

EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food

EatSafe in Ethiopia Program Launch Report

July 2022

This EatSafe report presents evidence that will help engage and empower consumers and market actors to better obtain safe nutritious food. It will be used to design and test consumer-centered food safety interventions in informal markets through the EatSafe program.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EatSafe	Evidence and Action Toward Safe, Nutritious Foods
FBD	Foodborne diseases
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Food safety plays a critical role in reducing foodborne disease. The World Health Organization estimates that 600 million people fall sick as a result of 200 different types of foodborne illness. In 2018, the Ethiopian government developed the Food and Nutrition Policy in 2018 to address issues throughout the food system – including the urgent problem of food safety.

As a consortium led by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Feed the Future's EatSafe program aims to improve the safety of nutritious foods in traditional markets. EatSafe in Ethiopia will operate in Aroge Gebeya market, located in Hawassa.

This report summarizes the formal launch of the EatSafe program in Ethiopia on May 12, 2022. The event was attended by 51 participants representing Feed the Future, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Ethiopia Mission, regional and local governments, private sector, academia, and research institutes. EatSafe's formal launch aimed to:

- Introduce EatSafe Ethiopia program to key stakeholders.
- Create opportunities for networking and collaboration among participants.
- Ensure a spirit of cooperation and commitment from all stakeholders.

GAIN's Ethiopia Director provided opening remarks, followed by keynote speeches from the Deputy Head of Ethiopia's Industry and Trade Bureau and the Feed the Future Coordinator for the USAID Mission in Ethiopia. EatSafe's Chief of Party and Senior Country Program Manager also spoke, followed by a presentation from a Hawassa University professor. Prior to closing remarks by a Senior Researcher from the Sidama Public Health Institute, a performance group performed a food safety drama enacting the consequences of foodborne illness.

EatSafe collected contact information for all event participants, ensuring continued collaboration and communication through the life of the EatSafe program in Ethiopia.

I. INTRODUCTION

Food safety plays a critical role in reducing foodborne disease. The World Health Organization estimates that 600 million people fall sick as a result of 200 different types of foodborne illness. In 2018, the Ethiopian government developed the Food and Nutrition Policy in 2018 to address issues throughout the food system – including the urgent problem of food safety.

Recognizing the considerable long-term work required to improve food safety systems, Feed the Future, an initiative of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), developed the Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food (EatSafe) program in 2019. As a consortium led by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), EatSafe aims to improve the safety of nutritious foods bought and sold in traditional food markets in low- and middle-income countries.

In Ethiopia, the EatSafe program officially launched on May 12, 2022 at Haile Resort, Hawassa. The launch event provided stakeholders with important information to help shape their views of EatSafe as a new Feed the Future program operating in Ethiopia. The program will operate in Aroge Gebeya market, located in Hawassa.

This report provides a summary of the formal launch event (see agenda in [Appendix 1](#)). The event was attended by 51 participants representing the following organizations:

- USAID Ethiopia offices;
- Other Feed the Future programs working in Ethiopia (Business Drivers for Food Safety, and Alliance for Inclusive and Nutritious Food Processing);
- Sidama Trade and Industry, Health, and Agriculture Bureaus;
- Sidama Public Health Institute;
- Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise;
- Hawassa University;
- Food vendors from Aroge Gebeya market; and
- Women, youth, private sector, and farmers associations.

I.1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the EatSafe launch event in Ethiopia were to:

- Introduce EatSafe Ethiopia program to key stakeholders;
- Create opportunities for networking and collaboration among participants; and
- Ensure a spirit of cooperation and commitment from all stakeholders.

2. PROGRAM SESSSIONS

2.1. OPENING REMARKS

Wubet Girma, the Country Director of GAIN's Ethiopia Office, welcomed all participants to the launch event. She provided an overview of GAIN as an organization, describing its mission as improving the consumption of nutritious and safe foods for all. In addition to program implementation, GAIN advocates for national policies that make safe and nutritious foods more available, affordable, and desirable for the Ethiopian people.

Through the financial support of USAID and Feed the Future, GAIN leads a consortium that includes International Livestock Research Institute, Pierce Mill Entertainment and Education, and the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics which is prepared to launch EatSafe in Ethiopia. Girma thanked key stakeholders who have engaged in initial program startup discussions and said GAIN and EatSafe look forward to strengthened collaboration through the life of the program.

2.2. KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Ato Betisso Wadiso, the Deputy Head of the Ethiopian Industry and Trade Bureau, provided the first keynote speech. He expressed his view that the EatSafe work to improve food safety in traditional markets will expand and support other development sectors. He further encouraged all stakeholders to work together, collaborating diligently throughout the life of the EatSafe program in Ethiopia. In conclusion, Betisso announced that the EatSafe program was officially launched in Ethiopia.

The second keynote speech was delivered by Megan Kyles, Feed the Future Coordinator, Economic Growth and Transformation Office, USAID Ethiopia Mission. She underlined that EatSafe is an important part of the United States Government's Feed the Future Initiative to end poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. Kyles further noted that unsafe food is an important component of Feed the Future's work, given that foodborne illness affects 100 million Africans each year. With a fruitful collaboration between USAID, Feed the Future, and the EatSafe consortium organizations, EatSafe's focus on consumers and vendors can help improve consumers' access to safe food in traditional markets in Ethiopia.

