

EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food

Report of Municipal Roundtable on Design of Safe Markets for Nutritious Food in Kebbi State

Revised September 2021

Held at Saffar Guest Inn Limited, Gesse Phase II, Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State, Nigeria

Organized by GAIN in Collaboration with USAID

On May 18 and 19, 2021



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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 traditional markets through the EatSafe program.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Below is a list of all acronyms and abbreviations used in the report.

CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EatSafe	Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food
FES	Focused Ethnographic Study
FtF	Feed the Future
FTL	Faith and Traditional Leaders
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
LFN	Law of Federal Republic of Nigeria
LGA	Local Government Area
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NAFDAC	National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control
NESREA	National Environmental Standards Regulation Enforcement Agency
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NPHCDA	National Primary Health Care Development Agency
SON	Standards Organization of Nigeria
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipal Roundtable Discussion on design of safe markets for nutritious food was held as a town hall-style meeting on the 18 and 19 May 2021 in Birnin Kebbi. The Municipal Roundtable Discussion (Roundtable) was designed to feed into the EatSafe Phase II intervention (co-creation) design workshop scheduled for 2-6 August 2021. The Roundtable's purpose was to update participants on EatSafe Nigeria project activities; discuss and receive input/suggestions from stakeholders on potential interventions that will make informal markets safer for nutritious food in Kebbi State; and strengthen collaboration towards ensuring safer markets for nutritious food in Kebbi State. On average, about one hundred participants attended on each day of the event. High level state government participation included the Honorable Commissioner, Kebbi State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Development and four Permanent Secretaries: the Vice-Chairman of Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area (LGA) and several other representatives from key stakeholder groups. The update on the EatSafe project activities was presented by the EatSafe Head of EatSafe Country Programs, who enumerated past and ongoing activities and next steps. This was followed by the town hall meeting discussions with participants divided into five groups according to stakeholders' role along the value chains of the seven EatSafe commodities (i.e., maize, fish, rice, cowpeas, soybeans, fresh vegetables, and beef). Each group was assigned a Facilitator who steered the group's discussions and reported on their discussion highlights and recommendations. The findings of the groups were then summarized and presented.

The stakeholders affirmed that the markets needed to improve their poor sanitary conditions, and that even though government policies and regulations exist, there is lack of implementation and enforcement in the markets. The key challenges to promoting food safety in the traditional markets include the poor Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) that hamper food safety culture; lack of suitable equipment/infrastructure; lack of financial resources and support; lack of stakeholder motivation; and concerns about potential increases in price due to adoption of improved food safety techniques/methods. It was noted that even though consumer associations are important and serve as a platform to reach consumers and enable them to present a stronger voice, there is currently no functional consumer association in Kebbi State. The stakeholders' recommended training; review of legislation; provision of facilities/infrastructure; advocacy; formation of consumer associations; and food safety sensitization/awareness through mass media outreach, among others. The stakeholders recognized the work of some organizations to promote food safety in the markets. *Bright Girls* and a few government agencies were specifically mentioned. With respect to EatSafe, stakeholders across the five different groups were willing to provide collaboration and services in their areas of expertise to support achievement of the set EatSafe objectives.

I. BACKGROUND

Food safety is essential to protecting health and livelihoods and in ensuring that food provides a safe source of nutrition for all consumers, especially in less developed regions. The burden of unsafe food falls disproportionately on consumers in certain regions of the world, especially Africa and Asia.

EatSafe (Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food) is a Feed the Future, USAID-funded, five-year project seeking lasting improvements in the safety of nutritious foods in informal markets by focusing on the consumer. Partners include the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), a research center with expertise in food safety, and Pierce Mill Entertainment and Education, a non-profit that specializes in social impact media for positive behavior change. EatSafe was established to generate evidence related to consumer-based interventions that can shape demand for safer food in informal markets. The project is currently being implemented in traditional markets in Kebbi State, Nigeria; will soon begin operations in Ethiopia; and may expand to additional countries in future years.

In Nigeria, the challenge of unsafe food is acute: Kebbi State, for example, has high levels of malnutrition, food insecurity and foodborne diseases despite being an agrarian State with diverse animal and plant food products. The Nigeria Demographic Health Survey 2018 reported that over 61% of children in the state suffer from malnutrition. Other studies report high levels of bacterial contamination of meat and meat products from markets in Kebbi state.

