

1 Scope

This Code contains a series of minimum requirements and practices to be observed in the sale of fresh agriculture and fisheries products in markets and authorized outlets that are fit for human consumption.

This Code applies to all agriculture and fisheries products consisting of fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, and fishery products that have not undergone any treatment or any processing and exhibit good quality characteristics.

2 Objective

The purpose of the Code is to ensure that fresh agriculture and fishery products sold in markets and authorized outlets are safe and fit for human consumption.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, the definitions specified in the documents of the Codex Alimentarius and references cited herein shall apply. Other relevant definitions are as follows:

3.1

authorized

a retail outlet permitted by the National Controlling Authority, Local Government Units (LGU) or designated official

3.2

carcass

all parts, excluding viscera of slaughtered animals after bleeding and dressing that may be used for human consumption

3.3

chilled

foods are cooled to a temperature approaching that of melting ice/ freezing water, i.e. 0°C to 4°C

3.4

cleaning

the removal of soil, dirt, grease or other objectionable matter

3.5

disinfection

the reduction, by means of chemical agents and/or physical methods, of the number of microorganisms in the environment, to a level that does not compromise food safety or suitability

3.6

environment

surrounding area/ place where food is prepared, maintained, exposed, serves and/or consumed

3.7**equipment**

an article that is used in the operation of markets and authorized outlets such as a freezer, grinder, ice maker, mixer, chiller, scale, slicer and table. It does not include apparatuses used for handling or storing large quantities of packaged foods that are received from a supplier in a cased or overwrapped lot such as hand trucks, forklifts, dollies, pallets, rackets and skids.

3.8**fish**

includes all fish and other aquatic species such as crustaceans (crabs, prawns, shrimps and lobsters), cephalopods (squid, cuttlefish and octopus) and mollusks (clams, mussels, scallops, oysters, snail and gastropods).

3.9**fishery products**

includes all seawater or freshwater animals or other products of aquatic living resources or parts thereof, e.g., seaweeds, invertebrates, etc.

3.10**fit for human consumption**

fresh agriculture and fishery products that have passed inspection by competent authority and in which no change due to disease, decomposition or contamination has subsequently been found

3.11**food animal**

includes all domestic animals slaughtered for human consumption, such as but not limited to cattle, carabao, buffalo, horse, sheep, goat, swine, deer, rabbit and poultry, such as chicken, duck, goose, turkey, quail, and pigeon

3.12**food recall**

when measures are applied to return unsafe or unsuitable agriculture or fishery products that have already been supplied or made available to consumers

3.13**fresh produce**

products apart from freezing, chilling or refrigeration, have not been treated for the purpose of preservation other than through protective packaging and which retains its natural characteristics

3.14**frozen**

foods are cooled so that the temperature of every part of the food is -18°C or lower after thermal stabilization

3.15**fruits**

succulent edible plant parts used chiefly as dessert or sweet course and consumed as raw

3.16**handling**

manner of packing, storing and maintaining the quality and safety of fresh agriculture and fisheries products

3.17**ice**

solid state of potable water used to chill and maintain the low temperature of agriculture and fishery products for preservation purposes

3.18**input**

all materials and items including containers and packaging used in the handling and sale of fresh agriculture and fisheries products

3.19**market/outlet**

place, building or structure where fresh agriculture & fisheries products are bought or sold directly to consumers

3.20**market day**

concerned Local Government Unit designated day(s) in a week where local vendors including other municipalities/cities vendors are allowed and permitted to sell their products in public markets or authorized places

3.21**meat**

fresh, chilled, or frozen edible carcass including offal derived from food animals

3.22**meat by-product**

includes edible part other than meat which has been derived from food animal whether boned or boneless and ground or intact to which no other ingredient has been added

3.23**meat inspection certificate**

an official certificate issued by the meat inspector or meat control officer who conducted the post mortem inspection certifying that the carcass is fit for human consumption

3.24**meat -brand/ mark of meat inspection**

any mark or stamp approved by the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS) and include any tag or label bearing such mark or stamp

3.25**offal**

the by-product, organs, glands and tissues other than meat of the food animal which may or may not be edible

3.26**organoleptic test**

assessment of quality of fresh agricultural commodities using sensory evaluation

3.27**packaging materials**

any containers such as cartons, boxes, cases and sacks or wrapping and covering material such as foil, film, wax paper, brown/kraft paper.

