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of Standards & Quality in Botswana



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**BOBS Donates to
Loratong Orphanage
Centre in Thamaga**

**BOBS Is
Accredited
By BOTA**

*Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of
Trade and Industry, Mrs Banny Molosiwa,
(L) handling a Certificate of Appreciation
of Service to (R) Mrs Shashi Sreekaram
of BOBS Standards Council.*

**Promoting a Healthy and
Safe Work Environment**

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BOBS end of year function: *A bouquet of events.*

By Boletilemang Psycho. Gabokgatlhe



Mr Gabokgatlhe is a Senior Human Resources Officer in the Corporate Services Department and his responsibilities include the provision of a full range of human capital, resourcing, rewards, relations and development services.



Mr Botsile Kebapetse director of ceremonies

Friday 30th November 2007 was a day when all BOBSians from Headquarters and the Francistown Branch came together to spend an eventful evening celebrating the past, the current as well as the future. It was at this event that members of staff were christened "BOBSians" a name that depicts team spirit and working together as one big family with a common goal.

The event was graced by the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Trade & Industry, Standards Council members, Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) management, Staff and their spouses. It was more than just an end of year function to make merry, wine, dine and dance the night away, but it was a packed bouquet that included recognition of long serving

staff and those who had demonstrated excellence in living the values of BOBS. The dedication of Standards Council members in having captained BOBS to be where it is now was also recognized. Not by any chance unimportant, the gathering furthermore was for BOBSians to cultivate and build relationships outside their day-to-day and formal organisational interactions.

The function was a glamorous affair with men and women attired in their evening best. The ceremony started with a photo shoot after which the Health and Wellness Committee ushered staff members and guests to their reserved seats. BOBS' reception area had earlier on been transformed as if by magic into a five star events outlet. When all were seated, it was for the two dazzling Directors of Ceremony, Mr. Botsile Kebzah Kebapetse and Mrs. Pinkie Malebe, to take over and

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master the proceedings.

First to be called on the podium was the first BOBSian in command, Dr Elsie Meintjies the Managing Director to welcome her staff and invited guests to the occasion. An obviously elated Dr Meintjies said her welcoming remarks by greetings and pleasantries in Setswana which were well received. That showed that for the past eleven months she had been with BOBS, she had not only been busy with managing in the corporate world but learning the language fast as well.

She further explained that the occasion was an important one as its purpose was to thank three categories of people for having contributed towards the growth of BOBS in their own different ways. These people were four members of the Standards Council whose term of service had come to an end and forty two staff members who had served BOBS for a continuous period of five and ten years respectively.

Furthermore, she said the occasion was also to give awards to members of staff who had demonstrated adherence to the five values of BOBS which are Diligence, Innovation, Transparency, Team Spirit and Social Responsibility.

The Managing Director thanked all staff members for being Vision 2016 compliant. She said, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank all BOBS staff for the compassion and care that they have shown towards the realization of Vision 2016 by donating clothes, toys, toiletries and treats to the needy children of Loratong Centre in Thamaga" She further went on to say "I am truly short of words for the spirit that you have shown and I can only say, keep it up BOBSians."

Dr Meintjies also proudly announced that BOBS was accredited by the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) as a Training Institution, an achievement that called for celebration. She emphasized that accreditation meant that BOBS should go all out and empower its customers with quality training on various courses.

The Guest of Honour and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Mrs Banny Molosiwa was called upon to present Certificates of Appreciation to the four members of the Council whose terms had come to an end. The four were Mr Thembo Lebang, Mrs Shashi Sreekaram, Mr Wankie Wankie and Mr Oteng Batlhoki

Before handing over the certificates, the Permanent Secretary motivated BOBS' staff to rise to the emerging challenges

of standardization and quality assurance. She urged them to brace themselves for the demand of their services in view of the envisaged diversifications in industries and the positive growth in the mining sector.

She extolled BOBS' staff for having worked hard in making their organization visible and ensuring that standards are adhered to. She encouraged members of staff to persevere in their work and to gear towards being "one of the 10 best National Standard Bodies in the world".

After the Permanent Secretary had retired from the podium, it was time for the Managing Director to retrace her steps, this time to give certificates to the pioneers of BOBS who had notched 5 years and 10 years respectively with the organization. There were 16 employees who received 5 years of service certificates and 26 employees who received 10 years of service certificates. There were ululations all around as one by one they received their deserved recognition for having faithfully worked for BOBS for so long.

