to "food which is non-toxic, harmless, meets nutrients requirements and does not cause any acute, subacute or chronic hazards to human health." [1] Food safety is not just manufacturers' problem, but a social problem; food safety is not just one country's problem, but a global problem.

In recent years, frequent outbreaks of food safety and quality incidents happened in China and many other countries. The EU's "BSE beef" incident, the British "Sudan" incident, Japan's "Snow Brand Milk Products' Staphylococcus aureus food poisoning" incident, Taiwan's "plasticizing agent" incident and China's "Sanlu milk powder" incident, "Clenbuterol" incident, "waste oil" incident etc., are direct threats to people's lives, caused panic among consumers and attracted close attention of the public.

Safety is the primary concern in food. Food safety is almost the major livelihood issues in China's innovative society management. However, the current situation is that while the old food safety incident has not been completely resolved, the new food safety incidents begin to emerge; this suggests that the food safety problem is caused by many factors. We need to build a new food safety control model in multi-dimensional perspective to break the dilemma.

In the research of food safety control, scholars have different point of views. Hussain and Salman (2006) studied the system failure brought by the current trend of co-regulation and self-control potential in food market system, proposed solutions based on market economics for the food problem. [2] Trygve Ugland and Frode Veggeland (2006) analyzed cross-sectoral cross-sectoral food safety policy integration in three periods of the EU's history, suggested that the result of internal policies integration will affect the efficiency of cross-sectoral policy integration. [3] Liu Ning (2006) started from the theory of social regulation, used the economics methods to analyze food market's externalities and information asymmetry caused by market failures, suggested that when the market itself cannot solve the problem, the Government must regulate it. [4] Wang Hu and Li Changjian (2008) started from the relevant interest groups' opposition and conflict, suggested that because of China's government-led food safety control ignored the food security of conflict between interest groups and coordination mechanisms, many limitations can be seen from this model, a new kind of multi-interests-oriented food safety control model should be constructed. [5] Mo Lalin and Zhang Zhichao (2010) started from the practical needs, carefully analyzed food industry based on economic laws, proposed that to comply with rules of market economy, the government, manufacturers, consumers and social sectors should work together to solve the current food safety issues. [6] This paper, analyzed food safety control model for the future in an innovative society management framework, which relies on the government, market and the third social sector to solve food safety problems.

2 Current Shortcomings and Problems of China's Food Safety

What can we eat now? This is the question people ask today. Food safety as a global issue mainly

shows in the following five aspects in China:

2.1 Responsibility of regulatory is dispersed

In the aspect of monitoring, food safety related to raw material production, processing, distribution, sales and other procedures, each procedure also involves various government sectors such as Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, Taxation, Food Supervision and Management etc., it is difficult to form seamless connection of the whole food chain "from the farm to the table ", this will lead to fragmented food safety management and poor communication. Multi-department monitoring on food safety led to duplication of testing in some areas and no test in some other areas, even loophole or "vacuum" in monitoring, and the responsibilities of various departments are not clear. Many sectors' working mechanisms no longer meet the needs of the community. Supervision and management not in place, the food safety standards coordination mechanism are not perfect and not enough enforcement of laws are important causes of food safety issues.

2.2 Potential risks in food raw materials, production and circulation

In the food raw materials aspect, planting, cultivation areas have illegal use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, veterinary drugs and illegal use of banned substances, the food chain from farm to table is seriously polluted, such as the Clenbuterol incident.

In the production aspect, illegal food production and food processing result in the production companies failed to operate in strict accordance with technical requirements, lead to serious pollution of food raw materials, over-excessive additives, not complete kill of microorganisms, which cause pathogenic microorganisms residue in food or decay happen during production or storage, such as the "Poisonous Xuewang " incident.

In the new food technology and application of new resources aspect, application of new materials, new technologies and new procedures bring new food safety challenges, such as genetically modified foods, enzymes and new food packaging materials.

In the circulation aspect, which is currently in disorder, that food storage, freight and container cannot meet standards, many qualified products become substandard products in circulation, and some even become rotten.

2.3 Existing problems in China's food safety system

Overall levels of Standards are low. Some standard limits are lower and have large gaps compared with CAC (Codex Alimentarius Commission Codex Alimentarius Commission) standards. For example, the limits of lead (Pb) in Chinese standards are generally lower than the standard level of CAC, CAC CODEX STAN230-2001 "lead limit" in the wine shall not exceed 0.2 mg / l, in liquid milk no more than 0.02 mg / l, in baby food no more than 0.02 mg / kg; the corresponding Chinese standard limits are 0.5 mg / l (wine), 0.2 mg / l (liquid milk), 0.5 mg / kg (infant formula).

