



INFOSAN

**International Food Safety
Authorities Network**

Jenny Bishop

Western Pacific Regional Office

World Health Organization



**World Health
Organization**

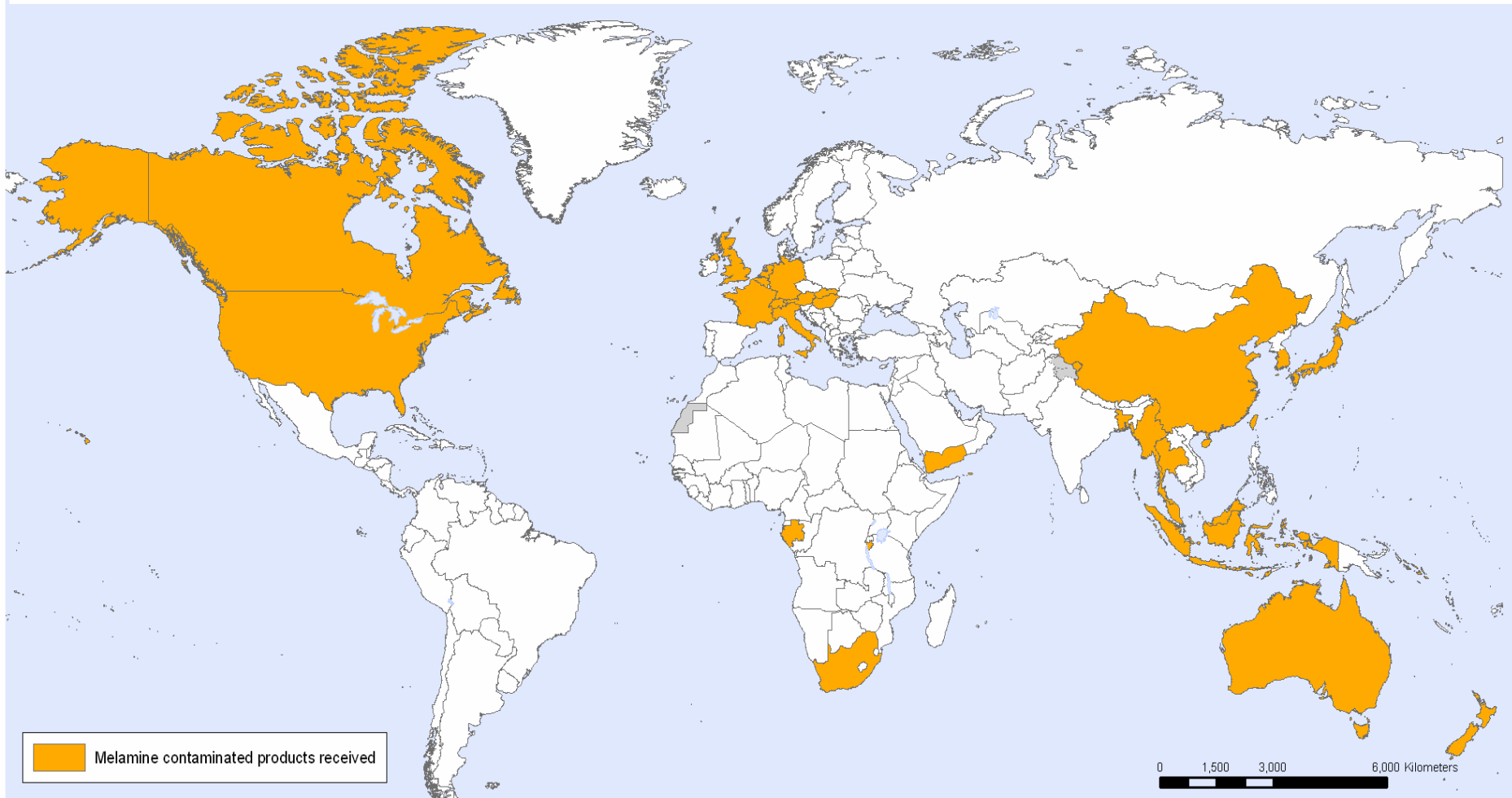


**Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations**

International foodborne disease outbreaks: Rapid spread worldwide by movement of food



Country received melamine contaminated products



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Data Source: World Health Organization
Map Production: Public Health Information
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World Health Organization



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Food Safety Events in the Media

The collage features several news articles and website screenshots related to food safety events in the media:

- Bonsoy scare triggers calls for iodine oversight** (The Australian, October 04, 2010 12:00AM)
- UPDATE 1-Nestle recalls South Africa infant formula** (Wed Mar 12, 2008 6:52am EDT)
- Belgium, Netherlands meat sectors face dioxin crisis** (By Ahmed Elamin, 31-Jan-2006)
- Veggie Booty Tied To Salmonella Outbreak** (FDA Reports 52 Cases Of Salmonella Illness From Eating Popular Snacks)
- Melamine Traces Found in U.S. Infant Formula** (By ANDREW MARTIN, Published: November 25, 2008)
- Hepatitis warning on semi-dried tomatoes** (Health authorities in Victoria and South Australia)
- Listeria Outbreak On Virgin Blue Airplane** (Posted on August 19, 2009 by Listeria Lawyer)
- Typhoid Fever Outbreak Linked to Manney Pulp** (By DAN FLYNN | 2012-14, 6:52)

The collage also includes various website navigation elements, social media sharing buttons, and images related to food safety, such as a bowl of tomatoes and a burrito.

Background

- The rapid globalization of food production and trade has increased the potential for international incidents involving contaminated food
- Dealing with these events requires rapid exchange of food safety information at both the national and international level
- By sharing experiences between countries food safety issues can be managed more effectively and efficiently
- It is therefore important to have a mechanism in place to facilitate collaboration between countries

To provide such a mechanism, INFOSAN was launched in 2004 and has been growing ever since



What is INFOSAN and its Purpose?

- A voluntary network of food safety authorities from around the world managed jointly by WHO and FAO
- Aims to prevent international spread of contaminated food and foodborne disease and strengthen food safety systems globally, by:
 - promoting the rapid exchange of information during food safety events
 - sharing information on important food safety issues of global interest
 - promoting partnership and collaboration between countries
 - helping countries strengthen their capacity to manage food safety risks

Milestones in developing INFOSAN

May 2000 – World Health Assembly of WHO adopts a resolution calling for improved communication among WHO and Member States on matters of food safety.

May 2002 – Member States express serious concerns at the WHA regarding health emergencies posed by natural, accidental and intentional contamination of food; WHO is requested to provide tools and support to Member States to increase their capacity to respond to such emergencies.

March 2004 – WHO and its Regional Offices take the first steps in establishing INFOSAN; WHO Representatives request the official designation of one or more INFOSAN Focal Points and one INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point.