The DITTS awards (Diligence, Innovation, Transparency, Team Spirit and Social Responsibility) were next. They were filled with excitement and suspense as the announcers and the Director of Corporate Services, Mr Lesedi Mabote took their time in order to build that big tension before the announcement of the winners.

The winners of each category were announced after the Internal Auditor, Mr Kelvin Mooya had assured and even "ashuwaade" Mr Mabote that the winners had been chosen in a transparent, free and fair manner.

Mr Billy Hamathi, the Manager-IT scooped the Diligence and Innovation awards while Mr Ndebombuya Mokaloba the Principal Engineer (Mechanical) got the Transparency award. The Team Spirit award went to Mrs Regina Sarumi the Public Relations Officer while the Social Responsibility award was claimed by Mrs Bagomi Morapedi the Administration Officer at the Francistown Branch.

At the end of the awards presentation, the Deputy Managing Director thanked everybody for having graced the occasion. She extended her appreciation to the Permanent Secretary, members of the Standards Council and invited guests for having made the occasion a memorable one. After the closing remarks all were invited for dinner after which people invaded the dance floor as the Botswana Police Band dished out live music.



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1. Mr Lesedi Mabote, Director of Corporate Services

2. Dr Elsie Meintjies, BOBS Managing Director

3. Mrs Masego Marobela, BOBS Deputy Managing Director

Promoting a healthy and safe work environment

By Hazwell Nyanda



Mr H C Nyanda is a Technical Secretary for Technical Committees on Tiles, Plastics Pipes and Timber. He is a Senior Standards Engineer responsible for development of standards in the Building and Construction sector.



Introduction

Occupational health and safety in the workplace has become one of the most important issues that determine the conduciveness of a work environment to productivity. A lot of companies take things for granted as long as there are no incidences related to occupational health and safety or at least as long as their occurrence is not brought to the attention of management. However, the impact of neglecting the influence of health and safety issues may be more catastrophic than would have been had steps been taken to implement pre-measures that could minimize or prevent their occurrence.

There are tested concepts and methods that are applied to minimize impacts of potential health and safety hazards to within acceptable levels in a work environment. Most governments provide some form of legislation for occupational health and safety requirements that must be met as part of prerequisites for issuance of licenses to operate businesses. Declaring what a company is going to do to ensure compliance is one thing; whereas compliance is another thing altogether.

There is therefore a need for assessment of compliance by the industry to the safety and health requirements.

It is obvious that we spend a large proportion of our time at work. Workers are therefore highly vulnerable to safety and health risks associated with the work environment. It is important for business legislation to include requirements not only for building occupancy approval but also for health and safety of employees. Specific health and safety requirements depend on the type of industry but some of the key health and safety considerations that need to be taken into account are:

Management responsibility

Management should

- a) establish, develop and implement occupational health, safety and environmental policies, objectives and strategies
- c) ensure that safety risk assessments and environmental impact

assessments are carried out

- d) establish procedures for managing health and safety issues.
- e) provide adequate resources for managing health and safety programmes

Employee responsibility

Employees should

- a) care for own health and safety.
- b) follow safety and health procedures.
- c) ensure own actions don't affect other people's safety and health.
- d) cooperate with supervisors/management in implementing health and safety regulations

Internal and external environments

Cleanliness of internal & external premises .i.e. floors, ceiling, walls, is important. It ensures that there are no obstacles in the way of workers commuting from one place to another and minimizes breeding environments for disease-causing parasites.

Enough working space should be provided in order to avoid overcrowding. 10 m³ of workspace per person is considered to be a minimum requirement.

Adequate ventilation to allow circulation of fresh air should be provided for at the design stage.

Adequate lighting and suitable means of lighting (whether natural or artificial) should be provided for. Inadequate and inappropriate lighting may cause sight problems in workers.

Wet floors are slippery and can cause fatal falls. There should be adequate means to quickly drain wet floors. As much as possible, wet floors should be avoided during normal working hours. Where this is not practical (such as on construction sites), it is important to cordon off wet areas or put warning signs.

Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities should be provided, separate for each sex and appropriately identifiable. The facilities should be kept in good hygienic condition.