To tackle these problems, a national launch of the EatSafe Project (sponsored by USAID) was held in Abuja, Nigeria on December 3, 2020, with an associated state level launch on February 24, 2021, in Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State. The review of Citizen Engagement was held after the State launch. As a follow up to that review, a municipal roundtable discussion (town hall meeting) that focused on the design of safe markets for nutritious food was held on May 18 and 19 2021 in Birnin Kebbi. The outcome of the municipal roundtable was designed to feed into the EatSafe Phase II intervention (co-creation) design workshop scheduled for August 2-6, 2021.

2. OBJECTIVES

The municipal roundtable was held to:

- Update participants on EatSafe project activities;
- Discuss and receive input/suggestions from stakeholders on potential interventions for improving the safety of nutritious food available at informal markets in Kebbi State; and
- Strengthen collaboration towards ensuring safer nutritious food from informal markets.

3. PARTICIPANTS

One hundred people attended each day of the event, including the Honorable Commissioner, Kebbi State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Development and four Permanent Secretaries, Vice-Chairman of Birnin Kebbi Local Government Area (LGA) and key representatives from:

- USAID/FtF Partners in Kebbi State;
- Relevant federal government agencies in Kebbi State;
- Relevant state government ministries, departments, and agencies;
- Market managers and chairmen of Market Associations;
- Faith and traditional leaders;
- Private Sector Food processors;
- Farmers associations;
- Consumers representatives from the three markets included in the EatSafe studies in Birnin Kebbi;
- Non-government organizations (local and international); and
- Academia and relevant professional bodies from Kebbi State.

4. EATSAFE NIGERIA ACTIVITIES UPDATE

The Head of EatSafe Country Programs presented the update on the EatSafe project, enumerating past and ongoing activities as well as next steps. He highlighted EatSafe's work to produce the global and Nigerian research activities, including risk assessment of selected foods in the target markets in Birnin Kebbi, focused ethnographic study, and review of citizen engagement in food safety in Kebbi. EatSafe also held the national and state level launches to introduce the project to stakeholders, meetings with national food safety stakeholders in Abuja to update them on activities, and review of food safety indicators by stakeholders that resulted in selecting 6 EatSafe Custom indicators. Other activities included dissemination of research findings. EatSafe presented lessons learned, especially noting and commending stakeholders for their collaboration and outlined the challenges that remain – chief among them, the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. GROUPING AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSIONS

Participants were organized into five groups, including:

- A. State Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)/Federal Regulatory Agencies;
- B. Feed the Future, Development Partners, NGOs/CSOs/FTLs;
- C. Market Managers/Market Associations, Farmers Associations, Women Groups/Consumer Associations;
- D. Food Processors; and
- E. Professional Bodies/Associations and Academics.

Each group discussion was assigned a facilitator who guided the discussions and reported on outcomes. The following guidelines applied to all group discussions:

- Current market conditions and food safety risks;
- Existing government food safety policies/regulations in the markets or what other organizations are doing in target markets in the area of food safety;
- Challenges identified for promoting food safety;
- Absence of consumer associations to promote food safety;
- Recommendations for safe markets; and
- Specific collaborative efforts your organization can bring to the table.

6. GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS BY FACILITATORS

Each group reported its recommendations, as described in the sections below.

6.1. GROUP A: STATE MINISTRIES, DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES (MDAS)/FEDERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES

Current State and Food Safety Risk in the Markets. This group affirmed that Central Market, Birnin Kebbi has functional facilities e.g., well-structured market with lock-up shops, water facilities and adequate drainage etc. These facilities were lacking in the other two markets (Tsohon Kasuwa and Yaryara Market).



Group A discussion during the Municipal Roundtable on Design of Safe Markets for Nutritious Food in Birnin Kebbi held on 18th and 19th May, 2021

Existing Market Policies and/or Other Organizations Working in Food Safety.

