Standards MATTER

Standards users
Your Quality Advocate

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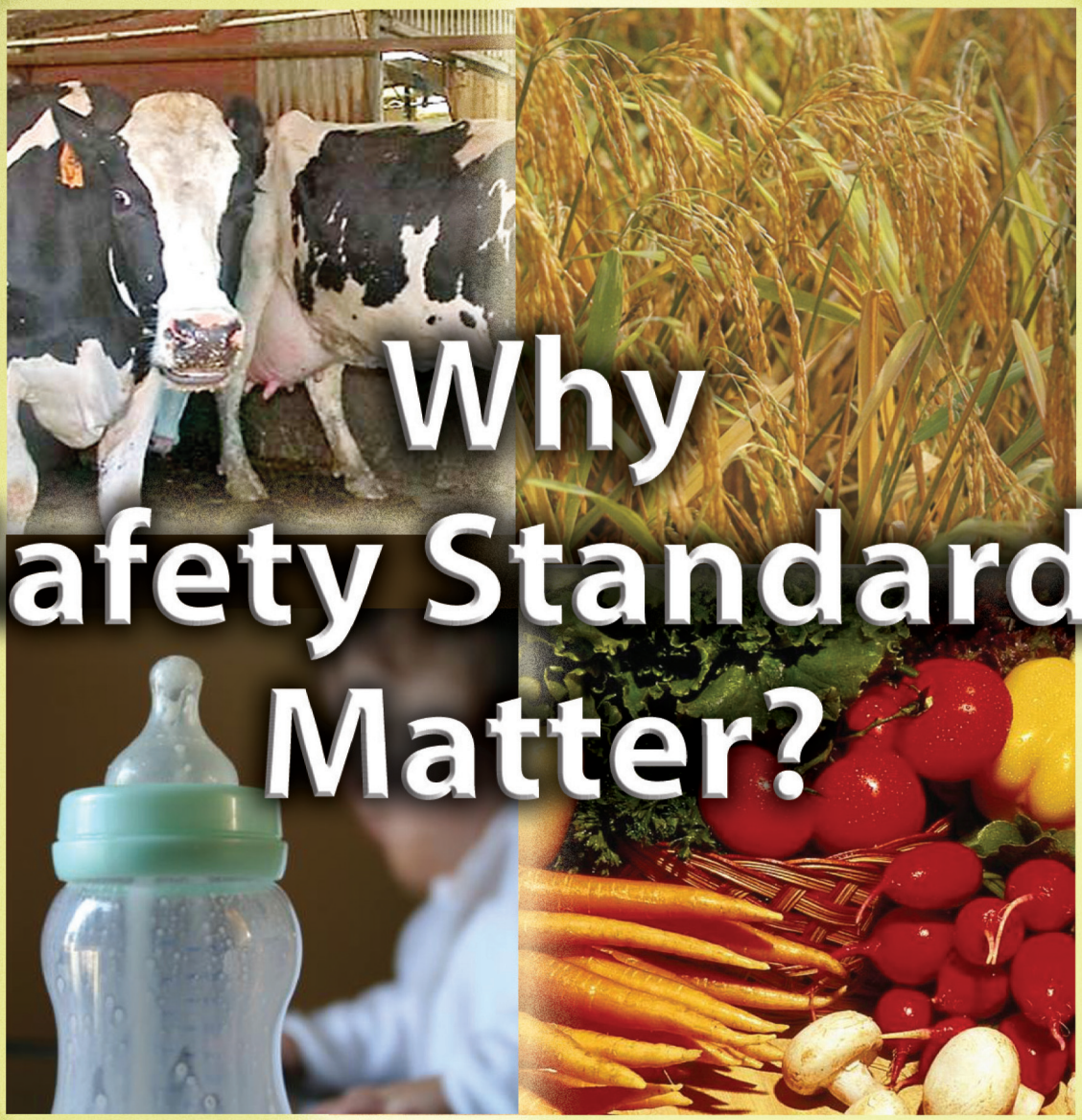


Why Safety Standards Matter?

inside this issue:

and many more features in this Issue of **STANDARDS MATTER**

Editorial

Safety of products and services are fundamental rights of people. History teaches us that product safety issues will perpetually be a challenge to industry, governments and consumers alike. Many factors such as geography, status of development, culture, level of infrastructure, technology and even changes in the climate may lead to unexpected consequences in the level of safety of products and services offered to consumers. Economic crisis in some cases aggravate product safety problems namely due to cost cutting measures in the safety management system.

In order to constantly remind ourselves the importance of safety and compliance to safety standards, this issue of STANDARDS Matter provides valuable insights from experts in safety of various products and services. We hope the articles reinforce among readers the importance of safety of products and services and provide updates on tools to enhance safety of products and services through standards and standardization.

We are happy to receive feedback to further improve the content of the magazine for the benefit of all users of standards.

Thank you and Best Regards,

Ratna Devi Nadarajan
STANDARDS MATTER

Contents

Message from the President

"Young children have long been target for the industries to market unhealthy food. In this edition we share the many ways unhealthy advertising affects children, their consumption and its effect on health."

The 3rd Edition of STANDARDS MATTER magazine focuses on various issues regarding safety of products and services. Consumers worldover have been bombarded with many safety issues lately and if recall correctly since the toy recall in 2007. The melamine scare is perhaps the worst of its kind related to food safety in modern history. Besides being fatal to vulnerable group of consumers the melamine scandal dealt a severe blow to the dairy industry in China and the dairy product industry globally. We have seen famous brands also suffer. Even our biscuit industry suffered millions of ringgit losses due to melamine contamination of ammonium bicarbonate.

Being affiliated with the National Consumer Complaints (NCCC), Standards Users has the privilege to have first hand look into safety related complaints. And NCCC has received hundreds of complaints on unsafe products, namely food. Other unsafe products are electrical goods and related to cosmetics. Weight management service providers have also raised concerns on the safety of their services when complainants come in with rashes and chronic ailments after weight loss programmes.

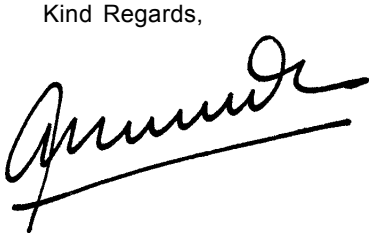
This edition of the magazine gives some information on food safety and the responsibilities of various stakeholders in ensuring safe food from farm to table. Young children have long been target for the industries to market unhealthy food. In this edition we share the many ways unhealthy advertising affects children, their consumption and its effect on health.

Safety of plastic feeding bottles for infants has also raised concerns among many consumers around the world. Especially after Health Canada imposed a ban on Polycarbonate (PC) feeding bottles last year. According to much research into PC bottles, Bisphenol A or BPA, a plasticiser leaches out of PC bottle materials into its content, and in the case of feeding bottles into milk. BPA is a known endocrine disruptor and affects growth of infants and children.

In this issue, we also have articles from Klaus Schneider and Julianne Jung on safety of gyms and standards on training equipment in health clubs, which may be very useful to readers.

I sincerely hope that the 3rd Edition of STANDARDS MATTER will be useful and informative to all readers. I would like to thank all those who have contributed articles and ideas to develop this magazine and my special thanks to ISO Central Secretariat for their support in allowing us to reprint some of the articles in the ISO Focus Magazine.

Kind Regards,



Datuk Marimuthu Nadason

Food Safety and Responsibilities of Various Stakeholders in Ensuring Safe Food From Farm to Table

1.0 Introduction

It is recognised that health hazards from food can arise from any part of the entire food chain; from raw materials, from handling and through all the stages involved in the processing, transportation, storage, sale and consumption of food. Hence, the objective of reducing risks to health from consuming food can be achieved most effectively by the principle of prevention, from farm to table. Safety must be built into food products from production until consumption.

Ensuring food safety throughout the food chain is a shared responsibility between the relevant government agencies, food industries, and the consumers themselves. The government has to play the lead role in formulating policy, developing legislation, enforcement as well as providing guidelines and facilitating the food industry and consumer. While the food industry must be responsible for ensuring safe food at all stages of production, processing and distribution. At the same time, consumers must acquire the knowledge and wisdom to make informed choices and practise safe food handling.

2.0 National Food Control System – The Role of Government

Various government Ministries and Departments are responsible for administering and regulating food safety along the food chain continuum. At the primary production level, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry through the various legislation such as the Pesticide Act 1974, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1974, the Fisheries Act 1985 and the Animal Ordinance 1953 (Revised 2006) is responsible for:-

- the registration and approval for use of agricultural inputs such as pesticides;
- the promotion of good farming practices such as Good Agriculture Practice (GAP), Good Aquaculture Practice (GAqP) and Good Animal Husbandry Practice (GAHP);
- food-animal-disease control;
- hygienic practices in abattoirs, milk produced in farms; and
- inspection and certification of imported meat/fish; and
- inspection and certification of meat/fish for export

The registration and approval of veterinary drugs is under the Poisons Act 1952, within the jurisdiction of the Pharmaceutical Services Division, Ministry of Health (MOH).