Fixed machinery, especially with moving parts, should be securely protected and/or fenced. This helps to prevent direct contact between personnel using the machinery and moving parts.

Fence for the premises should be well built & maintained. It should be able to prevent unwanted internal or external intrusion and should be such that it cannot be easily abused or tampered with.

Fixed vessels containing dangerous liquids should be securely housed or fenced to prevent unauthorised access. Necessary authorization shall be obtained for access to restricted areas.

Process owners should be adequately trained and be made aware of any dangers associated with the execution of their processes

Lifting/hoisting equipment should be of sound construction,

adequate strength, and be properly maintained.

Means of access into any area should be of sound construction and be properly maintained.

There should be proper procedures for working in a confined space that is susceptible to dangerous fumes.

There should be proper procedures for handling pressurized containers and containers holding explosive substances. The containers should be of sound construction and free of defects.

There should be proper identification, storage and handling of chemicals and other consumables i.e. substances should not to be used wrongly or be mistaken for other.

The premises should have adequate and suitable fire extinguishers which are readily accessible. Inflammable substances should be placed in a fire resistant store. Fire escape routes and doors should be adequate, properly maintained and free of obstructions.

General welfare provisions

The premises should have adequate supply of drinking water.

In situations where personnel use personal protective equipment during work, there should be adequate accommodation facilities for the equipment.

Where dining facilities are provided, areas for eating and smoking should be separated and should be properly designated. No eating and smoking should be allowed in working areas.

In situations where the work involves handling or coming into contact with substances that will soil the worker and his protective clothing, there should also be adequate ablution facilities such as lockers, change room, showers and soap.

In case of activities which are susceptible to injuries, emergency facilities should be installed very close to the working area.

The company should be properly stocked with required medicines for first aid. There should be a person dedicated to take charge of the first aid equipment.

Dust & fumes should be removed from any process. Employees should not eat in workrooms, especially where poisonous substances are used or where dust and fumes are given out.

Safety and health risk assessment

The following things should be done:

- Identify areas and processes where health and safety of workers is important/critical.
- All possible risks regarding a worker's health and safety should be identified and evaluated with the aim of developing measures that will eliminate such risks.

Assessment of potential exposure

Where practical, an employer should arrange for medical examination of employees' exposed to hazardous chemical substances (HCS), at defined intervals. A measurement programme of concentrations of HCS should be established (airborne or otherwise). Measurement programmes should be carried out by competent person/authority. Levels of employee exposure to HCS should be monitored to ensure acceptable exposure limits

are not exceeded.

If the risk assessment findings indicate that the health of workers is at risk, workers should be put under medical surveillance. Medical surveillance may include biological monitoring of exposure, and medical screening of workers and should be done by a qualified medical practitioner

Used oils, waste water contaminated with chemicals should not to be discharged into ablution or storm water drains. They should be collected and neutralized and dispose of in an approved way. Storm water should be diverted away from work areas to avoid contamination with wastes in working areas.

Records

Records of occurrences of accidents should be kept. Use of unregistered hazardous chemical substances should be avoided. All information on handling and storage of HCS should be kept. Controls to ensure proper handling and safety procedures should be followed. Employees should be inducted on safety rules & requirements.

Design and installation

The design and installation of infrastructure and equipment should be sound, using tested and proven design concepts. New design concepts should have undergone appropriate verification of soundness before being implemented.

Inspection and maintenance

Regular inspection and planned maintenance of equipment is important in order to identify potential defects before breakdowns occur that may cause accidents. Users of equipment should comply with approved operating procedures given by the equipment manufacturers.

Inspection chambers/openings should always be securely covered. Pipe work should be protected from damage and corrosion.

Environmental impact assessment

There should be an integrated management approach of all activities impacting on safety and health. Environmental impacts should be assessed and evaluated. Corrective and preventive actions should be taken and the results and trends monitored.

New facilities/extensions must meet relevant statutory and technical requirements.

Assessment and evaluation of the environmental impacts provide information about quality of the work environment, indicates the extent of operations compliance to regulations, indicates the extent to which stricter standards are required, identifies vulnerable aspects of an operation and identifies operating inefficiencies.

Conclusion

Perhaps the question management often asks is, "who is going to foot the bill for this health and safety programme"? Well, if you don't care about the health and safety of your employees, don't employ; work alone!

