

7th International Food Safety Congress

7TH INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY CONGRESS FINAL DECLARATION

7th International Food Safety Congress has been realised in Istanbul on 3 – 4 November 2022 with the theme of “Safe Food for Now and Future”. During the 2-day Congress, 23 foreign and 48 national speakers realised their presentations in 3 plenary and various parallel sessions.

7th International Food Safety Congress is organised under the coordination of Food Safety Association, in cooperation with IAFP-International Association for Food Protection and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, with the contributions of 36 agencies representing all stages of the chain including professional chambers, sectoral associations, producers’ unions, consumer associations; and is realised with the participation of over 400 guests from 18 different countries.

During the Congress up-to-date subjects and issues such as food safety communication strategies, tackling food frauds, climate change and mould toxins, novel food processing technologies, micro and nano plastics and one health were discussed. The Congress final declaration is bellows .

1 The scientific and technological developments occurring in the century we are living in, leads the way for the usage of new technologies in food processing as well. The current developments open new horizons from combatting against disease causing microorganisms to control methodologies. On one side new generation food processing technologies where sensorial properties and nutritional properties are kept without disruption while extending the shelf life are being developed, on the other side it is getting more and more important to evaluate the effects of these new technologies with a multidisciplinary approach not only on human health but also on environment and other bios. It should be aimed to put the legal regulations about the new technologies into force at once after the risk assessment studies are done.

2 As well as for new technologies, risk assessment processes for food safety risks that can be created by novel food including those with a wide-spread perception of being natural and healthy such as vegan food, should be managed through internationally accepted procedures.

3 Food fraud which is a globally wide-spread issue is increasing with the pandemics and the economic crises. Furthermore, new concepts on food risks are being introduced with changing environmental conditions and scientific developments observed. One of the basic ways to cope with these challenges is to open the way for easier and safer identification of fraud. In order to reach safe analysis results, it is necessary to systematically review the analysis procedures; include modern analysis parameters and limits for the identification of food fraud in the legislations. Responsibilities of official public laboratories and authorised private laboratories which both have an important role in this respect will increasingly continue. For the system to be strong, all stakeholders beginning with public authorities should fulfil its duty.



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4 In the World and in our country, micro and nano plastics are an important environmental pollution problem as well as being an important risk source for the effects of food on human health and sustainable food production. Although there are a lot of factors on environmental pollution, food and beverage packages have an important share on this. A solution strategy should be developed to this global problem with a global approach and within this strategy, production and usage of plastics should be defined within the framework of food safety and sustainability.

5 Transmission of food to consumers as packed and labelled is an indispensable food safety principle. With the pandemics period, demand of consumers to packed food is also increased. This is an important improvement from food safety point of view. On the other hand, another matter as important as the necessity of packages is the promotion of implementations such as reusing and recycling in parallel with getting prepared to the usage of environment friendly alternate packaging material while the requirement of risk assessment studies followed by legal regulations are targeted.

6 Most of the mycotoxins (mould toxins), which is one of the important risks in food, are heat resistant, carcinogenic matters. 25 % of all food produced globally are subject to contamination with mycotoxins. It is thought that climate change will further increase this exposure. Increase in mycotoxin pollution year by year due to climate change and its geographical spread brings together the problem of increased pesticide residues. An integrated management system with pre-harvest, at storage, processing and new generation control implementations to combat mycotoxins should be adopted.

7 Due to recent developments in food toxicology, it should be kept in mind that limit values calculated based on one by one toxicity of materials applied in the risk assessment of chemical contaminants and residues, will have significant differences in cases where there are more than one contaminants and residues, and this might cause important changes in the legal regulations. On the other hand, it is seen that endocrine disrupters which can be contaminated to food from various media and which can be more toxic especially at smaller concentrations might take place more in the agenda in the future and they will be controlled more tightly with legal arrangements.

8 Although consumer perceptions might be different, microorganisms harmful to human health causing food poisoning are still an important food safety concern. In spite of all developments, it is observed that food borne contagious outbreaks still happen. These outbreaks once again put forward the importance of the efficiency of pathogen tracking and control systems for public health. Since microorganisms are as well living creatures trying to survive, it might be observed that known risky food may change in time, they may form more resistant structures such as biofilms and may become resistant to the antibiotics used.

At the global and national level, it should never be disregarded that food and health authorities should work in cooperation; achieving food hygiene and sanitation is a priority objective for public and private sectors and for the consumers; and as is for all kind of struggle against risks, transparency and sharing information with all the parties is the most efficient way of striving against microbial risks.

9 It is of significant importance to use new generation microbiological analysis techniques such as WGS and NGS to enlighten food poisonings where the reason cannot be found clearly with classical methodologies in many cases; to identify accurately the pathogens in production facilities; and even to define antibiotic resistance.



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10 It is important to identify risks at the production stage, to take the necessary preventive measures and to manage with correct interventions where necessary. With this purpose, strategies to increase awareness on food safety, food-borne hazards and risks should be developed for all food premises no matter what scale they are. Internationally accepted food safety management systems should be benefitted as a guiding implementation. It should not be forgotten that achieving food safety is possible not only with experience but also with training and knowledge, and sharing of sectoral examples of good practices should be promoted.

11 Food production and supply chain is a whole from the field/farm to the table. It is usually not possible to eradicate food safety problems that occur at any stage of primary production, including seed and feed, at the succeeding stages. Dimensions of the challenges faced in dairy and beef husbandry, marine products and plant production should be shared transparently with the consumers. Unhealthy communication in this regard may cause loss of trust in the consumers, development of wrong risk perception, and having faults while choosing food and nutrition.

According to the 2019 Eurobarometer survey done by European Food Safety Authority EFSA in all EU countries and Türkiye; concerns and trusted people/agencies of EU consumers and Turkish consumers vary significantly. While Turkish consumers are mostly concerned about packing, additives and GMO; consumers in EU mostly worry about pesticides, antibiotics and hormone residues. Mostly trusted information source for Turkish consumers are farmers, scientists, civil society organisations and legal authority respectively; for the EU consumers mostly trusted source of information are scientists at the official agencies.

12 The worldwide problems of antibiotics resistance, environmental pollution and climate change show that human health, animal health and well-being of the nature are an inseparable whole. One of the basic requirements of being able to solve the problems as a whole is to establish the "One Health" system in our country in compliance with the World and to enable various professions such as veterinary surgeons, medical doctors, engineers, environment scientists, biologists, and so work together. To create human resources necessary to have this kind of a study, the curricula of the universities should be reviewed and multidisciplinary cooperation should be promoted at every scale.

13 During the communication of science based information on food safety to the consumers, utmost care should be given that the information provided is clear and comprehensible. It should be ensured that risk communication is not used only at times of crises but it is systematically continuous. It should not be ignored that participation of the consumers for the changes at food systems or fight against the risks is an obligatory prerequisite.

14 Consumers are under dense exposure to information pollution on food. In order to prevent this information pollution, there should be collaboration between agencies like schools, universities, associations, chambers, etc, and communication strategies should be developed including social sciences. Furthermore, in order to increase the awareness of consumers on food safety, it might be an important step to include food safety as a lecture at the primary school level.

15 Media has a great responsibility in communicating correct information on food safety to the consumers. This responsibility doesn't include only news programmes or transfer of information by consulting to the experts but also wrong information transferred during cooking programmes or serials. Media organizations carry a great responsibility in ensuring food safety. Discharging this responsibility as required should be regarded as their dut