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

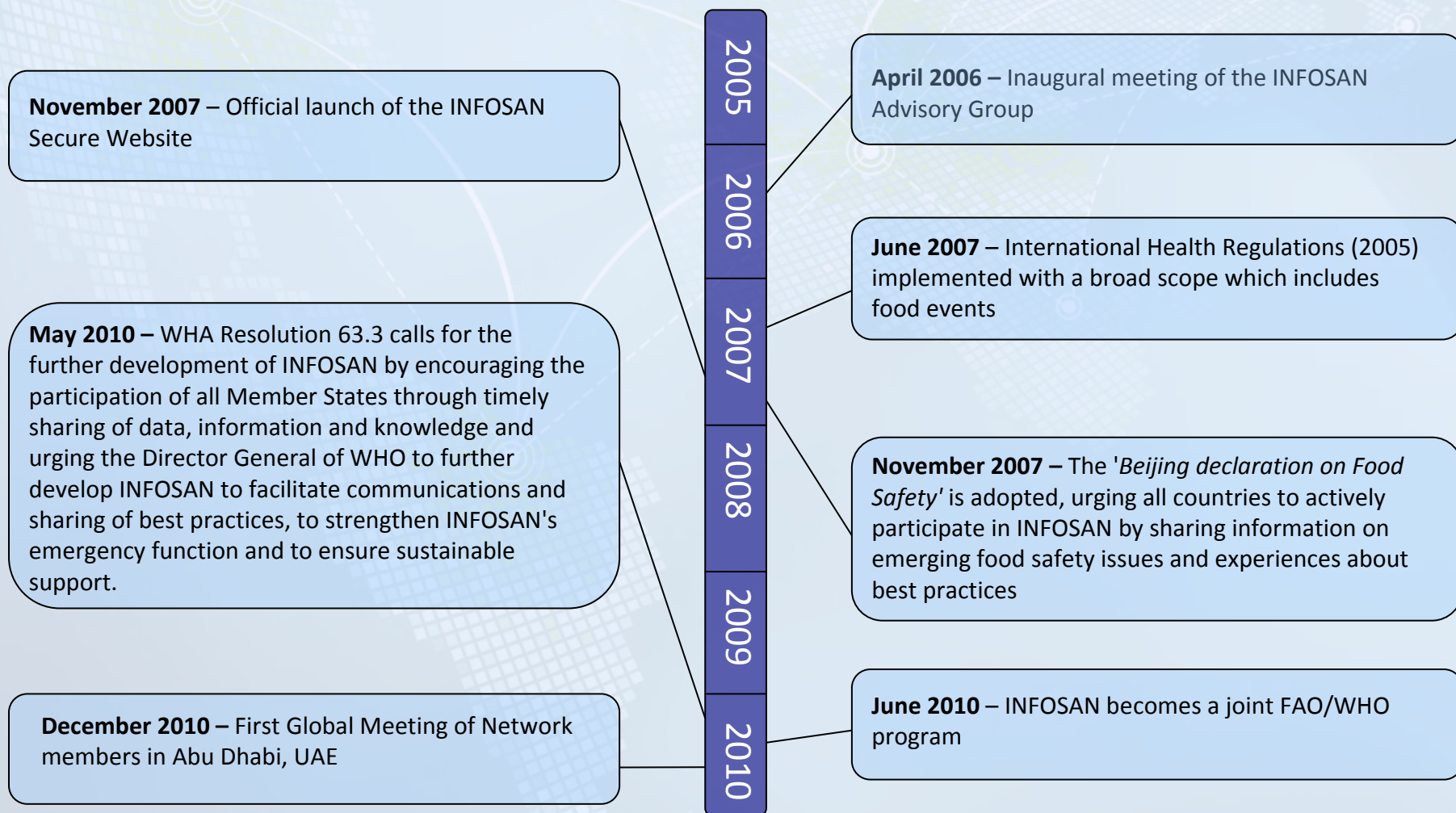
January 2002 – FAO/WHO First Global Forum for Food Safety Regulators calls for strengthened international communication regarding food safety.

January 2003 – WHO publishes a report on terrorist threats to food including guidance for establishing and strengthening prevention and response systems; the report points to the establishment of an international food safety emergency network as one of the basic preparedness measure that needs to be taken.

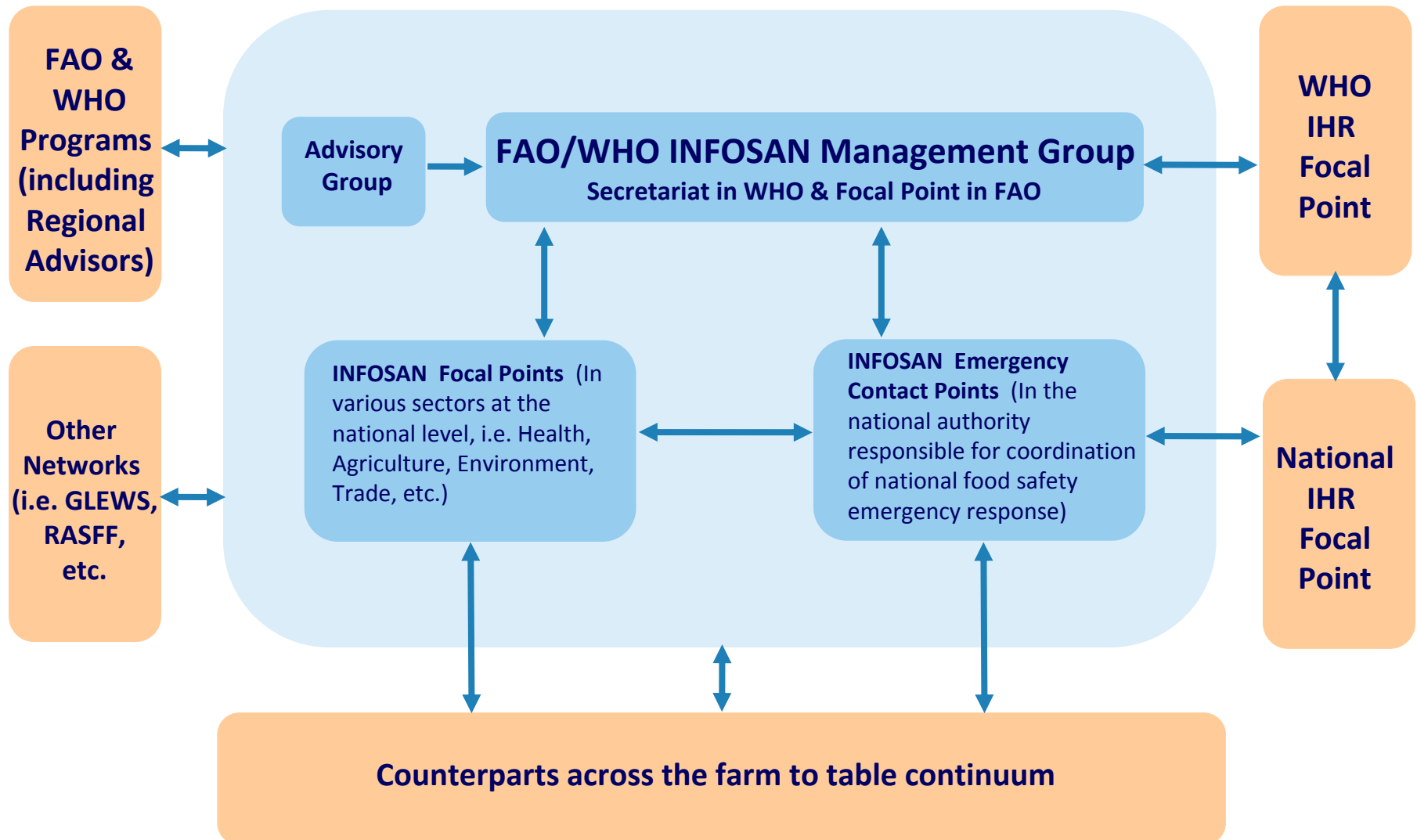
July 2004 – The Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted a text entitled '*Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Control Emergency Situations*'.

October 2004 – The Department of Food Safety and Zoonoses (FOS) of WHO, in cooperation with the FAO, officially inaugurate INFOSAN as a collaborative program, at the FAO/WHO Second Global Forum for Food Safety Regulators.