Information courtesy of "Occupational Health and Safety Requirements" document published by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, Queensland, Australia. More details can be accessed at www.deir.qld.gov.au.

BOBS Donates to Loratong Orphanage Centre in Thamaga

By Malebo Mokgachane



Mrs Mokgachane is a Human Resources Officer in the Corporate Services Department and her responsibilities include the provision of Human Resources administrative services, Industrial Relations, Staff Welfare issues aiming at developing and maintaining a constructive and harmonious environment within the Bureau.



A group photo of Loratong orphans

It was not a surprise when BOBS employees took this initiative of Social Responsibility to Thamaga, to donate Christmas gifts in the form of foodstuffs, clothes and toys to the children of Loratong Orphanage Centre on the 14th December 2007.

Loratong is an Orphanage Centre in Thamaga Village on the South West of Gaborone under the auspices of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) in the village. It survives only on donations and volunteers from the church. It currently has 304 children.

Speaking at the donation ceremony, the Acting Managing Director of BOBS, Mrs Masego Marobela, narrated that being in Thamaga was to honour BOBS' social responsibility value, which is also aligned with the Vision 2016 pillar of being a compassionate and caring nation.

She also mentioned that although this donation was small, it was the beginning of a long lasting relationship with the Orphanage. She further explained that though BOBS relationship with Loratong was fairly new, it was a starting point for many great things to come. Mrs Marobela further said that BOBS considered Loratong above others because its objectives and target impressed her organisation. " We liked the idea that Loratong

is helping small children. We feel that we have a role to play in making sure these future presidents are raised in a way that can open their tomorrow. We are sure this country and nation at large will benefit from these small faces that you see here today," she said.

Mrs Marobela commended caretakers of the orphanage, who are all volunteers, for the good work they are doing. "What you are doing is not an easy job. It takes an effort, especially since you receive no money in return," she said. She pledged BOBS' support in anyhow where they could assist.

Pastor Matibisi of the UCCSA, thanked the BOBS employees for their support. He pointed out that the Centre needed more help, including the expansion of the Centre, remuneration for the volunteers, building of hostels as some of the children do not have proper shelters, TV sets, transport and sporting facilities. " The list is endless, that is why we sometimes feel we are asking too much," he said.

The Chief's Representative, Mr Gobuamang Gobuamang in his closing remarks, cautioned the children to stay away from things that may hamper them from having a good life such as alcohol, drugs and peer pressure.

BOBS Function in Pictures



Above: Group photo of BOBS staff

Right: Mrs Bagomi Morapedi winner of the Socially Responsible award.



Above: Mr B Hamathi, winner of the Dilligence and Innovation awards



Left: Mr Wankie Wankie receiving his long service award as a Standards Council member.



Above: Mrs Regina Sarumi, winner of the Team Spirit award

Right: Mr K Motlathedi with his long service award



Below: BOBS staff enjoying the function



Creed for BOBSians

By GP Gabokgathe

BOBSians we're
 Our path long weeded has been
 Our way is clear and uncontaminated
 Our destiny is securely in our hands
 And against the turbulent seas we shall swim
 The other shore we shall reach

Our mission is as clear as rain water
 The genesis of National Standards shall be our being
 Promotion and their facilitation shall be our daily bread
 Competitiveness and efficiency in industries shall be our aim
 Among the top ten National Standards Bodies we shall perch
 Trade and consumer protection shall be dear to us

DITTS shall be our creed
 Our products shall prove to all and sundry
 That BOBSians are a knit family
 Of diligent and innovative workers
 Of transparent and cooperating pioneers
 Of patriots socially responsible
 Through our deeds we shall live DITTS
 We shall plan and strategise
 Obstacles we shall overcome
 Among the top ten we shall perch.

Draft Botswana Standards for public comments

Botswana Bureau of Standards intends to adopt the following Draft Standards as Botswana Standards:

1. MED 1 (604) D90: Water taps (Metallic) - Specification

This standard covers requirements for four classes of screw-down and non-screw-down metallic water taps (including stop taps) for the supply of water at temperatures not exceeding 75 °C. It also covers stopcocks of sizes up to and including 50 mm. It does not cover thermostatic mixer taps, single control mixer taps, metering taps, demand taps or taps of which the bodies are made entirely of a plastic material.

