

LAUNCHING RESEARCH ON BENEFITS OF NUTRITION AND RISKS OF FOOD SAFETY OF ANIMAL SOURCE FOODS IN VIETNAM

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In Vietnam, some people believe you shouldn't turn the fish over while you are eating it, because it is bad luck and means the boat may turn over when it goes fishing and that fisherman may die. On the other hand, Vietnamese women eat pork legs as they believe that this make them have more milk to breastfeed their child. Food is one of the most important aspects of life and culture and unsurprisingly there are many beliefs, proverbs and taboos about growing, preparing and eating food.

Animal source foods are excellent sources of nutrition but also a major cause of food-borne disease. In order to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks we need to understand consumption patterns. First of all: is the food produced and important in the community? But, it is not enough for food to be available in a community. It must also be affordable, accessible and acceptable, and ideally safe to the people who need it and can benefit from its nutrients. Many different factors influence the nutritional benefits and health risks of meat, milk, eggs and fish. These include whether people produce the livestock product or have to get it by other means, the quantities of animal source foods produced and sold, animal disease, the way foods are processed and prepared, and the amounts that different people in the community eventually eat.

These benefits of nutrition and risks of food safety of animal source foods are currently being investigated with national and international partners, and in Vietnam supported by ACIAR. The work has been linked to another project called [PigRisk](#) which focuses on human and animal health risks associated with the pork value chain. Qualitative assessment started with two workshops in Hung Yen and Nghe An, two provinces selected as CRP L&F study sites. Focus group discussions (FGD) were held with five groups of stakeholders: farmers; input suppliers; butchers and retailers; public animal health services; and, public human health services. Stakeholders mapped the value chain and discussed constraints and opportunities. Excellent facilitation was provided by a large team from the national project partners and co-leads Hanoi University of Agriculture and Hanoi School of Public Health.



This will be followed by rapid qualitative assessment in three districts of each province. We have identified districts which represent rural to rural, rural to peri-urban to urban, and peri-urban to urban value chains. In each district we will conduct Participatory Risk Assessments with farmers and consumers, FGDs with mothers of infants, and key informant interviews with input suppliers, transporters, butchers and the health and livestock public services.