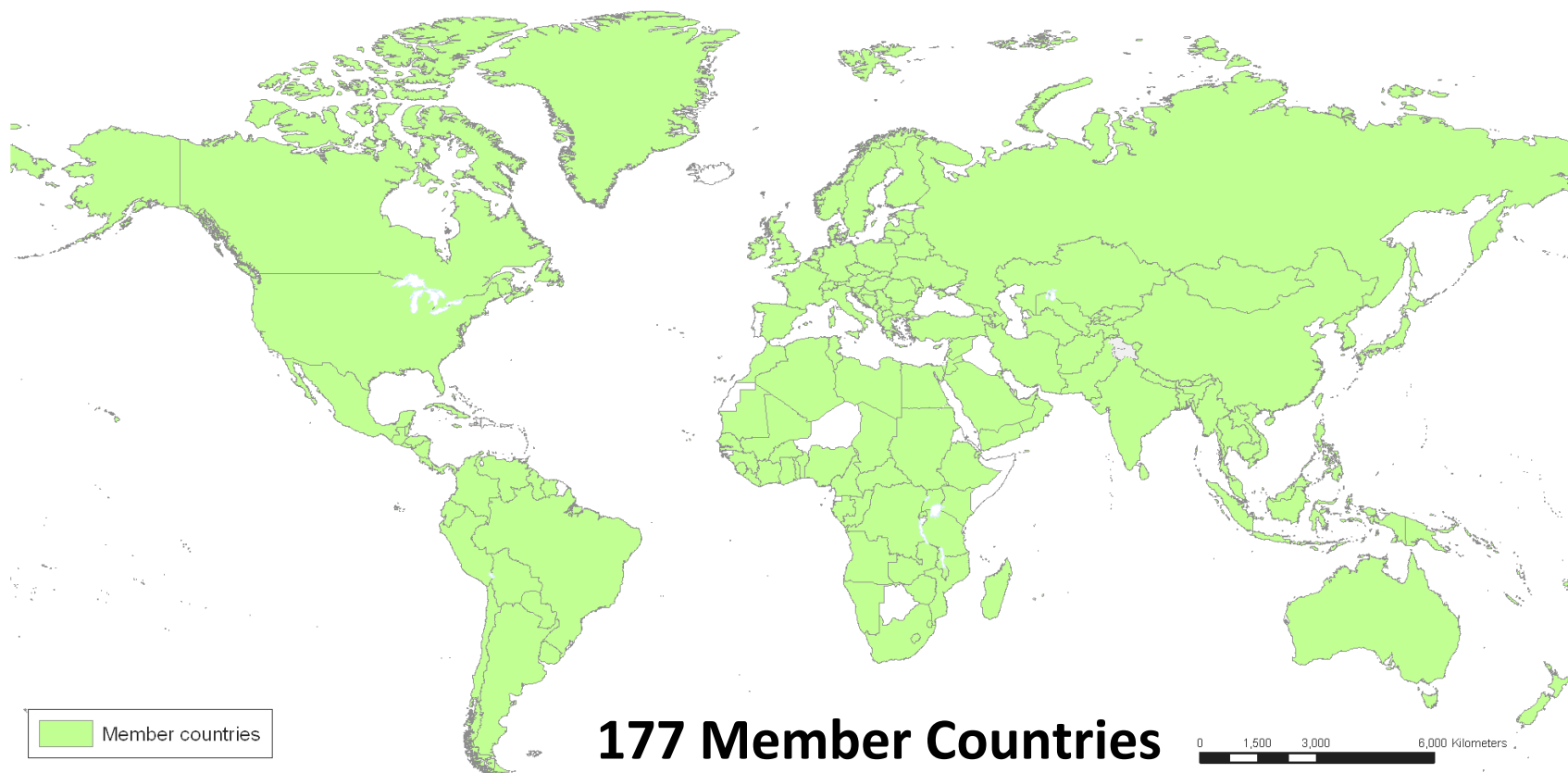
Milestones in developing INFOSAN



INFOSAN Structure and Links to Key Partners



Current Membership



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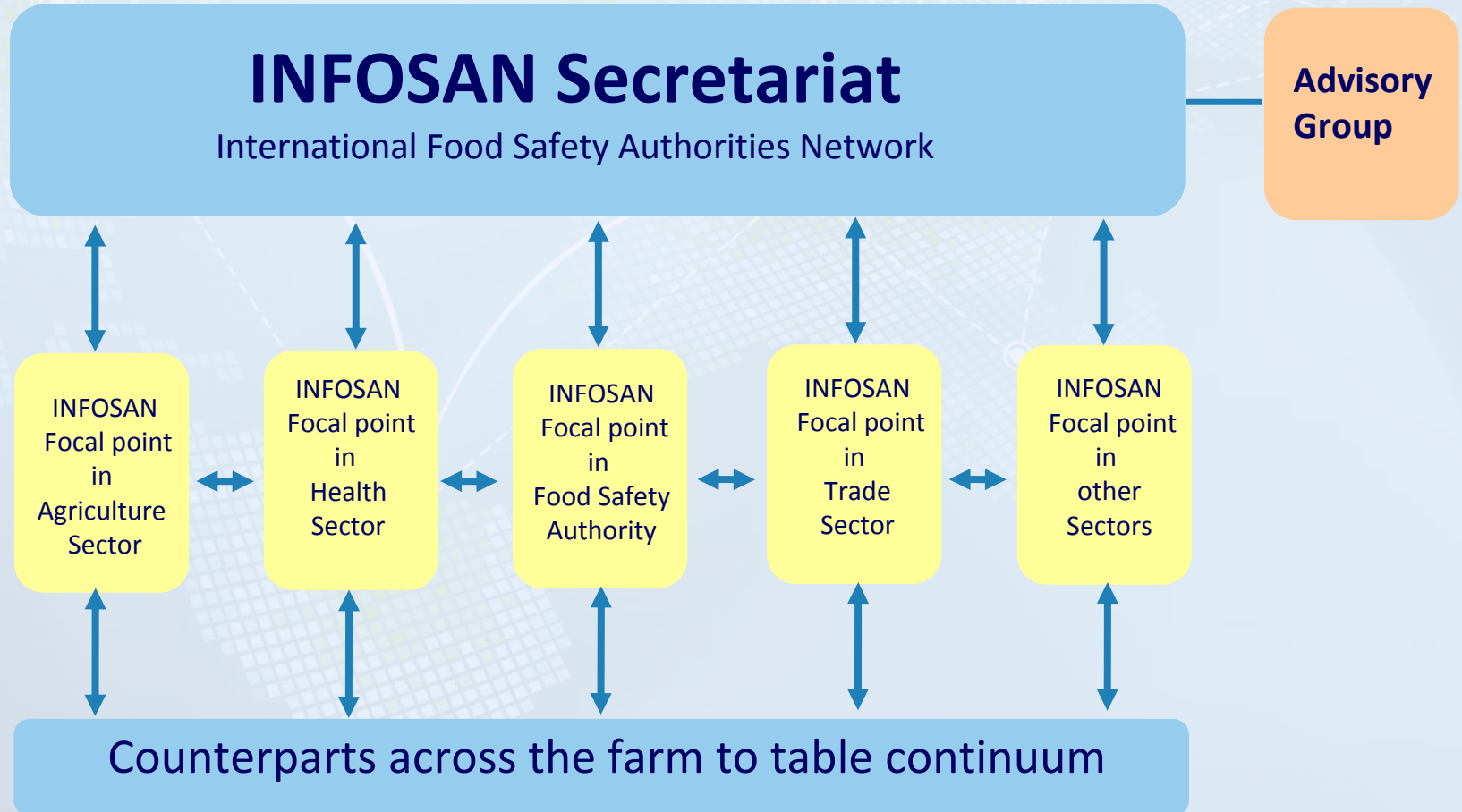


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Focal Point Roles and Responsibilities

- **Disseminates INFOSAN** notes, FAO/WHO guidelines, and other important food safety information from INFOSAN within their agency, as appropriate
- Provides **comments** to INFOSAN on information products disseminated to the Network
- Engages in **sharing information** with the INFOSAN Secretariat and other members on food safety issues that may be relevant at the international level and beneficial to all members, such as but not limited to: risk assessments on emerging hazards, lessons learnt, identified good practices, etc.
- **Collaborates** with INFOSAN Emergency Contact point on emergency events involving their respective agency

