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The Necessity of Risk Communication in the Food Safety Regulation: In the Instance of Mad Cow Disease

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Abstract

The risk communication under the context of food safety emphasizes at the perspectives of “horizontal communication” and “information exchange” between the stakeholders. The purpose of that is to regulate the food safety more compactly and further to fulfill the requirement of deliberative democracy. However, will the application of risk communication into the food safety management impact the embedded scientific neutral in the regulation system and thus interfere the agency’s decision making? Following this question, two controversial issues should be researched: 1. does the application of risk communication truly benefit the food safety management so that its cruciality to the food safety regulation deserves more spotlight? On the other hand, 2. does the risk communication only benefit the consumers, but not the food industry or suppliers; or even increase the administrative cost unexpectedly?

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In this article, we claim that the application of the risk communication can practically take consumers' need and their worries into consideration while improving the food safety regulation and relevant decision making. Moreover, the governance of the food safety with risk communication fulfills the requirement of accountability in modern democracy, in which the risk takers understand what they exactly bear under current food safety law and the pros and cons it brings. Ideally, if the information in the food system is fully disclosed to the stakeholders, all of the stakeholders will then be equipped with stronger capability to prevent or take the underlying risk; which results in a positive effect to the transaction order on the food market, as well as the achievement of the goal of food safety regulation.

Keywords: Food Safety, Risk Management, Risk Assessment, Risk Communication, Mad Cow Disease