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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

Food Security and Food Safety in Kenya: the Role of Universities

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Abstract

Food insecurity is a prevalent problem affecting 40 % of the population. Children under five are especially vulnerable to malnutrition as 26 % of the children are stunted, 11 % are underweight and 6 % are wasted. The causes of food insecurity are: poverty, drought and poor agricultural systems that lead to food losses throughout the food value chain. This leads to food insecurity resulting in poor accessibility, availability and sustainability of foods by households. Food safety is further a challenge that results in poor food utility and this problem is exacerbated by poor access to water, contamination of water, hygiene and poor waste disposal facilities. This results in water borne diseases and other complications leading to diseases such as cancer. To mitigate these problems, universities in Kenya have mounted programmes in Agriculture, Public Health and Nutrition in order to capacity build personnel to tackle these challenges. The University plays this role by training personnel in the reduction of food losses throughout the value chain, training of public health officers in the formulation and implementation of the public health act to reduce these incidences. Universities play a role in development of relevant material in the promotion of Food Security and maintaining of public health promotion for the Kenyan population. Universities also play a big role in generating innovations in the area of food security and food safety. Further, it builds capacity in research, monitoring and evaluation of food security and food safety systems. The Government has put in place mechanisms to reduce the problem of food insecurity and safety but these efforts have had little impact.

Keywords: Food insecurity, food safety, food security, health promotion and malnutrition.