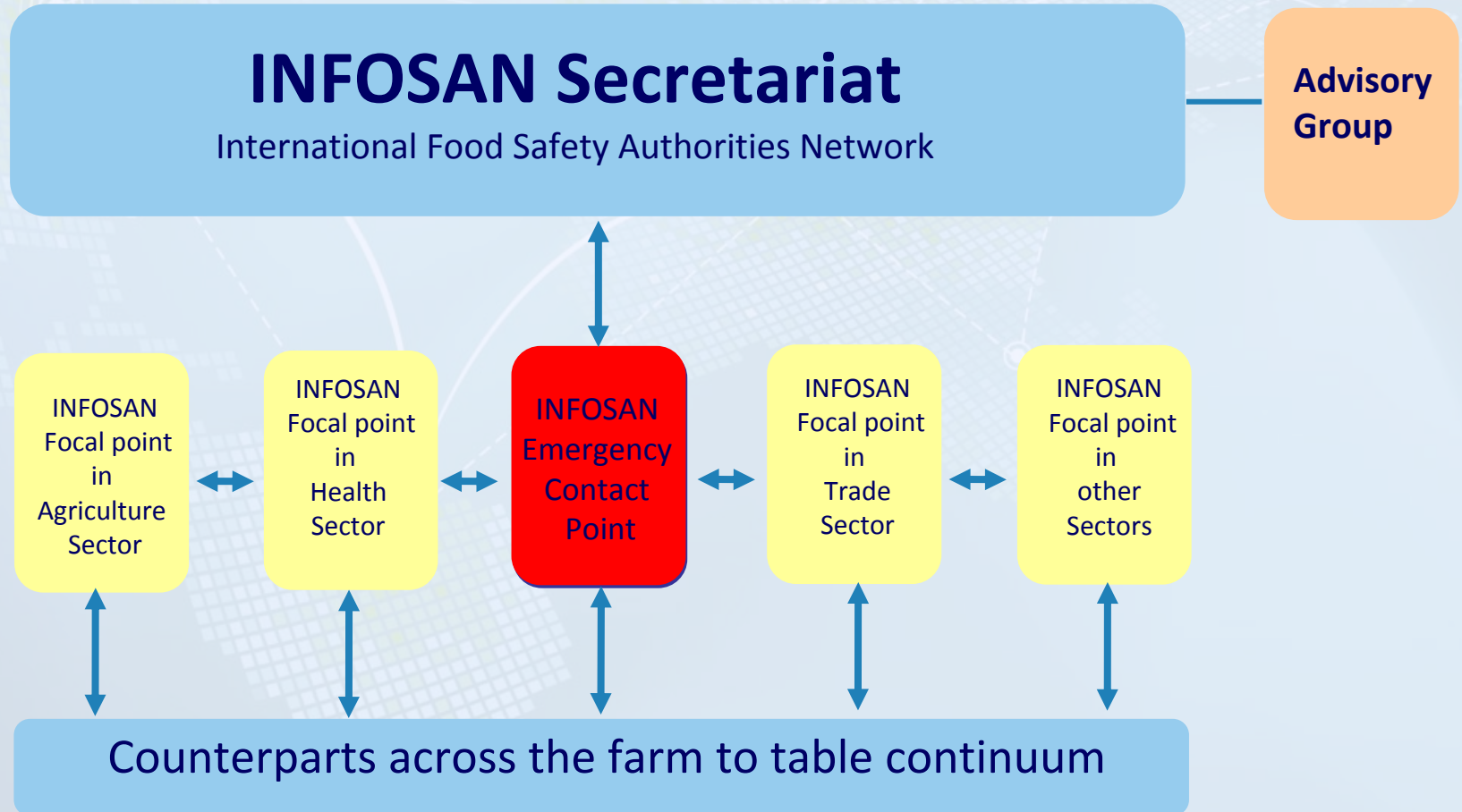
Structure of INFOSAN



Emergency Contact Point Roles and Responsibilities

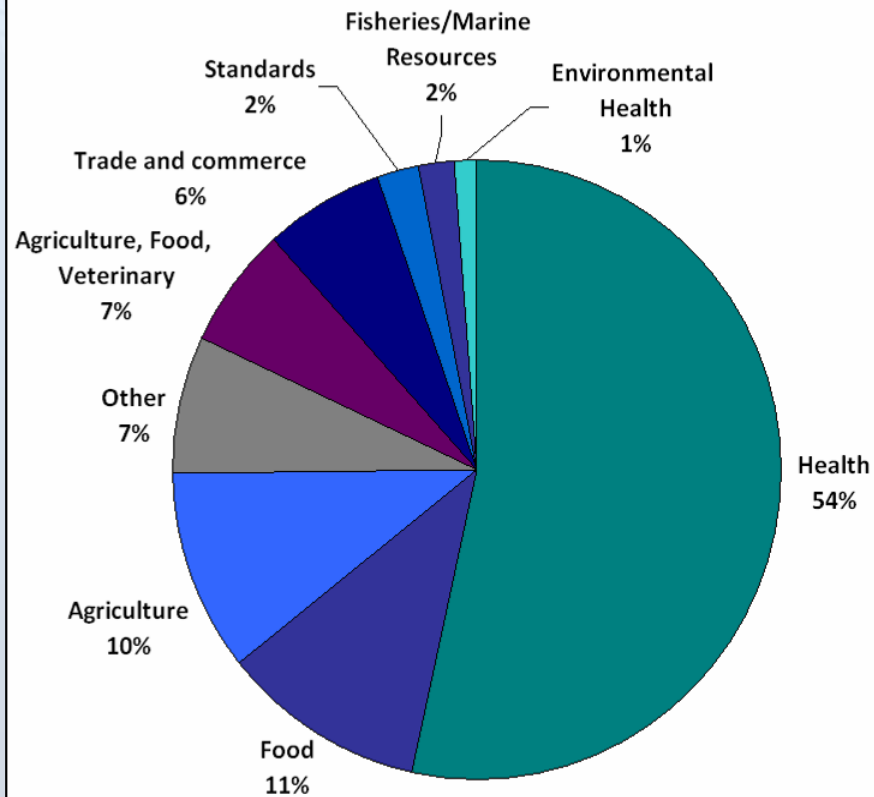
- **Reports** urgent food safety events of potential international significance to the INFOSAN Secretariat
- Collaborates with their **IHR National Focal Point** on food safety events that fall under the IHR
- Assists the INFOSAN Secretariat in the **verification and assessment** of events by providing all necessary information, and reviews INFOSAN Alert messages pertaining to an event in their country
- Requests **international assistance** through the INFOSAN Secretariat to respond to a food safety incident or emergency, as necessary
- Takes **action** on INFOSAN Alerts and disseminates information accordingly
- Carries out functions outlined for **Focal Points** within their Agency

INFOSAN Emergency

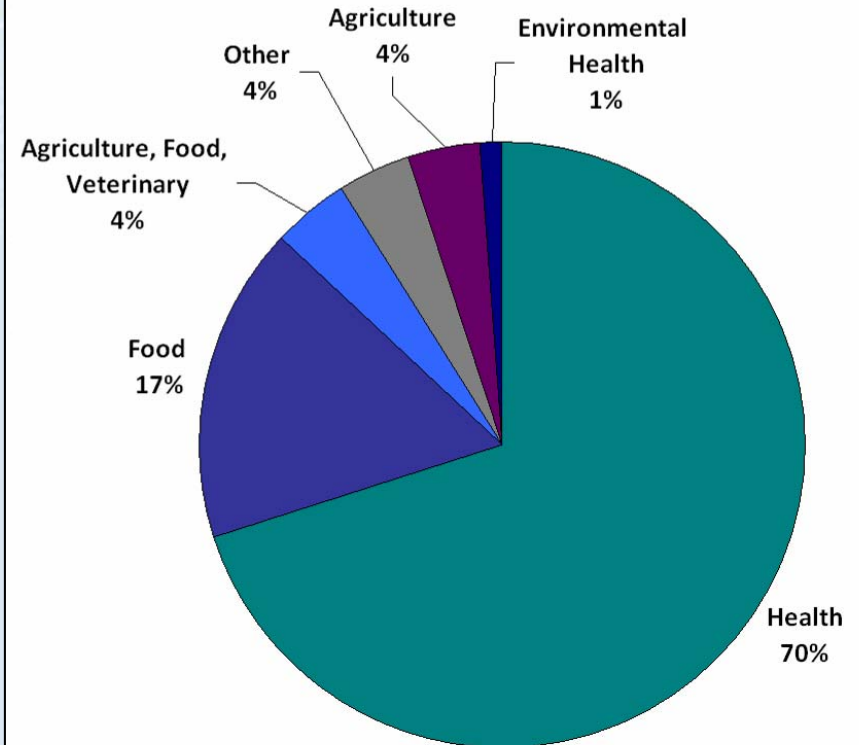


Affiliations of Focal Points and Emergency Contact Points

Focal Points



Emergency Contact Points



INFOSAN Collaborative Partnerships

- Global Early Warning System for Major Animal Diseases, including Zoonoses (GLEWS)
- World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)
- Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN)
- European Union - Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)
- EMPRES Food Safety
- WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network
- PulseNet International
- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)











