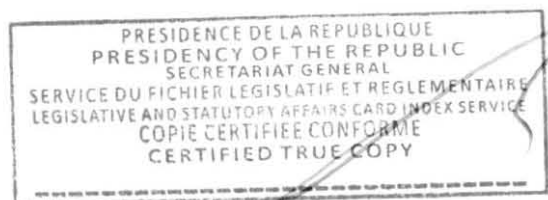


**REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**  
-----

**PEACE – WORK – FATHERLAND**  
-----

LAW N. 2018/020 OF 11 DEC 2018  
**FRAMEWORK LAW ON FOOD SAFETY**



***The Parliament deliberated and adopted,  
the President of the Republic hereby  
enacts the law set out below:***

## **CHAPTER I** **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **I - PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

**SECTION 1:** This law lays down the principles and bases for regulating food products, feed for animals intended for human consumption and food additives and supplements, in order to ensure a high level of consumers life and health protection and environmental soundness.

**SECTION 2:** The provisions of this law shall apply to the production, manufacturing, preparation, handling, parcelling, storage, transportation, packaging, preservation, import, export, distribution and sale of food products or any other related activity.

**SECTION 3:** This law seeks to:

- ensure consumer food safety;
- prevent and control food-borne diseases;
- make the declaration of food poisoning mandatory;
- promote national and international food trade by establishing an effective safety system based on scientific principles;
- contribute to establishing specific standards for food products consumed and marketed in the country, and ensure their application in control and monitoring plans;
- improve the quality of food produced domestically by implementing good production, manufacturing and hygiene practices, and a sanitary and phytosanitary risk control system;
- facilitate the integrated management of food safety at the various stages of the food chain;
- promote mechanisms for coordination between the various relevant food sector authorities and gradually prepare them to incorporate their activities into regional or international organizations, notably Codex Alimentarius (CODEX), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN);
- develop an efficient official inspection and control system based on standards, technical regulations and, as appropriate, scientific data;
- support and stimulate the development of the food industry and encourage competitiveness on the domestic and international market;

- promote the participation of consumers and various stakeholders in the food chain with respect to the consumption, processing and marketing of food products, as well as in the application and conduct of the national food safety policy;
- establish a framework to facilitate the implementation of national and international food requirements;
- strengthen the responsibility of any producer, processor or distributor in the protection of consumers' health by setting up self-checking systems and release for consumption authorizations;
- ensure communication on risks, in conjunction with epidemiological surveillance networks and early warning or health surveillance systems;
- set up a national system of authorizations for the consumption of foodstuff, animal feed, food additives and supplements.

## **II - DEFINITIONS**

**SECTION 4:** For the purposes of this law, the following definitions shall apply:

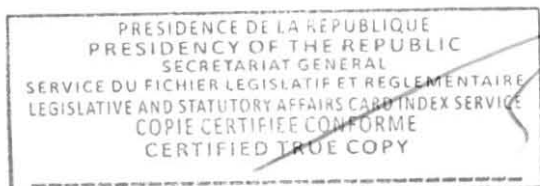
**Food additive:** any substance not normally consumed as a food by itself and not normally used as a typical ingredient of the food, whether or not it has nutritive value, the intentional addition of which to food for a technological (including organoleptic) purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food results, or may be reasonably expected to result, (directly or indirectly) in it or its by-products becoming a component of or otherwise affecting the characteristics of such foods. The term does not include "contaminants" or substances added to food for maintaining or improving nutritional qualities;

**Food or foodstuff:** any substance, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, which is intended for human consumption, and includes drink, chewing gum and any substance which has been used in the manufacture, preparation or treatment of "food" but does not include cosmetics or tobacco or substances used only as drugs;

**Adulterated food:** any food to which any substance is added, removed or substituted to change its composition, weight or volume for fraudulent purposes or to conceal or correct any defect in its quality or properties;

**Food unfit for human consumption:** any primary product or food which, without being spoiled or intoxicated, does not have all the necessary hygienic guarantees, taking into account certain undesirable elements that it contains, either by contamination or by degradation of its microbiological and/or chemical quality;

