

# Involving Stakeholders in Food Chain Risk Management: Case Studies

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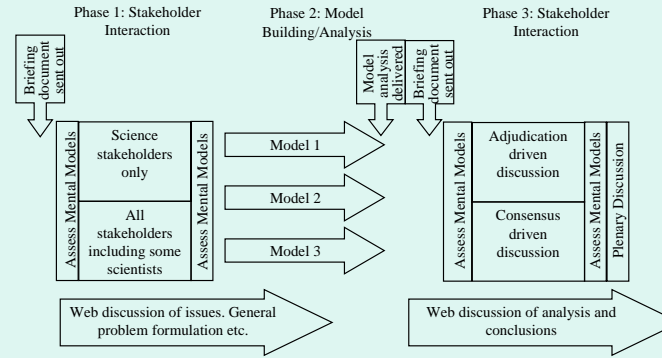


## Overview of Project

The focus of our project is the effective management of food chain risks in the rural economy. As one element, we are seeking to evaluate the use of participation processes and how they are adopted to engage stakeholders in the management and communication of risks. Past examples of such risks from which we can learn include BSE, salmonella contaminations, and the foot and mouth outbreak, where the impacts of the crises were much more diverse and far-reaching than first considered. We are seeking to provide guidance on how to ensure that the views and values of all stakeholders, particularly those in the rural community, are taken account of fully in the management process. Involving local people in local decisions may provide additional information, therefore strengthening the decision-making process and resulting in better management of the situation.

## Participatory Processes

A key aim is to compare a number of participatory processes to observe the differences and characteristics of each. The decision making process can be structured in three phases: issue formulation in which the questions of interest are clarified and defined and the concerns of stakeholders identified; assessment and analysis in which one or more studies are undertaken to provide answers to the questions; evaluation in which the outcomes of the study are discussed and decisions taken on the next steps. Figure 1 outlines the design of our experiment to test participatory processes.



## Experiment Design

Phase 1 is the issue formulation stage where the issues involved in a scenario, possible outcomes, and consequences are explored. Traditionally, the issue formulation phase has been done by experts and regulating agencies without significant input from stakeholders. One of the arguments for public participation is that the public bring much more information to the discussion than having just scientific stakeholders. We intend to test this by having two stakeholder interaction groups with a different mix of stakeholders at this phase. In phase 2, analyses will be conducted to build a range of perspectives on the scenarios being discussed and provide information for the evaluation phase. For the first case study, the analysis will be done without any further interaction with stakeholders. This may not be the case in future scenarios and will be reviewed at the end of this phase of the project. The overall idea is to explore the potential consequences and provide risk assessments, recognising that it may not be possible to answer with certainty all of the questions that arise in Phase 1. In phase 3, we will hold a second stakeholder interaction at which participants deliberate the risk assessments and strategies presented to them. We will have two parallel groups of participants, one of which will deliberate with an *adjudication* method and the other will deliberate more informally to reach a *consensus* to explore these different methodologies.

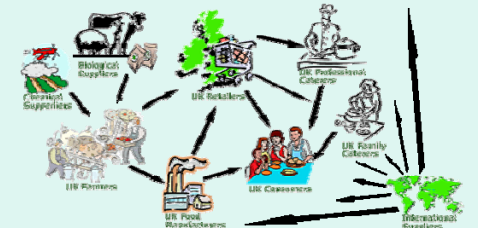
Alongside these three phases we will run a website with e-participation tools to discuss the assessments online. The information gathered from the website will be evaluated with that of the face-to-face interactions.

## Case Studies

Throughout the project we will explore the effectiveness of participatory processes based around three case studies. These hypothetical scenarios of incidents involving food chain risks would have impacts on the rural community.

### Case 1: Pesticide Exposure

This case revolves around the use of pesticides in farming. Research sponsored by Friends of the Earth (FOE) suggests that some pesticide residues on apples and pears may, in some circumstances, exceed recommended levels for children. The Pesticide Residues Committee acknowledges that variability in pesticide residues is an issue but stresses that this paper overstates the public health concern. They argue that, in the rare cases where the official thresholds are exceeded, they are unlikely to represent a real concern because of the safety margins that are implemented. The issues involved in this case will be deliberated in the first participatory process exercise.



### Case 2: Microbiological Health Risks in the Food Chain

The Food Standards Agency aims to reduce the number of cases of food poisoning caused by Campylobacter. This can be approached in a number of ways and the underlying societal decision becomes a choice between more stringent, and expensive, hygiene and biosecurity at the farm and producer facility or a public education campaign to reduce loss of control in domestic or commercial kitchens.

### Case 3: Emergency Situations in the Food Chain

The case focuses on an emergency management situation that may occur. The details of the case are still to be decided but will involve evaluating risks where information might be lacking, and in short timescales. We welcome any suggestions for this case study.

For more information visit our website at [www.relu-risk.org.uk](http://www.relu-risk.org.uk) or contact Clare Bayley at [clare.bayley@mbs.ac.uk](mailto:clare.bayley@mbs.ac.uk)