Communication within the Network

- Members are part of an electronic mailing list and receive alerts and other information from the Secretariat
- Members can contact the Secretariat for general inquiries or for emergency matters
- Members have access to a list of all INFOSAN members and can be in contact directly
- The INFOSAN Secure website is intended to facilitate online collaboration


INFOSAN Secure Website

The website is divided into 4 main sections:

1) Library

| Built-in folders | | |
|---|---|----------------|
|  | Appearance | |
|  | Inbox | |
| Title | Contributed on | Contributed by |
|  | INFOSAN Documents | |
|  | INFOSAN Emergency Alerts | |
|  | INFOSAN Information Notes | |
|  | Instructions on the Use of Secure Website | |
|  | Request for Information | |
|  | Useful Links | |

2) Discussion Forum

| all topics | | |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Commentaires sur le fichier Limits set by National Authorities on melamine levels in food (1) | | 02 October 2008 |
| Arna Mlynarczyk | | |
|  Feedback on the Melamine-contamination in milk and milk products - September 2008 (5) | | 23 September 2008 |
| Donald Campbell; INFOSAN INFOSAN; Juan Velasquez; Nick Tomlinson | | |
| Comments on file '18 September 2008 - Melamine-contaminated powdered milk (Update 2) ' (1) | | 21 September 2008 |
| LIONEL MICHAEL | | |
| Discussions Page Not Moderated (4) | | 09 November 2007 |
| INFOSAN INFOSAN; John Attard Kingswell; Michael De Shield | | |

3) Announcement Page

| all announcements | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
|  First Global Meeting of the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) | 19 October 2010 | INFOSAN INFOSAN |

4) Calendar

| Today is: 12 December 2010 | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| November 28 - December 4 | | | | | | | |
| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| December 5 - December 11 | | | | | | | |

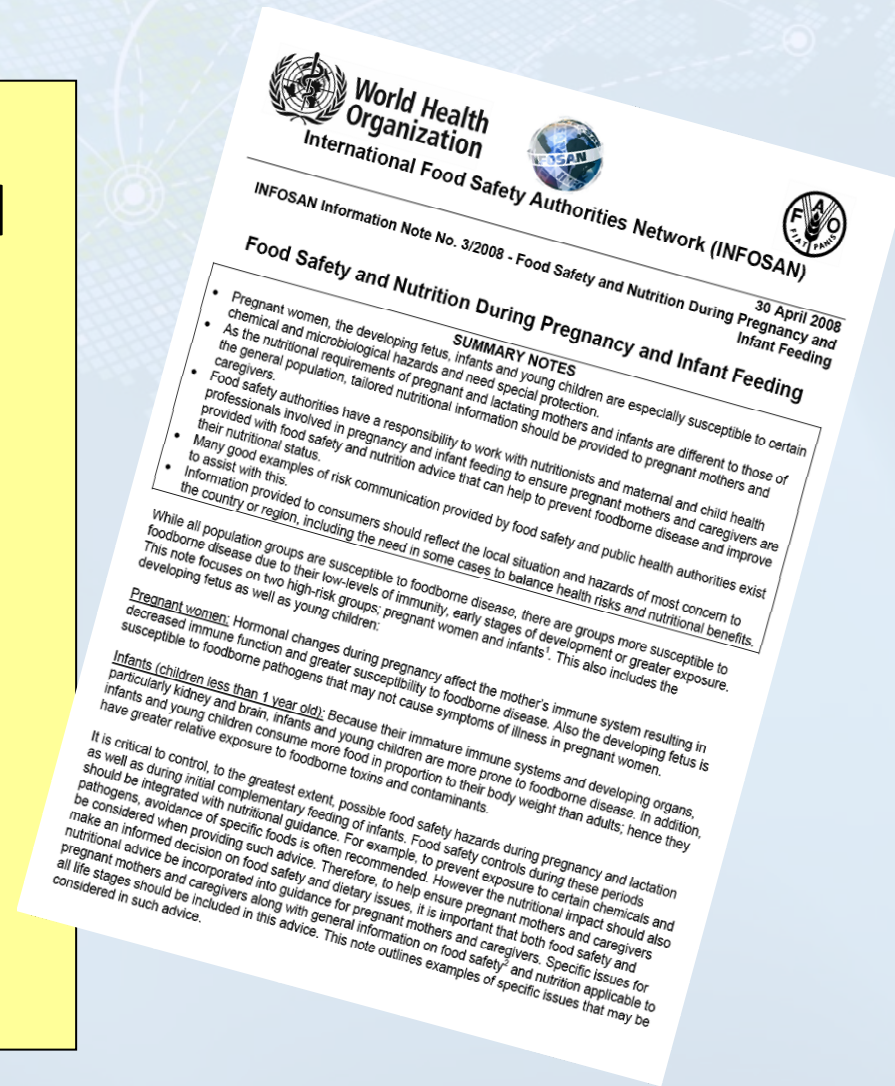
There are plans to develop a new website in the near future

Routine Activities

- **INFOSAN Information Notes** are developed by the INFOSAN Secretariat on a regular basis to provide key information about emergent or topical food safety issues
- **Food safety guidelines, questionnaires, surveys, newsletters and factsheets** are shared with INFOSAN members for further dissemination within their organizations
- INFOSAN members aid routine in-country **sharing of information** to strengthen the national food control system
- INFOSAN Members are engaged by the Secretariat for **gathering information** on emerging issues

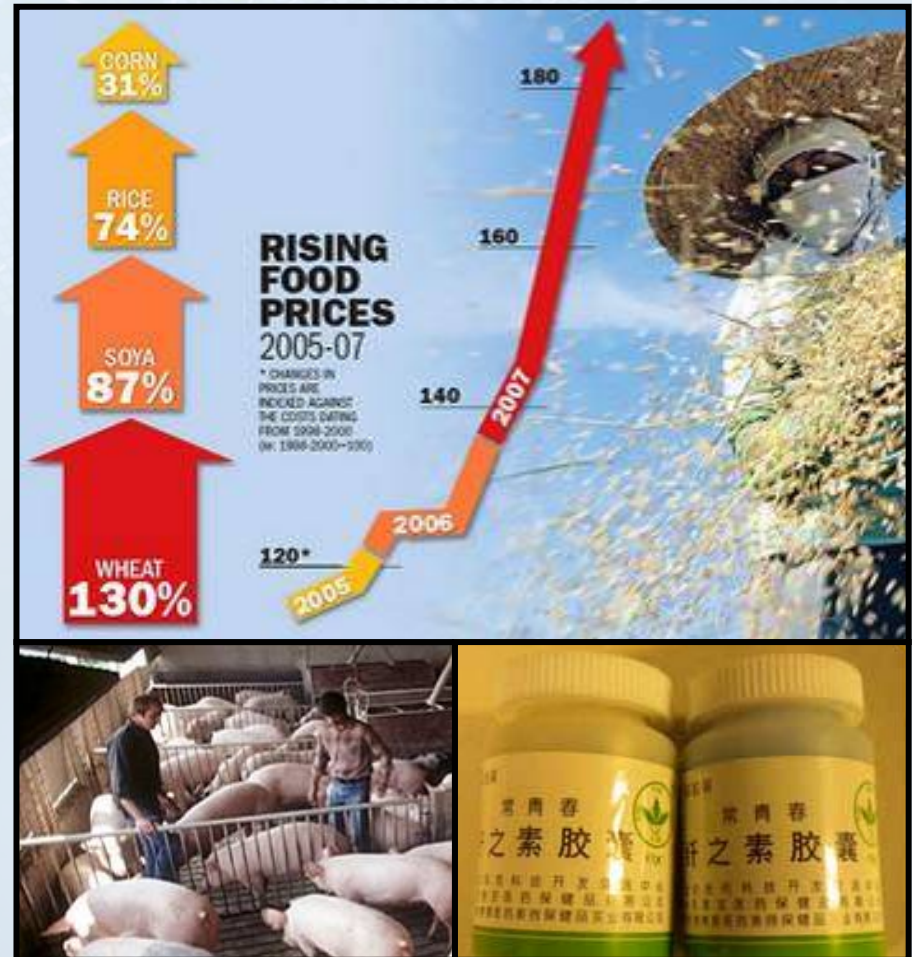
INFOSAN Information Notes

- Practical information on current and emerging food safety issues
- Intended to promote awareness and in some cases action by INFOSAN Members
- Means of sharing lessons learned and best practices



