

The Causes and Potential Solutions for Foodborne Illness, Food Security, and Food Safety: In the Case of the East Harerghe Region of Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract : Food security, foodborne illness, and food safety are critical issues that affect the East Harerghe region of Oromia, Ethiopia. Despite the region's potential for agriculture, food insecurity remains a significant problem, with many households experiencing chronic hunger and malnutrition. The region also experiences high rates of foodborne illnesses, including cholera, typhoid, and diarrhea, which are caused by poor hygiene and sanitation practices. Additionally, food safety is a significant challenge, particularly in rural areas, where there is a lack of infrastructure, inadequate food storage facilities, and limited access to information about food safety. There are several factors that contribute to the current situation in the East Harerghe region; firstly, the region is susceptible to natural disasters, for instance, drought, which affects crop yields and livestock production. Secondly, the region also experiences poor infrastructure, which affects the storage and transportation of food, particularly in rural areas. Thirdly, there is a lack of awareness and knowledge on good hygiene and sanitation practices, specifically during food handling, processing, and storage. Fourthly, instability due to conflict and other forms of land degradation exacerbates food insecurity and malnutrition. Finally, limited access to financial resources and markets commonly affects smallholder farmers by their ability to produce and sell food. To address the current situation in that area, several potential solutions can be implemented; investment in infrastructure is necessary, especially in rural areas, to improve the storage and transportation of food. Education and awareness programs on good hygiene and sanitation practices should target local communities, smallholder farmers, and food vendors. Financial resources and markets should be made more accessible to smallholder farmers, particularly through the provision of credit and improved access to markets. Addressing the underlying causes of conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence can help to reduce displacement and loss of livelihoods. Finally, the enforcement of food safety regulations and the implementation of standards for food processing and storage facilities are necessary to ensure food safety. In conclusion, addressing the challenges of food security, foodborne illness, and food safety in the East Harerghe region requires a coordinated effort from various stakeholders, including the government, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. By implementing the solutions outlined above, the region can improve its food security, prevent foodborne illnesses, and keep food safe for its population. Eventually, building the resilience of communities to shocks such as droughts, floods, and conflict is necessary to ensure long-term food security in the region.

Keywords : foodborne illness, food handling, food safety, food security

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