3.28**perishable**

rapidly spoiling or decomposing commodity

3.29**potable water**

water that is fit for drinking for human consumption, one that meets the requirements as specified in the International Standard for Drinking Water, WHO (1963)

3.30**poultry**

domestic fowls like chicken, duck, goose, turkey, pigeon, quail including ostrich

3.31**refrigeration**

process where the product is cooled to 5°C to 18°C

3.32**sales stall**

any fixed or mobile structure intended for selling of fresh agricultural commodities in the market or authorized outlets.

3.33**selling area**

surrounding area or place where fresh agriculture and fishery products are handled for sale

3.34**sorting**

process of segregating the products based on the size, appearance, ripeness and quality

3.35**slaughter**

butchering of food animal

3.36**slaughter animal**

any food animal brought into an licensed abattoir for slaughter

3.37**traceability**

ability to track the movement of food through specified stage(s) of production, processing and distribution

3.38**unreported fishing**

refers to fishing activities which have not been reported, or have been misreported to the Department, in contravention of national laws and regulations of the Philippines, or undertaken in the area of competence of a relevant RFMO which have not been reported or have been misreported, in contravention of the reporting procedures of that organization and further elaborated by regulations to be promulgated by the Department

3.39**vegetables**

edible parts of plant which can be eaten, cooked or in raw form. It refers to a plant whose fruit, tubers, bulbs, leaves are used as food

3.40**vendor/handler**

any authorized person (the principal vendor or his/her assistant) who directly handles fresh agriculture and fisheries products in the distribution chain and complies with the personal hygiene requirements

3.41**vermin**

collective term for insects such as flies, mosquitoes, cockroaches, lice, flies, mites, ticks, bedbugs, or small animals such as mice and rats that are vectors of diseases

3.42**vermin abatement program**

series of preventive and control procedures and activities for vermin control in the establishment

3.43**washing**

use of potable water to remove contaminants in fresh agricultural commodities

3.44**waste water**

water from domestic and industrial drains

4 Minimum Requirements**4.1 Source**

4.1.1 All fresh agriculture and fishery products should come from licensed and /or registered facilities.

4.1.2 Selling of unregulated, unreported and illegally caught fish are prohibited.

4.1.3 Sale of shellfish coming from red tide affected areas is prohibited.

4.2 Inputs

4.2.1 Equipment, containers, and utensils

Requirements regarding equipment, containers, and utensils used in handling during sale of fresh agriculture and fisheries products, and storage should be in accordance with Chapter III- "Food Establishments" of the Sanitation Code of the Philippines (PD 856) and its implementing rules and regulations.

4.2.2 Specifications

4.2.2.1 Holding containers (including ice & water storage like tanks, drums, etc.) shall be clean, non-corrosive, non-toxic material, non-absorbent, non-porous, perforated for fruits and vegetables only, free from cracks and defects, easy to clean and disinfect and shall not be used for any other purposes.

4.2.2.2 Cutting and chopping blocks shall be made of even, impervious, non-fibrous, and easily cleaned materials and free of cracks and crevices.

4.2.2.3 Utensils such as cutting knives, cutting boards, weighing scale, pair of scissors, pails, and others shall be clean, non-corrosive, non-absorbent, and free from cracks, and defects.

4.2.3 Handling practices

4.2.3.1 Containers previously used for substances that are toxic or harmful to human health, such as insecticide, paint or motor oil, soap or detergent, disinfectant, and the like should not be used.

4.2.3.2 Containers (including ice & water storage) shall be covered at all times to prevent contamination. Separate containers for meat carcass, blood and internal organs shall be used to prevent cross-contamination.

4.2.3.3 Containers should not be stacked on top of one another to avoid contamination through drippings from holes.

4.2.3.4 Containers, utensils, table surface, cutters, cutting knives, and other equipment should be in good condition, and properly maintained and cleaned.