At the processing and retail levels, the MOH ensures food safety and protects consumers against fraud in the preparation and sale of food through the Food Act 1983 and the Food Regulations 1985. This legislation is enforced through an inspection and sampling programme either at the factory, retail or point of entry to ensure the safety of the country's food supply. The Food Act 1983 underlines the powers of the Minister, enforcement officers and analysts in carrying out their duties, while the Food Regulations 1985 is a comprehensive legislation which prescribes a wide spectrum of standards for the various categories from raw to processed food stipulating permitted additives and their levels, maximum levels of contaminants, packaging and labelling requirements. Legislation is regularly updated to keep up with international developments, advances in food technology and consumers' demand. Stakeholders are involved in the

"Food control systems require continuous re-examination and re-evaluation to ensure substantial improvements in food safety systems. This is especially so where ensuring food safety is diverse, with responsibilities spread over different ministries and departments, and resources have to be optimised. "

formulation/review of food legislation and notification is made to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to fulfil obligations under the WTO.

2.1 Coordination and Collaboration Among Stakeholders

Food control systems require continuous re-examination and re-evaluation to ensure substantial improvements in food safety systems. This is especially so where ensuring food safety is diverse with responsibilities spread over different ministries and departments, and resources have to be optimised. Co-ordination and collaborations among these various agencies is imperative for an effective and efficient food safety programme.

The MOH spearheaded the establishment of the National Food Safety and Nutrition Council in 2001 as the highest advisory body to the government on food safety. It provides a platform in enhancing national coherence; taking into consideration the need for a more integrated approach, reducing duplication of efforts and optimising available resources and expertise from both public and private sectors. The Council, which consists of relevant government agencies, industry and consumer representatives as well as other stakeholders from farm to table, sets clear policies and strategies for the continuous improvement of food safety.

A National Food Safety Policy was formulated in 2002 to provide direction to all stakeholders in establishing and implementing food safety measures to safeguard human health through collaborative efforts. To effectively implement this Policy in a coordinated and integrated manner, a National Plan of Action on Food Safety was also outlined in 2002. The Action Plan clearly defines the role of each stakeholder and the action to be taken. It reflects the concerted effort, support and commitment by various stakeholders. The Action Plan is currently at various stages of implementation and is closely monitored.

2.2 Import Control

Import control programmes are to ensure safe and quality food supply. The Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) controls import of meat, poultry, eggs, milk and their products for human consumption as well as the animals' health. DVS also facilitates export of animal products in accordance with requirements of importing countries. Similarly, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fisheries control the importation of fresh fruits and vegetables, and fish and fishery products, respectively, at the entry points.

In order to facilitate control at entry points, the MOH has developed the Food Safety Information System of Malaysia (FoSIM). This system requires all importers and agents to register with MOH to enable them to electronically notify or declare their imports through the Customs Information System. This notification is essential for further action, i.e. for sampling or to refuse or permit clearance. The final decision would then be transmitted electronically to the Customs and agents for action.

This system tracks food imports and can be used to earmark banned consignments or foods affected in food safety crises. This system enables harmonisation of the surveillance system at entry points. It facilitates clearance with minimal documentation.

"FoSIM requires all importers and agents to register with MOH to enable it to electronically notify or declare their imports through the Customs Information System."

3.0 Food Safety Assurance – A primary responsibility of the Industry

Producers along the food supply chain should be responsible for the production of safe food, which can be achieved through the effective implementation of food safety assurance systems. To facilitate this, relevant government agencies have developed guidelines on food safety assurance systems pertinent to various stages of food production. In addition, certification schemes have been initiated to promote implementation of various food safety assurance systems.

At the farm level, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry certifies good agricultural and on-farm food safety practices, which include establishing controls for production practices, the application of pesticides and veterinary drugs and prevention of contamination of crops by water or environmental contaminants. For example, farms are certified to ensure GAP, GAqP and GAHP. In addition, the Veterinary Health Mark logo is also awarded under the Veterinary Inspection and Accreditation Programme as a mark of safety and quality for livestock products processing plants.

At the processing level, the MOH has implemented the Malaysian Certification Scheme for HACCP since 1997 to enhance the safety of food produced for the domestic and export market. The scheme is implemented on a 'tripartite' approach which involves the government, a pool of independent auditors and the food industry. In December 2006, the MOH launched the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Certification Scheme to assist food industries in fulfilling food safety requirements as well as consumer demands.

4.0 Consumers

Consumers ultimately are the ones making the decision to purchase a food product and preparing the food for consumption. As such, education programmes to empower consumers with the knowledge on food safety are crucial to prevent or reduce the incidence of food-borne diseases. Co-operation between the government and non-governmental organisations, including consumers associations, is very important in ensuring consumers benefit the most from the extensive reach of essential, accurate and timely messages.

5.0 Conclusion

Every stakeholder, including consumers, has to play their role and be equally accountable in ensuring food safety. When food safety crisis occurs, a typical scenario would be such that the public is at risk, the government is blamed and food industry suffers losses. To ensure that this does not happen, there need for a proper balance of regulatory governance, self-imposed food safety assurance by the food industry and well-informed consumers that make safe food choices as well as practices safe food handling.

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MAJLIS KESELAMATAN MAKANAN DAN PEMAKANAN KEBANGSAAN
MKMPK

Article Contributed by,

Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Haji Mohd Ismail Merican
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Marketing safe and healthy foods to children

by Cheah Chee Ho

"The diets of children throughout the world – even in China – are now dominated by unsuitable foods and drinks.

World Consumer Rights Day 2009 on March 15 marked a day of action around Consumers International's (CI) headline campaign: **Junk Food Generation – The CI campaign to stop the marketing of unhealthy food to children**.

Obesity epidemic

The increase in the eating of foods high in fat, sugar and salt, combined with less physical activity, has led to the rise of diet related diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. These preventable diseases are a massive cost to human life, people's livelihoods and health services. Children who are obese are much more likely to be obese adults and suffer long-term health problems. At least 22 million children around the world under five years are already overweight or obese and we must act to prevent the spread of the childhood obesity epidemic. In some countries, childhood obesity has already reached crisis point, in others it is a time-bomb waiting to explode. Obesity can be a result of malnutrition and the problem of eating too much and too little can exist side-by-side. Evidence also shows that children in the poorest countries may be even more vulnerable to the affects of marketing as they are less familiar with advertising but more likely to engage with promotions which link certain food with a modern lifestyle.

At the local front, according to MOH statistics, 22% of the adult population is overweight and 6.8% is clinically obese. At the beginning of 2007, MOH stated that it spent RM180 million or 20% of its annual RM900 million on drugs for lifestyles chronic diseases, which are mainly hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol, and the number of patients is expected to increase by 13% by 2020.

Advertising unhealthy food and the link to health problems

A report from the WHO Marketing of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Children, published in 2006, explains that there is evidence to prove that the advertising of food high in fat, sugar and salt has a direct effect on children wanting and eating these unhealthy foods which lead to obesity. Studies also show that children are much more likely to want to eat food that comes in branded packaging than food with no branding – even if it is the same product.

In its ***Global Strategies to Prevent Childhood Obesity 2006,*** IOTF has made the following observations;

> *"The diets of children throughout the world – even in China - are now dominated by unsuitable foods and drinks. Children are often targeted by marketers seeking to establish brand loyalty in everything from toys to video and other computer/ mobile games, clothes and food. This unprecedented commercialisation of childhood is distorting children's perceptions, understanding and knowledge about healthy foods, with evident effects on children from infancy onwards."*

The common marketing tactics employed by food corporations aimed at children and youngsters include;

- Television commercials
- Programme endorsements
- Toy lures
- On-pack promotions
- Celebrity / cartoon character endorsements
- Movie tie-ins

Nutrients (per 100g)	Low	Medium	High
Sugar	5g and below	Between 5g and 15g	Over 15g
Fat	3g and below	Between 3g and 20g	Over 20g
Salt	0.3g and below	Between 0.3 and 1.5g	Over 1.5g
Saturated fat	1.5g and below	Between 1.5 and 5g	Over 5g
Trans fat	1g and below	Between 1g and 2g	Over 2g

- Interactive websites
- Competitions
- Give away freebies
- Sponsoring school activities
- Promotional flyers

What is considered to be healthy?

The team of nutrition experts in the UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) has developed a multiple traffic light labelling system which uses a criteria *(see chart above)* to assess the nutritional quality of foods marketed.

Evidence of a global problem

In CI's global research into the marketing of unhealthy food to children, the report released in 2008, "Junk Food Trap", clearly documents the pervasive techniques used by multinational food companies to market unhealthy foods to children. An earlier report (Food Fables) in 2006 by UK's largest consumer organisation, WHICH, also looked into the marketing and nutrition quality of various fast food chains and food companies that targeted children and came to similar conclusions.

