

Country Profile: Turkey

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Country Profile: Turkeyⁱ

I – Key priorities for risk assessment

- Strengthening of infrastructure of risk assessment body
- Methods and tools for risk assessment
- Collection and collation of data
- International cooperation for risk assessment
- Emerging risks
- Cooperation and communication with other national authorities

II – Major public actors involved in food safety (including risk assessment, management and communication)

In Turkey, food safety, veterinary services and plant health is currently regulated by the following basic laws and their secondary legislation:

- Law on Veterinary Services, Plant Health, Food and Feed (No. 5996)
- National Biosafety Law (No.5997)
- Law no.1380 on Fisheries
- Law no. 5553 on Seeds

The Law no.5996 titled “Veterinary Services, Plant Health, Food and Feed” covers the provisions of Regulations no.178/2002/EC, 852/2004/EC, 853/2004/EC, 854/2004/EC, 882/2004/EC as well as relevant provisions of various EU legislations on not only food and feed safety but also veterinary and phytosanitary issues. The Law establishes a framework for veterinary services, zootechnics, plant health, food safety, feed, hygiene and official controls, while leaving the details to secondary legislation.

In Turkey, there is Department of Risk Assessment under the GKGM together with risk management departments. Therefore, there is not an institutional separation of risk assessment from risk management. There is not a risk assessment published, yet.

Turkey participates in the work of Codex Alimentarius, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) and some of EFSA network meetings as an observer country.

Simplified chart of the public organizations involved in food safety and risk assessment in Turkey



Local Authorities (Provincial and District Directorates), Laboratories, Institutes

- Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (GTHB)
 - General Directorate of Food and Control (GKGM)
 - Provincial and District Directorates
 - Provincial Food Control Laboratories
 - Veterinary Service Laboratories
 - Plant Quarantine Laboratories and Plant Protection Research Institute Laboratories
 - National Food Reference Laboratory
 - General Directorate of Plant Production (BUGEM)
 - General Directorate of Agricultural Research and Policy (TAGEM)
- Ministry of Health (SB)
 - Turkey Public Health Institute (THSK)
 - Department of Early Warning-Response and Field Epidemiology (EUC_SEDB)
 - National Toxicity Information Center (UZEM)
 - Department of Obesity Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases (ODMHDB)

Main public organisations involved in food safety and roles – Turkey

Organisation	Main areas of remit (in term of risk assessment/ management/ communication)	Risk assessment	Risk management	Risk communication
GTHB – Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock	Food and feed safety , veterinary and phytosanitary tasks incl. aquaculture,	x	x	x

Organisation	Main areas of remit (in term of risk assessment/ management/ communication)	Risk assessment	Risk management	Risk communication
	agricultural products			
SB – Ministry of Health	Health policy, foodborne outbreaks, inspection and control of the quality of water intended for human consumption, natural mineral water, dietary foods for special medical purposes for babies and adults	x	x	x
GKGM – General Directorate of Food and Control	Food and feed safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health	x	x	x
BUGEM – General Directorate of Plant Production	Organic production of agricultural products		x	x
TAGEM – General Directorate of Agricultural Research and Policy	Research in the field of plant health, animal health, food and feed safety, animal husbandry, fishery, horticulture and field crops	x		x
Laboratories	Analyses of foodstuffs		x	
EUC_SEDB – Department of Early Warning-Response and Field Epidemiology	The early warning and response activities including foodborne outbreaks.	x		x
UZEM – National Toxicity Information Center	The call center that gives advices and provides antidote nationwide		x	
ODMHDB – Department of Obesity Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases	Responsible for adequate and balanced nutrition; Participate in food codex commission of GTHB		x	

Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (GTHB)

Tasks of GTHB¹:

- Agricultural policy, food and feed safety, veterinary and phytosanitary tasks
- Risk assessment
- Risk management
- Risk communication

Website: <http://www.tarim.gov.tr>

¹Partial list including those tasks with relevance to food safety and risk assessment/ management/ communication

The GTHB is responsible for food and feed safety, including veterinary and phytosanitary aspects. The GTHB aims to protect public health, plant and animal health, animal welfare and consumer interests taking into consideration the protection of the environment. The GTHB is responsible for official control and inspection at all stages of the food and feed chain.

To protect human and animal health, the GTHB cooperates with the Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions with regard to the monitoring of certain zoonotic diseases and agents and antimicrobial resistance. Another reason for the GTHB cooperation with other institutions is to jointly conduct epidemiological research projects to investigate foodborne zoonotic diseases.

Ministry of Health (SB)

Tasks of SB¹:

- Health policy, foodborne outbreaks
- Food safety
- Risk assessment
- Risk management
- Risk communication

Website: <http://www.saglik.gov.tr>

The SB is responsible for specific aspects in the area of food safety. The SB prepares the legislation and is responsible for inspection and control of the quality of water intended for human consumption, natural mineral water (swimming pool, spa and bathing water), dietary foods for special medical purposes for babies and adults respectively, as well as products which do not require prescription but have been scientifically and clinically proven to be used as drugs, including enteral nutritional products. The SB is represented by Provincial Health Directorates (PHD) in provinces.

Laboratory confirmations of clinical and non clinic samples are done either at the selected provincial public health laboratories or by the national reference laboratory of SB. Moreover, AMR and nosocomial infection control programs are also monitored by SB.

Provincial Health Directorates are the main responsible bodies at peripheral level.

