**Food Safety Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

According to the “Statute of the Food Safety Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan” approved by Decree No 1681, dated 13 November 2017  of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Food Safety Agency  is the central  executive authority implementing the state policy and regulation in the area of safety of food products, exercising regulatory veterinarian and phyto-sanitary control, conducting registration of entities operating in the entire food chain, issuing health, veterinarian and phyto-sanitary certificates, exercising state control over the protection of the rights of consumers of food products and cargoes in state veterinarian and phyto-sanitary control at all stages of the food chain, including primary production, procurement, processing, packaging, storage, transportation, circulation (including import-export operations).

**Functions of the Food Safety Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan:**

* Submit to the concerned agency analysis of the situation, proposals regarding improvement of state regulation and control in the relevant area
* Perform duties associated with the development of norms in the relevant area;
* Ensure that priorities for the development of the relevant sector are set together with the concerned state agencies, state programs and development concepts are prepared and implemented;
* Coordinate activities in the relevant area with other executive authorities;
* Ensure that the international agreements related to its area of focus and to which the Republic of Azerbaijan was a party are implemented;
* Take into account the recommendations of international organizations on its field of expertise;
* Conduct risk analysis, including risk assessment, risk management and risk communication in the relevant sphere;
* Register food business operators in terms of food safety aspects, maintain state registry, as well as issue food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary certificates
* Take measures in cooperation with appropriate government agencies to carry out veterinary, phytosanitary and food safety control over imported goods at the customs border checkpoints
* Undertake inspections at all stages of food chain in accordance with the risk level of the product and in cases determined by legislation and make decisions on elimination of irregularities discovered in this area and (or) impose restrictive measures (give instructions)
* Where decisions (instructions) on elimination of violations as specified by clause 3.0.9 of the Regulations are not made, appeal the court to ensure mandatory enforcement thereof;
* Take decision as specified by respective legislation on disposal and utilization (re-processing, reproduction or liquidation) of unusable food products;
* Where dangerous animal diseases occur, determine the rules for carrying out special veterinary measures and other actions, take actions to restrict and warn people in areas with risk of the spread of the disease, issue instructions on slaughter or mandatory disposal of animals, mandatory enforcement of disposal or utilization of primary product of animal origin, veterinary medicines, food and feed additives;
* Isolate harmful organisms in quarantine facilities under phytosanitary control and in materials under plant quarantine upon their detection, take actions to take, store, utilize, re-process or dispose plants, plant products, pests, biological medicines, agrochemicals and other plant protection agents of which harmfulness has been proved following the investigation of the product;
* Review cases on administrative offence, which are related to its competences and impose administrative penalties; Exercise control to ensure the persons involved in operations at different stage of food chain undergo medical examination during the recruitment and employment period pursuant to the rules and time determined together with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
* Demand the dismissal of persons involved in operations at different stages of food chain, who present a risk of spreading infectious and parasitic diseases, as well as violating regularly sanitary norms and rules and hygienic norms, due to the characteristics of their production or work they are dealing with;
* Exercise control on implementation of disinfection, disinfestation (insect control), deratization (rat destruction), fumigation works, as well as veterinary, phytosanitary and food safety measures in premises, facilities, sites, areas, food transporting vehicles of food business operators;
* Participate in the preparation of rational physiological norms together with government agencies concerned;
* Make decisions on taking the samples for assessing the safety indicators of the food products in the cases and in the manner prescribed by law, take samples and  ensure the assessment of these samples on a single methodology in the accredited laboratories under its subordination, give instructions to eliminate revealed violations and take other measures envisaged by law during the inspections undertaken pursuant the Article 3.0.9 of this Regulations for the purpose of carrying out state control over safety of food products;
* Exercise state control over compliance with the legislation on protection of food consumers’ rights as well as over the compliance with the rules of trade, public catering, household and other types of service in the relevant area, take measures to prevent law violations in this area and make accused persons liable for such violations;
* Take measures to ensure that consumers have complete and accurate information about food safety and quality requirements;
* Prepare and implement measures for preventing actions that lead or may lead to the violation of the rights and legitimate interests of food products consumers of foodstuffs;
* take measures against the breach of the rules for the replacement or recall of products kept or sold during the storage or sale of food products;
* Take immediate measures to withdraw from market of food products domestically produced or imported into the country, that have caused or had justified reasons to cause dangerous and mass poisoning (diseases) and to eliminate emergency situation in the area of food safety together with relevant government agencies;
* Analyze the cases of food poisoning among the population in view of food safety aspects, as well as take measures to prevent and eliminate their spread;
* Based on safety criteria, set up examination of infrastructure and products of food business operators involved in primary production, production and processing of food imported into the country, maintain registration and state registry of such operators in accordance with the results of the examinations, and fulfil requirements of importing countries, including the European Union regarding the export of food products;
