



Conference Roundup

GFSI Annual Conference

Singapore
8-11 APRIL
2024



QUICK LINKS



3

DAY ONE
APRIL 9TH

19

DAY TWO
APRIL 10TH

29

DAY THREE
APRIL 11TH

37

PARTNERS &
SPONSORS

38

ABOUT
US

IN NUMBERS

500+
PARTICIPANTS

FROM

40
COUNTRIES

80+
SPEAKERS

29
PARTNERS

DAY ONE APRIL 9TH



A Warm Welcome to the GFSI Conference 2024

Isabelle KUMAR,
Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Sean SUMMERS,
Group CEO, Pick n Pay

Journalist and Presenter Isabelle Kumar opened the 23rd edition of the GFSI Conference, extending a warm welcome to more than 500 participants at the Marina Bay Sands Expo Center in Singapore. She was joined on stage by Sean Summers, CEO of Pick n Pay, Retail Board Sponsor of the GFSI coalition and addressed the following hot topics:

Key Points

- > The urgent need to address climate change and ensure food safety in today's changing world.
- > The pivotal role of innovation and digital technologies in enhancing food safety and sustainability.
- > The absolute necessity of collective effort from within the food industry.



Welcome Addresses from the CGF's Managing Director and GFSI Director

Wai-Chan CHAN, Managing Director, The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF)

Erica SHEWARD, Director of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), The Consumer Goods Forum

The CGF's Managing Director, Wai-Chan Chan, recalled GFSI's mission of ensuring safe food for all and CGF priorities which include accelerating coalition growth and scaling up efforts and impact. Recognising that challenges will arise with AI in food safety, collaboration remains vital.

Promising a week fueled with knowledge and innovation, GFSI Director, Erica Sheward, emphasised the importance of risk management in the food industry. She reminded the audience that food safety is a fundamental human right, which is far from being attained due to complex and interconnected global food systems.

Building on GFSI's successful track record, which has delivered an international food safety system for nearly 25 years and strengthened confidence among consumers, communities, and businesses, she shared the key ambitions of the coalition:

“GFSI oversees the system that provides safe food for consumers around the world. It is essential to look after this big ecosystem.”

Wai-Chan CHAN

Key Points

- › Launch a revision to the GFSI Governance Rules in 2024 designed to improve operations and trust continually.
- › Publish the first GFSI Annual Report detailing metrics for effective monitoring.
- › Take action against cases of GFSI brand abuse.
- › Prioritise and revisit the GFSI Race to the Top projects.
- › Open stakeholder consultation on the first draft of the Professional Development Framework for auditors.
- › Deliver a new approach to food safety capability building.
- › Provide updates on outputs from data management strategy and online registry of certificates.

“Food safety is not just an industry term. It’s a fundamental human right. Every individual, regardless of their geographic location, socio-economic status or cultural background, has the intrinsic right to safe and nutritious food.”

Erica SHEWARD



Special Keynote Address:

Dr. Amy KHOR, Senior Minister of State, Republic of Singapore

Dr. Amy KHOR

Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, Ministry of Transport Republic of Singapore

We can enhance food safety, not only within our borders but also globally and in so doing, we can contribute to the wellbeing of populations worldwide.

Dr. Amy KHOR

The Hon. Dr. Amy Khor gave a captivating overview of the regional food safety landscape and explained how in Singapore, the government, food industry, and consumers share responsibility for ensuring food safety. She emphasised the vital importance of collective action to strengthen regulations, share knowledge, and adopt good practices, citing examples of successful initiatives in the island-state country.

Key Points

Food Safety in the Face of Climate Change

- > Focus on this growing concern and respond to keep pace with the evolving landscape.
- > Engage as industry in a new food safety framework, with grading and resilience measures to protect consumers and safeguard the food supply.

Enhancing Food Safety in Singapore through Science and Technology

- > Following a risk-based approach, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) leverages science and technology to enhance oversight and response through its National Centre for Food Science (NCFS).
- > Employing whole genome sequencing, food scientists identify hazards in new food production systems.

- > Enhance food safety through international collaboration by catalysing partnerships focussing on monitoring and regulation harmonisation such as NCFS as WHO Collaborating Centre to help set Codex food safety standards.