Information gathering for emerging issues

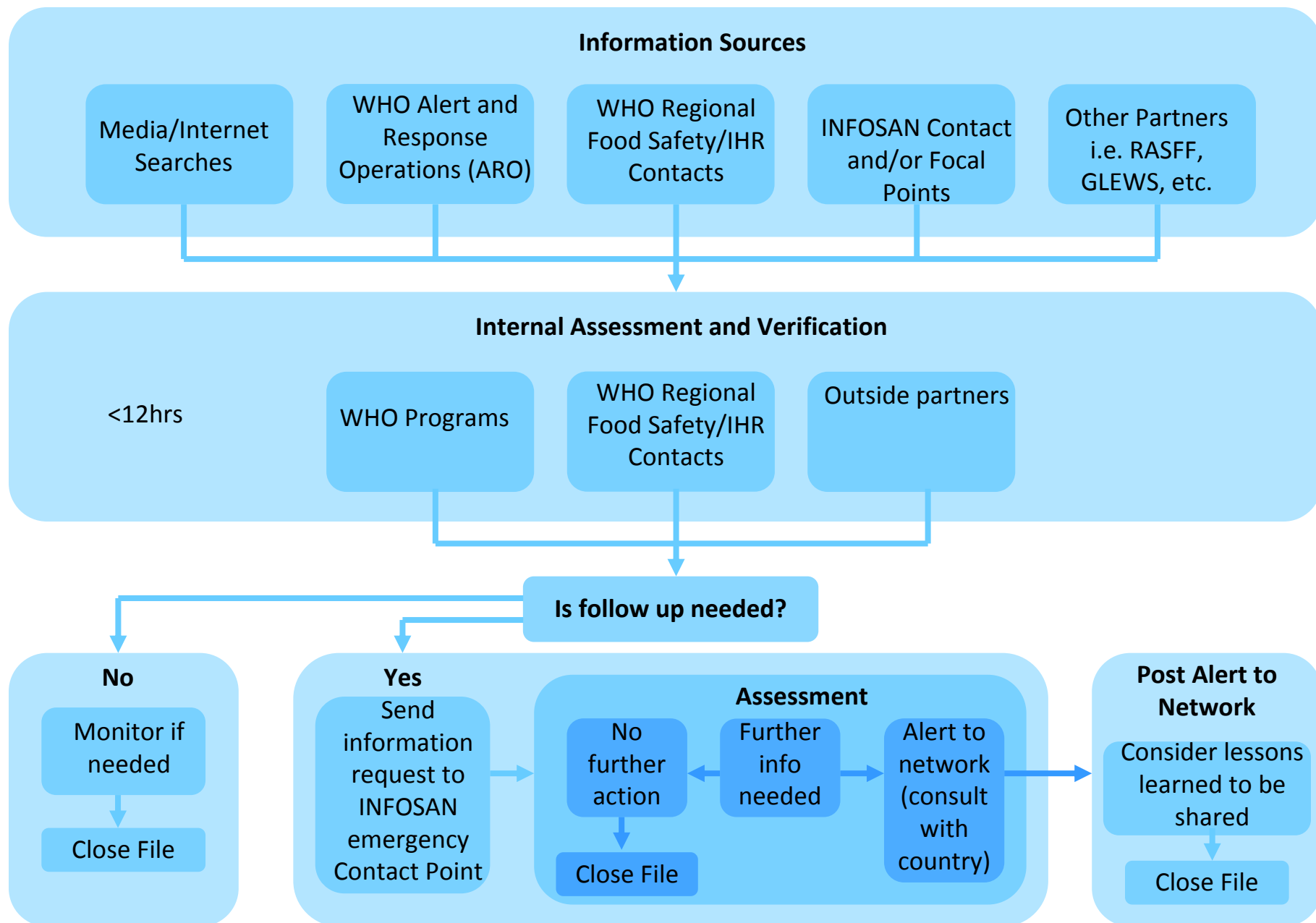
- April 2008 survey to assess impact of food prices crises
- 2007 survey on pig processing methods after PIN identified in USA
- 2010 information message on undeclared sibutramine in foods



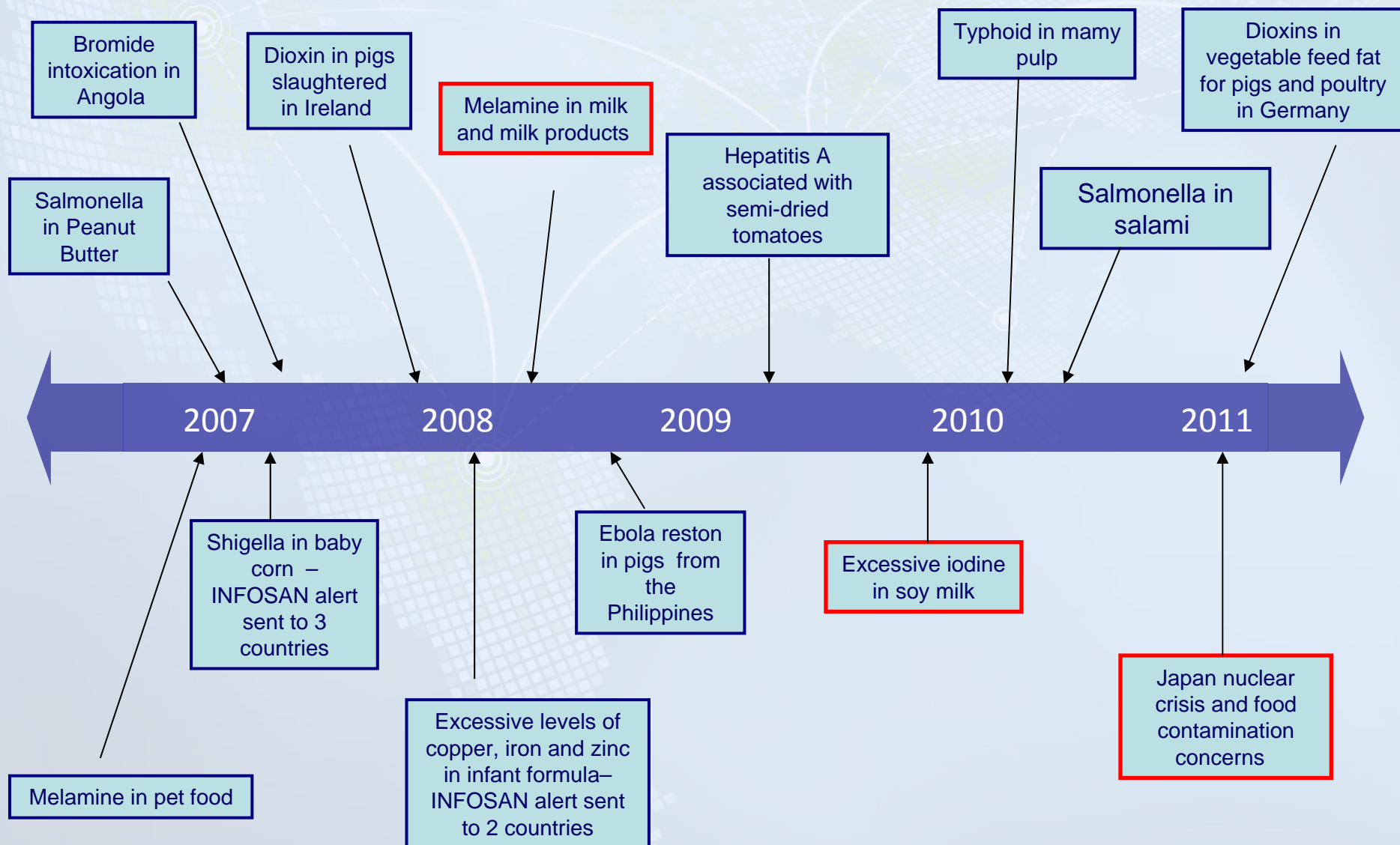
Emergency Activities

- **INFOSAN identifies, verifies and shares information** on food safety-related events which involve contaminated foods in international commerce, and foodborne illness outbreaks, not limited to one country
- INFOSAN Secretariat provides **technical assistance** to national governments in managing food safety and food production-related events or emergencies
- INFOSAN secretariat **coordinated information exchange** between countries and will facilitate technical assistance in the field, if requested

