

Zimbabwe action plan towards maize and flour fortification 2011

The food fortification taskforce in Zimbabwe is working through four working groups namely:

- 1) Policy, Administration and Coordination.
- 2) Information, Education and Communication.
- 3) Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation.
- 4) Technical Advisory (Laboratory/Technical, Trade and Equipment).

- **The taskforce meets every month**

The terms of references for the taskforce are:

- 1) Assess, map out and document the magnitude and extent of the micronutrient deficiencies in Zimbabwe (**National Micronutrient Survey**) by **October 2011**.
- 2) Sensitise all relevant key players on the status of the micronutrient situation in Zimbabwe by mid April 2012.
- 3) Make an inventory of all the current procedures of identified food vehicles by the end of December 2011 to include the following :
 - a) Companies and Organisations involved in production of food vehicles.
 - b) Food fortified levels of fortification and standard used in the fortification.

4) Commission of Flour Flow Analysis consultancy to:

- Identify food vehicles , how and where they are distributed.
 - Identify the maize and wheat flour millers, also processors of cooking oils.
 - Look into how fortification is currently being done.
 - Analyse sales data to get an indication of consumption.
 - Cost of the fortification process and the implied cost of the final product.
 - Review the potential impact (advantages, risks, assumptions) of fortification on international trade and food prices by June 2011.
- 5) Document food consumptions patterns in Zimbabwe during the National Micronutrient Survey by end of October 2011.

6) Develop information, education and communication materials for sensitizing and for advocacy with key players at all levels including consumers by December 2011.

7) Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for maize and wheat flour by the end of May 2011.

- **Meeting with millers and Premix suppliers by the end May 2011.**
- **Training of all Port Health Authorities on food fortification and monitoring by July/august 2011.**

8) Harmonise quality control standards for food fortification in Zimbabwe in line with regional and international standards by December 2012.

9) Evaluate the work of the National Taskforce and present findings to the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare annually.

In Zimbabwe food fortification is on voluntary basis.

Note: Permission to fortify is given by the Secretary of Health.

At present manufacturers are fortifying using international standards.

Zimbabwe has no stand alone regulations on food fortification, although there are some regulation which deals with fortification namely:

- The Food and Food Standards (flour, bread and cereals)Regulations,1972.
- The Food and Food Standards (Soft drinks)Regulation, 1977.
- Food and Food Standards (Food additives and Prohibited Substances) Regulations,2001.
- Food and Food Standards (citrus juices and citrus drinks) Regulation, 1977.
- Food and Food Standards(condiments) (amendments) Regulation, 2000(3.) for iodated salt.
- Food and Food Standards (food labelling)Regulation 2002.(the regulation in section 4, specifies that for vitamin and minerals to be claimed that a food has been fortified:

(a)The content should be 7,5% of the Reference Nutrient Value per 100ml of liquid food source

(b)the content should be 15% of the Reference Nutrient Value per 1000g of solid food source.

(c)for high source the value quoted should be twice the value claimed on the source.

- the guidelines for corn soya blend (not gazetted and not a regulation).

FOOD FORTIFICATION SENSITISATION MEETING FOR INDUSTRIES

A meeting was held between the National Food Fortification Taskforce and the Industry to find out what was hindering industries from fortifying their products.

Outcome of the meeting

- Fortification was an additional cost to the producers, therefore consumers go for the unfortified products.
- Lack of information on nutritional requirements on nutritional requirements on the part of consumers.
- Industries are not getting the information obtained by government from food consumption surveys .
- Equipment for analysis of micronutrients is not adequate in the country.

Companies that are fortifying foods in Zimbabwe are:-

Unilever, National Foods , Makonde Industries ,Cairns Foods, Nestlé Zimbabwe , Lyons, Blue Ribbon Foods.

Hammer Mill Food Fortification

A presentation on Hammer Mill Food Fortification was presented on the 1st September 2010 by Makonde Industries. The Industry highlighted that, premixes were imported from DSM and the company had a back-up services on the supply of vitamins.

- The presented also highlighted that some hammer mills withdrew when the cost of fortification was attached to them. Those who continued to fortify, realized that, consumer were attracted by fortifying.
- However, it was resolved that Legislation was the only way to make the hammer millers fortify.
- The main problems realized in the pilot project were, curiosity, fear, and resistance of the introduction of a new product.
- During the Hammer Mill food fortification, fortification was at 25% of the RDA.
- Hammer Mill fortification by CARE and OXFAM in 2002(3)was stopped after having funding problems

A Questionnaire for the food manufacturer is already in place to determine, who is fortifying, the level of fortification and the standards being used and the problems that are hindering them from fortifying.

A questionnaire for the Laboratories capacity to fortify is also in place.

The two questionnaires are waiting for the resources for their administration.

Sampling of fortified foods

A meeting was held between the Environmental Health Department ,Deputy Director Government Analyst (Food Control) and the Harare City Health Department to discuss the sampling of fortified food during their course of duty. Food Inspectors were asked to include fortified foods in their sampling plan.

On 8 - 11 September 2010, a workshop was conducted by the National Nutrition Unit on the monitoring of the Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes and Food Fortification.

The workshop was attended by Nutritionist, Port Health Officers, Partners and the Laboratory officers.

Consumer education on food fortification

The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe presented a paper on the consumer education on food fortification. The strategies highlighted to reach out to consumers included:-

- Information desk
- Consumer education
- Outreach to rural areas
- Consumer action clubs
- Radio and television programs
- Newspaper articles

The health promotion department in the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare was approached for the schedule for free slots on the national broadcasting channel(sport fm).

A meeting was held between the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Food Nutrition Council and partners, to discuss their roles and responsibilities.

National Micronutrient Survey

There are no recent national data on micronutrient status in Zimbabwe. The last National Micronutrient Survey was conducted in 1999. In order to determine the magnitude and extent of the micronutrient deficiencies, the country will be conducting out a national micronutrient survey by October 2011. The survey will contribute to development of a more appropriate and evidence based response strategy and adequate programmes to tackle micronutrient malnutrition.

- A concept paper is already in place and it will be sent out to donors by the end of April 2011.
- A protocol will also be finalized and submitted for ethical clearance by the end of April 2011.
- A Principal Investigator was appointed.
- Recruitment and Training of Enumerators will be done by August 2011, with field work starting in September.

Report writing and disseminations of results is expected to be finished by the end of December 2011.