Role of multinational food companies

Parents want to be able to choose healthy options for their children but their efforts are being undermined by the huge amount of advertising and promotion of unhealthy food aimed at their children. Food companies adopt a whole range of techniques to target children with their products. In 2006 the biggest multinational companies spent:

- $7.8 billion on food,
- $4 billion on soft drinks and
- $1.1 billion on sweets and confectionary

Advertising Age's Global Marketers, November 2007

As many food and beverage companies sell the same unhealthy food products all around the world, we need to have international protection against the marketing of unhealthy food to children. One of the reasons that self-regulation by the multinational food companies has not worked is because they are free to adopt different standards in different countries. All children are vulnerable and deserve protection in whatever country they are in.

Therefore, consumer associations around the globe are calling for the World Health Organisation to develop an effective international code on the marketing of unhealthy food to children and for it to be adopted and implemented by governments.

The CI and International Obesity Taskforce (IOTF) model code

CI and the IOTF have produced a model code to be adopted by WHO, national governments and food companies. The model code adopts the following principles:

- The focus of regulation must be unhealthy food, such as food high in fat, sugar and/or salt.
- All children, younger and older, deserve equal protection.
- All types of marketing, advertising and promotions should be included

The Code demands for:

- A ban on radio or TV advertisements promoting unhealthy food between 0600 and 2100.
- No marketing of unhealthy food to children using new media (such as websites, social networking sites and text messaging).
- No promotion of unhealthy food in schools.
- No inclusion of free gift, toys, or collectible items, which appeal to children to promote unhealthy foods.
- No use of celebrities, cartoon characters, competitions or free gifts to market unhealthy food.

* The Code can be viewed at www.junkfoodgeneration.org

Parents want to be able to choose healthy options for their children but their efforts are being undermined by the huge amount of advertising and promotion of unhealthy food aimed at their children.

Cheah Chee Ho is manager of Policy and Research at the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA). He also manages the Health Desk and holds a degree in Food Science. His main area of research and interest is in public health, medicines, food safety, nutrition and health promotion. He is also active in the civil society movement and is currently a steering committee member representing FOMCA in the Coalition against the Privatisation of Healthcare and also other NGO coalitions on issues related to drug patents and access to medicine.

Pain? Maybe, but no danger

Sculpting the perfect body

Getting fit and staying healthy is happily becoming the realisable dream of more and more of us in today's health–conscious society. An early workout to start the day, or rushing off to the gym from the office is increasingly the daily routine of many. Yet, as we step up and down or run on the treadmill, what guarantees do we have that we are using the machine correctly and avoiding unnecessary risks?

The solution lies with International Standards for training equipment, which can ensure that our efforts to stay fit and healthy do not end up in preventable drama. "One world, one dream, one standard'' is the motto speaking for a world with the international ties of globalisation.

Here we talk not about one standard, but rather about one extremely useful series of standards: the ISO 20957 for stationary training equipment. This series truly embodies the spirit of "global world" as it is the result of ISO's policy of collaboration with other standards bodies. Indeed, the standards were riginally adopted from the European EN 957 series under the Vienna Agreement – a series in turn inspired by Germany's initiative to spark standardisation in this field.

The risks of training

In the early 1980s, Germans began training at health clubs in even larger numbers. These users were often not aware of the risks of training with heavy weights, and did not know to use the old training machines safely, leading to a high rate of accidents and injuries. This trend led the German fitness industry, users and health club owners to begin work on a safety standard for stationary training equipment, based on the injuries they saw.

The standard was developed and published by DIN (Deutsches Institut fur Normung), the ISO member in Germany, and it was met with substantial success. Users enjoyed a much safer training environment, the total number of injuries decreased significantly, and the health club industry experienced rapid growth.

In 1989, the idea of a European standard for stationary training equipment, based on the German standard, was born. This led to a series of standards developed by the working group Stationary Training Equipment under the CEN technical committee for sports, playground and other recreational facilities and equipment. The first part of EN 957 became available in 1996.

Following a positive decision under the Vienna Agreement, ISO technical committee ISO/TC 83, Sports and recreational equipment, subsequently prepared the multipart series ISO 20957, Stationary training equipment **(see box).**

Row, pedal, run

The ISO 20957 series of International Standards, under the general title Stationary training equipment:

- **ISO 20957-1:2005, Part 1**: General Safety requirements and test methods
- **ISO 20957-2:2005, Part 2**: Strength training equipment, additional specific safety requirements and test methods.
- **ISO 20957-4:2005, Part 4**: Strength training benches,additional specific safety requirements and test methods
- **ISO 20957-5:2005,Part 5**: Pedal crank training equipment,additional specific requirements and test methods.
- **ISO 20957-6:2005, Part 6**: Treadmills, additional specific safety requirements and test methods.
- **ISO 20957-7:2005,Part 7**: Rowing machines, additional specific safety requirements and test methods.
- **ISO 20957-7:2005,Part 8**: Steppers, stairclimbers and climbers, additional specific safety requirements and test methods.
- **ISO 20957-9:2005,Part 9**: Elliptical trainers,additional specific safety requirements and test methods
- **ISO 20957-10:2007, Part 10**: Exercise bicycles with a fixed wheel or without freewheel. Additional specific safety requirements and test methods.

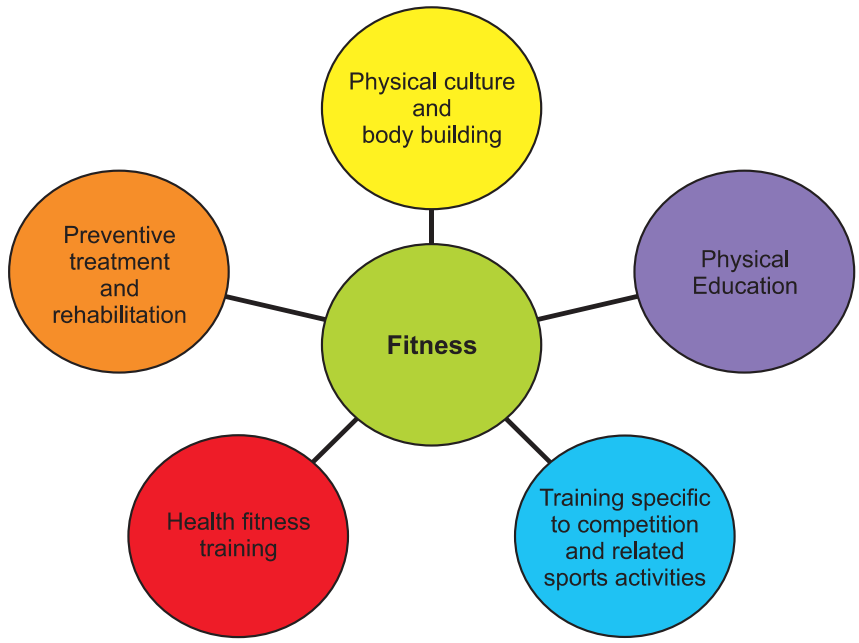
Step it, don't sweat it

The ISO 20957 series specifies safety requirements for stationary training equipment during use. This includes equipment for use in supervised training areas of organisations such as sports associations, educational establishments, hotels, sport halls and clubs, where access and control is regulated by the owner or another legally responsible person.

Equipment for domestic use and other types of equipment, including motor-driven equipment, also come under the safety requirements defined in ISO 20957. However, the series does not apply to stationary training equipment intended for use by children. Training equipment may be used for a number of activities that can encompass general fitness, competition and medical rehabilitation **(see figure 1).**

If the user has special needs, such as medical rehabilitation or disabilities, the owner of the establishment is required to conduct a specific risk assessment to determine safe use and ensure that, if necessary, trained staff are available to supervise the different activities.

