Enhancing Food Quality and Safety Management in Ethiopia's Food Processing Industry: Challenges, Causes, and Solutions

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Abstract : Food quality and safety challenges are prevalent in Ethiopia's food processing industry, which can have adverse effects on consumers' health and wellbeing. The country is known for its diverse range of agricultural products, which are essential to its economy. However, poor food quality and safety policies and management systems in the food processing industry have led to several health problems, foodborne illnesses, and economic losses. This paper aims to highlight the causes and effects of food safety and quality issues in the food processing industry of Ethiopia and discuss potential solutions to address these issues. One of the main causes of poor food quality and safety in Ethiopia's food processing industry is the lack of adequate regulations and enforcement mechanisms. The absence of comprehensive food safety and quality policies and guidelines has led to substandard practices in the food manufacturing process. Moreover, the lack of monitoring and enforcement of existing regulations has created a conducive environment for unscrupulous businesses to engage in unsafe practices that endanger the public's health. The effects of poor food quality and safety are significant, ranging from the loss of human lives, increased healthcare costs, and loss of consumer confidence in the food processing industry. Foodborne illnesses, such as diarrhea, typhoid fever, and cholera, are prevalent in Ethiopia, and poor food quality and safety practices contribute significantly to their prevalence. Additionally, food recalls due to contamination or mislabeling often result in significant economic losses for businesses in the food processing industry. To address these challenges, the Ethiopian government has begun to take steps to improve food quality and safety in the food processing industry. One of the most notable initiatives is the Ethiopian Food and Drug Administration (EFDA), which was established in 2010 to regulate and monitor the quality and safety of food and drug products in the country. The EFDA has implemented several measures to enhance food safety, such as conducting routine inspections, monitoring the importation of food products, and enforcing strict labeling requirements. Another potential solution to improve food quality and safety in Ethiopia's food processing industry is the implementation of food safety management systems (FSMS). An FSMS is a set of procedures and policies designed to identify, assess, and control food safety hazards throughout the food manufacturing process. Implementing an FSMS can help businesses in the food processing industry identify and address potential hazards before they cause harm to consumers. Additionally, the implementation of an FSMS can help businesses comply with existing food safety regulations and guidelines. In conclusion, improving food quality and safety policies and management systems in Ethiopia's food processing industry is critical to protecting public health and enhancing the country's economy. Addressing the root causes of poor food quality and safety and implementing effective solutions, such as the establishment of regulatory agencies and the implementation of food safety management systems, can help to improve the overall safety and quality of the country's food supply.

Keywords : food quality, food safety, policy, management system, food processing industry

Conference Title : ICFQFSPMS 2023 : International Conference on Food Quality, Food Safety Policy and Management System
Conference Location : Toronto, Canada
Conference Dates : June 19-20, 2023