

THE EAST AFRICA PROFICIENCY TESTING SCHEME FOR SAFE FOOD & REGIONAL TRADE PROMOTION

Case study of Honey, Maize grains, Rice, Species and Peanut Butter

By: Emanuel Cosmas Bakashaya

INTRODUCTION

The East Africa proficiency testing (PT) Scheme began its journey in 2006 with only three food matrices, i.e. wheat flour, salt and water matrices.

Currently, the scheme provides over 20 food matrices and over 15 non-food matrices demonstrating a strong commitment to enhancing food safety and quality across the region. The Scheme is operated by the Bureaus from five East Africa Countries that is Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda .

the Scheme serve as vital quality assurance tool for laboratories, enabling them to compare performance and identify improvement areas

REGIONAL TRADE

Honey, maize grains and peanut butter are among the most significant traded commodities within the region, serving as essential staple food. Spices are also traded within the region and exported to markets in Asia, America, Europe etc.



ADDRESSING REGIONAL TRADE & FOOD SAFETY

The scheme aims to address challenges of industries and laboratories related to inconsistencies and lack of uniformity in practices, measurement and procedure which affects accuracy and reliability of their test results.

Additionally, the scheme aims to address regional trade obstacles which arise due to the inconsistency of quality and contamination related to aflatoxin, hydroxymethylfurfural, heavy metals as well as microbiological contamination

The Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) has taken proactive steps to address the existing challenges by establishing the PT program under the EAC PT Scheme. This program lessens the dependency on foreign programs and contributes to the general expansion of the regional trade and food safety.

Cost effectiveness, a sizable and varied participant pool, and wide range of multi-analyte possibilities per matrix are just few of EAC PT Scheme's noteworthy advantages. These features allow participants to consolidate individual programs resulting in significant savings both in time and resources.

Conclusion: The scheme is a reliable system in the region for the guaranteed food safety and quality.