

<b>Title</b>	Improving the safety and quality of fresh fruit and vegetables (FFV): a practical approach
<b>Authors</b>	M. Pineiro, L.B. Diaz
<b>Citation</b>	ISHS Acta Horticulturae 741:19-24. 2007.
<b>Keywords</b>	fresh produce; primary production; hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP); good practices; good agricultural practices; training

### **Abstract**

As part of its effort to assist member countries to implement more effectively the standards, guidelines and recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius, FAO/AGNS is presently conducting a program for improving the quality and safety of FFV. It focuses on the application of good practices to prevent hazards at appropriate points in the fresh fruits and vegetable chain (production and post-harvest stages-food chain approach). A training pack has been prepared as part of the program activities in an effort to strengthen the institutional capacities, both public and private, to develop and implement comprehensive quality assurance and food safety programs for FFV, that are environmentally sustainable and benefit all actors in the chain. It consists of a manual, hard copy and Cd-Rom, a database and case studies to plan and carry out capacity building in quality and safety of FFV at the country level. It is available in English, French and Spanish, for distribution to all member countries and is freely available on the FAO website. The main objective is to improve the safe production, harvesting, handling, storage, transport and marketing of FFV by providing access to reference information and information exchange among the chain actors, and tools for training, extension and awareness creation. The training pack was validated through numerous sub-regional workshops and has two purposes. Firstly, it provides a step by step guide for “training trainers” on the use of the package by countries in the process of improving the quality and safety of FFV. Secondly, it provides information which can be used by countries to develop training programs and implement the safety and quality requirements to suit their specific needs and thus enhance their capability to apply the Codex guidelines and standards, importers requirements, as well as improve the fresh produce domestic market. The package identifies and provides information, in the form of modules with relevant visual aids, grouped around distinct themes. This structure provides the flexibility to develop a training program to meet the specific needs by allowing the organizer of the training to select those modules which contribute to the achievement of the training objective. The training pack provide all the necessary materials for trainers to replicate the course, identify their priorities and develop their national program based on local realities, capabilities and conditions.