Figure 1: Activities for which training equipment is used



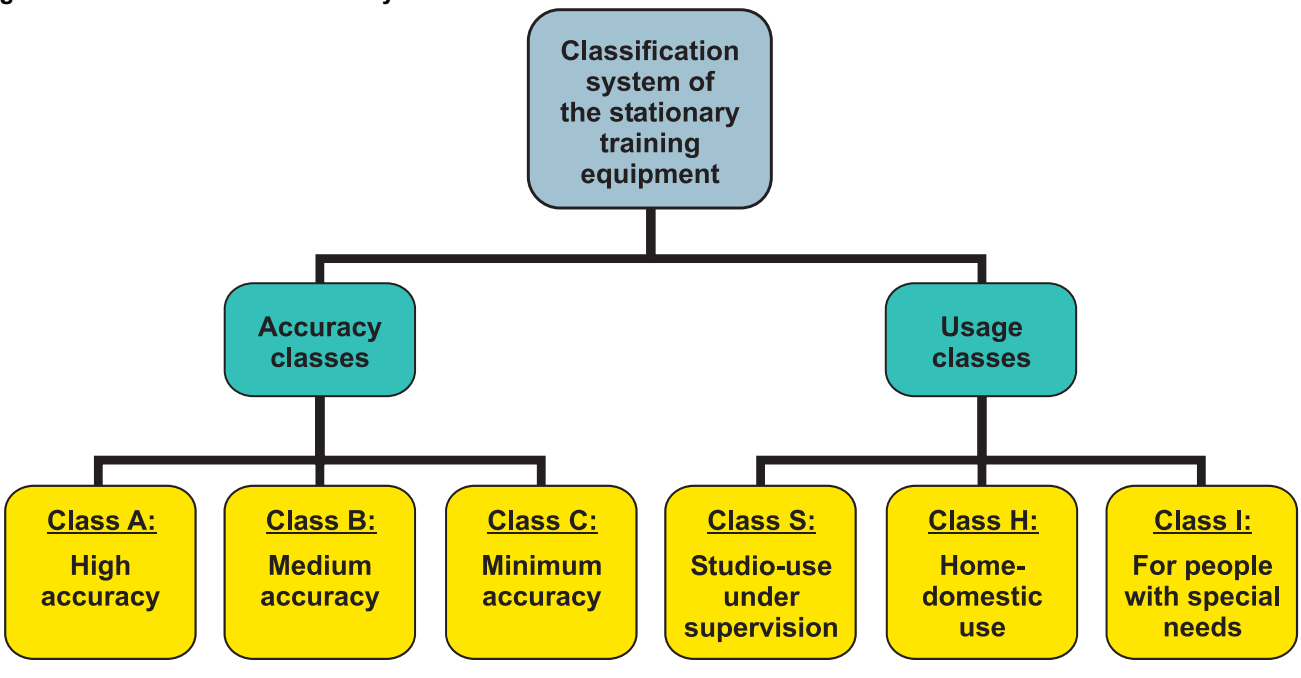
Accuracy and usage classes

A main element of this series is the classification system. Stationary training equipment are classified in accordance with accuracy and usage classes. The ISO 20957 series specifies three accuracy classes, from high to minimum. The usage classes are also subdivided into three classes, as shown in **Figure 2.**

In addition, Class S training equipment is intended for use in the training areas or organisations such as sport associations, educational establishments, hotels, clubs and studios, where access and control are regulated by the owner or another legally responsible person. In contrast to this, Class H is defined as intended for use in the home.

Class I, as well as Class S, are applicable for professional and / or commercial use under supervision, and for people with special needs such as visually or hearing impaired and physical or learning disabilities.

Figure 2: ISO 20957 classification system



The ISO 20957 series specifies safety requirements for stationary training equipment during use. This includes equipment for use in supervised training areas of organisations such as sports associations, educational establishments, hotels, sport halls and clubs, where access and control are regulated by the owner or another legally responsible person.

A safe workout

Safety is, of course, of prime importance. Specified requirements include stability of free-standing equipment, external construction, equipment access and escape, adjustment and locking mechanisms, ropes, belts and chains, pull-in points, gripping positions and electrical safety.

In addition to these safety requirements, test methods for stability, determination of the removing force of applied handgrips, testing of access/escape and testing of endurance lead, squeeze and shear points are also defined.

Furthermore, this series of standards specifies requirements for care and maintenance, assembly instructions, and general instructions for use and marking.

Always better

The quality of a standard may be measured in different ways. One approach is to see how often the standard is used in the industry and investigate the effort made by the industry to follow the requirements.

Another way to measure success in moving toward safer products is by tracking statistics on accident in relation to the number of products. We can also look at how many national standard organisations publish the standard in their own markets.

Feedback received by the technical committee from the fitness industry and users is a strong indicator for the quality of a standard.

Testing and worldwide implementation are aimed toward a single over-riding goal: providing the best possible protection for the user. Like athletes themselves, the fitness industry and standards organisations are constantly striving to improve.

Since last year, Parts 1 to 9 of ISO 20957 have been undergoing a systematic review, the first since their publication. Some parts have already entered this process. This could provide a good opportunity to implement the latest data and research results received from all over the world, and proceed further along an already successful path.

Going to the gym might still cause pain for many of us, but at least we can reassured that with the ISO 20957 series of International Standards, our efforts to sculpt the perfect body using training equipment will not put us in danger. And you know what they say: “no pain, no gain”, so go book your next session.

The Authors:

Mr Klaus Schneider works as an accredited and certified expert in the fields of medical training and sport and leisure equipment. He serves as the Convenor of the CEN working group Stationary training equipment and as a member of ASTM International. He is also a member of several other sports-related committees.

Ms Julianne Jung works as a technical officer on the sports equipment standards committee of the German Institute for Standardisation (DIN). Her major task at DIN is managing committees dealing with European standardisation of sports, playground, and other recreational facilities and equipment, small craft, and cycles and motorised vehicles not intended for use on public roads. She participates in a number of sports- related ISO committees and working groups.

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Got Good Milk?

Team effort for the dairy sector

Milk and Milk products are vital to the food chain, providing ingredients for a wide range of food products. Recently, it was revealed that milk powder in certain parts of Asia was adulterated with melamine additives before being added to infant formula and other products. This crisis exemplified how food issues can quickly explode from one area into another throughout the supply chain, making compliance with International Standards increasingly relevant.

ISO/ TC 34/SC 5, Milk and milk products - Methods of analysis and sampling, makes an important contribution to the effective functioning of the dairy industry, and by extension, the entire food chain - by developing, publishing and reviewing methods of analysis and sampling, and by disseminating relevant information to key stakeholders.

Effective collaboration - ISO and the International Dairy Federation

The sub-committee has cooperated closely with the International Dairy Federation (IDF) since 1963 (and until 2001 with AOAC international, the Association of Analytical Communities). This collaboration has resulted in the publication of most of the sub-committee's projects as joint ISO-IDF International Standards or Technical Specifications (IDF Reviewed Methods). These joint ISO-IDF International Standards are published under the auspices of ISO.

The procedure for developing ISO-IDF standards is based on ISO directives. IDF and ISO/TC 34/SC 5 maintain separate voting procedures.

The ISO-IDF working area is subdivided, as shown in Figure 1. Development of ISO-IDF International Standards for analysis methods and sampling for milk and milk products is conducted by Joint ISO-ISF Action Teams (JATs), each of which includes project groups for the ISO-IDF work items within its specific scope.

The common ISO/TC 34/SC 5 and IDF working area is supervised by the Method Standard Steering Group (MSSG). The MSSG consists of the chairpersons of five Standing Committees, members of the IDF Science Permanent Controlling Committee (SPCC), and the secretary of ISO/TC 34/SC 5. The MSSG is supported by one or more representatives from the IDF Head Office.

Experts nominated to new projects by either IDF or ISO/TC 34/SC 5 become members of the JAT, supervising the project in one of the five specific working areas. There is considerable overlap, however, in the representatives appointed by the two organisations, as they generally draw from the same pool of dairy industry professionals.

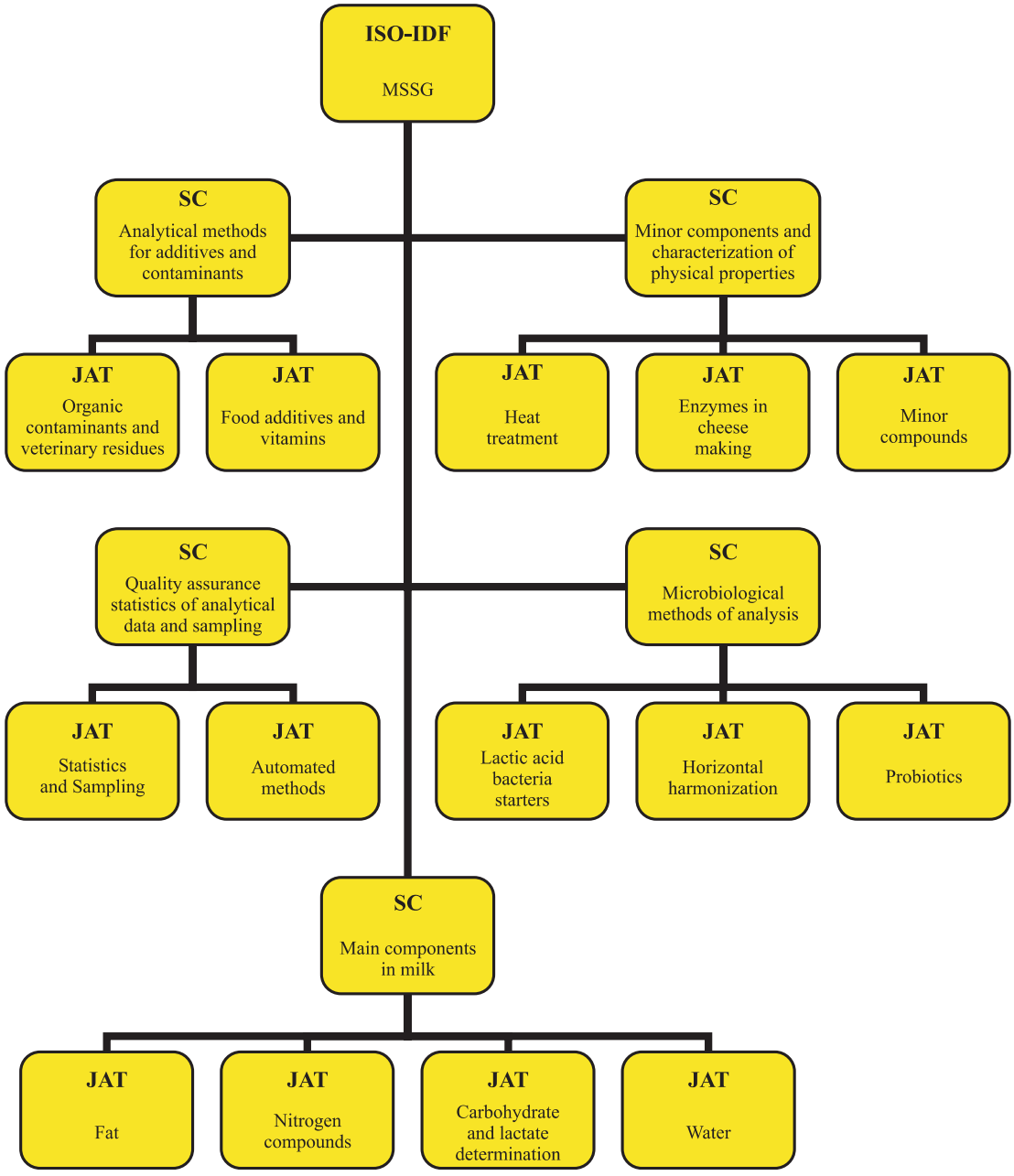
Under the aegis of a project leader and his or her group, working drafts are prepared for ISO-IDF international standards. All comments obtained from IDF and ISO/TC 34/SC 5 member bodies are considered, and inter-laboratory studies are conducted. Each step in the progression to standard is taken only after the approval requirements of both ISO and IDF member bodies are fulfilled.

