

PROMOTING FOOD SAFETY IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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Background and Aims: The Kyrgyz Republic is reforming the system on technical regulations and standards in the area of food safety. To promote the reform the European Commission has established the project "Support to Implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement – Phase III" (PSA). One of the main objectives of the project is to provide food safety along the chain of the food product turnover. The aim of this study was the informing of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic on the "PSA – Phase III" project to create preconditions for adopting and implementing international standards on food safety.

Methods: Population survey was conducted twice - at the beginning and at the end of the study. A total sample of 1000 households across the republic were surveyed. Booklets, posters and placards and mass media materials were developed for the campaign.

Results: The study was carried out in 3 stages. First, a baseline questionnaire on food safety was conducted which showed poor knowledge of the population on food safety measures. Then a large scale informational campaign was conducted with the involvement of mass media and with the use of the developed promotion materials. The campaign informed the population about international standards on food quality and safety, principles of national legislation on technical regulation, the main food poisoning prevention measures, requirements on biological additives and gene engineering products, foodstuff safety in agriculture. The second survey allowed assessment of the efficiency of the campaign.

Conclusions: The informational campaign led to an increase in the food safety awareness of the population and knowledge of respondents about food safety measures implemented by the Government of the republic and the international community.