Participants listed several public health laws, including the Consolidated Edicts of 1993; Meat Edict of 1978 (amended in 1985); and NAFDAC's Food and Drug ACT 32, ACT 33 and ACT 34, LFN. All these ACTs are examples of the laws that regulate informal markets. They also highlighted two organizations, the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) and Bright Girls, that are already doing some work in the markets.

Challenges Envisioned for Promoting Food Safety:

- Lack of knowledge on food safety issues among consumers and vendors due to low literacy rate;
- Resistance among vendors when told not to use poisonous chemicals as preservatives (e.g., calcium, carbide, and fluorine);
- Inadequate rule enforcement to ensure compliance to food safety standards;
- Inadequate market administrator capacity to address food safety issues;

- Little or no water, hygiene, and sanitation facilities in the three markets;
- Inadequate storage facilities in the markets;
- Some religious and cultural beliefs may pose as challenges;
- Unhygienic methods of food handling; and
- Contamination of food during transportation to the markets.

Absence Of Consumer Associations to Promote Food Safety: Participants in this group acknowledged the absence of consumer associations in the State. They also noted the importance of consumer associations in promoting food safety in the markets as well as ensuring vendor compliance with safety regulations.

Recommendations For Safe Markets:

- Encourage the formation of consumer associations through sensitization and inclusive mobilization;
- Invest in functional storage and preservative materials;
- Introduce modern, acceptable means of food storage and preservation;
- Process food to reduce post-harvest losses on some perishable items (e.g., mangoes, tomatoes, onions, pepper, etc.);
- Review application and enforcement of existing food safety laws/regulations;
- Promote the use of modern equipment and technologies in food processing and quality evaluation;
- Increase the number of market personnel and build their expertise in modern market management;
- Provide administrative structures at Tsohon and Yaryara markets; and
- Provide water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities at Yaryara and old markets.

Potential Future Collaborative Efforts. Participants in this group identified several areas in which their organizations could collaborate with EatSafe, including:

Ministry of Agriculture

- Further disseminate Good Agricultural Practice information for farmers;
- The use and handling of Agro-chemicals using radio platforms;
- Intensify quality control for all commodities in the three Kebbi markets;
- Synergize with all the regulatory agencies for food safety; and
- Promote improved storage and processing technologies and equipment.

Ministry of Budget and Planning

- Ensure adequate budgetary provisions for all the line MDAs; and
- Support the formulation of enabling policies and regulations on food safety.

6.2. GROUP B: FEED THE FUTURE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, NGOS/CSOS/FTLS

Current State of Food Safety Risk in the Markets. Participants agreed that the markets are in deplorable condition. They highlighted some of the current problems in the markets to include poor drainage, lack of water, poor WASH practices in the markets, etc.

Existing Market Policies and/or Other Organizations Working in Food Safety.

Participants could not readily point to an existing government regulation on the informal markets besides the government's revenue collection drive. They specifically referenced the work of the Bright Girls, an indigenous non-government organization.



Cross Section of Participants during Group B discussion at the Municipal Roundtable on Design of Safe Markets for Nutritious Food in Birnin Kebbi held on 18th and 19th May, 2021

Challenges Envisioned for Promoting Food Safety. Participants believed it would be a challenge to change people's behavior, and although the government may be willing to establish policies and implement regulations, enforcement would always be a major challenge. Participants also expressed concern about food safety controls contributing to price hikes in the informal markets, which would place extra burden on consumers.

Absence of Consumer Associations to Promote Food Safety: Participants are not aware of any functional consumer association in the State and emphasized the importance of such associations in ensuring safety of food in the informal markets.

Recommendations for Safe Markets:

- Provision of good drainage systems;
- Training and sensitization of vendors;
- Provision of sustainable food protective equipment in the markets;
- Monitoring of food transporters; and
- Establishment of consumer associations.

Potential Future Collaborative Efforts. Participants stated they could collaborate with EatSafe in the following areas:

- Bright Girls and Active Support can contribute to public awareness;
- Breakthrough Action can collaborate with EatSafe in the area of behavioral change monitoring;
- Mothers Association believed they would be helpful in reaching women processors and training them in proper food handling practices; and
- Niima Farmers Association believed it could collaborate with EatSafe to train women farmers on best agricultural practices.