Since ISO and IDF agreed in 2001 to publish standards jointly, their efforts have led to the publication of about 130 ISO-IDF International Standards. Additionally, some 30 ISO and IDF standards will be brought up to joint ISO-IDF status through a fast-track procedure for publication under the ISO umbrella.

Counting cells and keeping babies safe

Recently published standards include ISO 707|IDF 50:2008, Milk and milk products - Guidance on sampling, which provides guidance on methods for sampling milk and milk products for microbiological, chemical, physical and sensory analysis (excluding automated sampling). This standard is used as is by many countries, or as guidance for sampling procedures in writing local legislation.

Figure 1: ISO- IDF working area structure



ISO 13366 IDF 148, Milk- Enumeration of somatic cells, was also published recently:

- Part 1, Microscopic method (Reference method) specifies the reference method for counting somatic cells in both raw and chemically preserved milk. This method, applicable to cow's milk, can be used to prepare standard test samples and determine the proper reference method.
- Part 2, Guidance on the operation of fluoro-opto-electronic counters,gives guidance on the operating conditions for counting somatic cells in both raw and chemically preserved milk,using fluoro-opto-electronic methods in which either a rotating disc technique or flow cytometry is applied in the counting section. This guidance is applicable to the counting of somatic cells in raw cow's milk and milk from other species, such as goat, sheep and buffalo.

An important microbiological publication is ISO/TS 22964| IDF/ RM 210, Milk and milk products – Detection of Enterobacter sakazakii. This is a technical specification for a method to detect E.sakazii in milk powder and powdered infant formula, and is also applicable to environmental samples collected from milk powder or infant formula factories. Investigations have shown that a fatal infection was associated with E.sakazakii in hospitalised neonates, and that the infection was associated with the presence of the organism in commercial powdered formula fed to the infant.

Demand from dairy associations led to an internationally accepted testing method for E.sakazakii (which was recently re-classified as six species within the genus Cronobacter spp). Based on the new dairy technical specification, a horizontal standard for food products is being developed.

"Many experts have been actively working towards making appropriate test methods readily available to the international dairy community not only for supplier milk, but also for intermediate ingredients as well as finished products."

Extraordinary successes and future challenges

One measure of the success of ISO/ TC 34/ SC 5 is its extraordinary co-operation with the IDF. This is reflected not only in the sheer number of publications, but also by the fact that many of the joint ISO- IDF International Standards have been adopted by the Codex Committee for Milk and Milk Products (CCMMP), and through that committee by the Codex Committee for Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS).

But ISO / TC 34 / SC 5 also faces significant challenges. One of these is the decrease in the number of available experts and the amount of funding allocated to their work, a problem that can partly be attributed to mergers in the dairy industry. Another issue is the cost of organising inter-laboratory trials and the number of laboratories participating.

Looking ahead, there is still a great deal to be done, not only in the standardisation of methods, but also in bringing the issues to the attention of stakeholders, the diary industry and laboratories. ISO/TC 34/SC 5 and IDF Methods of Analysis and Sampling are constantly seeking ways to increase participation and encourage member countries and their experts to join our work.

Adulteration of milk - The melamine problem

In response to recent concerns related to the adulteration of milk products with melamine, the MSSG made the following statement:

"Many experts have been actively working towards making appropriate test methods readily available to the international dairy community not only for supplier milk, but also for intermediate ingredients as well as finished products.''

"The task is daunting given the broad scope of consumer foods that contain dairy ingredients as important contributors to their functional and nutritive value. Furthermore, the recent discovery of melamine in some sources of animal feed broadens the scope."

The MSSG also said that the recent melamine contamination has been clearly intentional to artificially inflate the measured protein content of ingredients and end-products and added, "In a publication from September 2008, the World Health Organisation (WHO) addresses the issue of the combined toxicity of melamine and cyanuric acid ***(www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/ Melamine.pdf)***. According to this report, each substance, on its own, is of relatively low acute toxicity but when co-ingested, renal toxicity results.

"Therefore, in order to provide a measure of food safety, it is important that both analyses be assessed via a robust quantitative protocol. At present, investigations are ongoing as to how publication of some of the available procedures could be fast-tracked in light of the immediate worldwide need."

Author:

Ing. Rinus van Schaik holds an "external secretariat" of the NEN, the Dutch Standardisation Institute and member of ISO, located at Qlip NV, an independent service organisation for the dairy sector. He has served as Secretary of ISO/ TC 34/ SC 5 and NEN/ NC/ 370005, Milk and milk products since 1990 and of CEN/ TC 302, Milk and milk products- Methods of analysis and sampling, since 1992. He is also an associate member of the Dutch National Committee of the International Dairy Federation.

"This article first appeared in *ISO Focus - the Magazine of the International Organization for Standardization* Volume 5, December 2008. Reprinted with permission of the ISO Central Secretariat (www.iso.org/isofocus)"

REVIEW

Comments from and position of the Malaysian Association of Standards Users on the revision of Malaysian Standard MS 735 – Specification for Plastic Feeding Bottles

Background

First of all, we thank the Malaysian Plastic Manufacturers Association - Working Group on Blow Moulding for undertaking the review of the MS 735.

We believe that most plastic feeding bottles, if not all, are made of polycarbonate materials. There has been grave concerns over the chemical 2,2-BIS(4-HYDROXYPHENYL)PROPANE (or Bisphenol A), which is used to produce the polycarbonate used to make feeding bottles and also other food and beverage containers.

Although many proponents of the plastic industry, namely users of Bisphenol A (BPA), have continuously refuted the dangers of this chemical at levels present currently in human body, there have been new developments reported by various countries and their agencies (government and public research groups), in the assessment and health effects of BPA.

BPA is a known endocrine disruptor. This chemical was first used as a synthetic hormone to control difficult pregnancies. It was shelved when another drug was discovered. But then the plastic industry found it to be useful in the manufacturing of polycarbonate (PC).

As an endocrine disruptor, Bisphenol A causes a response in cells similar to the effect of estradiol (estrogen hormone). BPA binds with estrogen-related receptors but does not replace the activity of estrogen. As a result, BPA may be adding a "false" estrogen effect in the body, off-setting the hormonal balance required for healthy human development. Experiments with animals link exposure at very low doses to a range of serious health problems, including:

- prostate and breast cancer
- early onset of puberty
- obesity
- hyperactivity
- lowered sperm count
- miscarriage
- diabetes
- altered immune system[1]

Exposure to BPA is widespread. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 95 per cent of Americans tested have detectable levels of BPA in their bodies[2], A 2008 study shows that BPA levels are lowest in adults, mid-range in adolescents and **highest in children**[3]. The chemical bond between BPA molecules is unstable, and with time and use, the chemical leaches from bottles into materials it comes into contact with (for example, milk)[4]. A January 2008 University of Cincinnati study found BPA leaching from Nalgene bottles.[5]

An August 2007 Environmental Working Group study found BPA leaches from the inner lining of popular infant formula cans. In March 2007, independent laboratory tests found BPA in over half of 97 cans of name-brand fruit, vegetables, soda, and other commonly eaten canned goods[6].

