

PRESENT STATUS OF AWARENESS AND COMPLIANCE ON FOOD ACT IN SRI LANKA

A.T. Kolamunna¹ and C.A.K. Dissanayake¹

¹*Department of Animal and Food Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura.*

Food safety has become a worldwide concern with the development of the food industry. Similarly in Sri Lanka, attention on food safety and hygiene issues has been increased. Legislative regulation of those issues is mainly done under the Food Act No. 26 of 1980 which has been amended twice in 1991 and 2011. These food regulations are stated in Gazette notifications. Proper awareness and compliance with the food act are necessary for food safety. This cross-sectional analysis was done to assess the awareness and compliance with prohibitions and regulations in Food Act. Litigations undertaken by public health Inspectors in *Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Nuwaraeliya, Matara, Anuradhapura* and *Polonnaruwa* districts and data from a field surveys were analyzed. Thirty Public Health Inspectors from the above stated seven districts, 50 traders and 70 consumers from *Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Kalutara* and *Kurunegala* were interviewed for the study. Collected primary and secondary data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, Friedman and Chi-square tests with 95% confidence level ($p=0.05$). According to litigations analyzed, "Food (labelling and advertising) regulation" was the highest violated regulation in Sri Lanka. However, according to the ranking by Public Health Inspectors, the highest violated regulation was Food (Packaging materials and articles) regulation ($p<0.05$). Laws regarding hygiene and labelling had been the ones implemented more frequently. According to traders' ranking, their highest and least compliance were on Food (Packaging materials and articles) regulation and Food (Bread standards) regulation respectively ($p<0.05$). The highest consumer awareness was on colouring agents whereas, least was on flavouring agents. Highest and least compliance were on Food (Adoption for standards) regulation and Food (Labelling and advertising) regulation respectively ($p<0.05$). In conclusion, labelling and advertising are the most prominent violation related to food safety in Sri Lanka. Thus, awareness has to be increased on food safety regulations among all stakeholders in the country.

Keywords: Consumers, Food regulations, Public Health Inspectors, Traders, Violation