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A landscape analysis of food control framework in Sri Lanka

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The local food industry is a top seated money maker in the Sri Lankan economy. Hence, food controlling becomes an essential and integral concern both for the consumer and industry. As a country which possesses a high posted food industry in its economy, being equipped with an effective and proactive national food control system is of paramount importance. In this study attempts were taken to explore the prevalent food control system in Sri Lanka identifying the local food control agencies and their legislations on different aspects of food trade. The central food administration unit, Sri Lanka Standards Institution, local food control agencies and the stakeholder group of food regulators were surveyed by way of unstructured interviews to analyse the *status-quo* of local food control systems. Altogether 29 respondents were interviewed covering the pertinent stakeholders of apex food control management, inspection and analytical personnel, food operators along with related academia. At present, the multiple agency food control system in Sri Lanka suffers from fragmented mandate, poor coordination, bureaucracies along the way from farm to table continuum. Moreover, Sri Lanka being a developing country, the food industry's infrastructure is deemed poverty stricken and therefore the regulators have to arrive at a compromise between public health protection and industry development in imposing food regulations. Conclusively, the components of the local food control system require improvements and constructive and conceivable recommendations to uplift the local food control framework highlighting an integrated and participatory approach with relevant stakeholder groups. In this case, the study has made its recommendations to obtain assistance from international agencies, especially WHO and FAO, to prepare guidelines.

Keywords: Food control systems, food legislations, food regulations, food standards, Sri Lanka