4.2.3.5 Equipment shall be in good working conditions.

4.2.3.6 Containers must be kept in clean, protected places, and vermin-free areas.

4.2.4 Cleaning

4.2.4.1 Utensils, containers, materials and equipment should be free from all solid particles before being thoroughly cleansed in potable water with soap and acceptable detergent.

4.2.4.2 All utensils, containers and stall materials should be thoroughly cleaned before and after the day's work, dried, and kept in sanitary container/cabinet.

4.2.4.4 Detergents and disinfectants used to clean and disinfect working surfaces, utensils, containers, water outlets and other components should be non-toxic and non-corrosive. It must be kept away from areas where the fresh agricultural and fisheries products are displayed and stored.

4.3 Packing and packaging materials

4.3.1 Packaging or wrapping materials should be free from any form of impurities or contaminants, without defects or pinholes.

4.3.2 Wrapping/packaging materials must be properly handled and kept clean.

4.3.3 Printed packaging materials like newspaper must not be used.

4.3.4 Recycling of previously used wrapping/packaging materials should not be practiced.

4.4 Water and water storage

4.4.1 Water for general purposes (washing inputs and recipients) should be potable and where possible chlorinated.

4.4.2 Water to be used should be obtained from approved sources, free from impurities or foreign matters.

4.4.3 Transported potable water should be kept in a clean and appropriate container to prevent contamination. Only those authorized by competent authority should be used in transporting water.

4.4.4 Waste water must be properly disposed of and not present a hazard to the potable water, surrounding area or handlers.

4.4.5 Water hose must be in good condition and properly hung after use, not allowing the tip of the hose to be in contact with dirty objects.

4.5 Cold storage (For fish and meat products)

4.5.1 Cold storage facilities/freezers should be provided with thermometer and should have adequate capacity to maintain a temperature of -18°C or lower at all times.

4.5.2 Cold storage rooms/freezers shall be kept clean, free from objectionable odor, and in good condition. The following temperature should be maintained:

4.5.2.1 Chilling temperature for fish and fishery products should be at 0° C to 4°C and 0°C-10°C for meat;

4.5.2.2 Freezing temperature of fresh-frozen fish and fishery products and meat should be -18°C or below

4.6 Ice and ice handling

4.6.1 Ice shall be made of potable water and manufactured from ice plant approved by competent authorities.

4.6.2 Ice shall not be placed in direct contact with the floor or unclean surfaces.

4.6.3 Ice crusher and ice picks shall be properly maintained and kept clean

4.6.4 Ice storage shall be kept clean and well maintained.

5 Requirements for fresh agriculture and fisheries products

5.1 Handling practices

5.1.1 General consideration

5.1.1.1 Fresh agriculture and fisheries products must be kept clean, and protected from any forms of contaminants.

5.1.1.2 Fresh agriculture and fisheries products shall be displayed/ sold in tables, shelves, boxes and storage spaces that are smooth and made of non-contaminating material, clean and protected from direct sunlight, dust, fumes, pests like insects, rodents and other biological agents.

5.1.1.3 Fresh agriculture and fisheries products shall be kept or stored separately in areas from non-edible products like soap, disinfectants, pesticides and other toxic or poisonous substances.

5.1.1.4 Withdrawal of fresh agriculture and fisheries products for sale shall be on a first in, first out (FIFO) basis.

5.1.1.5 Proper segregation of products should be observed.

5.1.1.6 Fresh and prepared agricultural commodities must be packed separately according to species/kind.

5.1.1.7 Use of formalin and other poisonous substances as preservative and colorant are prohibited.

5.1.2 Special considerations

5.1.2.1 Fish and other aquatic species

- a) Fish and other aquatic species shall be handled properly after catch and, prevented from any form of contaminations and exposure to sunlight to slow down quality deterioration.