Content inconsistency in the standards. For example, GB16321-2003 "lactic acid bacteria beverage health standards" provisions lead not exceed December 2010 China's food safety system management requirements of 10.05 mg / l, and QB1554-1992 "lactic acid bacteria beverage," provides that lead not exceed 1.0 mg / liter.

Missing of important standards. Some important areas have not yet to develop national standards. For example, for residues of veterinary drugs in food only have industry standard but no standard national standards; several important categories on the food industry (such as dairy products, beverages, etc.) have not yet developed specific practices (Good Manufacturing Practice GMP) [7].

2.4 Lack of corporate social responsibility

China's traditional culture treats agriculture as a more important industry compared with business. Influenced by traditional culture, enterprises' only goal is maximize profit and economic benefits. As a for-profit organization, such a goal has nothing to blame, However, if the ultimate goal is only to maximize profit, it is easy to neglect long-term benefits and focus on short-term interests, resulting in short-sighted behaviors. For example, use unqualified materials in production, do shoddy work and use inferior material, sacrifice the interests of consumers in exchange for short-term excess profits. The "melamine milk", "artificial honey" incidents occurred in recent years, are all consequences of enterprises chasing short-term economic interests and neglecting the social responsibility.

2.5 Consumers have little consciousness in their rights, and the process to protect consumer rights is hard to go through

Speaking from the awareness of rights protection, a survey showed that when food quality problems occur, many consumers may not report and choose to be silent, only 20% of consumers faced quality problems will claim compensations, which indirectly contributed to the arrogance of illegal food producers. Of course, the weak awareness of consumer rights is because of difficulty in claim process,

the low success rate and price paid is much greater than the cost to buy food. China's current food safety laws and regulations are inadequate, have some shortcomings especially in dealing with the responsibility of food safety perpetrators [8 9].

3 Comparative Analysis of Foreign Food Safety Control Mode

Due to different political, economic, social management mode in different countries, the modes of their food safety management are not the same. Analysis of different country's food safety control model and the characteristics has very important meaning for China to build and improve its food safety control system.

3.1 Complete management system

Take the European Union for example: the EU's management system are formed by the vertical and horizontal management control system between government or organizations: the vertical one is set up by the supreme governing body of food safety and its affiliated various professional management committee in its member states established by European Commission; horizontal management system is constituted by a number of professional committees covering a comprehensive network system, such as the Plant Health Standing Committee, Veterinary Standing Committee etc.

3.2 Strict market access and food inspection

Take Singapore for example: Singapore's legal system pays a lot attention to food safety. The safety standards for accreditation are very stringent. Since 2006, Singapore began to implement ISO22000 food safety standards for accreditation, became the first in Southeast Asia using ISO22000 food safety management system. The new appraisal standards can enhance consumer confidence, and also help improve the food industry's overall competitiveness.

Singapore imports 90 percent of its food from abroad. Imported food is checked rigorously. Most of the local inspection and quarantine of food and related enforcement are carried out by Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority. Sometimes the National Environment Agency is also involved in some food safety checks. To prevent and reduce the inflow of substandard food, AVA has enacted comprehensive and rigorous inspection procedures. The first step is to check the farm or the production of food processing plants to ensure that production meets the safety standards in Singapore. It can be said that AVA has already begun the food safety identification work before the imported food being loaded in to transportation vehicles.

3.3 Food safety management from the source

Japan's "food traceability system." Japan established "resume" for each product of its production, processing, circulation and record its origin, use of pesticides and other information through electronic records. Once problems occur, the reasons will be able to be quickly found by looking up records, this can avoid processing situations in investigation.

UK's "focus on prevention, early warning, rapid processing." UK established emergency response mechanism in various aspects of the food chain, the food market, circulation and consumption segments are all treated as sources for prevention and control; at the same time, food traceability and recall system is also an important part of source governance which can control the spread of pollution as soon as possible when accidents happen.

3.4 Important participation of the third sector of society

The third sectors of society (such as consumer associations, various food industry associations, food quality testing associations, food certification associations, etc.) are the various non-governmental organizations and public organizations between the government and business, are non-governmental and public-good [10]. Consumers Association of Canada set up a "Food Safety Education Organization," provide consumers with information and knowledge on food safety through the Internet. Consumers can report food safety problems via the Internet to the management, which effectively improved the safety awareness of food production enterprises.

4 China's Food Safety Control Methods and Suggestions

Food safety is a systemic problem, so the solution path should also be systemic. The author believes that:

4.1 Food safety control should use public control

In the food safety regulatory process, depending solely on the effort of government or market cannot achieve good results. Only the government resources, social resources and market resources are integrated and public governance model is carried out we can get the expected result. In the regulatory

process, the government, food industry and community are all involved in economic activities. It is led by government supervision, where community supervision is the main body and based on market regulation to allocate proper food safety control authority, to achieve the relative system balance of supply and demand, in order to reduce the cost of community supervision and maximize social welfare [11].

