

### Current Health Event

#### World Health Day 2015

On April 8, WHO, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO celebrated World Health Day 2015 under the slogan “From farm to plate: make food safe.”

#### Editorial note:

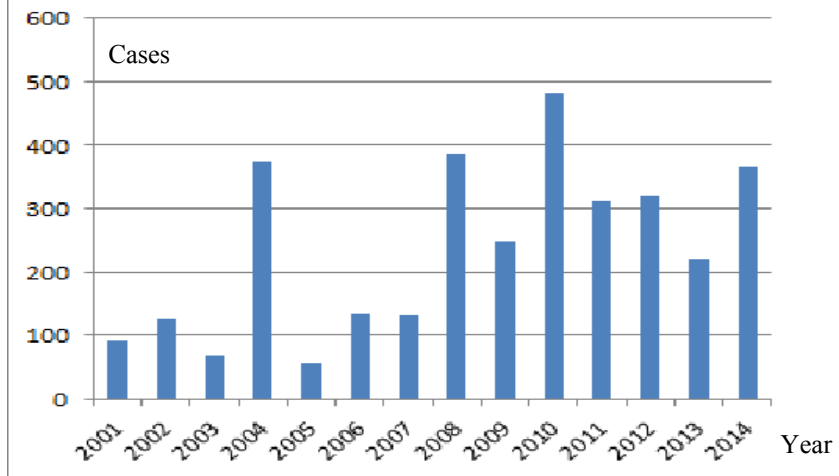
Lebanon’s food is considered a national treasure, and the country’s cuisine is appreciated worldwide. However in recent years Lebanon has observed an increase in food-borne illnesses, which shed light on issues in the safety of the food chain.

In November 2014, the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health swung into action. Public health officials began surprise inspections of restaurants, slaughterhouses, supermarkets and farms. All those found to provide food products not compatible with national standards were cited on public media. Some were shut down, pending completion of needed improvements and re-inspection.

The campaign triggered a ripple effect. Now more actors across the food chain are considering the merits of food suppliers. Consumers are more alert to the food they buy and eat, establishments are reinforcing their own internal food safety policies

At the consumer end of the food supply chain, the public plays important roles in promoting food safety, from practising safe food hygiene and learning how to take care when cooking specific foods that may be hazardous, to reading the labels when buying and preparing food. The WHO Five Keys to Safer Food explain the basic principles that each individual should know all

Figure: Food poisoning reported cases from 2001 to 2014, source MoPH.



over the world to prevent foodborne diseases.

WHO supported the MoPH food safety drive by providing workshops and training to more than 200 public health inspectors on standard food sampling and inspection based on good manufacturing practice and WHO standard check lists. All this activity and new-found commitment has enhanced the MoPH normative work. Food inspection checklists have been updated in accordance with the Codex Alimentarius.

#### WHO Five Keys to Safer Food:

1. keep clean;
2. separate raw and cooked;
3. cook thoroughly;
4. keep food at safe temperatures; and
5. use safe water and raw materials.

WHO supports Lebanon to prevent, detect and respond to foodborne disease outbreaks—in line with the Codex Alimentarius. WHO’s campaign aims to raise awareness on the need for greater action by all involved in the food chain to ensure the safety of food, from production to consumption and the many steps in between.

#### Cumulative Notifiable diseases in Lebanon (Syrian)

Disease	2014	2015 Cumul*	Mar	Apr
<b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases</b>				
Polio	0(0)	0	0(0)	0(0)
Acute Flaccid Paralysis	53(16)	26(4)	12(1)	4(0)
Measles	235(107)	12(1)	6(0)	2(0)
Mumps	736(117)	515(106)	171(39)	27(3)
Pertussis	87(25)	11(4)	4(0)	1(0)
Rabies	1(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	18(12)	4(0)	2(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep B	218(33)	55(9)	12(2)	4(1)
<b>Water/Food Borne Diseases</b>				
Brucellosis	252(36)	36(12)	14(5)	0(0)
Cholera	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Hydatid cyst	16(2)	5(1)	0(0)	0(0)
Typhoid				
Fever	546(33)	88(9)	30(3)	3(0)
Viral Hep A	2582(911)	402(93)	77(12)	5(2)
<b>Other Diseases</b>				
Leishmaniasis	663(638)	9(6)	4(1)	0(0)
Meningitis	232(35)	93(19)	24(6)	9(0)
Viral Hep C	100(6)	27(1)	9(0)	0(0)

Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon as on 18/04/2015