- b) It must be iced, or stored in a cool temperature as soon as possible to prevent spoilage and deterioration.
- c) Fish and shellfish (mollusk/bivalve) shall be packed properly in clean appropriate packaging materials or fish containers or crates.
- d) Oysters and mussels and other bivalves shall be moistened by occasional sprinkling of clear weak brine solution or clean seawater and originates from harvesting area declared as safe for PSP toxin contaminants.
- e) Seaweeds and other seaweed species shall be washed with clean seawater or weak brine solution, free from any adhering foreign matter and properly packed in appropriate containers.
- f) Live fish must be kept in clean, cool and aerated container.
- g) Every container with fish shall be iced properly to maintain the temperature of chilled fish at 0°C – 4 °C (preferably at a ratio of 1 part of ice to 1 part fish).
- h) Fish containers like banniera, styrofoam boxes, and plastics shall be elevated from the floor. Shellfish containers like Styrofoam boxes or polyethylene plastic boxes shall be provided with cover, easily cleaned and in good condition.
- i) Fresh fish and fishery products should not be exposed to room temperature without ice. Fresh fish must be kept in chilling/freezing temperature at all times.
- j) Fresh fish and fishery products should be cleaned by removing undesirable parts, when necessary.
- k) Fish wastes (entrails, scales, etc.) shall be properly collected and disposed.
- l) Dressed, sliced, fillet, steak, or deboned fish shall be washed thoroughly and stored immediately at chilling or freezing temperature where applicable.

5.1.2.2 Fruits and vegetables

- a) The fruits and vegetables displayed for sale shall be well-protected and kept at an appropriate temperature. Fruits and vegetables should not be displayed on the floors/ground and placed in protruded areas beyond stall perimeter.
- b) Fruits and vegetables should be classified according to size, ripeness, variety, and storage life.
- c) Perishable fruits and vegetables shall be stored in clean, cool and dry place.
- d) Leaves of fruits and root crops shall be removed to minimize water loss.
- e) Bamboo baskets shall be lined with appropriate materials to act as barriers against too much moisture loss.
- f) Vegetables should be freshened with clean water, whenever applicable.

- g) Cut-up vegetables should be packed with transparent plastic.
- h) Perforated plastic film liners should be used on containers for commodities stored at low temperatures and provided with proper ventilation.
- i) Fruits and vegetables should be packed in clean containers.
- j) Packing of fruits and vegetables should have no sign of degradation and should not be treated with unauthorized preservative.
- k) Root and bulb crops should be stored at a relatively dry atmosphere.
- l) Select fruits and vegetables, removing parts or items in poor condition, and check that they are intact and fit for human consumption.
- m) Prepare each kind of fruits and vegetables in the appropriate manner and according to its intended use.
- n) Peel, squeeze and/or cut, as appropriate fruits and vegetables with appropriate and hygienic equipment and utensils.
- o) Avoid direct hand contact with ready-to-eat of any kind, including peeled fruits/vegetables.

5.1.2.3 Meat

- a) All meat and meat products for sale should come from approved sources such as an accredited slaughterhouse, cold storage, dressing and meat processing plant.
- b) All fresh meat should be properly stamped or branded and issued with a Meat Inspection Certificate. All imported frozen meat from cold storages should be accompanied by Certificate of Meat Inspection (CoMI)
- c) Meat should be displayed in manner where the drip from one piece does not fall on another piece.
- d) Meat products must not be removed from the cold storage/freezers until required for serving or display.
- e) Tongs in handling meat products should be used to avoid direct contact. Plastic gloves may also be used by the handler.

6 Requirements for the area or place of selling

6.1 Area or place of selling

6.1.1 General considerations

6.1.1.1 These should be designed and constructed in accordance with Section IV of the Recommended International Code of Practice -General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 4 - 2003).

6.1.1.2 Requirements of the Sanitation Code of the Philippines (P.D. 856) should also be considered.

6.1.1.3 Place or area for display for fresh agriculture and fisheries products shall be kept clean and sanitary at all times.

6.1.1.4 Signboards/stall labels should be placed in an area where it could not be a source of contamination

6.1.1.5 Equipment, containers, utensils, working surfaces, and other components shall meet the same requirements specified in 4.2.

