

AVA. Lastly, the looking into tapping new media such as blogs, podcasts and SMS⁶ to enhance communication efforts is proposed.

Strategies to improve the risk communication program of Thailand were presented in a case study. The delegates from the Member Economy identified five approaches. First is the involvement of farm, industries and consumers. This approach includes formulation of a national communication plan and an emergency plan for crises situations. Second is the understanding of consumer perception. Under this activity, a spokesperson shall be identified to convey key messages to the public. Training modules shall also be developed for vital food safety programs

The third action focuses on product labeling. The media shall be instructed on safe cooking methods. Newsletters, cartoon series and other educational materials shall also be disseminated for such purpose. Fourth is regular monitoring by the government. Farms shall be inspected and compliance monitored. Markets, supermarkets and retailers shall also be checked as to compliance with labeling provisions.

National surveillance systems would include field and hospital surveillance. Partnership with reference laboratory networks and the WHO shall be strengthened. Enhancing consumer awareness completes the five approaches. Conduct of a national public awareness campaign shall be in one of the major activities under this approach.

For the case study by the delegates from Viet Nam, six strategies were enumerated. A classification and identification of the target audience shall be done in order to develop suitable messages and communication approaches. The different communication channels shall also be mobilized. In addition, an increased number of mobile teams shall be deployed. The delegates also recommended that a study and understanding of the perceived public risk shall be undertaken to improve its communication strategies. Following Codex guidelines, the risk analysis program is envisioned to be implemented. Finally, strengthening of the Month of Action for Food Safety and Quality program shall be continued.

Closing Ceremonies

Before the official closing ceremonies, Mr Israel dela Cruz gave the post evaluation exam, APEC evaluation questionnaires and reminded all APEC-sponsored participants what to do when they returned to their home economy.

Dr Sonia De Leon along with the other Philippine delegates gave their thanks to the delegates for coming to the Philippines. Dr de Leon gave the closing remarks by pointing out the importance of cooperation, networking and reaching for our dreams. She also expressed her gratitude to the resource speakers and delegates.

⁶ SMS or Short Message Service (SMS) is a communications protocol allowing the interchange of short text messages between mobile telephone devices. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_message_service, accessed 27 June 2008)