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# Research on the Status Quo and Supervision Mechanism of Food Safety in China

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**Abstract** Food safety supervision mechanism is a strong guarantee to promote the smooth implementation of China's food safety laws and regulations, and it is implemented through legal, administrative, economic, moral and other integrated policy instruments, as well as media publicity, quality traceability, network tracking, information disclosure and other non-administrative means. Along with strengthening supervision and control means, the people's food safety in China is safeguarded, and the healthy development of the food industry is promoted.

**Key words** Food safety, Supervision mechanism, Regulatory system

## 1 Introduction

Food safety is a popular project that concerns the people of China, and it is in connection with the health and safety of the majority of the people and directly affects China's economic development and social stability<sup>[1]</sup>. It has been well recognized that human health and life safety and food safety are closely related, and food industry is an important industry of the national economy and is also a major political issue related to the national economy and people's livelihood<sup>[2]</sup>. Through investigation and survey and other means, food safety special rectification was carried out, and new food safety regulatory mechanisms were explored actively. It was advocated that every citizen is a food safety supervisor through public service advertisements. This monitoring mechanism to a certain extent supports and encourages social participation and safeguards the rights of every citizen to supervise, participate and know<sup>[3]</sup>. However, this kind of social supervisor mechanism belongs to the non-governmental nature and is not protected by relevant laws and regulations. What's more, it is still be subject to the government's control and restraint, that is, only the rights to give information feedback and report are reserved. In this paper, how to use existing laws and regulations to supervise and safeguard the rights was discussed. This has a practical significance to carry out social supervision in a truly independent manner and provides a useful boost to the research of food safety supervision mechanism and support for the development and research of food safety laws and regulations in China<sup>[4]</sup>.

## 2 Status of food safety in China

**2.1 Administrative regulation is not standardized, and there are no effective food safety laws and supervision and management systems** In the process of food safety supervision and management in China, in order to avoid buckpassing phenom-

enon in the regulatory process, the food quality and safety supervision and management agencies need to be refined, and a sector-based comprehensive, specialized and systematic supervision mode needs to be established for each of the production, processing, circulation and consumption links of food. A food safety regulatory system of grid modular partition can be established to identify food safety issues and identify responsible parties in a timely manner.

**2.2 The self-discipline and integrity of food production, processing and marketing need to be enhanced** The purpose of business is always seeking profit, unrelated conscience and morality. How to conduct proper guidance and effective management is the key and difficult point. The supervision of the source of food production in China can learn from the river chief system of water pollution control. At the administrative level, hierarchical supervision and control at city, district, county and township levels can be used. It should be emphasized that once food safety issues occur in certain administrative region, relevant personnel will encounter one-vote veto in the administrative examination, promotion and other administrative processes. For major incidents, the responsible person will be investigated for legal responsibility.

**2.3 Media propaganda lacks advantages and moral restraint is not strong** The food safety knowledge, such as the correct understanding of food additives, can be popularized among the broad masses of the people through television, radio, mobile APP and training, *etc.* Through science education and publicity, citizens' ability to participate in the supervision of food safety will be improved gradually. Even if consumption cannot determine the quality of production, the profit-seeking nature of businessmen will surely change the quality of their production to suit the vast consumer base.

**2.4 Food quality control technology lags behind, and food quality inspection facilities need to be increased** Integrated food safety supervision and food safety incidents prevention can be achieved through establishing and improving scientific, rigorous, open and sophisticated detection technology and testing system, increasing testing equipment investment, advocating continuous

free testing activities, taking full advantages of China's universities' food safety testing equipment and professional and technical personnel and using paid cooperation and other means.

**2.5 A safety monitoring system for online food needs to be established and improved urgently** With the rise of the internet +, stylish, fast and cheap online booking and mobile APP booking have become popular among the masses of all ages. A full range of online food safety regulatory system can be established to protect the legitimate rights and interests of consumers. If the complaints are verified, the sales platform will make compensation first. The public are guided actively to participate in network food safety supervision. Thus, a co-governance pattern will be formed.

### 3 Existing problems and causes

In China's food safety supervision and management, unclear responsibility distinction, imperfect management system and non-standardized technology are the main problems. Rapid development of the network economy is in conflict with the lagged management concepts and technology. For example, necessary technical means are absent for producing and trading online food products; the development of testing technology and relevant standards is not timely; hardware resources, especially for trading, monitoring and transaction forensics of online food are lacked; food products quality and safety certification, technical advisory appraisal testing services are not in place; and the feedback mechanism is not perfect.

### 4 Countermeasures and suggestions for China's food safety supervision mechanism

**4.1 Constructing a new pattern of government regulation, industry self-discipline, corporate responsibility and social supervision** The research of China's food safety supervision mechanism needs to be normalized. Starting from public foods and consumers' rights protection, the status and existing problems of food safety regulatory system should be studied in depth and comprehensively. The food safety supervision system can be innovated from the aspects of government supervision, industry regulations development, self-regulatory production and online food safety supervision. Government agencies should further reform the performance, system, resources and measures of the food safety regulatory system.