**Animal feed:** any substance or product, including food additives, whether processed or unprocessed, intended to be used for oral feeding of animals;



**Processed food**: any food coloured, dyed, pulverized, polished, coated, mixed, canned, flavoured, diluted or thickened with any substance;

**Allergen**: any substance capable of sensitizing the body of certain individuals and determining, during its reintroduction, pathological manifestations;

**Risk analysis**: a process consisting of three components: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication;

**Risk assessment**: a scientifically based process consisting of the following steps: (i) hazard identification, (ii) hazard characterization, (iii) exposure assessment, and (iv) risk characterization;

**Risk management**: the process, distinct from risk assessment, of weighing policy alternatives, in consultation with all interested parties, considering risk assessment and other factors relevant for the health protection of consumers and for the promotion of fair trade practices, and, if needed, selecting appropriate prevention and control options;

**Risk communication**: the interactive exchange of information and opinions throughout the risk analysis process concerning hazards and risks, risk-related factors and risk perceptions, among risk assessors, risk managers, consumers, industry, the academic community and other interested parties, including the explanation of risk assessment findings and the basis of risk management decisions;

**Pest risk analysis**: the process of evaluating biological or other scientific or economic evidence to determine whether an organism is a pest, whether it should be regulated, and the strength of any phytosanitary measures to be taken against it;

**Self-control**: all measures taken by farmers, whether carried out by themselves or by a third party, to ensure that the products they manage at all stages of production, processing and distribution meet the legal requirements for food safety, product quality and traceability, as well as the monitoring of actual compliance with these requirements;

**Processing aid**: any substance or material, not including apparatus or utensils, and not consumed as a food ingredient by itself, intentionally used in the processing of raw materials, foods or their ingredients, to fulfil a certain technological purpose during treatment or processing and which may result in the non-intentional but unavoidable presence of residues or derivatives in the final product;

**Food chain**: all stages from primary production of food to consumption through handling, transport, processing, packaging, distribution and storage;

**Food supplement**: foodstuff that is a concentrated source of nutrients, substances with a nutritional or physiological effect, plants or plant extracts that are intended to overcome the deficiencies of a person's regular diet. These supplements can be in

various forms including: capsules, lozenges, tablets, pills, powder sachets, fluid-filled ampoules, flasks with a dropper, solution;

**Contaminant:** any substance not intentionally added to food, which is present in such food as a result of the production (including operations carried out in crop husbandry, animal husbandry and veterinary medicine), manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or storage of such food or as a result of environmental contamination. The term does not include insect fragments, rodent hairs and other extraneous matter;

**Official control:** any form of control that the competent authority conducts to check compliance with regulations;

**Parcelling:** an object which, regardless of the nature of materials that constitutes it, is intended to contain and protect the foodstuff, to allow their handling and their transportation, as well as to ensure their presentation;

**Label :** any indication, mark, sign or design or any other written description, printed painted marked, etched or stamped on the food packaging or any other feature related to packaging;

**HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control points)** : a system which identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significant for food safety;

**Food hygiene:** all conditions and measures necessary to ensure food security and safety at all stages of the food chain;

**Ingredient:** any substance, including food additives, used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and present in the final product although in a modified form;

**Food safety:** assurance that food will not cause damage to the consumer when prepared and/or eaten according to its intended use;

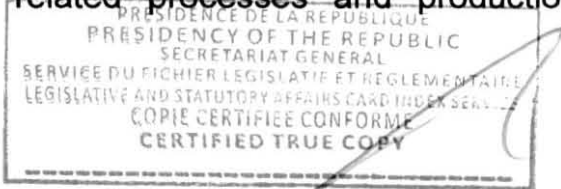
**Inspection:** official examination of institutions, foods and their treatment, companies of the food sector, their production and management system, including documents, tests on finished products and food practices, the origin and destination of incoming and outgoing products, to verify their compliance with legal standards;

**Official laboratory:** Accredited laboratory per se in conformity with this law;

**Phytosanitary measures:** any legislation, regulation or official procedure having the purpose to prevent the introduction of and/or the spread of quarantine pests, or to limit the economic impact of regulated non-quarantine pests;