Research and Assessment on Presence and Health Effects of BPA

Much research and assessment was conducted by industry groups, independent, public interest and government agencies. Although many claim that current levels of BPA found in humans is not cause for concern, there are still many reports which caution the use of polycarbonate, especially for infants and children food and beverage containers.

Therefore, many countries have approached the issues and uncertainties based on precautionary principles and established (in some cases enforced) limits for BPA based on intake microgram / body weight.

Precautionary Principle

When an activity raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

Key elements of the principle include taking precaution in the face of scientific uncertainty; exploring alternatives to possibly harmful actions**; placing the burden of proof on proponents of an activity rather than on victims or potential victims of the activity**; and using democratic processes to carry out and enforce the principle – including the **public right to informed consent.**

The United States according to report compiled by the Consumers Union:

The current daily upper limit of BPA that the US Environmental Protection Agency calculates as safe is 50 micrograms per kilogram of body weight, but that standard is based on experiments conducted in the 1980s, before a flood of new studies emerged suggesting that serious health risks could result from much lower doses, based on experiments in laboratory animals and in human cells. Some studies showed adverse health effects from exposure of only 0.025 microgram per kilogram of body weight per day, yet a polycarbonate bottle with room-temperature water can leach 2 micrograms of BPA per liter. A 3-month-old baby drinking formula from a polycarbonate bottle may be exposed to as much as 11 micrograms per kilogram of body weight daily.

The conclusion of the *DRAFT National Toxicology Programme (NTP) BRIEF ON BISPHENOL A - April 14, 2008; Peer Review Date: June 11, 2008*, which

offers the latest review on Bisphenol A, reads:

The NTP concurs with the conclusion of the CERHR Expert Panel on Bisphenol A that there is some concern for neural and behavioural effects in foetuses, infants, and children at current human exposures. The NTP also has some concern for Bisphenol A exposure in these populations based on effects in the prostate gland, mammary gland, and an earlier age for puberty in females.

The scientific evidence that supports a conclusion of some concern for exposures in foetuses, infants, and children comes from a number of laboratory animal studies reporting that "low" level exposure to Bisphenol A during development can cause changes in behaviour and the brain, prostate gland, mammary gland, and the age at which females attain puberty. These studies only provide limited evidence for adverse effects on development and more research is needed to better understand their implications for human health. However, because these effects in animals occur at Bisphenol A exposure levels similar to those experienced by humans, the possibility that Bisphenol A may alter human development cannot be dismissed.

The NTP has negligible concern that exposure of pregnant women to Bisphenol A will result in fetal or neonatal mortality, birth defects or reduced birth weight and growth in their offspring.

In laboratory animals, exposure to very high levels of Bisphenol A during pregnancy can cause foetal death and reduced birth weight and growth during infancy. These studies provide clear evidence for adverse effects on development, but occur at exposure levels far in excess of those experienced by humans. Two recent human studies have not associated Bisphenol A exposure in pregnant women with decreased birth weight or several other measures of birth outcome.

Results from several animal studies provide evidence that Bisphenol A does not cause birth defects such as cleft palette, skeletal malformations, or grossly abnormal organs.

The NTP concurs with the conclusion of the CERHR Expert Panel on Bisphenol A that there is negligible concern that exposure to Bisphenol A causes reproductive effects in non-occupationally exposed adults and minimal concern for workers exposed to higher levels in occupational settings.

Data from studies in humans are not sufficient to determine if Bisphenol A adversely affects reproduction when exposure occurs during adulthood. A number of studies, when considered together, suggest a possible effect on reproductive hormones, especially in men exposed to higher levels of Bisphenol A in the workplace. Laboratory studies in adult animals show adverse effects on fertility, estrous cycling, and the testes at exposure levels far in excess of those experienced by humans. A number of other effects, such as decreased sperm count, are reported for the reproductive system at lower doses in animals exposed only during adulthood, but these effects have not been shown to be reproducible. Laboratory animal studies consistently report that Bisphenol A does not affect fertility.

These conclusions are based on information available at the time this brief was prepared. As new information on toxicity and exposure accumulates, it may form the basis for either lowering or raising the levels of concern expressed in the conclusions.

The European Union:

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently concluded that the 50-microgram safety standard is sufficient. But a panel of 38 experts from around the world convened by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) disagreed. Their review of hundreds of studies over the past decade suggested a connection between exposure to BPA at levels typical in the US and increased rates of breast and prostate cancer, reproductive system abnormalities, and, for exposure in the womb, problems such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obesity, and diabetes.

EFSA is aware of the draft US NTP (National Toxicology Program) brief on Bisphenol A, the Environment Canada draft screening assessment report and the Risk Management scope document. EFSA is also aware of Health Canada's risk assessment of Bisphenol A from food packaging applications and is examining all relevant information available.

Canada:

Canada is the first country in the world to complete a risk assessment of Bisphenol A in consultation with industry and other stakeholders, and to initiate a 60-day public comment period on whether to ban the importation, sale and advertising of polycarbonate baby bottles which contain Bisphenol A. The comment period began on April 19, 2008, once the Government published a summary notice of its assessment findings in Canada Gazette, Part 1.

"Data from studies in humans are not sufficient to determine if Bisphenol A adversely affects reproduction when exposure occurs during adulthood."

To be prudent, the Government of Canada is proposing to reduce Bisphenol A exposure in infants and newborns by proposing a number of actions: to ban polycarbonate baby bottles; to develop stringent migration targets for Bisphenol A in infant formula cans; to work with the industry to develop alternative food packaging and develop a code of practice; and to list Bisphenol A under Schedule 1 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Environment Canada scientists also found that at low levels, Bisphenol A can harm fish and aquatic organisms over time. Studies indicate that it can currently be found in wastewater and sludge treatment plants.

In their risk assessment of Bisphenol A, the Canadian authorities have paid special attention to differences between infants and adults in the elimination of the substance from the body. EFSA had considered the issue in its risk assessment on Bisphenol A published in January 2007, which set a Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) of 0.05 milligram/kg body weight for this substance. EFSA found that intakes of infants and children were well below the TDI. However, the opinion did not explicitly mention whether there were relevant differences between infants and adults in clearing Bisphenol A from the body. The Euopean Commission has now asked EFSA to further assess these aspects, taking into account the most recent information and data available.

Japan:

Japan has also established limits to Bisphenol A intake and concurs with many of the findings by EFSA and US FDA. NITE has developed a determination method for BPA in polycarbonate plastic containers (National Institute of Technology and Evaluation, Japan – NITE).

Position of the Malaysian Association of Standards Users

We are aware that there is no conclusive evidence that the current level of Bisphenol A found in humans can cause adverse health effects. But our concerns are all for the infants and children which, based on the information above, indicates the presence of higher levels of Bisphenol A in children than in adults. We fear that the increased use of Bisphenol A in many food and beverage containers may lead to higher intake of Bisphenol A among children, not to mention infants.

1. We strongly seek a precautionary approach to this matter and call for the revision of the MS 735 to include determination of Bisphenol A and also the limits as indicated in the attachment; as clause 3.3 of the standard, pending further evidence to support a ban on BPA in feeding bottles.
2. The Food Act 1983 and the Food Regulations 1985 do not imply any limits for Bisphenol A or address any concern in relation to the use polycarbonate feeding bottles.

   Therefore referring to the current food regulations will address some issues related to packaging. The MS 735 does not cover the latest developments and findings on Bisphenol A in PC feeding bottles.
3. Since there are no regulatory mechanisms to assist in controlling children's and infants' exposure to Bisphenol A, the MS 735 (which is voluntary) should strive to address this shortcoming. We can be sure that feeding bottles carrying an MS mark will, at least, assure consumers that the products are safer than those without the marks (MS mark will indicate that Bisphenol A is below or at the level where several studies indicate no adverse health impact).

28 Safety of Packages For Food (Malaysia, Food Regulations 1985)

No person shall import, manufacture, advertise for sale or sell any package, appliance, container or vessel made of enamel or glazed earthenware that is intended for use in the preparation, packaging, storage, delivery or exposure of food for sale and is either capable of imparting lead, antimony, arsenic, cadmium or any other toxic substance to any food prepared, packed, stored, delivered or exposed in it, or is not resistant to acid unless the package, appliance, container or vessel satisfies the test described in the Thirteenth Schedule.

4. Most of the developed countries are setting limits and may follow the Canadian approach on the ban of Bisphenol A for food containers. Many of the stores in US and Canada (Toys R Us, Bay r Us, Wal Mart for example) are phasing out plastic feeding bottles replacing them with glass or Bisphenol A free alternatives. What happens to countries like Malaysia where there is no law on feeding bottles and Bisphenol A?