6.1.1.6 Flies and other pests or vermin should be controlled.

6.1.1.7 Spillages should be cleaned up promptly and product debris should not be allowed to accumulate.

6.1.2 Specific considerations

6.1.2.1 Indoor areas

- a) Indoor areas and selling areas should be sufficiently lit, well-ventilated, and kept as clean as possible at all times and situated far from any source of contaminants (rubbish, waste water, animals). Use of color enhancing lights is prohibited.
- b) The working area, including surfaces in contact with the fresh commodities, shall be in good condition and properly maintained and shall be washed with potable water and disinfected as appropriate.

6.1.2.2 Outdoor areas

- a) The area where the fresh agricultural products are displayed for sale shall be elevated and at least 60 to 70 cm off the ground for sale of meat and meat products.
- b) The area should be used only during market days.

6.2 Hygienic practice

6.2.1 Facilities

6.2.1.1 Toilets must have separate rooms for male and female with clean flushable bowls.

6.2.1.2 Toilets must be well-ventilated, well-lighted and frequently cleaned and disinfected.

6.2.1.3 Individual toilet quarters must have covered waste boxes.

6.2.1.4 Hygienic/sanitary practices reminders should be appropriately posted in toilets.

6.2.1.5 Hand washing lavatories should be provided with potable water, liquid cleaning detergents and hand drying devices.

6.2.1.6 Locker rooms, when available, should be kept in good hygienic conditions.

6.3 Personal hygiene

6.3.1 Food handlers and market vendors should take a bath before going to work.

6.3.2 Nails should be kept trimmed, clean and without nail polish.

6.3.3 Clean apron and hairnet should be worn at work at all times.

6.3.4 No person who is known to be suffering from, or who is a carrier of any communicable disease or has infected wound or open lesions should engage in the preparation, handling, and transportation.

6.3.5 Market vendors should possess valid health certificates.

6.3.6 Persons selling or handling fresh produce shall refrain from spitting, coughing, sneezing, smoking or behavior/habits that can compromise food safety.

6.3.7 Food handlers shall not wear any jewelries, accessories and perfumes.

6.3.8 Handlers shall not handle fresh produce, money, and receipts or tickets at same time. When this is not possible, washing and disinfecting of hands before handling and selling products is recommended.

6.3.9 Suitable protective clothing with sleeves must be worn by all handlers/vendors. Garments shall be changed every day or as often as necessary.

6.3.10 Hands and forearms must also be thoroughly washed after visiting the toilet, blowing the nose, handling refuse or swill, and smoking before handling products and at frequent intervals during the work period.

6.3.11 Clean and dry disposable cloths is preferred for usage.

6.3.12 Tongs or gloves shall be provided to customers when they handle the products where applicable.

7 Requirements for fresh agriculture and fisheries products marketing

7.1 Sales stall

7.1.1 The sales stall should be built of solid, resistant and impermeable material and should be sufficiently high to be easily sanitized.

7.1.2 The sales stall, its surroundings and equipment or tools should be kept clean, free of litter and odors, in good repair and condition and free from vermin at all times.

7.1.3 The sales stall shall be free from personal belongings, such as clothes, footwear, blankets, tobacco, and other forms of contaminants. Avoid keeping personal belongings in the area of food preparation, storage and/or consumption.

7.1.4 All merchandise displayed for sale shall be so arranged that the aisles and passageways shall not obstruct the flow of customers.

7.1.5 Display table surface should be sloping or inclined to allow efficient downward flow of water to the drainage. The surface should also be smooth, free from cracks or crevices, non-porous, non-corrosive, non-toxic, non-absorbent, easy to clean and disinfect.

7.1.6 Business permit, stall number, names of principal vendor/handlers and certificate, (e.g. Meat Inspection Certificate) issued for the day are displayed in conspicuous place within their respective stall.

7.1.7 Adornments, decorative displays, promotional materials and other items may be placed in such a way that they do not present a source for cross-contamination.

7.1.8 Animals must not be allowed in any stall area. Infestations of insects or rodents must be reported immediately to the Market Administrator or Superintendent.

7.1.9 When not in use, the sales stall should be covered and/or kept in a clean dry place.

7.1.10 The outdoor sales stall should not be used for any other purpose.

7.1.11 The outdoor sales stall should be located in a zone determined by the concerned Local Government Unit so that it is protected from contaminants originating from traffic, pedestrians, domestic animals and/or vectors.

