

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Algiers Food Defense and Chemical Pesticide Workshops

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

Ambassador Joan Polaschik, Algeria's Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr. Karim Boughalem, and Agricultural Attache', Charles Rush opened the Food Defense Workshop on April 12, 2015. During this week, the Office of Agricultural Affairs also hosted a Chemical Pesticide workshop. Participants at both workshops represented nearly every government ministry, the private sector, and academia. US based expert speakers from government, the private sector, and academia discussed the importance of developing a national food defense strategy to secure Algeria's food supply from intentional or unintentional contamination. The workshop was featured in both print and electronic media in Algeria.

General Information:

April 12 -15, 2015, U.S. Embassy Algiers hosted two workshops coordinated by the Office of Agricultural Affairs and funded by the Department of State on Food Defense and Chemical Pesticide Risk. The two workshops received national media coverage and facilitated intra-ministerial collaboration among Government of Algeria ministries, private industry, and academia. The Food Defense Workshop was held April 12-13 and was attended by more than 100 participants (the largest workshop hosted by Embassy Algiers to date) from private industry, academia, and nearly every ministry within the Government of Algeria. Algerian delegates were introduced to the fundamental principles of food defense and collaborated together in diverse participant-led working groups to develop guiding principles, preliminary goals and objectives, and an initial list of action items for the development of a national food defense strategy and action plans for private industry.

The Chemical Pesticide Risk Workshop was held on April 14-15 with a smaller group of more than 40 Algerian government officials in attendance similarly representing nearly every ministry within the Government of Algeria involved in safeguarding chemicals and ensuring the proper use of agricultural pesticides. Participants gained technical knowledge on complex and varied chemical threat issues and formed working groups to strategize their readiness to address chemicals and their associated risks.

The workshops were led by subject matter experts from U.S. government, academia, and the private sector that have significant experience conducting international outreach on these topics. Each workshop was designed to incorporate collaborative group exercises to support Algeria's capacity to create and implement robust Food Defense and Chemical Pesticide security programs that allowed the Government of Algeria ministries to exchange ideas on actionable Food Defense and Chemical Security items. To continue the effort, additional technical visits and follow-up training by U.S. subject matter experts in areas of risk assessment and chemical management are planned for the remainder of the year in Algeria.

The U.S. has gained significant experience designing programs to protect its food supply against intentional and unintentional contamination. Since 2006, experts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS), the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS), the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (HHS/FDA), U.S. industry, and the University of Minnesota's National Center for Food Protection and Defense (UMN-NCFPD) have worked together to increase global awareness of food defense. This became a major initiative after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Our food supply system is global and an incident of intentional contamination can have potentially large impacts on the economy, public health, security, consumer confidence, and also among trading partners.

The Food Defense and Chemical Pesticide Risk workshops in Algiers were consistent with the U.S. government's desire to encourage greater awareness of the potential for harm to the global food and chemical supply. The two workshops initiated strategic dialogue and partnerships among the Algerian government ministries, private industry, and academia to collectively work together in addressing these challenges.