Event Detection and Action



Examples of INFOSAN Emergency Actions



Example of INFOSAN in action

Thyroid toxicosis from excess iodine
in soy milk product



World Health
Organization



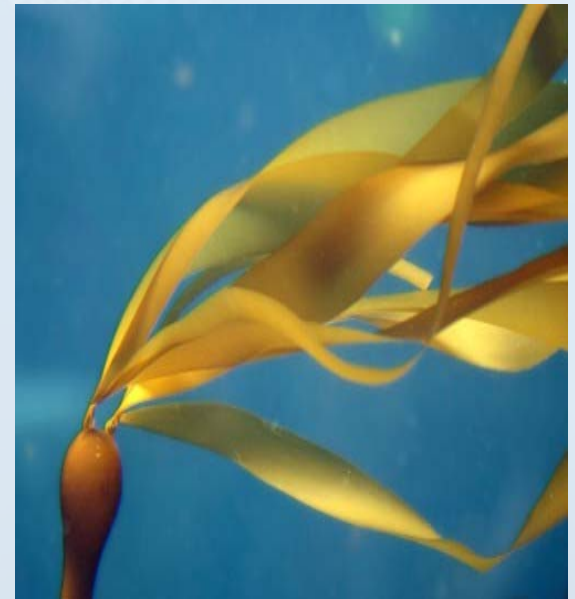
Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations

Thyrotoxicosis from Excess Iodine in Soy Milk

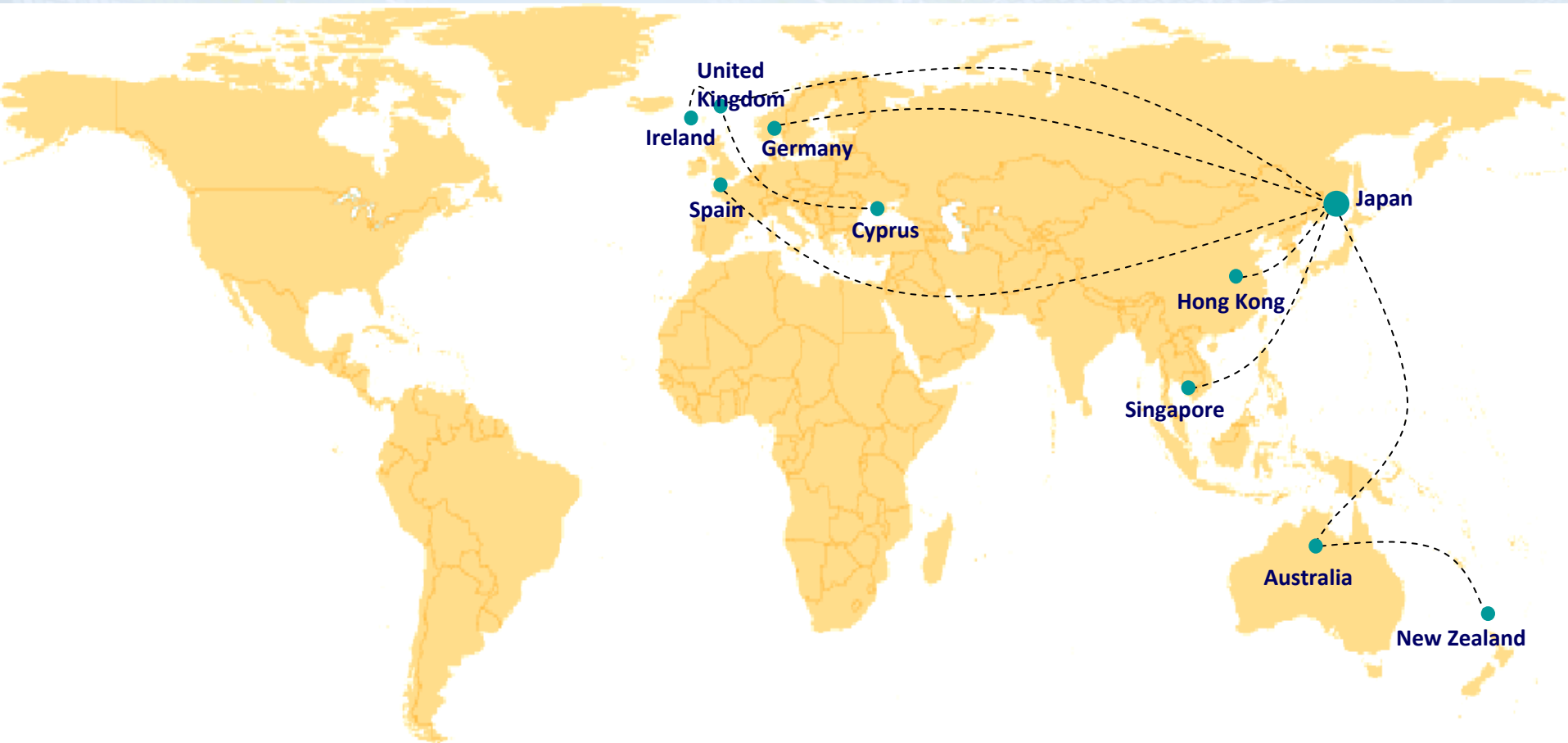
- On 23 December 2009, New South Wales Health Dept. and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) advised the National Incident Room (NIR) of illness (thyrotoxicosis) in nine adults and one infant in New South Wales which were linked to a soy milk product, brand X soy milk, imported from Japan.
- On 24 December 2009 FSANZ issued recall notice
- Same day, after assessment under annex 2 of the IHR (2005), Australia sent the notification to WPRO IHR.

Analysis of the Product

- Iodine content of the soy milk was 31 000 $\mu\text{g/L}$.
- At these levels, tolerable daily intake is likely to be exceeded with as little as 30 mL (1/8 cup) consumed per day by an adult.
- Raw material (ingredient) testing
 - kelp (seaweed “Konbu”) extracts
 - iodine level of 403mg/100g



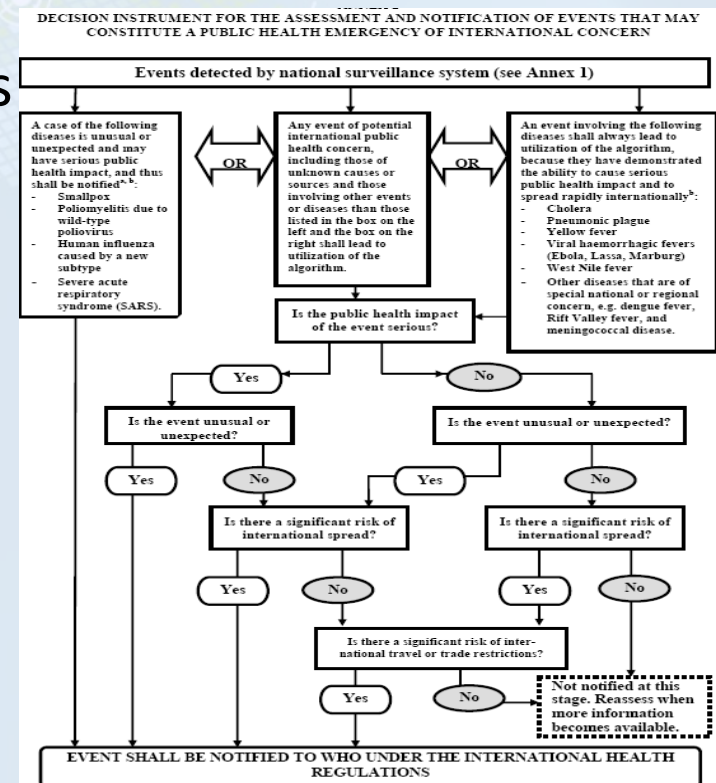
International Distribution



Criteria for Communicating Food Safety Events to INFOSAN

- Review public health threat posed by a food safety event using Annex 2 of the IHR (2005) in collaboration with IHR NFP