2.3. FOOD SAFETY AS A GLOBAL CONCERN

Richard Pluke, EatSafe's Chief of Party, described why food safety is a global concern. The burden of foodborne disease is immense, with vulnerable populations (i.e., children, older adults, and pregnant women) bearing 40% of this burden. The World Health

Organization estimates that foodborne diseases are responsible for 600 million illnesses and 420,000 deaths globally. The World Bank estimates that foodborne disease has an economic impact of \$110 billion lost annually.

Food safety is recognized as an essential area of focus for food systems, especially for countries struggling with the delivery of safe and nutritious food. EatSafe assists governments in their efforts by focusing on four areas:

1. Testing new approaches to reduce foodborne hazards and risks in traditional markets;
2. Emphasizing the linkages between food safety and nutrition;
3. Leveraging the role consumers play in seeking improved food safety outcomes;
4. Stimulating national and global prioritization of food safety.

Consumers are critical to EatSafe's approach, as their behaviors, perspectives, and concerns about food safety will inform the design of EatSafe's interventions in traditional market settings. Likewise, EatSafe seeks to elevate food safety on the national and global stages. Dr. Pluke invited all participants to maximize the momentum of the work through their engagement with EatSafe in Ethiopia, concluding that partnerships provide the opportunity to improve food safety and build a stronger food system.

2.4. THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD SAFETY IN ETHIOPIA

Dr. Kebede Abegaz, Hawassa University, described the significance of food safety in Ethiopia. He explained how unsafe food triggers a vicious cycle frequently leading to increased malnutrition. Food contamination at any point in the food supply chain can cause diarrheal diseases – and many types of foodborne illness can even be fatal. Kebede discussed several factors that affect the availability of safe food, including an uncoordinated food system from production through consumption, inconsistent rules across the supply chains and in markets, poor market infrastructure, and limited capacity for enforcement of rules and regulations. He concluded by emphasizing the need for programs like EatSafe to coordinate across food system actors and focus specifically on traditional markets.

2.5. INTRODUCTION OF THE EATSAFE PROGRAM

Genet Gebremedhin, EatSafe Senior Country Program Manager, formally introduced participants to the EatSafe program.¹ EatSafe in Ethiopia will operate in the Aroge Gebeya traditional food market located in Hawassa. She described its two-phased approach starting with formative research that informs the design, testing, and implementation of interventions during Phase II. She noted that EatSafe broadly shares

¹ EatSafe's key objectives and expected results are described in the [one-page program brief](#).

knowledge and information through both phases of the program –within the EatSafe consortium, to development partners, other Feed the Future and USAID investments in Ethiopia, public sector organizations and additional stakeholders who seeks to improve food safety.

2.6. FOOD SAFETY DRAMA

A group of young people [performed a drama about food safety \(Figure 1\)](#). They danced to well-known Sidama music and were dressed in colorful clothes of the culture. The drama followed the process of producing food using traditional agricultural methods to its sale at a traditional market with poor sanitary conditions. The drama then showed the dangers of poor hygiene at home, as food was prepared by unwashed hands and family members became ill. Those who were infected with contaminated food were taken to a clinic, treated for their illness and educated on proper food hygiene. The piece concluded with a demonstration of how the characters changed their behaviors both in the market and at home.

Figure 1. Photograph of the Food Safety Drama



2.7. CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Million Tamato, Senior Researcher at Sidama Public Health Institute, closed the event. Tamato emphasized the dangers eating unsafe food, underlining how one can be vulnerable to a range of health problems. He compared avoiding unsafe food to other health-promoting food behaviors (e.g., avoiding tobacco, and limiting excessive salt, fat sugar, alcohol in the diet). He then closed the launch event and invited participants to lunch at 12 PM (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Photograph of Participants from EatSafe in Ethiopia Launch Event



3. APPENDICES

3.1. APPENDIX I: AGENDA

TIME	ACTIVITY	FACILITATOR
9:00 - 9:29 AM	Registration and Coffee	EatSafe team
9:30 - 9:35 AM	Introducing the program	Taye Worku, <i>Master of Ceremony; Radio Host</i>
9:36 - 9:46 AM	Welcome Speech	Wubet Girma, <i>GAIN, Ethiopia Country Director</i>
9:47 - 9:59 AM	Keynote Speech	Ato Betiso Wadiso, <i>Deputy Head, Industry and Trade Bureau</i>
10 - 10:10 AM	Keynote Speech	Megan Kyles, <i>Feed the Future Coordinator, Economic Growth & Transformation Office, USAID</i>
10:11 - 10:30 AM	Food Safety as a Global Concern	Richard Pluke, <i>Chief of Party, EatSafe</i>
10:31 - 10:50 AM	Importance of food safety in Ethiopia	Kebede Abegaz, <i>Instructor, Nutrition, Food Science, & Technology, Hawassa University</i>
10:51 - 11:05 AM	Introducing EatSafe Program	Genet Gebremedhin, <i>EatSafe Country Senior Program Manger</i>
11:06 - 11:26 AM	Food safety drama	Performance group
11:27 - 11:45 AM	Closing Remarks	Dr. Million Tamato, <i>Senior Researcher Sidama Public Health Institute</i>
11:46 - 11:59 AM	Group photo	All
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Lunch	