* Analyse information on the results of researches, monitoring, audits and examinations conducted in the field of expertise of the Agency and create a unified data bank;
* In cooperation with relevant government agencies, provide proposals regarding the development of food testing laboratory system;
* Provide review of the draft standards and technical specifications on quality of food products, as specified by relevant legislation;
* In cooperation with relevant government agencies, take actions for support of entrepreneurship development and state regulation of public support of businesses in the country;
* Take measures in support of raising awareness on food safety issues among food products consumers as well as food business operators involved in operations at all stages of food chain, and in cooperation with relevant government agencies, take measures to increase economic and legal awareness of businesses and ensure introduction of international best practices in order to improve entrepreneurship activities and competitiveness of entrepreneurs;
* Prepare proposals to improve the system of control over GMOs or organisms created using modern biotechnological and genetic engineering techniques and food products which contain such organisms or their material and take statutory measures, in conjunction with relevant government agencies against illegal trade of such food products;
* Identify genetically modified organisms or organisms generated by contemporary biotechnology and genetic engineering methods and food containing such organisms or their material and take action with in conjunction with relevant government agencies to identify potential hazards;
* Check whether or not genetic products of food origin imported to the country have been subjected to genetic modification at the country's customs border;
* Take actions in conjunction with government agencies concerned to develop and implement traceability and recall systems in order to strengthen safety of food products at all stages of the food chain;
* Promote healthy and rational nutrition;
* Provide a review of building and reconstruction plans of construction facilities designed for production, packaging, storage, processing, utilization and disposal of food;
* Protect population from diseases common for human being and animals as specified by applicable legislation;
* Protect the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan from infectious diseases likely to come from foreign countries;
* Control animal, livestock products and primary products owners to ensure their obedience to the veterinary legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
* Exercise control on safety, production, storage, application in cattle breading and veterinary, trading of veterinary medicines, vitamins, feed additives, as well as biological stimulators and hormones which accelerate height growth and increase productivity;
* Prepare and approve actions plan to fight against epizootic disease;
* Take actions to ensure obedience to rules and requirements of World Animal Health Organization (OIE) and other international organizations;
* Regardless of a type of property, exercise control of services provided to legal and physical persons;
* Exercise control on storage, transportation, distribution, use and quality of veterinary and phytosanitary medicines purchased with a funding from public budget and other sources not prohibited by law;
* Set up accounting and record keeping in veterinary, as well keep a statistical records of quarantine diseases of animals;
* Organize and implement testing of plant protection agents and agrochemicals;
* Investigate phytosanitary situation in the country and take plant protection measures;
* Control import of plant pests, pathogens and weeds, which are subject of quarantine, into the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
* Should hazardous organisms subject to quarantine are approved to be in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, submit to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan proposals on declaration of quarantine in those territories to fight against them;
* Control production, storage, trading, application, import and export of pests, biological medicines, agrochemicals and other plant production agents, as well as all types of plant products, feeds, feed additives and amount of residues in soil;
* Carry out a phytosanitary check and laboratory examination of materials under quarantine control and imported to or planned to export from the country;
* Keep record of legal and physical persons involved in import, export, production, storage and application of pests, biological medicines, agrochemicals and other plant protection agents based on data received from the Ministry of Taxes of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
* Carry out testing, registry of pests, agrochemicals, biological and other medicines and prepare a list of permitted medicines;
* Ensure approbation, examination, testing, state registration of veterinary medicines, as well as maintain registry of such medicines and provide commentary on approbation;
* Control import, export, production, trading, distribution of biologically active feed additives;
* Control obedience to requirements in technical regulations and technical normative legal acts in the field of food safety when “curative”, “dietary” and other equivalent names are granted to food and other promotional information are placed on labels;
* Consult and provide trainings on the voluntary application of international food standards through the subordinate authority, provide laboratory analysis on food safety and quality, provide expertise and research (measurement) services on food products, as well as implement national reference laboratory functions;
* Ensure implementation of issues related to the protection of human and citizen's rights and freedoms, related to its scope of work and duties and undertake preventative measures against their violation;
* With the view of international best practices, ensure introduction of scientific-technical innovations in the area of the Agency activities and promote the implementation of modern international management systems by food producers;
* Ensure that budgetary resources, credits and grants and all other financial resources related to the Agency are used efficiently and for designated purpose;
* Ensure implementation of the measures for maintaining state secret and confidentiality regimes, as well as security measures pursuant to the field of expertise in which it is involved;
* Ensure that the public is informed about its activities, website is created, and information not prohibited by legislation is disclosed to public and updated on permanent basis.
* Undertake measures to ensure talent training and additional education of professionals in the area of focus of the Agency;
* Include scientific researches into the scope of activities and duties of the Agency.