**4.2 Standardizing the construction of trade associations and improving government's food safety supervision and regulation level** The government should support the establishment of food safety associations in terms of funding and policy support. The associations should be organized non-administratively, and the association members should be from professional committees of all walks of life and experts in various fields. The food additives, residues, components and other technical terms should be subjected to scientific assessment. A fair and scientific assessment can be made through the independence of monitoring, and the laziness, malfeasance and corruption of government can be supervised.

From the scientific point of view, effective, forward-looking, targeted and operations recommendations are made for the current stage of China's food safety laws and regulations.

**4.3 Emphasizing the responsibility system of managers and improving the source supervision and management mechanism** The final management mode of China's food safety supervision mechanism is the legal system, but at this stage, it is inseparable from emphasizing the management mode of human governing. In the administrative licensing stage, once food safety problems appear in the production process, ex ante approval process can be considered to pursue the regulator's responsibility. In the administrative supervision phase of food circulation link, periodic inspection needs to be replaced by random cross-checking. Supervision team needs to be organized for the food safety agencies across the city. The power of punishment for supervisor's abuse of power needs to be increased, and the negligent supervisor will encounter heavier punishment.

**4.4 Improving people's safety awareness and smoothing reporting feedback mechanism** Government departments should dare to take the initiative to expose food safety incidents, report regularly the results of food safety inspection through different media, give full play to the public awareness of safeguarding their rights, strengthen information feedback mechanism and focus on solving the problem of information asymmetry between managers and the public. The construction of an all-round, broad-coverage and multi-level work system of mass prevention and control is advocated so as to extend the tentacles of government supervision and make up for the failure of government supervision. Network platform, three-digit telephone, email, whistle-blowing mailbox and other reporting methods are provided. The complaints will be accepted by professional personnel, and the handling results are tracked and notified regularly.

**4.5 Constructing traceability system, cooperating with colleges and universities and strengthening the construction of testing equipment** The development of traceability system for food safety should be strengthened so as to develop a full traceability system in which product information can be checked, information can be traced, risk is within a controllable range and problems can be traced. The food quality testing equipment and technical level and management skills can be improved by making full use of colleges' talent pool and training advantages. The cooperation with universities and research institutions needs to be enhanced; the complexity and timely detection of food quality indicators should be ensured; and the accuracy of instruments, testing techniques and the technical level of professionals should be improved.

**4.6 Constructing online food production and management practices and improving online food management mechanism** At this stage, there are still some problems in the sales of online food in China, such as low threshold, the lack of industry self-regulation and the lack of formal application procedures and examination

FPCUs. Meanwhile, the government can give scientific guidance to individual cooperatives about how to establish FPCUs, and the government can fully use its own unique social mobilization power and good social reputation, unite basic cooperatives with common interests in the same area efficiently and provide comprehensive and timely market information to cooperatives along with the financial support and technical guidance services. The International Labor Organization in 1999 proposed the initiatives to promote cooperatives, it is necessary for the governments to support cooperatives to establish a scientific organization in their nation which can protect member's interests, such as cooperative union or alliance<sup>[10]</sup>. But we can not ignore certain hidden risks if the government is involved in the creation of cooperative union, too many government's ideas will be carried out, lacking people's own thoughts. Therefore, it is necessary to ask for views of all members and serve the common interests of the members. At the same time, it is important to maintain the independent self-government of the union, such as decision-making level candidates, development strategy formulation, major investment decisions and other initiatives, rather than being replaced by the government.

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tion and supervision system for catering enterprises. In the face of the chaos in the online food takeaway market, the development of norms and related regulations for online food production and sales should be sped up. At the same time, the development of relevant laws and regulations for supervising online food production and marketing should be promoted. Thus, online food production and marketing, as well as its supervision and management, has laws and regulations to implement.

**4.7 Strengthening the construction of network forensics laboratory to make network supervision and management well documented** Difficult evidence collection of online trading of network operators and third-party trading platform has always been a puzzle plaguing managers. In order to achieve a breakthrough in the online food safety supervision and make management legal and reasonable, the construction of China's online food safety supervision forensics laboratory should be sped up, related information, especially about unqualified food and businesses should be fully and truly disclosed in a timely manner, and a special rapid response mechanism should be established for online food consumption complaints and supervision.

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## 5 Conclusions

In short, researching China's food safety supervision mechanism and improving the social participation mechanism is a long process. With the continuous improvement of the level of food safety assurance mechanism, the establishment of an effective safety supervision mechanism will contain food safety incidents and promote the sound development of the security situation. People will no longer be overwhelmed by concerns over the existence of food problems.

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