**Sanitary measures:** any measure applied to protect human life or health within the territory of the country from risks arising from additives, contaminants, toxins or disease-causing organisms in food or feedstuffs, or from risks arising from diseases carried by foods which are animals, plants or products thereof or from risks arising from any other hazards in foods;

**Food standard** : document approved by a recognized body, which provides a common and regular use, of rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods of which the observance is not





compulsory. Prescriptions in terms of terminology, symbol, packaging, mark, marking and labelling relating to a product, the process and production methods may equally treat only these services;

**Nutrients**: fatty acids, amino acids, proteins, simple sugars, probiotics, vitamins and minerals;

**Economic operator**: any natural or legal person in the field of production, manufacturing, preparation, manipulation, treatment, packaging, transportation, packing, conservation, import, export, distribution, food sales, or any other related activity;

**Entry and exit points**: airports, ports and inland ports, parcel post centres or officially designated land border points;

**Pre-packaging**: packing a product in a package without the knowledge of the buyer, such that the quantity of the product in the package has a given value beforehand and which cannot be modified without notice;

**Production**: farming, harvesting, capturing, treatment or food processing including the acquisition, the treatment, the rearing of farm animals before slaughter until their release for consumption.

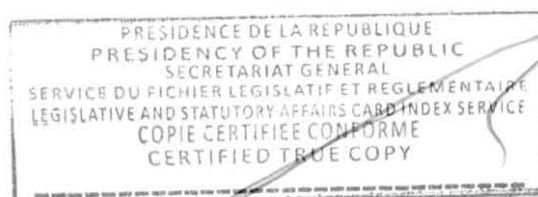
**Quality**: all properties and characteristics of a product which makes it fit to satisfy the hidden or expressed needs of the users. Food quality comprises the following four components: hygienic, nutritional, organoleptic and use.

**Risk**: a function of the probability of an adverse health effect and the severity of that effect, consequential to a hazard(s) in food;

**Surveillance**: scheduled observation or evaluation of a parameter, with respect to a particular point or time, which is later compared to a reference,

**Traceability**: the ability to trace and follow a food, feed and food-producing animal or substance intended to be, or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution.

**Utensil**: the whole or part of a tool, instrument, machine, appliances and other instruments used or that could be used for the production, the manufacturing, the preparation, the manipulation, the packaging, the transportation, the packing, the conservation, the import, the export, the distribution, the sales, the serving or storage of any food.



## CHAPTER II GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF FOOD SAFETY

**SECTION 5:** In accordance with the food safety principle, food products and objects that come in contact with food products, including ingredients, packaging, and utensils used for their production, manufacturing and preparation should not constitute a risk factor to human health.

**SECTION 6:** (1) The applicable legislation and the intervention of competent authorities and economic operators with regards to food shall be based on the principle of risk analysis.

(2) Risk assessment shall comply with scientific criteria and be carried out independently and transparently.

(3) Risk management and communication on risks shall be based on risk assessment.

**SECTION 7:** (1) Hygienic measures taken shall be based on available scientific evidence.

(2) They shall not be applied in a manner as to constitute arbitrary or unjustified discrimination, or a disguised restriction to commerce, in accordance with the principles of free exchange.

**SECTION 8:** The food legislation shall seek to protect the interest of consumers and provide them with essential conditions for making a well-informed choice of food products to consume.

In this regard, it shall be responsible for preventing:

- fraudulent and misleading practices;
- the marketing of defective and /or adulterated food products;
- any practice that may mislead the consumer.

**SECTION 9:** (1) The implementation of the principle of precaution shall enable decision-makers to take action where scientific data is insufficient, inconclusive or uncertain, but where, according to information gathered from an objective and preliminary scientific assessment, there are reasonable grounds to be worried about potentially dangerous health hazards resulting from a phenomenon, a product or a process.



(2) Its implementation may be required to maintain the level of health protection chosen.