2. BCD 5 (564) D20: Glass-fibre-reinforced thermosetting plastics (GRP) pipes – Part 2: Pipes, fittings and joint assemblies for the conveyance of hazardous chemical substances in industrial applications – Specification

This draft Botswana Standard specifies requirements for pipes, fittings and joint assemblies manufactured from glass-fibre-reinforced thermosetting resins for the conveyance of liquid or gas hazardous chemical substances in industrial applications, that are designed for general operation under conditions of internal pressure or vacuum but can also be used for non-pressurized applications.

3. BCD 5 (565) D20: Glass-fibre-reinforced thermosetting plastics (GRP) pipes – Part 3: Pipes, fittings and ancillaries for underground (buried) fire protection services – Specification

This draft Botswana Standard covers the design, manufacture, certification, transportation, installation and inspection of GRP pipes, fittings and ancillaries for use as underground (buried) fire protection services.

4. BCD 5 (568) D20: Flush valves for WC flushing cisterns – Specification

This draft Botswana Standard covers requirements for the construction and performance of four types and three sizes of flush valves for WC flushing cisterns.

5. BCD 5 (569) D20: WC flushing systems (low-flushing capacity) that operate with flushing cisterns – Specification

This draft Botswana Standard specifies requirements for the components, assembly and combined performance of WC flushing systems that operate in conjunction with cisterns that have stored water capacities of 6 litres and less.

6. BCD 5 (602) D20: WC flushing cisterns – Specification

This draft Botswana Standard covers requirements for hand-operated high-level, low-level, near-level and close-coupled cisterns of various flushing capacities and that are designed for a single-flush operation, a dual-flush operation or an interruptible-flush operation.

7. BCD 2 (210) D20: Indoor venetian blinds – Specification

This draft Botswana Standard covers the dimensional and constructional requirements for venetian blinds (other than black-out blinds), of area not exceeding 11.125 m² and width not exceeding 4 m

8. BCD 4 (579) D20: Standardized specification for civil engineering construction – General

This specification covers the principles, responsibilities and requirements generally applicable to all civil engineering construction and building works.

9. BCD 4 (580) D20: Standardized specification for civil engineering construction – General (small works)

This specification covers the principles, responsibilities and requirements generally applicable to all civil engineering construction and building work on small projects such as piling, drilling and sports field contracts, and on buildings, bridges and similar isolated structures and on other minor works.

10. AFD 2 (551) D20: Animal feeding stuffs - Cattle feeds - Specification

This draft Botswana Standard specifies requirements for cattle feeds.

11. AFD 3 (607) D20: Cereals - Whole and dehulled pearl millet grains - Specification

This draft Botswana Standard applies to whole and dehulled pearl millet grains destined for human consumption, which is obtained from *Pennisetum typhoides* (syn. *P. americanum* L.).

12. BCD 3 (596) D20: Standardized specification for civil engineering construction - Sewers - Specification

This specification covers the general construction requirements for sewerage systems including connecting sewers, manholes, and the like, but excluding sewer rising mains, pump stations,

treatment works, and ancillary works.

13. BCD 3 (597) D20: Standardized specification for civil engineering construction – Asphalt base and surfacing - Specification

This specification covers the priming of the subbase or base and the construction of two types of hot-mix asphalt base and surfacing, namely continuously graded asphalt and, gap-graded; and open-graded asphalt which, in the case of surfacing, includes rolled-in pre-coated chips or a friction course of open-graded asphalt.

14. BCD 3 (598) D20: Standardized specification for civil engineering construction – Ancillary roadworks - Specification

This specification covers the supply and installation of metal W-section guardrails for rails; the supply and erection of permanent road signs alongside and over carriageways, ramps, and cross roads; and the permanent marking of road surfaces with white or yellow painted lines and symbols and the supply and fixing of retro-reflective road studs.

15. BOS 50 Part 1 D20: Hotels and related establishments – Grading requirements- Part 1: Hotels

The standard defines the requirements that will be used to assess hotels in Botswana

16. BOS 50 Part 2 D20: Hotels and related establishments – Grading requirements- Part 2: Game Lodges and camps

The standard defines the requirements that will be used to assess game lodges and camps in Botswana.

