Bioterrorism: Contemporary Issues In Food Safety

In a world of food lovers, who is watching out for their safety? From topics ranging from tampering and bioterrorism to different food safety barriers that are globally interconnected to the environment, consuming food is more dangerous than ever. Consumers must be extra cautious and really take into context where and how their food was made and packaged.

When intentional contamination of food occurs, this is called food tampering. Food tampering is done to cause intentional harm to a person or people. Although not prevalent in the United States, other countries fall victim to this often. As a result, the FDA has bulked up their security measures on their inspections of international food-processing plants (Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, 2018). However, consumers also have the ability to illness caused from food tampering. A few tips for consumers include, not purchasing any items that are open or torn, looks unusual, past sell-by dates, and ensuring that plastic seals are present on appropriate foods. By following those tips, illness from food tampering can be significantly minimized.

Bioterrorism sounds like a terrifying word, doesn't it? It is defined as "an act or threat of deliberate contamination of food for human consumption with chemical, biological or radio-nuclear agents for the purpose of causing injury or death to civilian populations and/or disrupting social, economic or political stability" (JH Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2010). Agriculture bioterrorism is one of the most common forms of this issue. Directed primarily at livestock and crops, a biological weapon is used to harm the annual revenues of $150 billion. The huge amount of money that the U.S. livestock industry produces, makes it a prime candidate for such bioterrorism.

Amongst these major issues, one issue that is looked upon as being major is differing food safety regulations. While most people may not even take a second glance at the food safety regulations of other countries across the globe, they really should. Differing food safety regulations cause major issues even for the people in the United States because the food Americans consume does not always come from here in the U.S. "Food represents one of the largest globally traded commodities and can pose a major safety risk if not controlled" (GFSR, 2019). In today's times, most countries have a food safety regulating authority so that food-related illness is reduced greatly.

Globally, food safety can be a huge risk. When food standards differ, food tampering occurs, and bioterrorism is a threat, the global food supply is at risk. Without the proper channels, such as the CFDA (China Food and Drug Administration), MAPA (Ministry of Agriculture, livestock, and Food Supply), SENASA (The National Food Safety and Quality Service), and FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act), (just to name a few) the health and safety of all people consuming any amount of food would be in danger. Consumers can thank these agencies for the continued safety of the products they are consuming on a daily basis (NCBI, 1998).

With a number of agencies controlling our food supply, tampering, bioterrorism, and differing food safety regulations are under control. With that said, they are not completely muted. These contemporary issues are still creating risks today, more so in countries outside of the United

States, so Americans still need to be educated and made aware of the risks to their food supply. The more one is educated, the safer they are in terms of their food supply.

References

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