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TBS, the Home of Standards

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Industry and Trade, Prof. Riziki Shemdoe (third left) launches Kigoma TBS Zonal office recently. Looking on from left are Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of Industry and Trade Ludovick Nduhiye, TBS Director General Dr. Athuman Ngenya and Kigoma Regional Administrative Secretary Rashid Mchata.

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Government to control 53 informal borders in Western Zone

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By Roida Andusamile

The Ministry of Industry and Trade in collaboration with other Ministries will control 53 informal borders in Kigoma, Katavi and Rukwa regions in order to meet the challenge of illegal importation of products.

The statement was made recently in Kigoma by Prof. Riziki Shemdoe during the launching of the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) office in the Western Region, that will serve Kigoma, Katavi and Rukwa regions and that TBS should currently collaborate with other Government institutions in addressing this issue while the Ministry continues its process of providing a permanent solution.

Prof. Shemdoe made the announcement following a statement made by TBS Director General Dr. Athuman Ngenya who, among other things, pointed out the existence of informal borders that hamper the bureau's efforts to regulate imports.

In that statement, Dr Ngenya explained that out of the 53 borders, Rukwa region leads with 35 informal borders followed by Kigoma 14 and Katavi (4).

"The issue of borders is cross-cutting so I will consult with other ministries to find solutions to this issue as the presence of informal borders is also causing the country to lose revenue," emphasized Prof. Shemdoe.

Prof. Shemdoe also thanked government authorities in Kigoma Region for the support they provide to government institutions in the region and has called on all other institutions under the ministry to also collaborate with the authorities in the region for efficiency.

"It is my belief that the opening of the TBS office in Kigoma will be a catalyst for development in the Western Zone," explained Prof. Shemdoe.

Prof. Shemdoe commended TBS for opening the office in Kigoma hence making the number of offices under the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Kigoma to be three which are Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) and the Weights and Measures Agency (WMA).

The launch of the Western Region office makes TBS to have six (6) zonal offices which includes; Lake Zone (Mwanza, Kagera, Shinyanga, Geita, Mara and Simiyu), Northern Zone (Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Manyara and Tanga), Central Zone (Dodoma, Singida and Tabora), Southern Zone (Mtwara, Lindi and Ruvuma) and Southern Highlands Zone (Mbeya, Iringa, Songwe and Njombe). Head office in Dar es Salaam also operates in the Eastern regions of Dar es Salaam, the Coast and Morogoro.

EDITORIAL

Deal between TBS, NFQCL is step in the right direction

Good news is coming from the Lake Zone regions where the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) and the Mwanza-based National Fish Control Quality Laboratory (NFQCL) are finalizing preparations for an agreement in which the former will use the latter's lab to test its food samples.

The agreement between the two government institutions will be a step in the right direction to help ease current challenges that TBS faces regarding delays in testing the quality of products – especially perishables -- in the Lake Zone regions of Mara, Simiyu, Shinyanga, Mwanza, Geita and Kagera.

The National Fish Quality Control Laboratory (NFQCLAB) located at Nyegezi Fisheries Area is one of the Tanzania's leading providers of fish (food), water, and environmental samples testing services.

It operates under the Fisheries Development Division of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries as mandated by the Fisheries Act No. 22 of 2003 and the Fisheries Regulations of 2009.

The laboratory has more than 20 years of experience of offering a range of high quality analytical testing services in the country through its Microbiological and Chemical accredited laboratories.

NFQCLAB caters for microbiological and chemical analyses of fish, fishery products and parameters related to monitoring of aquatic environment. Currently the laboratory has capability to analyse other food and feeds stuff.

Among the key objectives of NFQCLAB is to ensure the accuracy and precision of the laboratory services so that produced results are reliable, interpretable, repeatable and comparable; to establish and maintain national and international recognition through compliance with the requirement of ISO/IEC 17025 standards on accreditation bodies.

As one of 'the leading' names in food testing, NFQCLAB has established a

proud reputation through its high quality service to the food industry over the last 20 years.

The laboratory is able to offer its customers an unrivalled range of tests and services. The range of product categories tested includes chilled (fish and fishery products, meat and poultry, dairy, ready meals, cooked meat, fruit juice, soups), fresh (fruit and vegetables) and frozen (fish and fishery products meat and poultry, fruit and vegetables, ice cream).