17. BOS 50 Part 3 D20: Hotels and related establishments – grading requirements- Part 3: Guest houses

The standard defines the requirements that will be used to assess guest houses in Botswana.

18. BOS 50 Part 4 D20: Hotels and related establishments – grading requirements- Part 4: Self-catering establishments

The standard defines the requirements that will be used to assess self-catering establishments in Botswana.

To make comments on these standards, please contact the Information Centre of the Botswana Bureau of Standards at Plot No. 55745, Main Airport Road, Block 8, Gaborone.

All interested parties are invited to provide their views regarding the standards before 29th February 2008.

Suggestions which entail revision of the text should indicate the

preferred wording and the relevant clauses should be quoted against each comment.

The comments should be sent to:

The Managing Director,
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E-mail: infoc@hq.bobstandards.bw

Alternatively, these Draft Botswana Standards may be viewed at the BOBS Francistown office at this address:

The Branch Manager
Botswana Bureau of Standards
Plot No. 13393/4/5, Insurance House, Second Floor
P/Bag F465
Francistown, Botswana
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BOBS Is Accredited By BOTTA

By Mr Judah Bosa



Mr. Bosa is responsible for development and delivery of BOBS training courses to all national stakeholders which in turn enables organizations to implement standards and thereby gain competitive advantage in the market place

Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) is proud to inform its stakeholders of its accreditation by Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) as a Training Institution with effect from November 2007. The accreditation covers the approval of International Management Systems training. This achievement by BOBS implies that BOBS has among other things competent staff, provides conducive learning environment, has systems and procedures for records management, conforms to its policies and procedures, and has course development coordination structures in place.

Part of BOBS mandate includes provision of training on standards and quality assurance. Training on standards is one of the vehicles that leads organizations to certification of their management systems and products. BOBS is committed to the provision of quality services to its customers.

BOBS training portfolio includes different aspects of environmental, laboratory and quality management systems. For more information on our training activities, please visit our website (see address below) and click on Training Services.

www.bobstandards.bw
Or contact:
BOBS Training Unit at:
Telephone: 3903200
Fax: 3910597
Email: j_bosa@bobstandards.bw

The relevance of setting up a Food Standards Agency in Botswana: The UK as an example

By Kobe.K. Motlhatledi



Mr Motlhatledi is a Senior Scientist in the Training Unit, responsible for training in Quality Management Systems and Food Safety Management Systems. He has a BSc (Biomedical Science) and MSc (Food Science and Microbiology).

1. Introduction

Globally, food-borne infections continue to be the major common and serious public threat and still remain the cause of morbidity and mortality. The occurrence of such infections is not limited only to developing countries. Developed countries also are experiencing the same problems and this is mainly due to newly emerging pathogens, changes in consumption of food, consumer trends and trends in food production (Blackburn and McClure 2002).

In order to counteract the problem of food-borne pathogens effective national food control systems are essential to protect the health and safety of consumers. These systems are also critical in enabling countries to assure the safety and quality of their foods entering international trade and to ensure that imported foods conform to national requirements. The new global environment for food trade places considerable obligations on countries to strengthen their food control systems and to implement and enforce risk-based food control strategies. In addition, consumers are taking great interest in the way food is produced, processed and marketed, and are increasingly calling for their Governments to accept greater responsibility for food safety and consumer protection.

It is therefore apparent that measures to control food-borne illnesses requires participation of all stakeholders in the food chain and concerted efforts should be aimed at eliminating the cause of infections and initially reducing the possibility of the presence of micro-organisms. This has led many countries to initiate the formation of food control agencies with varying systems in order to combat the problems posed by food-borne pathogens. However, many of these food control systems need to be revised and strengthened if improvements are to be realized. This article discusses one such agency in the United Kingdom, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and looks at the relevance of setting up such an agency in Botswana. The paper also reviews the impact of FSA in the control of food-borne infections and the various existing legislations, multiple jurisdictions, and weaknesses in surveillance, monitoring and enforcement of the control of food-borne infections in Botswana.

2. The UK Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency is an independent Government department which was set up by an Act of Parliament in 2000 (OPSI 1999). The main purpose FSA, as stated in its annual report of 2005/06, is 'to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food' (FSA 2006). In addition, the agency is non-ministerial and as the Act states, has the right to publish its advice and recommendations without first obtaining the approval of the Health Ministers, through which it reports to Parliament, and thus safeguarding a substantial amount of independence.

