

## COMPLETION REPORT

Food Safety Management: Experience from Japan and Lessons Learned for Vietnam

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In recent years, especially since 1990s when Vietnamese agricultural production was enhanced with the use of chemical inputs, often in excessive quantities (according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the import of agrochemicals increased from 20,000 to 50,000 tons over the period 2005–2014), such as pesticides fungicides, herbicides, food additives, hormones, and antibiotics, etc., the contamination of foods in Vietnam has considered as the huge problems. During 4 years (2011-2014), there were annually 168 cases of food poisoning with 3,800 infected people of which 33 were dead and 3,500 were hospitalization, whereas during the period from 2010 to 2012 there were 1,200 incidences a year, of which 9 dead in Japan. It could be said that Vietnamese situation is much worse in comparison with Japanese one.

The reasons are the fact that: (1) There are a numbers of laws which directly or indirectly have conducted food safety management in Japan since early 1950s, as soon as the Second World War ended. In Vietnam there is a unique Law on Food Safety which has just been established in 2010. Further, the scopes of Japanese laws relating food safety management are much wider than Vietnamese ones; (2) Regulations in Japanese laws relating to food safety management are very detailed and comprehensive. They seem to cover all types of foods, food additives, apparatus and containers/packages, and almost all aspects relating the safety of these products. Vietnamese law on food safety regulated similar issues, but law implementation is not relevant to written ones due to perception of related actors and inspective works; (3) A big difference can be found in roles of local governments. In Japan, responsibilities in food safety management are particularly assigned to local level, especially prefecture. Local Bureaus of Health and Welfare and Public Health Center play important roles in food safety management for both domestic and imported products. Differently, in provincial level, people have merely seen the appearances of Department of Agricultural and Development and Market Control Department in food safety inspection. The participation of health sector in food safety management is not as active as in Japan; (4) While Consumer Agency and Consumer Commission have played crucial roles in risk communication, risk management, then consumer protection from unsafe food in Japan, Vietnamese Consumer Protection Association weakly functions. When Vietnamese consumers were facing with unsafe vegetable consumption, they have dealt with themselves because they did not know who they should complain to and how to make a complaint; (5) Japanese consumers' perception of food risk and food safety is more clearly and early than Vietnamese ones. It is demonstrated that consumers' movement of food safety has happened in Japan, especially in Metropolitan Tokyo since the early 1960s and 1970s. So far, safe food movement in Japan has changed so much in terms of consumers' concerns and the ways in which consumers made their claims. The situation is totally different in Vietnam. Before 1990s, Vietnamese people had to struggle for food quantity rather than for food quality. Food safety had just become Vietnamese consumer's concern since the early 2000s when a number of consumers poisoned by unsafe food, of which many of them died and most of them were patients.

Based a comparative analysis of food safety management as well as food safety situation in Japan and Vietnam, five relevant experiences for safety food management in Vietnam should be drawn from

Japan as follows: (1) Laws and policies on food safety management should be more detailed and comprehensive; (2) Inspection in implementing regulations on food safety management need to be improved; (3) Enhancing roles of local government in food safety management, especially roles of health sector at district and provincial levels; (4) To promote roles and functions of Vietnamese Consumer Protection Association not only in protecting consumer's benefit, but also so in food safety management; and (5) Upgrading consumer's and producer's perception of food risk and food safety is also an important strategy in Vietnam.

### **Publication of the Results of Research Project:**

**Verbal Presentation** (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

The author has presented the research results in the seminar entitled "*Food Safety Management: Experience from Japan and Lessons Learned for Vietnam*" on 15 June 2015 at Faculty of Economics and Rural Development, Hanoi University of Agriculture

**Report and Paper** (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

A working paper with title "*State Management of Food Safety: A Comparison between Japan and Vietnam*" has completed and it is available for lecturer's and student's references at the library of Faculty of Economics and Rural Development, Hanoi University of Agriculture. (Authors: Nguyen Phuong Le and Nguyen Mau Dung, July 2015)

**Book** (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

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