General Directorate of Food and Control (GKGM)

Tasks of GKGM¹:

- Food and feed safety
- Risk assessment
- Risk communication
- Risk management
- Codex Alimentarius Contact Point
- OIE Contact Point
- EFSA Focal Point
- RASFF Contact Point

Website: <http://www.tarim.gov.tr/GKGM>

The GKGM is a unit of the GTHB and responsible for developing policies and preparing legislation, as well as the subsequent enforcement, control and inspection of food and feed safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health at the central level. The GKGM is the regulatory authority for pesticides and veterinary drugs.

Laboratory services for animal health, plant health as well as food and feed safety are provided

by 8 veterinary control and research institutes, 8 plant protection research institutes, 4 quarantine laboratories, 39 provincial control laboratories, 1 food control and central research institute, and 1 national food reference laboratory under the supervision of the GKGM. There are also 84 private laboratories operating with the authorisation of the GKGM. Most of the practical implementation and enforcement activities are carried out by 81 Provincial Food, Agriculture and Livestock Directorates (PADs) and 914 District Food, Agriculture and Livestock Directorates (DADs) with a vertical chain of command between the two.

Department of Risk Assessment, under the General Directorate of Food and Control, covers food and feed safety, plant health and animal health and welfare. In this context, the Department shall provide scientific advice, scientific and technical support to risk managers in GTHB. It conducts these tasks through Scientific Commissions and the Scientific Committee and provides secretarial service for them.

General Directorate of Plant Production (BUGEM)

Tasks of BUGEM¹:

- Organic production of agricultural products
- Risk management
- Risk communication

Website: <http://www.tarim.gov.tr/BUGEM>

BUGEM is a unit of the GTHB and responsible for determination and inspection of standards and the convenience of use of the agricultural inputs and the production technologies such as the organic production of agricultural products.

General Directorate of Agricultural Research and Policy (TAGEM)

Tasks of TAGEM¹:

- Agricultural research
- Risk assessment
- Risk communication

Website: <http://www.tarim.gov.tr/TAGEM>

TAGEM is a unit of the GTHB and involved in agricultural research in the field of plant health, animal health, food and feed safety, animal husbandry, fishery, horticulture and field crops to identify the priorities and strategies of agricultural research and development taking into account the national development plans and to prepare and implement in those areas.

Some specific areas such as issues with regard to residues of plant protection products and veterinary drugs, heavy metals and other contaminants, mycotoxins, additives, microbiological criteria are studied in research institutions and laboratories, such as the Plant Protection Central Research Institute and the Veterinarian Central Research and Control Institute.

Some of the laboratories associated with TAGEM carry out laboratory analysis of samples collected during food, feed, animal disease and phytosanitary controls and inspections under GKGM supervision. TAGEM is also secretariat of the Biosafety Board which is responsible for the authorisation of GMOs for food and feed use and also secretariat of its Scientific Commissions which are responsible for risk assessment.

III – Food safety alerts management in Turkey

1. Does the competent authority (or authorities) for food safety have an established mechanism to evaluate and react to food safety crises (crises management mechanism)?	Yes
2. If the reply to Q1 is yes, does this mechanism include a committee or a body with pre-determined representatives?	No
3. If there is an established mechanism for crisis management (the reply to Q1 is Yes):	
3a. Do actors with risk assessment capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	Yes
3b. Do actors with risk management capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	Yes
3c. Do actors with risk communication capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	Yes

Additional explanations on alert management in Turkey

Issues related to official controls, sampling, administrative sanctions and determination of contact persons in food-borne cases and outbreaks are regulated by "Procedure for Official Controls on Foodborne Infections and Poisoning". According to the procedure, a permanent and a substitute persons are determined at all of the 81 Provincial Food, Agriculture and Livestock Directorate, 40 official food control laboratories and 81 Provincial Public Health Directorate as the poisoning contact points. Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (GTHB) and the Ministry of Health (SB) operates control activities jointly during the cases and outbreaks.

IV – Characteristics of the food sector in Turkey

Number of enterprises^{2 3}: 35631

% of the industrial sector²: 11,65

% of the industrial workforce²: 12,38

% of industrial turnover²: 13,40

Top subsectors (in terms of number of enterprises): Bakery products, grain products and starch, dairy products, processed and preserved fruit and vegetables, cocoa, confectionery and chocolate, beverages, vegetable oils, meat and meat products (*in descending order*)

Top subsectors (in terms of turnover): processed and preserved fruit and vegetables, dairy products, grain products and starch, meat and meat products, Bakery products, vegetable oils, beverages, cocoa, confectionery and chocolate (*in descending order*)

V – Civil Society Organisations

In Turkey, there are several CSOs with relevance to the food sector. Some focus on consumer

² Source: Federation of Food and Drink Industry Associations of Turkey, Inventory-2012 (Based on the data of 2010).

³ Current number: 80245 (April, 2014).

rights and consumer protection, some others work directly or indirectly towards food security (food aid; within their mission objectives) while some are for sectorial cooperation and development. These CSOs for sectorial cooperation and development are involved in building up a new legislation or market regulation. Consumer associations act as information suppliers towards consumers, help to strengthen consumer demand for quality food products while operating within the framework of ethical values. They aim to train, inform and make aware consumers so that they demand safe food. Besides, they carry out activities to develop cooperation with related local and international bodies.

Besides associations, there are also professional chambers that engage in the public dialogue for new legislation or market regulation regarding foodstuffs representing the interest of the consumers, too. There are also federations comprising of associations and in some cases companies.

Currently, there are more than 100 food/consumer related civic organizations, including regional and national coverage.

ⁱ **Country profile elaborated by:**

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