   Will we become a dumping ground for plastic bottles from countries that have imposed the ban?
5. The Working Group developing / reviewing the MS 735 on Specficiation for Plastic Feeding Bottles has no consumer involvement. Thus, there was limited period for consultation considering evidence supporting and opposing ban on Bisphenol A in food and beverage containers / packaging.

We urge the ISC J to include the determination and establish the limits of Bisphenol A in the plastic feeding bottles through the inclusion of these requirements in the MS 735.

Standards of this nature (with uncertainties and awaiting further investigations) should be reviewed on a frequent basis to ensure that the specifications remain relevant.

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CSR / SR News

From various sources, local, and overseas, on the CSR or SR related issues.

UNNEWS: UNICEF RECEIVES US $48 MILLION FROM RETAIL CHAIN IKEA TO HELP INDIA'S POOR

New York, Feb 23 2009 1:00PM

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) initiatives supporting some of the poorest people in India are set to receive a US$48 million boost from Swedish retail giant IKEA, the agency announced on a day that coincided with the day of International Corporate Philanthropy.

The donation, the latest from the IKEA Social Initiative, will go towards projects aimed at improving the health and survival of tens of millions of women and children in some of India's most deprived areas.

In India, one woman dies every seven minutes from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth and nearly one million newborn babies die every year, UNICEF said in a news release announcing the donation.

The agency noted that India is home to almost 40 per cent of all malnourished children worldwide, with a record 25 million children under five years old suffering from wasting and 61 million children stunted due to malnutrition.

The donation from the IKEA Social Initiative will allow UNICEF to support local and national government-led health, nutrition, clean water and sanitation projects, including those providing infants with immunisations and vitamin A supplements, as well as programmes advocating breastfeeding and the importance of nutritious food for children under the age of 24 months.

"The resources being provided will allow us to implement critical long-term programmes that seek to improve child survival, development and protection," said Karin Hulshof, UNICEF India Country Representative in New Delhi.

"IKEA Social Initiative has chosen to concentrate its long-term commitments on South Asia, where the needs of children and women are great, and where IKEA has long business experience," added Ms Hulshof.

"In India, one woman dies every seven minutes from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth and nearly one million newborn babies die every year"

UNICEF, IKEA and the Government of India created a partnership in 2000 to tackle the root causes of child labour in the carpet belt of India, including debt, poverty, the lack of access to education, disability and ill health.

As a result, some 80,000 children in the state of Uttar Pradesh who were unable to attend school have been able to get an education, and around 140,000 children and 150,000 women have been immunized against infectious diseases.

Roughly 22,000 women have created their own employment opportunities through self-help groups supported by the partnership's programmes.

The IKEA Social Initiative has become UNICEF's biggest corporate partner, with total commitments of more than US$180 million from 2000 to 2015.

"The IKEA Social Initiative makes a serious corporate commitment toward improving the living conditions in countries where it is working," said Saad Houry, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director.

"IKEA's investment in children's wellbeing, despite the downturn in the global economy, sets a high standard for corporate partnership," added Mr Houry.

CSR / SR News

From various sources, local, and overseas, on the CSR or SR related issues.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE STANDARDS – CAN WE NOT SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES?

Article from CSR ASIA: by Rikke Netterstrom

Thursday, Feb 12, 2009

Some of the World's most prominent sustainable agriculture standards are coming under attack – their credibility and viability threatened by large international NGOs that are fed up with slow progress. But can these attacks create such confusion and mistrust that companies give up and go back to the less-than-sustainable "old ways"?

FSC - old friends parting ways

In September 2008, Friends of the Earth (FoE) became the first international environmental NGO to back out of their support for the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council). FoE was one of the founding members of FSC, which was established to ensure that timber – of tropical origin in particular – came from legal sources and was produced under a set of rigorous sustainability standards.

The FSC has had its share of controversies, most often linked to a lack of credibility of third-party auditors, and in some cases allegations of corruption, casting doubts on the credibility of the standard. However, until very recently, the major international NGOs defended FSC as the best option available for consumers, retailers and manufacturers wanting assurance that they were not inadvertently contributing to large-scale deforestation and depletion of tropical timer species such as teak.

The decision has not been taken lightly – in fact, one website contains a correction from FoE which clarifies that the position is led by Friends of the Earth UK, and some of FoE's national organisations continue to support the standard. Also, Friends of the Earth does not entirely dismiss the standard, but wants a full review before it will reconsider its position.

RSPO - nipping progress in the bud?

A similar situation is arising for the newly established RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) standard. Several of the first companies to have become certified have come under heavy fire by Greenpeace, which claims that the standard is toothless and has major gaps.

Greenpeace points out – correctly – that there is still evidence of massive deforestation taking place in connection with oil palm production, and is urging plantations and manufacturers to support a moratorium on deforestation. This is a relatively easy demand,and appears to be a no-brainer for any responsible company. Companies refusing to sign up are thus easy targets for charges of "Greenwash".

As always, however, the reality is more complex. A number of the companies not signing up are pointing out that Greenpeace's definition of deforestation is so narrow that it could stop companies from using previously logged, degraded land where a few trees have managed to re-establish. So in their view, the moratorium on deforestation would amount to a moratorium on all new plantings – a premise which would be unacceptable to most producers. Producers also find it unacceptable that Greenpeace completely dismisses the Principles and Criteria of the RSPO, which go a long way (if not 100%) to halting deforestation. The RSPO does explicitly ban any development in primary forest areas, and areas containing "high conservation values", e.g. endangered species.

Whether producers are overreacting or whether Greenpeace is undervaluing the work of the RSPO is an open question. Most likely, both sides have valid points. The real issue is that a lack of communication and engagement has created a no-win situation, with increasingly deep trenches being built. The few parties attempting to bridge the gap are viewed with suspicion and as sell-outs.

The big picture – a forest without trees?

From the rhetoric of FoE on timber, and Greenpeace on palm oil, it is difficult to imagine what they see as the solution. Are we to understand that timber and palm oil cannot be sustainably produced? Or that the standards developed through many years of multi-stakeholder consultation and review are

void, and that FoE and Greenpeace are somehow more experts and more qualified to develop a standard than the hundreds of organisations which have contributed?

Perhaps these standards do represent too many compromises – the art of the possible – rather than a final solution. The impatience of the two organisations is entirely understandable – large-scale deforestation by timber and palm oil companies is still taking place, and FSC and RSPO have not stopped this from happening. Of course, criticism is important. Human nature and the logic of growing organisations do mean that it can be difficult to see and to admit one's own flaws.

But dismissing these standards and attacking the companies attempting to adhere to them cannot possibly be constructive. Of course, certification should not be a "get-out-of-jail-free card", and companies claiming to be sustainable must be able to demonstrate that they can document their progress and be open to engagement and criticism.

However, it seems illogical to exclusively attack these organisations, rather than focusing on those that are still engaged in the worst kinds of destruction and violations. Where are the campaigns to stop such "cowboys"? It is a real concern that while Greenpeace and FoE are focused on undermining the companies that are at least attempting to get it right with the assistance of the FSC and RSPO standards, others are cutting down the world's remaining trees – unnoticed and unharmed.

Standards Users | **Events**

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON ISO 26000, GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: IMPACT ON TRADE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

3rd and 4th November 2008, Petaling Jaya Hilton

The Department of Standards Malaysia (STANDARDS MALAYSIA) together with Malaysian Association of Standards Users (Standards Users) organised a two-day Seminar and Workshop on ISO 26000, Guidance on Social Responsibility: Impact on Trade and Social Development in Southeast Asia. This seminar was a finale to the road shows carried out in 2007 and last year, creating awareness on Social Responsibility Standards being developed by ISO called the ISO 26000.

The theme Impact on Trade & Social Development in Southeast Asia is crucial due to multiple bilateral and multilateral agreements implemented among Southeast Asian countries, between ASEAN and other countries namely Japan, China and Korea. Some of the trade agreements incorporate social clauses on labour issues.

The workshop-seminar was held in Hilton Hotel Petaling Jaya and the keynote address and opening was done by Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Haji Fadillah Haji Yusof.

The first day of the workshop comprised presentation by experts from areas of concern to SR and Trade. A workshop on the second day focused on group discussions on specific topics.

The topics were:

1. How can SR Support Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives towards Sustainable Consumption and Production?
2. Investment and Trade Issues
3. Environment and Community Development Issues" .


Some images from the National Seminar on ISO 26000, Guidance on Social Responsibility: Impact on Trade and Social Development in Southeast Asia.



Standards Users | **Events**

PUBLIC SEMINAR ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STANDARDS AND APPLICATIONS

Oct 21 2008
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah

The objective of the seminar was to create awareness on the importance of Malaysian Standards and its applications to the relevant stakeholders. The seminar focused on applications of MS or Malaysian Standards for Public Toilets or the MS 2015:2006 series. The focus on MS for public toilets arose from the recognition of year 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation by the United Nations

Organised by Department of Standards Malaysia with the cooperation of Malaysian Association of Standards Users.