6.3. GROUP C: MARKET MANAGERS/MARKET ASSOCIATIONS, FARMERS ASSOCIATIONS, WOMEN GROUPS/CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS

Current State of Food Safety Risk in the Markets.

Participants believed that the current condition of the EatSafe target markets is fair, but there is room for improvement.

Existing Market Policies and/or Other Organizations Working in Food Safety.

Participants agreed there are laws, policies, and regulations, but they are not being implemented on the ground at the markets.



Participants during Group C discussion at the Municipal Roundtable on Design of Safe Markets for Nutritious Food in Birnin Kebbi held on 18th and 19th May, 2021

Challenges Envisioned for Promoting Food Safety:

- Inadequate preservative equipment for fresh leafy vegetables and fruit products;
- Lack of cold storage for fresh meat and fish;
- Inadequate supervision by government regulatory officers;
- Inadequate mobilization of extension workers to enlighten and educate farmers on safe use of agrochemicals such as fertilizers, insecticides/ pesticides, and good supply seeds; and
- Inadequate farming inputs, such as improved seed varieties and improved breeds of farm animals.

Absence of Consumer Associations to Promote Food Safety: Participants were not aware of any consumer association in the State and emphasized the importance of such associations in ensuring proper safety of food in the markets.

Recommendations for Safe Markets:

- Review Environmental Health Laws to address contexts in Kebbi State;
- Enhance enforcement role/mandate for health workers; and
- Provide for modern digital equipment/facilities.

Potential Future Collaborative Efforts. Participants believed they can collaborate with EatSafe to form consultative groups comprising all stakeholders for monitoring all food production, processing, and selling activities.

6.4. GROUP D: FOOD PROCESSORS

Current State of Food Safety Risk in the Markets. Participants said the current state of Yaryara Market is deplorable but believed that the condition of the Central Market is fair, compared to other markets.

Existing Market Policies and/or Other Organizations Working in Food Safety.

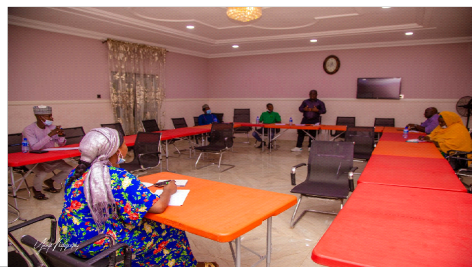
Participants acknowledged the role of Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Ministry of Health, etc. as agencies empowered to help improve conditions and practices in the informal market.

Challenges Envisioned for Promoting Food Safety. Participants identified challenges with food display due to limited infrastructure and difficulty affecting behavioral change. Limited food handling knowledge was also identified as a possible challenge.

Absence of Consumer Associations to Promote Food Safety. Participants said they were not aware of any consumer association in the state.

Recommendations for Safe Markets: Sensitization on food safety best practices, personal hygiene and food handling practices and provision of facilities that will improve personal and environmental hygiene.

Potential Future Collaborative Efforts. Collaboration with EatSafe in areas of training and sensitization on food safety best practices-good personal hygiene and food handling practices.



Group D Participants during group discussion at the Municipal Roundtable on Design of Safe Markets for Nutritious Food in Birnin Kebbi held on 18th and 19th May,

6.5. GROUP E: PROFESSIONAL BODIES/ASSOCIATIONS AND ACADEMICS

Current State of Food Safety Risk in the Markets. The current condition of the target markets is not encouraging. They highlighted concerns about chemical contaminants, open defecation, open display of cooked food, mixed display of food products and chemicals in close proximity, as some of the food safety risks in these markets.

Existing Market Policies and/or Other Organizations Working in Food Safety. Existing laws highlighted include the Public Health Law, National Environmental Standards Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA), NAFDAC, SON, National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA). Participants also identified the Ministry of Health and Environment as well as some NGOs as some of the organizations currently (or historically) carrying out sensitization on food safety.

Challenges Envisioned for Promoting Food Safety:

- Resource constraints such as financial, human, and material;
- Inadequate knowledge of food safety among vendors and consumers;
- Poor pest/disease management techniques; and
- Inadequate inspection of imported foods sold in the markets.

Absence of Consumer Associations to Promote Food Safety: Participants reported not to be aware of any consumer associations in the state or in the markets.