Strengthening Singapore's Food Safety Frameworks and Legislation

- > Provide technical assistance and capacity building to investigate food safety incidents in the Asia Pacific region.
- > Prioritise knowledge sharing and implement strict safety processes and a new grading system for food establishments.
- > The upcoming Food Safety and Security Bill aims to unify legislation and enhance the food supply chain's resilience, ensuring safety from farm to fork.



Special Keynote Address:

The Frontiers of Food Safety in Singapore - Driving Impact Together

Vipul CHAWLA

Group CEO, FairPrice Group

“Global Food Systems have a profound impact on human and planetary health.”

Vipul CHAWLA

Advocating for the crucial role of food safety for business and society, Vipul Chawla discussed the evolution of food retail and safety in Singapore over the past 50 years. He highlighted how the industry adapts to changing customer needs and expectations and emphasised the importance of collaborating with suppliers from farm to fork to ensure safety and identify where quality controls can be strengthened.

There's a need for food safety professionals to work together to ensure the safety of the food supply chain with a shift from just-in-time to just-in-case; using technology like SCOPE to track produce and stay nimble; prioritising purpose over profit in supply chain decisions, and expanding food donation and waste reduction initiatives to support vulnerable communities.

Key Points

FairPrice Evolution and Initiatives

- › Evolved from a brick-and-mortar grocery business to a food services conglomerate, FairPrice prioritises affordability, service, and quality while contributing to food resilience and serving vulnerable communities.
- › Double down on food safety initiatives, including imperfect produce programmes and community fridges.

Leveraging Technology for Agility

- › Invests in digital transformation to enhance food resilience and agility in times of crisis.

- › Supply chain professionals prioritise purpose over profit in the face of disruptions, leveraging technology to stay agile and address food wastage.

Responding to Challenges and Evolving Needs

- › Singapore faces supply chain diversification challenges due to recent developments and disruptions.
- › Retailers must continue to advocate for food safety to serve society and meet evolving consumer needs.



GFSI Horizons: Charting the Course for Future Food Safety Excellence

Kelvin CHEN

Head of QA & GFSI China Steering Committee Co-Chair, M Commerce Group and Wumart Tech Group

Mark A. FRYLING

Vice President, Global Food Safety and Quality & GFSI Steering Committee Co-Chair, General Mills

Cindy JENKS

General Manager, Pick n Pay

Howard POPOOLA

Vice President - Corporate Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory Compliance & GFSI Steering Committee Co-Chair, The Kroger Co.

Key Points

In the GFSI Horizons panel, the GFSI Steering Committee co-chairs shared updates on the coalition's strategic priorities, the Race to The Top Framework and the transformational changes happening at GFSI.

They discussed strategic initiatives shaping global food safety through a lively discussion on the use of technology and AI in food safety and quality, driving better ability to predict issues in supply chains, and technology to reduce food waste and approve efficiency. Panellists acknowledged that digital transformation can yield predictable outcomes, enhance consumer satisfaction, and optimise business results. As for climate change's impact on food safety, panellists agreed on a shared responsibility for stakeholders: calling for immediate action, collaboration, and technological innovation to safeguard the global food system.

- Forging ahead with GFSI's Race to the Top framework that evaluates and improves food safety systems through its key features of harmonisation and benchmarking requirements, ongoing assessment, and a certificate platform for certified manufacturers.
- They called for the industry to continue building food safety capabilities and upgrading systems globally, especially for small and medium enterprises and work with regulators through public-private partnerships to increase trust in GFSI audits.



- › They urged harmonisation of food safety standards globally while understanding each country's uniqueness.
- › They acknowledged that while digitalisation and AI will play a pivotal role in enhancing food safety, the industry is still in the early phases of understanding its potential.
- › Underlined the need to implement sustainable farming practices to utilise water resources better, protect soil health, reduce pollution, promote biodiversity and change harvesting patterns to adapt to climate change.





Scientifically Verified Traceability Empowering a Safe and Sustainable Food Supply

Lisa KIRIBATHGODA

Technical Marketing Manager,
MSD Animal Health

The session emphasised the role of technology, DNA tracing, and data-driven solutions in verifying traceability and sustainability in the meat and seafood industries. Lisa Kiribathgoda discussed the importance of traceability and data collection for ensuring food safety and sustainability. Technology's potential to revolutionise the meat industry by enhancing transparency, improving product quality, expanding market share, and fostering consumer trust through data-driven solutions.