- Public health impact- serious
- Unusual or unexpected
- Risk of international spread
- Risk of trade restrictions



- In addition consider:
 - Implications for food safety regulators



Learning Centre

News room

Translated material

Publications

Fact sheets

Fact sheets 2010

Bisphenol A (BPA)
and food packaging
(19 January 2010)Plant sterols
(January 2010)Acrylamide and food
(March 2010)Raw Chicken Meat
Microbiological
Survey – summary of
results (March 2010)Update: Austrian
government retracts
conclusions
reported in a long
term reproduction
study on GM corn
lines MON810 and
NK603 (April 2010)**Reformulated
Bonsoy soy milk
without kombu
seaweed to return
to shelves (April
2010)**

Fact Sheets 2009

Fact Sheets 2008

Fact Sheets 2007

Fact Sheets 2006

Home ► Science and Education ► Fact sheets ► Fact sheets 2010 ►

Reformulated Bonsoy soy milk without kombu seaweed to return to shelves

28 April 2010

Food and Health authorities today confirmed that Bonsoy soy milk, reformulated without kombu seaweed extract, could return to sale.

On the 24 December 2009, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) coordinated a national food recall and issued a media release advising people not to consume Bonsoy soy milk with all best before dates. This followed a cluster of nine adults aged from 29 to 47, and one child, who presented in NSW with thyroid problems.

A national medical reporting system has been established in Australia. Between 23 December 2009 and 15 March 2010, there were 38 cases of thyroid dysfunction reported to public health units in Australia that are suspected to be associated with the consumption of Bonsoy soy milk.

Bonsoy soy milk was enriched with kombu which is a seaweed product. Upon testing, the Bonsoy milk with added kombu was found to be the only product with excessively high levels of iodine. This product was also recalled in the UK, Ireland, Singapore and Hong Kong.

The levels of iodine in the Bonsoy soy milk were at a level that is likely to exceed the safe limit for iodine when as little as 30ml (one eighth of a cup) is consumed per day by an adult. The only soy milk product identified through testing to have high levels of iodine was Bonsoy soy milk.

FSANZ is also coordinating further testing of a range of beverages enriched with seaweed and other seaweed containing products. Any found to have unsafe levels of iodine will be recalled.

Food and Health Authorities remind anyone with 1 litre tetra packs of the original Bonsoy soy milk with kombu, with all best before dates, that they should not consume them and should safely dispose of them or return same to place of purchase. Anyone who has consumed the earlier batches of Bonsoy with kombu over a prolonged time who feels generally unwell should consult their doctor.

Information for Medical Practitioners: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/recall-soymilk>

Example of INFOSAN in Action

Japan's Nuclear Crisis
INFOSAN's response to food contamination concerns



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INFOSAN Actions

- **Close collaboration with INFOSAN Emergency Contact Point in Japan MHLW** (food monitoring data, actions undertaken)
- Collaboration with **Member States importing food** from Japan (imported food monitoring data, controls put in place)
- **Assistance to countries** (laboratory information, provision of technical input, development of Technical Information Notes)

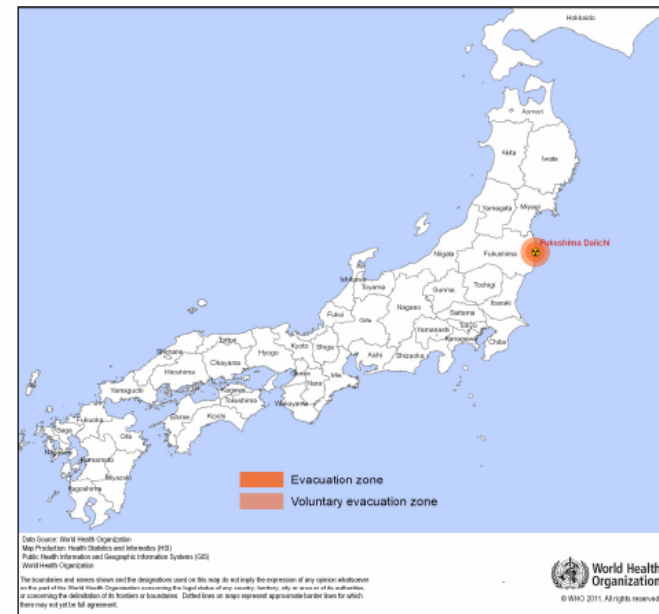
INFOSAN Information Exchange

- Daily updates from Japan
- Active updates from members on control measures
- Regular synthesis of data from Japan
- All information provided on secure website

Descriptive Analysis of Food Monitoring Results from Japan - 28 April 2011

On 16 March 2011, Japanese officials began sampling various food items to be tested for radionuclide contamination. Test results for the food items sampled as of 27 April 2011 have been shared by Japanese officials. Figure 1 below shows a map of Japan showing prefectures and indicating the site of the evacuation zone around the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

Figure 1 - Map of Japan indicating evacuation zone



- A total of 2215 food samples (collected between 16 March 2011 and 27 April 2011) have been tested from 18 prefectures in Japan (Chiba, Ehime, Fukushima, Gifu, Gunma, Hyogo, Hokkaido, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Kyoto, Miyagi, Nagano, Niigata, Saitama, Shizuoka, Tochigi, Tokyo, and Yamagata).
- Approximately 231 different kinds of foods have been tested within the following broad categories: milk; vegetables; meat; fishery products; eggs; and other.
- 212/2215 (9.6%) samples, representing six different categories of food, (Table 1), have tested positive for radionuclides at levels exceeding the action levels set by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) in Japan for withdrawal from markets.

INFOSAN – the Next Steps



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First Global Meeting – Dec 2010

Meeting outcomes:

- an improved sense of community among members
- practical recommendations to enhance communication and collaboration
- identification of opportunities to strengthen core capacity at country and regional level which promote participation in INFOSAN



The Way Forward

- **Continue fostering a true community of practice**
- **Enhance member engagement in the Network**
 - revise Members' Guide
 - develop regionally based strategies for enhancing participation in INFOSAN
- **Improve national coordination**
 - identify capacity building and training needs and link with partners to meet them
- **Develop effective methods for exchanging ideas in a secure environment** (for both emergency and routine communication)
 - improve web-based communication platform
- **Seamlessly interact with other global networks and initiatives**
 - formalize agreements
- **Develop a resource mobilization plan to ensure sustainability**

INFOSAN Advisory Group

- Advise the Secretariat on effective ways to interact with Member States
- Review current operations and recommending ways to improve the functions of the Network
- Provide input on the INFOSAN strategic plan and work plan
- Engage in strengthening the Network through advocacy and fund raising



WPRO – Regional Action

Western Pacific Regional Food Safety Strategy 2011-2015

- Increasing the capacity to detect, assess and manage food safety incidents and emergencies.

1) Development of Food Safety

Emergency Response Plans

2) Development of risk analysis, food traceability and recall capabilities

3) Active participation in INFOSAN

4) Development of regional support



INFOSAN Progress Report 2004-2010

- First report the activities of the INFOSAN Network
- Reviews the structure and function of the Network and highlights key milestones
- Available online





"Only if we act together can we respond effectively to international food safety problems and ensure safer food for everyone"

Dr Margaret Chan – Director-General



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Thank you

bishopj@wpro.who.int

www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/infosan/en/index.html



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