4.2 Legislation on food safety control

To control food safety offenses, severe penalties should be used because food safety offenses are indirect murder in a wide range. Chongqing Higher People's Court has issued an "Advice on the Trial of Food and Drug Safety Cases", said it would severely punish crimes which endanger food and drug safety according to law, when the crime deserves the death penalty, should sentence to death according to the law firmly. At the same time, the fine on food safety crime was increased, no amount limit would be put on the fine, to curb the profiteering motives of crime and prevent recidivism. This is just a local "opinion", the state should carry out regulations to severely punish crimes which endanger food and drug safety.

4.3 Establish community prevention system

Establish a market monitoring service system, give full play to the role of the third sector and mobilize community members to participate in investigation and supervision. Establish law enforcement and local report departments to enhance the regulatory capacity. Spread the knowledge of food safety and establish food safety prevention and control institutions within major food manufacture enterprises. Build reporting system and give rewards to informants, protect the rights of informants.

4.4 Improve China's food safety standard system

China's food safety standards system should learn from the practice of some foreign country, lead by the National Standardization Management Committee and encourage producers to participate in standard development, revision and implementation to achieve enterprise standardization.

Develop national standards and rules for special operations in important areas and industries as soon as possible, such as national standards of veterinary drug residues in food; specific practice standards for dairy products, beverages and others (GMP).

Conduct a comprehensive clean-up of the existing national and industry food standards. For outdated standards, especially some national or industry food standards which are not in line with technology and social development should be promptly abolished, and publish new standards which meet both China's situation and international standards (primarily ISO and CAC standards).

4.5 Continuously improve the social responsibility of food enterprises

Food enterprises' corporate social responsibility bottom line is food safety, ensuring food safety is the core feature of corporate social responsibility. Therefore, food companies must take the initiative to strengthen their own sense of responsibility, take consumers' health and safety protection, social and natural environment protection and improvement as the company's basic mission. Strengthen the government and media's supervision over food industry's corporate social responsibility. Organize government regulatory authorities' functions and duties, build food safety regulatory system and responsibility trace system under the principles of rights and responsibility in accordance, to encourage food companies to effectively fulfill their corporate social responsibility.

5 Conclusions

In the transition period, China faces public crisis and risks one after another. Food safety crisis is one of the most important public crises. Food safety issues should be a public health problem. However, the recent outbreak of food safety crises generated "threat to the existence" making the crisis become a hot topic in Innovative Society Management and a national primary problem to be settled. Food safety management is a systemic problem. In order to create a safe and harmonious living environment for consumers, we should expect three joint efforts of government, business and social sectors, regulation of public food safety control, legislation on food safety crimes, establishment of group prevention in market regulatory system to speed up China's food safety standard system building, and vigorously promote food corporate social responsibility.

References

- [1] Food Safety Law [M]. China Legal Publishing House, 2009 (3) :1-2 (In Chinese)
- [2] Hussain and Salman. Coregulation and Voluntarism in the Provision of Food Safety:Lessons from Institutional Economics, Working Papers with Number 45996 Provided by Land Economy Research

- Group of Scottish Agricultural College:1-29
- [3] Trygve Ugland & FrodeVeggeland. Experiments in Food Safety Policy Integration in the European Union[J]. Journal of Common Market Studies 2006,44(9):607-624
 - [4] Liu Ning. The Economics Analysis of China's Food Safety Social Regulation [J]. Industrial Economy Technology, 2006 (3) :132-134 (In Chinese)
 - [5] Wang Hu, Li Changjian. Food Safety Regulation Study in Multi-interest Context ---From the Perspective of Game [J]. China Agricultural University (Social Science Edition), 2008, (3) :144-152 (In Chinese)
 - [6] Mo Yalin, Zhang Zhichao, Food Safety Control Research Based on Economic Analysis of [J]. The Future and Development, 2010, (3) :29-34 (In Chinese)
 - [7] Wu Huayuan, Yang Bin, Chinese Food Safety Standard System Management Overview [J]. Jiangxi Chemical Industry, 2010, (4) :1-3 (In Chinese)
 - [8] Du Bo, Zhang Ran. Punishments in China's Food Safety Laws System [J]. North China Electric Power University (Social Science Edition), 2008. (3) :54-57 (In Chinese)
 - [9] Shi Haigen. China's Food Safety Causes, Status and Countermeasures [J]. China's Public Health Management, 2007,23 (1) :37-39 (In Chinese)
 - [10] Hu Yifen. "Participatory Governance" - Analysis of the Third Sector and Government Relations [J]. Chongqing Social Science, 2004, (1) :59-61 (In Chinese)
 - [11] Cheng Yu. Public Governance: Exploring the Food Safety Control Model [J]. Guangdong Radio & TV University, 2009 (6) :81-85 (In Chinese)