**SECTION 10:** All food-related activities shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions, standards, guidelines and other national and international recommendations contained in regularly ratified international treaties governing food safety, notably those of Codex Alimentarius, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Worldwide Organization of Consumers (OIC) as well as those established by the Cartagena Protocol on Biotechnological Risk Protection.

**SECTION 11:** (1) Economic operators of the food sector shall ensure that their activities comply with the provisions of the food legislation.

(2) They shall be responsible for protecting consumer health in relation to the products they release for consumption.

**SECTION 12:** As part of health inspection procedures, economic operators shall enjoy the guarantees of transparency, impartiality, and proportionality granted to persons subject to an inspection measure.

**SECTION 13:** On the proposal of health security entities, the competent authority shall:

- take appropriate measures to ensure that the actors concerned participate in food safety decision-making process;
- depending on the nature, the seriousness and scope of food safety risks, take appropriate measures to inform the actors concerned of the nature of these risks and the measures taken to prevent, reduce or eliminate them. To this end, economic operators as well as the relevant government services, each in his own sphere of competence as laid down for the implementation of this law, shall be bound to provide monthly data required for monitoring;
- provide access to information in its possession relating to food safety, including information on hazardous substances and activities.





## **CHAPTER III**

### **ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM**

#### **I- ORGANIZATION**

**SECTION 14:** A food safety policy and strategy paper shall define the Government's vision of food safety and outline each stakeholder's responsibilities and activities.

**SECTION 15:** Special instruments shall lay down the conditions for organizing the food safety system.

#### **II- FUNCTIONING**

**SECTION 16:** The food control procedure shall take the following elements into account:

- visual and documentary inspection;
- food chain inspection;
- inspection of the production environment;
- collection of samples;
- physico-chemical and microbiological analysis;
- interpretation of the results of the analyses of samples collected.

**SECTION 17:** Control operations shall be carried out in compliance with the following principles:

- transparency between the economic operator and the government service(s);
- impartiality, honesty and confidentiality on the part of authorized officers ;
- complementarity and effectiveness of the action of each competent authority ;
- use of nationally and internationally recognized standards.

**SECTION 18:** (1) Laboratories accredited and/or approved by the competent authority shall be responsible for supporting food safety entities.

(2) A separate instrument shall lay down the conditions for accrediting and/or approving laboratories.

**SECTION 19:** (1) Any substance added to a food product must be subject to prior authorization by the competent authority, or authorized by a national or international standard.



(2) Special instruments shall establish the list of authorized food substances and lay down conditions for their use.

**SECTION 20:** In case of emergency or force majeure, the competent authority may, through a duly reasoned act:

- impose a total ban on the production, manufacturing, preparation and sale of any food product;
- impose conditions for producing, manufacturing, preparing and selling food products;
- request the analysis and examination of any food product;
- require that any food should be kept or isolated in a location and restricted from use for a period deemed necessary;
- request the destruction or disposal of any foodstuff;
- order any necessary measure;
- request the treatment of any foodstuff;
- recall the foodstuff, as appropriate.

**SECTION 21:** (1) Any economic operator in Cameroon involved in the production, preservation, processing, transportation, packing, packaging, import, export, distribution and sale of foodstuff must be registered with the competent authority.

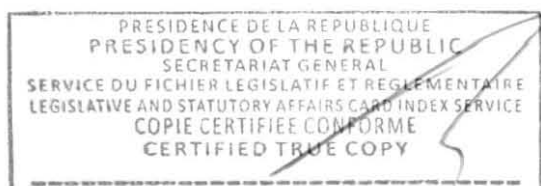
(2) The competent authority shall proceed with registration, where the economic operator complies with the national and international legislation in force in his area of activity.

**SECTION 22:** The self-control of a production or distribution establishment must be based on a guide duly validated by the competent authority, to ensure product compliance before its supply for consumption.

**SECTION 23:** The principle of traceability shall be applied to all activities relating to human food and feed for animals intended for human consumption.

**SECTION 24:** (1) Economic operators, as well as food-producing companies and their staff must comply with all the rules of hygiene provided for the implementation of this law, in line with the standards of Codex Alimentarius or the guidelines of any other international organization involved in food safety.