2.1 Guiding principles

The FSA promotes the microbiological safety of food throughout the food chain. It is responsible for the strategy of reducing food-borne illnesses, promoting a hazard analysis-based approach to food

safety management and providing guidance for producers, retailers, caterers and the general public. The agency has devised the means of measuring food-borne illness levels in order to ensure proper monitoring of trends in these infections.

The agency has two roles in relation to new food legislation, over ninety per cent of which comes from the European Union. It represents the U.K. government during policy development and the drafting processes carried out by the relevant parts of the European Commission, and it translates new European legislation into measures that apply nationally. The FSA also has dual responsibilities when it comes to food law enforcement. At a local level, the agency works with the individual local authorities to ensure consistent, proportionate, and effective action on food safety and standards issues. At a national level, the FSA is responsible for promulgating all of the slaughterhouse hygiene, inspection, and welfare regulations (Krebs 2004). This regulatory responsibility is one of the factors distinguishing the FSA. While similar agencies in Europe may be involved in risk assessment and risk communication, the FSA has responsibility across the whole risk spectrum: assessment, communication, and management.

Although the FSA has made tremendous progress in the control of food-borne pathogens, much still remains to be done. Even though improving microbiological food safety still remains just as important, much concentration needs to be on areas of diet and hygiene. This can lead to reductions in cardiovascular and cancer diseases.

3. Food safety control systems in Botswana

Reports on outbreaks of food borne illness are indications of the magnitude of the problem associated with food as a vehicle for disease transmission in Botswana (FAO-WHO 3 - 6 October 2005). At the macro level, a number of factors impact negatively on the situation and these include: poverty coupled with poor environmental hygiene and sanitation; rapid and unplanned proliferation of street food vending sites; poor public health funding coupled with inadequate human resources and expertise (FAO-WHO 12 - 14 October 2004). Food handling, preparation and storage are the major problems at the micro level. Problems associated with inadequate linkages include food legislation, regulations, laboratory services, inspection services, monitoring services, administration of food control, manpower development and funding of food safety programmes. For example, the Food Control Unit in Botswana is under the Community Health Services Division in the Ministry of Health. The food laws within the country include Food Control Act; Meat Industries Act; Public Health Act; Consumer Protection Act; Standards Act. These laws have different implementing authorities, which include, at Central level: Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Trade and Industry; Botswana Bureau of Standards; and at Local level: district councils and town or city councils.

3.1 Relevance of setting a FSA in Botswana

In order to overcome the problems associated with fragmentation of food control systems and the lack of collaboration between sectors, there is need to establish national food control authority or agency with inter-ministerial and interdepartmental representation. Initial interception measures are to focus on food processing industry, consumer education, street food vendors and food control infrastructure and resources. The food processing industry in Botswana ranges from sophisticated state-of-the-art facilities to small artisan operations producing traditional food for the local

community. This calls for greater vigilance by the food processing units and for food control activity to be implemented at all stages along the food supply chain.

There are thousands of single workers without families and a large floating population who move in and out of the city for work, and these people largely depend upon street food vendors for their daily sustenance. In Botswana, street food vendors are an important component of the food supply chain.

These ready-to-eat foods and beverages are prepared and/or sold by vendors or hawkers mainly in streets or other convenient public places. These foods are generally prepared and sold under unhygienic conditions, with limited access to safe water, sanitary services, or garbage disposal facilities. Hence, street foods pose a high risk of food poisoning due to microbial contamination, as well as improper use of food additives, adulteration and environmental contamination.

Food control infrastructure in Botswana tends to be inadequate, due to limited resources and often poor management. Food control laboratories are frequently poorly equipped and lack suitably trained analytical staff. This is exacerbated by multiple agencies and legislations involved in food control.

4. Conclusion

The establishment of FSA in the UK is an example worth noting and transferring to developing countries. Modern food control systems call for science-based and transparent decision-making processes, and require access to qualified and trained personnel in disciplines such as food science and technology, chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology, veterinary science, medicine, epidemiology, agricultural sciences, quality assurance, auditing and food law. Food control authorities in developing countries need to better appreciate the role of science in the risk-based approach, and to take advantage of scientific resources in the international community, through shared responsibility with all stakeholders (Kaferstein 2004).