Other categories are ambient (bakery, cakes, potable and drinking water) and ready to eat (sandwiches, snacks, and prepared fruit). For TBS, an institution with a humble beginning and tremendous growth, its management has shown the spirit and drive to restore public confidence in the country's sole standards regulator.

For more than four decades, the TBS administration has undertaken bold measures to ensure that the local market is freed of substandard goods.

The management has firmly implemented the already existing quality assurance machinery, namely the batch certification scheme through Pre-shipment Verification of Conformity to Standards (PVoC) and Destination Inspection (DI) and TBS Mark Certification Scheme.

One success story is that the Bureau has already recorded an increase in applications for standards mark certification, a rise in the number of certificates of conformity (CoC), an increase in products seizures and premises closures due to non-adherence to quality procedures; and an increase in incidents of destruction of substandard products.

The public, too, has showered praise on the Bureau in its efforts to cleanse the market of substandard products. One key strategy that the TBS management has employed in transforming the state-run institution into a dependable tool in waging a protracted battle against inferior products is the strengthening of the workers' commitment towards the realisation of corporate goals.

This has been achieved through enhanced corporate communication, requisition and accommodation of workers' views obtained from various forums.

The guiding principle towards the realization of the Bureau's key objectives is that "the management isn't about to retire in its pain to achieve its set objectives." The ambition is to restore TBS image to make it realize its dream of making the country's standards watchdog an organization that is nationally and internationally distinguished as the centre of excellence in standardization and quality assurance activities.

Manufacturers in SADC urged to produce quality products

By Roida Andusamile

Manufacturers in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member countries have been urged to produce quality products so as to compete fairly in the region.

Chairperson of the 42 SADC Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Corporation Structures Annual General meeting, Dr. Athuman Ngenya made the call recently while addressing the meeting through video conference at Mwalimu Nyerere International Conference Centre in Dar es Salaam.

Dr. Ngenya who is also the Director General for Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) said that apart from discussing issues of standards the meeting also discussed TBT issues which hinders trade development among member countries.

He further said the meeting also discussed about quality policy for African countries which its draft has been finalized.

Speaking earlier during the opening session, the Permanent

Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Trade Prof. Riziki Shemdoe said it is high time for SADC member countries to come up with strategies that will help them to produce quality products and do away with barriers to trade.

Prof. Shemdoe said despite the fact that the Ministry is currently implementing the Blue Print which to a large extent removed trade barriers and created conducive environment for investors, SADC member countries also need to remove trade barriers so as to attract more investors in the region.

"We will be appreciated if African countries will move forward and be among the first 100 countries which have no trade barriers and conducive environment for investors," he elaborated.

The theme of the 42 meeting was "a conducive environment for inclusive and sustainable development, increased intra- regional trade and job creation"

The one-day meeting was attended by 12 member countries which included: Tanzania, Botswana, Nambia, Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho., South Africa, Zambia, Mauritius, Comoro, Eswatini and Zimbabwe.

TBS Director General Dr. Athuman Ngenya Chairs the 42 SADC TBT Corporation Structures Annual General meeting through video conference at Mwalimu Nyerere International Conference centre in Dar es Salaam.

"For safety and higher efficiency, always buy TBS-marked/certified electrical appliances"

"Food safety is everyone's business"

By Neema Mtemvu

The Director of Quality Management at the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) Lazaro Msasalaga has called on Tanzanians to ensure that the food they purchase is safe before consuming.

Msasalaga made the call recently when speaking at the climax of the World Food Safety Day, which was marked at TBS headquarters in Ubungo, Dar es Salaam. Msasalaga urged Tanzanians to take precautionary measures to avoid contacts with unnecessary diseases which are caused by unsafe food.

"It is important for the consumer to check the food and ensure it is in good check, good condition, expired or altered in any way", he said,

He added that consumers have the right to get information on food through description written on the label. He insisted producers to put accurate information sticking on standards, principles and regulations.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) more than 420,000 people died in 2015 due to diseases resulting from unsafe food. In Africa alone it was estimated that 137,000 people died due to such disease where as children and pregnant women are at more risk.