(2) The competent authority and, on its behalf, its official food control and monitoring services, shall ensure compliance with hygiene rules and practices.



**SECTION 25:** Any economic operator who manufactures, processes or distributes food products must develop and implement a hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) system or another recognized system, in compliance with the terms defined by international standards.

**SECTION 26:** Any pre-packaged foodstuff must be labelled in accordance with the legislation in force.

**SECTION 27:** Public sensitization and food safety promotion activities shall be organized by the entities responsible for food safety.

### **III- APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE FOODSTUFF, ANIMAL FEED, FOOD ADDITIVES AND SUPPLEMENTS FOR CONSUMPTION**

**SECTION 28:** (1) The authorization to release for consumption (ARC) shall be issued by the competent authority.

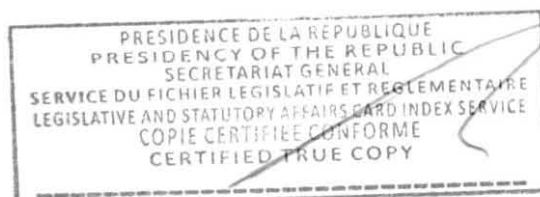
(2) It shall comprise the following elements:

- the report on the sanitary control of the production site, using the BPF/BPH, HACCP or other quality system;
- the self-control system;
- the results of the analyses carried out by accredited or approved laboratories;
- expert opinion on the products concerned;
- the status of knowledge and current control of the risks associated with these foodstuffs;
- general interest.

**SECTION 29:** The following shall be subject to ARC:

- foodstuffs produced at national level;
- imported foodstuff;
- dietetic foodstuff;
- feed for animals intended for human consumption;
- food additives and processing aids ;
- food supplements.

**SECTION 30:** The validity of the authorization for release for consumption of foodstuff and animal feed shall be three (3) years renewable.



## **CHAPTER IV** **FOOD INSPECTION**

**SECTION 31:** Inspections carried out pursuant to this law shall concern:

- imported, exported, and locally marketed foodstuffs;
- food processing companies and their environment, as well as transportation means, the equipment and materials used or involved at the different stages of the food chain;
- food processing company staff;
- the various processes and methods used.

**SECTION 32:** The general organization of food inspection in Cameroon shall be laid down by a separate instrument.

## **CHAPTER V** **FINANCING FOOD SAFETY ACTIVITIES**

**SECTION 33:** Food safety activities may be financed through:

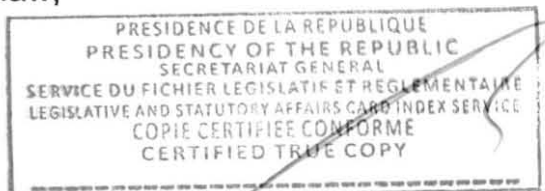
- State subsidies;
- any support from development partners;
- any other form of financing in compliance with the legislation in force.

**SECTION 34:** The conditions for collecting, mobilizing and using funds intended to finance food safety activities shall be laid down in a separate instrument.

## **CHAPTER VI** **ADMINISTRATIVE AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES**

**SECTION 35:** Without prejudice to criminal proceedings, the competent authority may, in the event of failure by companies to fulfil their obligations under this law, or where a serious or immediate danger is established, impose one of the following penalties:

- suspension or cancellation of the registration of the company;
- seizure or destruction of any food, utensil, material, substance or other object in connection with an offence committed or used in the commission of an offence;
- suspension of the approval of any laboratory, equipment or professional authorized by this law;



- temporary closure of the company;
- temporary or permanent banning of the use of company equipment or some company premises;
- temporary or permanent banning of the official of the defaulting food processing company from participating in any other food processing company.

## **CHAPTER VII** **MISCELLANEOUS AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

**SECTION 37:** Implementing instruments shall, as appropriate, supplement the provisions of this law.

**SECTION 38:** All previous provisions repugnant to this law are repealed.

**SECTION 39:** This law shall be registered, published according to the procedure of urgency, and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and French./-

YAOUNDE, 11 DEC 2018

  
**PAUL BIYA**  
**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC**