Report Summary

Projects Completed by the Malaysian Association of Standards Users for the Department of Standards Malaysia for year 2008

Several activities were carried out last year as part of a three-year programme to enhance awareness on the importance of standards and on social responsibility in the advent of the development of the new ISO 26000 – Guidance Standards on Social Responsibility (SR).

The list of activities follows:

For Promotion of the Importance of Standards:

1. Essay writing and photography competition on standards.
2. Awareness training on the importance of Standards for Consumers for Educators
3. Training Sessions - follow-up to the 'Train the Trainer Module'
4. Promotion of MS 2015:2006 for Public Toilets in conjunction with International Year of Sanitation 2008

For SR:

1. Information brochure on SR (translated to Bahasa Malaysia)
2. Training on SR cum roadshows
3. Inter-university debate competitions on SR related themes – SR towards Realising Sustainable Consumption
4. Dedicated website on SR
5. National Seminar on ISO 26000 Guidance on Social Responsibility: Its Impact on Trade and Social Development in Southeast Asia

Secretariat

1. National Mirror Committee for ISO COPOLCO

Media Promotion

1. Advertorial

Summary on the outcome of the promotion activities on Standards

- **Essay writing and photography competition on standards.**
  - Number of entries at **512** increased about **61%** compared with 2007 and achieved the key deliverable of between 400 - 500 entries.
  - Number of schools where outreach programmes were conducted increased from **13** in **2007 to 15 in 2008**
  - The number of students attending the outreach programmes **was 1,682 compared with 719 in 2007**
  - Based on the feedback forms from the entries, the awareness that the Department of Standards Malaysia as the national standards body is steadily increasing among participants of the competition and among students after the school outreach programmes were carried out.
- **Awareness training on the importance of Standards for Young Consumers –** targeted at teaching professionals.
  - The number of teachers participating in the awareness training in **2008 was 215** compared with **211 in 2007**. The frequency of training was three and the same as in 2007. Record participation among teachers was 97 (which is highest among all training sessions conducted for teachers in 2006 and 2007).
  - The evaluation indicated that teachers would like more such training sessions to be conducted, both for teachers and students.
- **Training Sessions following the development of the 'Train the Trainer Module'**
  - The outcome of the training further revealed that the teachers did not express intention to conduct training sessions. Instead about three of the 22 participants (teachers) invited Standards Users to conduct outreach programmes in their schools.
  - The comprehension of the module is enhanced if it is available in Bahasa Malaysia
  - Standards Users has revised the proposal and will implement the revised proposal pending approval from STANDARDS MALAYSIA
- **Promotion of MS 2015:2006 for Public Toilets** in conjunction with International Year of Sanitation (IYS) 2008
  - Based on the proposal, Standards Users carried out three School Workshops and two Public Seminars on the importance of MS 2015:2006 for Public Toilets – for Hygiene and Sanitation
  - The programme covered 588 students and adults
  - Pending one more public seminar which is planned for East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The programme was originally scheduled to be completed in March 2009.
  - The report of this programme will be submitted to UN agencies to promote the benefits of the MS 2015:2006 to improve sanitation in developing countries.
  - Standards Users also presented a paper at the World

Toilet Summit to promote the MS 2015:2006 and the activities carried out in conjunction with International Year of Sanitation. The Summit was held in Macau in November 2008.

- **Information brochure on SR**
  - The brochures were developed for two stakeholders i.e industry and consumers, to provide a brief understanding on SR and the ISO 26000. The brochures were distributed at all outreach programmes conducted by Standards Users and FOMCA. Lat year, the brochure was made available in Bahasa Malaysia as well. It became very useful during the Inter-University Debate Competition as it is always held in Bahasa Malaysia

- **Training on SR cum road show**

  The training seminar was conducted in Petaling Jaya and Penang. The participants overall comments were:

  - To engage the larger industries and MNCs as well;
  - To update the industry on any latest programme / outcome
  - To participate more to understand how interaction among MNCs apart from SMEs

  There was prevalent concern among SME/I on addressing SR issues related to their businesses. Government stakeholders seem aloof with the development of the ISO 26000.

- **Inter-university debate competition on SR theme**
  - Last year, the improvements suggested in 2007 were put in place and the judges commented while content improved, the participants / speakers still lacked research and are detached from the theme. The secretariat will explore possibilities to increase slots allocated for debriefing to address these issues.

- **Dedicated website on SR and the National Mirror Committee on ISO WG SR**
  - The website has been promoted through:
    - participants of the training, debate, exhibitions mailing list etc
    - brochures and publications related to SR
    - presentation by Standards Users

  The site is currently migrating to a new host which provides better features for the same price and it is more user-friendly, thus enabling faster uploading and updating of content.

- **National Seminar on ISO 26000 Guidance on Social Responsibility:** Its Impact on Trade and Social Development in Southeast Asia
  - From the group discussion, it is quite clear that organisations have familiarised or been familiarised with terms such as Sustainable Consumption, Production (SCP) and Sustainable Development (SD).
  - Actions must be taken to go far beyond familiarising with terms and towards internalisation and 'operationalisation'. Many organisations feel planting trees and sorting waste are adequate for SD.
  - There seems to be a need for more guidance on how an organisation can address SCP needs, considering its nature of operations and resources, etc.
  - Tools for these purposes will be of great help towards realising an organisation's SR. After all SD is about finding balance between people, planet and profit, which is also the spirit of the ISO 26000.and SR.

  A total of 53 participants attended the seminar. And this time more MNCs, PLCs and GLCs participated, compared with the Training Seminars.

- **National Mirror Committee on ISO COPOLCO**

  The secretariat was not able to meet in 2008. One meeting was planned in September, but was postponed. Nevertheless, the secreatariat was able to participate and contribute at the 30th ISO COPOLCO Workshop and Plenary held in Seoul, Korea, from May 26 to 29, 2008, as:
  - WG co-convenor for Product Safety
  - Rapportuer for the Workshop
  - Drafting Committee
  - Due to the APEC Product Safety Workshop which was held in Kuala Lumpur, we were unable to participate in the Chairs Group Meeting last year.

- **Advertorial**
  - Standards Users covered mostly SR and food safety issues in the media in 2008
  - To further supplement media reports – the Standards Matter Magazine was published and already 2,000 copies of the 1st issue are in circulation. The 2nd issue was printed in October 2008 and approximately 1,000 have been mailed to stakeholders in the field of standardisation and accreditation.
  - In addition to this, Standards Users also published 4 series of its position papers on:
  - Expectations of consumers in 2008, on product safety
  - Accessible Design
  - State of Food Safety
  - The China Milk Scandal
  - Further to this, a booklet on child safety will also be published.

Overall, the promotional activities reached more targeted participants than in 2007. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. The evaluations carried out have provided Standards Users with valuable information and ideas to effectively reach targeted participants and stakeholders for future activities.

Finally, we would like to record our sincerest appreciation to the Department of Standards Malaysia for continuing to support Standards Users and commitment in reaching out to consumers and other stakeholders to enhance their awareness and appreciation of the importance of standards in improving the quality of life of consumers.

We look forward to a long-term relationship in order to continue the good work together.

NATIONAL CONSUMER CAMPAIGN 2008 - 2012

3K

Change With Begins Me

CHANGE begins with me

That is the Mantra for a Sustainable Future for Malaysian Consumers

The Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA) together with campaign partners, CUEPACS, NCWO and MBM has embarked on the National Consumer Campaign (Kempen Konsumer Kebangsaan) or 3K which will run from 2008 till 2012.

It is clear from the changes taking place worldwide that the time for cheap food and fuel is over. With this continuing increase of food and fuel prices, the Malaysian consumer faces the risks of increasing cost of living, decreasing quality of life, increasing debts and personal and family stress.

Consumers used to expecting the government to continue to absorb increasing costs and maintain their old lifestyle will feel uncomfortable to take greater responsibility of their lives. Thus changing habits will be difficult. But if we want to ensure a sustainable development, then consumers must learn and practice sustainable consumption as part of their daily lives. This will not only benefit them as individuals, but will also benefit the environment and more importantly, future generations of consumers. We need to relook at our own lifestyle and be willing to make fundamental changes to the way we live.

About the 3K

3K has been launched to enable Malaysian Consumers to make changes to their consumption patterns through taking greater personal responsibility in their spending behaviours. 3K aims to change the mindset and the behavior of Malaysian consumers by enhancing awareness and challenging current held beliefs.

In conducting this campaign FOMCA has formed a Partnership with 3 primary institutions, that is the National Council of Women Organizations (NCWO), the Malaysian Youth Council (MBM) and the National Trade Union of Government Employees (CUEPACS)

3K will also be reaching out to student groups through school consumer clubs, undergraduates at public and private universities, Rukun Tetangga and Residents' Associations and Village Communities through the Village Development and Security Committees.

For more information about the Campaign and
How to Get Involved / Become Partners, please contact:

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