Recommendations for Safe Markets: Sensitization, training on proper chemical application, decongestion of markets, enforcement of regulations, etc.

Potential Future Collaborative Efforts. Collaboration with EatSafe in areas of training and sensitization.

7. HARMONIZED GROUP REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

EatSafe collated and presented the harmonized report from the group recommendations. The consensus was that the current condition of the Central Market is fair, but there is need for improvement to enhance food safety. The other two markets were characterized as in poor conditions and in need of urgent and meaningful improvements.

The problems identified in the markets include standing water in some specific areas; high population density; illegal structures and open spaces; insufficient number of hand-washing facilities; insufficient water supply; concerns of pesticides on grains, especially cowpea; open defecation; open influx of contaminated foods, and an inadequate number of environmental health officers.

Government policies and regulations were believed to be in place but are not being enforced in the markets. Some stakeholders were also concerned that revenue collection regulations were being implemented.

Challenges envisioned for promoting food safety cut across knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) that hamper food safety; lack of suitable equipment and infrastructure; lack of financial resources; lack of motivation; and increased prices due to adoption of



Dr. Nwando Onuigbo-Chatta and Altine Sahabi (participant/ Interpreter) during the Municipal Roundtable on Design of Safe Markets for Nutritious Food in Birnin Kebbi held on 18th and 19th May, 2021

improved food safety techniques/methods. The absence of consumer associations in Kebbi was identified by all groups as a gap, as they are important and serve as a platform to reach consumers and present a stronger voice for improved conditions and policies.

The stakeholders' recommendations on potential interventions for safe markets include a variety of areas: training; review revision and implementation of legislation; provision of

facilities/infrastructure; advocacy; formation of consumer associations; and sensitization/awareness through mass media, among others.

They recognized some organizations' efforts to promote food safety in the markets,

specifically Bright Girls and several government agencies. With respect to prospective EatSafe collaboration, stakeholders across the five groups were willing to provide services in their areas of expertise to support achievement of the set objectives.



A cross section of participants at the Municipal Roundtable on Design of Safe Markets for Nutritious Food in Birnin Kebbi held on 18th and 19th May, 2021

8. CONCLUSION

EatSafe acknowledged the contributions of stakeholders to the discussion on improving food safety in the markets and reiterated the need for all stakeholders to sustain collaborative efforts that drive towards improving the safety and availability of nutritious foods in the traditional markets in the State.

8.1. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

The following documents and materials related to the workshop are available upon request: Concept note; Agenda; PowerPoint presentations; media files (i.e., audio); Photos; and Attendance List.

Recommendations for Intervention Design and Future Studies under EatSafe

EatSafe [Nigeria] aims to generate the evidence and knowledge to leverage the potential for increased consumer demand for safe food to substantially improve the safety of nutritious foods available in informal market settings in Nigeria and other countries where EatSafe operates. Central to EatSafe's work is understanding (and potentially shaping) the motivations, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of consumers and food vendors. While EatSafe will undertake novel primary research on consumer and vendor motivations and practices, it is essential to ensure that this work is informed by and builds on what has already been done—both in terms of methods used and results obtained. The following lessons emerging from this document can be considered to influence the design of EatSafe's interventions going forward:

- In general, the problems identified in the markets were: poor or complete lack of good drainage systems; high population density in the markets; insufficient number of hand-washing facilities; inadequate water supply; concerns of pesticides on grains (especially cowpea); open defecation; open influx of contaminated foods; and an inadequate number of environmental health officers.
- To improve the safety of nutritious food available in the target markets, certain water, sanitation and hygiene facilities may need to be provided and the existing ones improved upon. Also, there may be need for increased public awareness of alternative preservation methods for grains to reduce chemical contamination.
- For improved food safety in informal markets, the regulatory environment needs to be revived and vendor compliance improved.
- Consumer associations are key and vital to achieving safe markets for nutritious food. Collaboration with responsible government and non-governmental organizations to create functional consumer associations in the state should be given consideration.
- Other potential interventions recommended for safe markets are training and retraining, review of legislation, provision of facilities/infrastructure, advocacy, and sensitization/awareness on food safety through mass media, among other approaches.