

Visit to Zimbabwe Government Analyst Lab

Constraints

- Strong microbiological analysis capacity, fortification is not wholly separate from food safety
- Clarity of parameters of food products required as they are a prerequisite for certification for fortification
- Accessibility to procedures and standards applied to industry, through guidelines and FAQs
- Overcoming the requirements of fortification
 - Having premix suppliers being certified
 - Food vehicles selected and approved
 - Factory inspection report
 - Analyst report
- Time period for processing certification for fortification
- Seeking the perfect fortification structure versus tweaking as we go along

What did you learn that was positive?

- Staff comes across as motivated and operating as best as they can given resource constraints
- Staff is open about labs limited capacity and resource constraints
- Despite resource constraints and lack of equipment, the lab has some testing capacity, supported by i-Check
- The requirements for fortification certification are clear
- There is a technical expert available to industry to support the path towards fortification
 - E.g. Millers trained on iron spot checks
- Swaziland and Lesotho millers learned that Zimbabwe government tests premix suppliers, while they must do the testing on their own or rely on supplier Certificate of Analysis

What we would like to learn more about?

- A clear implementation roadmap is required especially to make use of the voluntary fortification provision
 - Certification of fortification requires testing and manufacturers need to understand what is being tested
- Guidelines or a public SOP required to link legal framework and implementation, putting the law into practice
 - Including sample collection standardization in plain language
 - Use of associations to disseminate information about compliance and technical support
 - Frequency of sampling and cost impact
- Fortification is covered by a substantial legal framework, but implementation process and details are not clear
 - A comprehensive Monitoring and Enforcement plan is required that is shared and known to all stakeholders
- The lab, in addition to analysis, can play a role in providing information, education, and communication to non-millers and consumers in order that awareness is raised and trust established
 - Long term training support via collaboration with industry associations
- Lab is not accredited or ISO certified, which means that the results are not generally accepted outside of the country

What should the lab do for you?

- GAL has limited resource for analysis, with addition of i-Checks (Chromo and Flora for Vitamin A; Iron for Iron) they can process more samples
 - The use of i-Checks requires a centrifuge and not always well known
- GAL has to outsource analysis of all other micronutrients, which can take up to 6 months for results to be returned and a concern for industry
 - Substantial export permitting process for sending samples outside of Zimbabwe
 - Burden would be lessened if GAL was accredited
- 3 types of Iron can be analyzed (Ferrous Fumurate, Ferrous Sulfate, and FeEDTA) each with different solution times
- Support ongoing training via industry associations and in collaboration with other Government bodies

Certification to Fortify in Zimbabwe

- Application by processor/miller or premix supplier
- Factory visit and inspection by MoH staff from EHD, GAL and, possibly, City Health
- Sample collection of food product/premix during factory inspection
- Analysis of food sample/premix sample (to determine if food product meets basic food safety; to determine if premix meets specs)
- Report of factory visit and analysis provided to FSAB for consideration
- Recommendation of FSAB to Permanent Secretary of MoH&CC
- Approval of PS

Priorities to 2016

- Certification of Producers and Premix Suppliers
- Implementation and applicability of fortification standards to imported inputs
 - Will there be a transition period and how will it be handled
- Establishing sustainability of program post NGO and donor engagement
 - Resourcing GAL long term and interim plan to meet 2016 (expected to analyze 3 samples from each producer per year)