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## Business-Driven Solutions to Improve Food Safety and Reduce Postharvest Loss in Emerging Economies

#FES #BD4FS #postharvestloss #foodsafety #GFB #SME



Produce market in Ethiopia; Photo credit: Russ Webster.

Inadequate food safety practices are prevalent among businesses operating along post-farmgate to pre-consumer food corridors in emerging economies. Disruption of the cold chain and poor hygiene practices are commonly observed during food handling at all points along the supply chain. This adversely affects the safety and nutritional value of food, as well as the shelf-life, quality, and market value of food products. Scalable solutions to food safety can reduce food loss and the incidence of foodborne illness, while also increasing profit for businesses and generating greater employment opportunities for the local workforce.

On this second annual International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, Feed the Future Business Drivers for Food Safety (BD4FS), funded by USAID and implemented by Food Enterprise Solutions (FES), recognizes the important role of businesses in developing and driving effective and sustainable solutions to food safety and food loss challenges. Core to our mission is strengthening capacities of food business actors so that they can be agents of positive change towards creating a culture of food safety.

Collaboration and co-creation with businesses and other food systems actors are key to the BD4FS approach. We are identifying small- to medium-sized local food businesses in our Feed the Future focus countries – Ethiopia, Senegal, and Nepal - that are influential actors in the food system, have a desire to grow, and embrace food safety as an integral part of their business. We refer to these as Growing Food Businesses (GFBs). We are working closely with our partner GFBs to learn what the existing practices are for food safety and to understand barriers and enablers for adopting safer food practices.

There is strong food safety capacity in Ethiopia, Senegal, and Nepal concentrated in the export sector, driven by profit and markets that have import regulations for food safety. GFBs that supply local markets, however, lack access to capital that would enable them to adopt cold chain technologies to improve food safety and reduce postharvest loss. With this insight, we have initiated a training series to help these GFBs become investment-ready; and in a parallel effort, we are exploring affordable financial services for capital investment in cold chain logistics and innovative food safety technologies. Upon learning that many food businesses do not measure postharvest loss, BD4FS co-developed a postharvest loss tool for businesses to measure food loss and have engaged partner GFBs in Senegal to test the tool. BD4FS will work with GFBs to incorporate measuring and tracking postharvest loss into their business standard operating procedures (SOPs).

We believe that when businesses have a quantifiable understanding of how implementing food safety practices and technologies will improve their bottom line through expanded market access, improved product value, and reduced food loss, they will be incentivized to create and adopt solutions to existing food safety challenges.



FES president, Russ Webster, meeting with food business and food safety practitioners in Ethiopia; Photo courtesy of FES.

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