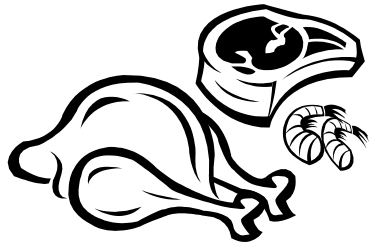


Courses and materials can be offered individually or organized into curricula for continuing education and job training certification. They may also be implemented as part of formal undergraduate and graduate degree programs in food safety.

Developing programs and contacts is critically important in addressing regional food safety concerns and improving understanding about requirements for imported and exported products.



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Food Safety Institute

of the

Americas



*Integrating Food Safety Education,
Information, Communication, and
Outreach
In the Americas*

United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

The explosive growth of the international food marketplace has brought a variety of food never before available to the ordinary consumer's table. People can consume new products from different countries and enjoy traditional seasonal favorites year round.

But this expanding marketplace also brings the possibility for unsafe food to reach much larger populations. Countries are now more dependent on each other's safeguards to guarantee their citizens a wholesome food supply.

The nations of the Americas make up a regional community deeply concerned about the many challenges of ensuring food safety and security. One approach to these complex problems is for our countries to exchange information and education on food safety risks and how to manage them.

The proposed Food Safety Institute of the Americas (FSIA) is an innovative idea for harmonizing, developing, and distributing food safety information and education throughout the Americas. The agency will coordinate programs to concentrate on areas with the greatest needs; share resources on programs that already exist within our community; and promote the development of international food safety standards.

To do this, the FSIA will enlist the support of existing networks among researchers, public health officials,

regulatory officials, and food and animal producers and distributors.

There are many academic, governmental, and nongovernmental organizations with wide-ranging expertise that would make them potential partners in the development and implementation of the FSIA.

FSIA Goals

FSIA's major goal is to harmonize and circulate food safety education, information, and communication throughout the Americas.

Overall, the FSIA will help to:

- Provide a major outreach program to enhance food safety and public health in the Americas.
- Provide the region with greater access to food safety information and the technical assistance necessary to ensure the safety of imported and exported meat, poultry, and egg products.
- Promote the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to bring about standardization of food safety requirements.
- Act as a forum for scientific discussion relevant to food safety and international standards in the Americas.

- Provide more efficient delivery of information and education at lower costs.
- Combine food safety information, communications, and educational efforts into a coordinated activity that minimizes duplication and distributes resources among FSIA partners.
- Increase access to the region's existing food safety programs.
- Support development of science-based agreements that strengthen national and local economies.

FSIA Colleges

Food safety subject matter areas will be grouped into "colleges and departments" within the FSIA and entrusted to centers of academic expertise. The FSIA will seek to tap into existing networks of universities and organizations within North, South, and Central America and the Caribbean. Some training and education programs as well as informational materials presently offered by one member's institution could be shared within the entire FSIA community. By using existing knowledge bases, FSIA can place greater emphasis on developing materials to fill gaps in food safety education and information.