7.1.12 The outdoor sales stall must be designated by the market superintendent or administrator and stored in clean, safe and dry area protected from sun, dust, fumes and other sources of contaminants during non-market days.

7.2 Protection and sale of fresh agriculture and fisheries products

7.2.1 General consideration

7.2.1.1 Requirements of Republic Act No. 7394 otherwise known as the Consumer Act of the Philippines (i.e. Title III Protection Against Deceptive, Unfair and Unconscionable Sales Acts or Practices) should be considered.

7.2.1.2 Due care shall be taken to prevent fresh products from falling to the floor.

7.2.1.3 Care should be taken to prevent contamination at all times.

7.2.1.4 Products should not be handled unnecessarily by buyers.

7.2.1.5 Color enhancing lights, mats and other materials to deceive the consumers as to the freshness/wholesomeness is prohibited.

7.2.1.6 If the outdoor point of sale is a vehicle, the driver's compartment shall be separated from the compartment used for handling and sale. It shall be cleaned and separated from the rest of the vehicle.

8 Handling and disposal of waste and pest control

8.1 Waste bins (containers) should be kept far from the handling area and have a lid and, where possible, should be fitted with an automatic closing device.

8.2 Waste containers should be of rust or corrosion resistant material, waterproof, and easy to clean.

8.3 All receptacles / refuse bins should be provided with tight fitting lids or covers, so constructed and maintained as to be vermin-proof and easily cleaned.

8.4 Waste management should comply with the provisions under Clean Water Act 9275 and Solid Waste Management RA 9003.

8.5 Pest control should be carried out in accordance with provincial, city, municipal and/or national regulations. The application of chemical substances for pest control should only be done by authorized technical personnel. The procedure should avoid the contamination of the commodity, vendors/handlers, the public and the environment.

8.6 Duly approved by competent authority vermin abatement program shall be instituted in the market or authorized outlets.

9 Traceability and recall

9.1 If applicable, each container/packaging material of fresh products should be marked properly for effective recall and stock rotation to identify the following:

9.1.1 Producer and contact information;

9.1.2 Place of production/origin;

9.1.3 Packer and contact details;

9.1.4 Product species;

9.1.5 Weight, volume, number

9.1.6 Harvest area and/or; and

9.1.7 Production Date**9.1.8** Name and address of meat establishment

9.2 Authorities should ensure effective procedures are in place to deal with any food safety hazard and to enable the complete and rapid recall of products from the market

9.3 Products that have been withdrawn from market due to immediate hazard, other products which are produced under similar conditions must be evaluated for safety and may need to be withdrawn. The need for public warnings should be considered.

9.4 Recalled products must be held under the supervision of the competent authority until they are destroyed, used for purposes other than human consumption, or determined to be safe for human consumption.

References**PNS/BAFPS 46:2006**

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the references document (including any amendments) applies.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act

The Code of Federal Regulations Part 123 – Fish & Fishery Products

The Consumer Act of the Philippines

EC Regulation 178/2002

Fisheries Administrative Order #211

Fisheries Administrative Order #210

Fisheries Administrative Order #212

Food Standards Code – Australia New Zealand 2002 - Traceability

Gönül, Kaletunç & Ferhan Özadali. Understanding the Recall Concept in the Food Industry. www.ohioline.osu.edu/aex-fact/0251.html. Retrieved: February 21, 2006

International Standard for Drinking Water, WHO (1963) RA 9296

Recommended International Code of Practice- General Principles of Food Hygiene - CAC/RCP 1-1969 (Rev. 4-2003)

The Sanitation Code of the Philippines

Traceability in the Food Chain – Food Standards Agency UK

Fisheries Administrative Order 212 S. 2001

AO no. 6 series of 2012- Rules and regulations on hygienic handling of chilled, frozen and thawed meat in meat markets

Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Foods, Codex Alimentarius CAC/ RCP 43R-1995

US-FDA Food Code 2009

Code of Hygienic Practice for Precooked and Cooked Foods in Mass Catering, Codex Alimentarius CAC/ RCP 39-1993