He said the government through TBS has an obligation to control food safety. The government has put enabling environment to implement this assignment including establishment of policy, acts, principles and regulations improving food markets to ensure that the issue of food safety is strictly followed in the whole chain.

According to the Director, the bureau has been educating the public on the importance of food safety, conduct assessment of food hazards, control and inspections.

The second World Food Safety Day (WFSD) was celebrated on 7 June 2020 with the intention of drawing attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage food borne risks, contributing to food security, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, tourism and sustainable development.

Following the success of the first celebration in 2019, this year WFSD reinforces the call to strengthen commitment to scale up food safety made by the Addis Ababa Conference and the Geneva forum in 2019 under the umbrella of the future of food safety. WHO in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) is pleased to facilitate member state efforts to celebrate the World Food Safety Day.

Under the theme "Food safety everyone's business" the action oriented campaign will promote global food safety awareness and call upon countries, decisions makers, the private sector, civil society ,UN organisation and the general public to take actions.

Food safety is a shared responsibility between governments, producers and consumers. Everybody has a role to play from farms to tables to ensure the food we consume is safe and will not cause damages to our health.

"When you buy a product always look for the TBS mark which assures you of quality, reliability and safety"

TBS urges producers on use of right measurements

By Neema Mtemvu

Local producers have been urged to use right measurements during their production processes in order to get quality products for local and foreign use.

Speaking in Dar es Salaam recently during the commemoration of the World Metrology Day, the Director General of Tanzania Bureau of Standards, Dr. Athuman Ngenya said as the Government strives to build an industrial economy and bring about individual and national prosperity, it is imperative for industrialists to improve the quality of their products by adhering to use of right measurements in their production.

Dr. Ngenya said measurements affect virtually all aspects of life including but not limited to petty trading, hospital and pharmaceutical services, vehicle tyre services and mechanical services, making it imperative for producers to ensure the correctness of measurements for safety, security and value for money.

"TBS, in collaboration with other government institutions mandated to oversee measurements, endeavours to ensure that every local producer uses right measurements so as to produce quality products for domestic and foreign markets," stressed Dr. Ngenya, noting that TBS through its Metrology Laboratory is the custodian of national measurement standards and is mandated to assist industries to achieve quality.

He said the Government intends to improve industries in terms of quality and quantity so as to stimulate the national economy and that at the moment the TBS Metrology Laboratory can provide various services in scientific measurements in areas of Mass, Dimensions, Temperature, Volumes, Time and Frequency, Pressure, Force, Electrical measurements, Torque, Chemical metrology and training in metrology.

World Metrology Day is internationally celebrated on 20th May every year by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) and their members, to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the Metre Convention in 1875.

The theme for World Metrology Day 2020 was "Measurements for global trade". This theme was chosen to create awareness of the important role measurements play in facilitating fair global trade ensuring products meet standards and regulations and satisfying customer quality expectation.

"Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten. Always use TBS-certified products"

Human health concerns associated with residues of veterinary drugs in food of animal origin

By Immaculata Justin

Residues of veterinary drugs are pharmacologically active substances and their metabolites which remain in foodstuff (beef, lamb meat, goat meat, pork, poultry meat, eggs and milk) obtained from animals to which the veterinary medicinal product in question has been used for its treatment.

Livestock are given veterinary medicines to combat infectious diseases, as a prophylaxis or used regularly as growth promoters. Presence of residues of these medicines in food is caused by several factors, among which include failure of adhering to the recommended withdrawal periods after last treatment or prophylaxis, delivery of livestock treatment service by unqualified personnel, lack of livestock prophylaxis/treatment records, administration of veterinary medicines of which a primary packaging material does not bear a label that gives among others the information regarding withdrawal periods.

However, treatment of animals may lead to traces of veterinary drugs in food. Certain levels of these traces can be tolerated in human body, provided that they do not exceed the tolerable Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) as set for the respective drug in a specified food product.