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Staff News

By Malebo Mokgachane



Mrs Mokgachane is a Human Resources Officer in the Corporate Services Department and her responsibilities include the provision of Human Resources administrative services, Industrial Relations, Staff Welfare issues aiming at developing and maintaining a constructive and harmonious environment within the Bureau.

Appointments

BOBS Staff would like to take this opportunity to welcome and wish all new members of staff a pleasant and fulfilling stay at BOBS



Mr. Jan Titus

Mr Titus was appointed Assistant Technician – Testing (Microbiology) on the 3rd October 2007 in the Department of Commercial Enterprises. Jan has a Certificate in Animal Health and Production obtained from Botswana College of Agriculture. He has previously worked at National Veterinary Laboratory in the Biochemistry and Bacteriology Sections as Assistant Technician.



Ms Boikanyego Carolyn Otumiseng

Ms Otumiseng joined BOBS on 15th October 2007 as an Office Secretary in the Corporate Services Department. Boikanyego has a Diploma in Secretarial Studies obtained from Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce. She brings with her the experience she gained working for the University of Botswana as a Secretary.



Mr. Thuto Mongalenyane

Mr Mongalenyane was appointed Engineer – Testing (Electrical) on the 15th October 2007 in the Commercial Enterprises Department. Thuto has a Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical and Electronic) obtained from the University of Botswana.



Mr. Atholang Rantwa

Mr Rantwa was appointed Laboratory Technician – Testing (Civil) on the 5th November 2007 in the Department of Commercial Enterprises. Atholang has a National Diploma in Building and Civil Engineering obtained from the University of Botswana.



Mr Omri Mokgosi

Mr Mokgosi joined BOBS on 5th November 2007 as a Senior Engineer – Testing (Mechanical) in the Commercial Enterprises Department. Omri has a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) Degree in Industrial Engineering obtained from the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom.

He has previously worked at Delphi Automotive Systems as a Plant Reliability Maintenance Engineer.



Mr. Marshall Senthufhe

Mr Senthufhe was appointed Engineer – Testing (Civil) on the 15th November 2007 in the Department of Commercial Enterprises. Marshall has a Degree in Civil Engineering obtained from the University of Botswana.



Ms. Kgomotso Monare

Ms Monare joined BOBS on 3rd December 2007 as an Office Secretary in the Standards Department. Kgomotso has a Higher National Diploma in Secretarial Studies obtained from Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce. She has previously worked at

University of Botswana as a Personal Secretary.



Ms. Zukiswa Raditladi

Ms Raditladi was appointed Senior Standards Scientist (Environmental Management) on 3rd December 2007 in the Standards Department. Zukiswa has a Masters of Philosophy (Mphil.) Degree in Analytical Chemistry obtained from University of Botswana. She brings with her the

experience she gained working for Botswana Technology Centre as a Chemist in the Civil Engineering Unit.



Mr Bontlogile Obuseng

Mr Obuseng joined BOBS on 3rd December 2007 as a Scientist – Testing (Textiles-Leather) in the Commercial Enterprises Department. Bontlogile has a Bachelor of Science (Hons) Degree in Leather Technology obtained from University College Northampton in UK. He has

previously worked at Rural Industries Innovation Centre as a Leather Technologist.



Mr. Mareko Sebonego

Mr Sebonego was appointed Manager – Facilities and Administration on the 3rd December 2007 in the Corporate Services Department. Mareko has a Masters of Real Estate degree from University of New South Wales, Australia and Masters of Business Administration from University of

Botswana. He brings with him the experience he gained working for Botswana Power Corporation as a Property Management Officer.

Bereavement



Mr Isaac Lephogole joined BOBS on 1st January 2007 as a Refrigeration Mechanic in the Corporate Services Department. He passed away on the 19th October 2007 after a short illness. May his soul rest in peace.

Internal Upward Mobility

BOBS would like to congratulate the following members of staff who were appointed to higher positions of responsibility.



Ms Josephine Sebako

Office Secretary to Director – Regulatory Compliance appointed on the 1st December 2007



Mr Keeper Morgan

Director – Commercial Enterprises appointed on the 1st December 2007



Newlyweds

Mr Gabo Motlhabane, Commercial Enterprise Department in BOBS got married to Tlotlo Motlhabane, formerly Seamolo.