

International Food Safety Capacity Building

Moldova, Philippines, and Myanmar

Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan

March 2018
Activities report

Many developing countries have food safety systems that are developing as well. Some of these countries welcome volunteer assistance through programs such as the U.S. based Fulbright scholars program and various NGOs such as “Farmer-to-Farmer”. Capacity building can address policy, institutional, and regulatory aspects as well as specific enhancements related to risk-based food inspection, laboratory support, value chain development, and support to private sector and professional education programs.

The main goal is to help develop robust systems to assure the safety of foods consumed and exported from a country. Well-established principles of developing modern systems to assure food safety and prevent fraudulent practices are followed, e.g. risk-based approaches, food safety controls from farm to fork, technology-enhanced food safety, effective stakeholder engagement (government, academia, industry). It is important to collaborate with all stakeholders in country, regionally, and globally.

Dr. Nummer has more than 25 years’ experience in food safety and microbiology as an academic and outreach professional. He began his international outreach in 2011 in Moldova. This project was a professional overview of the Moldova food manufacturing and testing environment. It highlighted the many gaps and the great need to modernize regarding their overall food safety system. Once on the ground, it was far easier to see the many complications to food safety including availability of modern transportation (roads and equipment), modern temperature control, and modern facilities. It also highlighted a model Czech meat processor operating in Chisinau who brought with them a European style food safety system.

In 2014 **Dr Nummer** visited Hong Kong while on sabbatical as the Global Food Safety Advisor to the Chief Safety Officer of Disney Parks and Resorts. On the surface Hong Kong may not be truly considered a developing island, but the food safety system farm-to-fork is weak at the farm level. Naturally, most foods must be imported onto the island. Mainland China is just a few kilometers away. However, Chinese farm grown foods may modern transportation, modern temperature control, and modern facilities. More specifically, traceability and product safety from China is lacking. As a result many food buyers seek foods from a more developed supply chain, often at a considerable increase in costs.

In 2017, **Dr. Nummer’s** Fulbright project in the Philippines was focused on strengthening the food safety training and education program via the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. The old adage of “teach a man to fish...” describes this project in that the goal was to assist the University in their efforts to strengthen their own programs addressing food safety education. The University of Santo Tomas’ College of Engineering was developing an entrepreneurship which could facilitate education and training in food entrepreneurship and food safety.

In late 2017, **Dr. Nummer** hosted a Fulbright scholar, senior faculty member, and department head from Myanmar in the USA. The Dr. was given free range of the Utah State University campus where she presented lectures and participated in student classes. Side trips were used to introduce her to Salt Lake City food manufacturers (*with tons of free candy at the end of the tour* ☺). Simple networking again highlighted the many complications to food safety in developing countries including availability of modern transportation (roads and equipment), modern temperature control, and modern facilities.

A 2018 return trip to Philippines is in planning and Utah State University has a collaboration with a University in Taiwan. Together with Macao, Hong Kong, Myanmar, and the Philippines Dr Nummer is hoping to encourage more ASEAN country collaborations and capacity sharing between these countries. A 2018 return trip to Moldova is planned to provide some training and outreach seminars.

Everyone is entitled to a safe and nutritious food supply. As countries develop in general, they need to focus some attention to the safety of their food supply.