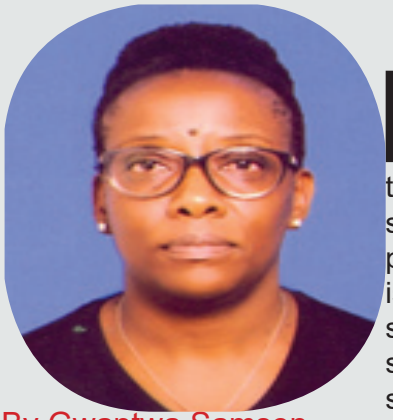
One of the core activities of the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) is to set standards for various commodities, including food products. Standards for food products of animal origin among others, specify requirements for the MRLs for veterinary drugs, which is the maximum amount of veterinary drug residue that is expected to remain on food products when a veterinary drug is used to treat an animal according to label directions that will not be a concern to human health.

Consumption of food of animal origin containing residues of veterinary drug in quantity above the recommended MRL may cause health risk to people, which include antimicrobial resistance (AMR), allergic reaction to some individuals, toxic substances in the human body and in some cases, cancer; as banned antibiotic may be abused in animal treatment.

In order to avoid presence of residues of veterinary drugs in food of animal origin one should adhere to the Good Animal Husbandry Practices, including proper labelling of drugs intended to be used for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes, adherence to the withdrawal periods of veterinary drugs, veterinary services to be delivered by a qualified personnel and sensible use of veterinary drugs in food producing animals.

"To beat your competition, make quality your mission"

Importance of food labelling in food safety



By Gwantwa Samson

Food safety refers to the set of scientific guidelines that dictate how to store, handle and prepare food to ensure it is safe for human consumption. Access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health. An increase in global trade, expanding word economy, liberalization of food trade, growing consumer demand, developments in food science and technology had shift away from the traditional face-to-face food producer and buyer relationship to the consumption of pre-packaged foods.

Pre-packaged foods are foods that has been processed to increase the shelf life and improve some organoleptic properties, and made up in advance in a container, ready to offer to consumer. These prepackaged foods normally contain labels which bears information about a particular product. A food label is one of the most important and direct means of communicating information to the consumer. The internationally accepted definition of a food label is any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stenciled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a container of food or food product.

FAO promotes Food Labelling as an effective tool to protect consumer health in terms of food safety and nutrition. Food labels are important to food safety because they convey information about the product's identity and contents, and on how to handle, prepare and consume it safely.

Food safety framework among other things includes food labelling regulation for the purpose of ensuring that consumers are protected from hazards that may arise from consumption of unsafe food. Food can be unsafe due to misuse or abuse resulted from lack of information about a particular food.

The main purpose of food labelling is to provide information from the manufacturer to consumer about a particular food. The main information includes but not limited to; name of the food, ingredients used in its manufacture, net weight, nutritional composition, date of manufacture of the food, date of expiry, batch number, recommended storage condition, instructions for use etc.

Depending on the type of food, some food labels may also require to provide information on the recommended method of preparation of the food, recommended users, warning to vulnerable groups, statutory warnings etc. All this information are aiming at providing adequate information to consumers so that they can make informed choices.

It is obvious that, people have different food and nutritional requirements, choices and preferences. Some people have health challenges that require certain amount of food or nutrients. Some health challenges require people to moderate or not to consume some food ingredients such as salt, sugar, pepper etc. Importantly prepackaged foods normally have specific shelf life beyond which they can cause health hazards when used. All these factors suggest the importance of proper and precise food labelling.

Food labelling is legally regulated and food regulatory authorities are using the information to protect consumers by ensuring provision of clear, honest and correct information on food labels.

Tanzania Bureau of Standards amongst other responsibilities, has the mandate to ensure food safety in the country. In the context of food labelling as

stated earlier that it is one of the important issues to consider when speaking of Food safety, various standards and regulations have been developed to ensure that consumers are protected against false and improper food labelling. The Bureau is doing certification and registration of prepackaged food products. In the course of registration and certification, labelling is one of the key parameters that are assessed to ensure that consumers are provided with adequate and precise information.

However, consumers have a responsibility of protecting themselves and they are supposed to read food labels prior purchase of a food so that they can be informed of what they intend to purchase for consumption.

"Misuse of TBS quality mark is a criminal offence punishable under the Standards Act No. 2 of 2009"

TANZANIA BUREAU OF

tbs

STANDARDS

Your Partner
in Global Trade