Key Points

DNA-based Technology Verifies Compliance and Tests Supply Chain

- › This system tracks and verifies the origin, welfare status, and compliance of meat products throughout the supply chain, using genetic sampling, product verification, and data analysis to provide accurate information and promote accountability within the supply chain.

- › Genetic identification and monitoring data are critical for farm benchmarking and connecting farm knowledge to food on consumers' plates.

Data Drives Enhanced Sustainability and Efficiency

- › Ensuring quality and ethical sourcing, Marks & Spencer

worked with DNA Trace to trace every beef product to its origin as the retailer had done to verify the ethical sourcing of its shrimp, assuring consumers.

- › Monitoring behaviour metrics like movement and temperature can help make data-driven decisions that enhance sustainability and improve animal health as well as lower emissions and increase efficiency in supply chains.

Consumer Trust and Market Share Growth

- › Emphasised the importance of traceability and data collection in ensuring food safety and sustainability, particularly in meat and seafood supply chains.
- › Implementing data-driven solutions, businesses can enable consumers to make informed choices, increasing transparency and trust.



Unleashing the Power of Technology for Food Safety Management

Dave CREAM
Director, STRIDE Food
R&D Consultancy Ltd.

Patrick WALL
Professor of Public Health,
University College Dublin

Susanne GARCIA-SCHAUERMANN
Senior Vice-President SARA
& Quality Assurance,
Mondelēz International

Gary LOH
Founder & CEO, DiMuto

“So therefore, when the spotlight comes on one of your products, absence of evidence isn’t the same thing as evidence of absence.”

Patrick WALL

In this session, panellists discussed the need for the food industry to adopt new technologies and methodologies to enhance food safety and productivity. They emphasised fostering a culture of forward-thinking and openness. The discussions highlighted how innovative solutions empower proactive measures for global food safety standards and increase transparency in the food supply chain, improving overall practices in the food industry.

Key Points

Challenges and Opportunities in Leveraging Technology

- › Leveraging advanced technologies like whole genome sequencing and bioinformatics, can lead regulatory agencies to faster identification and risk tracking.
- › Digitalisation and new technologies are vital for modernising the food industry, despite challenges like varying technical capabilities and resistance to change.
- › Highlighted the need for convincing cost-benefit analyses and simplified implementation methods as mindset issues, cost concerns, and labour challenges are among the obstacles to adopting new food safety technologies.



Collaborative Efforts for Enhanced Food Safety

- › Crucial collaboration between regulators and the industry can achieve common goals of consumer health, necessitating better data sharing and supplier development.
- › Standardising root cause analysis and knowledge sharing among countries are essential for improving food safety globally.
- › Embracing a holistic approach to food safety that integrates technology and collaboration across departments, is essential

for addressing challenges: affordable and accessible technology adoption is necessary to overcome supply chain challenges, focusing on early detection and risk communication; technology can revolutionise the food industry by providing real-time data visibility, transparency, and proactive insights, fostering collaboration and consumer engagement in risk management.

- › Balancing the need for data privacy with the benefits of sharing information to prevent outbreaks poses a dilemma for companies.





Food Safety in the Green Transition - The Unintended Consequences

Roy KIRBY
Partner, FoodsafERM

Phil WEBSTER
Partner, Arthur D. Little Limited

Dr. Li Dan
Assistant Professor, Department of Food Science & Technology, National University of Singapore

Max TEPLITSKI, Ph.D.
Chief Science Officer, International Fresh Produce Association

“Start with telling our story, the story of agriculture, the story of the industry, because what we’re seeing is the story of food being told by others, by celebrities. Every Netflix documentary that you see, the story of food is told by somebody who has very little relationship to food.”

Max Teplitski

The panel focused on primary production, discussing the challenges and solutions of transitioning to green practices in the food industry, and balancing food safety and sustainability. Diverse perspectives highlighted impacts like technology increasing food safety hazards. Solutions included emphasising research and data gathering; improving regulations; and designing safe, sustainable food despite cost considerations, aligning with evolving consumer demands.

Key Points

Sustainable Practices and Challenges

- › Discussed transitioning to sustainable practices in food safety, focusing on primary production.
- › Climate change threatens fresh produce, while regenerative agriculture presents solutions but raises food safety concerns.
- › Regulatory uncertainty and new technologies pose major challenges, especially in water usage analysis.



Risk Management and Consumer Interaction

- › Using enterprise risk management for a holistic approach to prioritising sustainability, food safety, and reputation risks.
- › Suggested prioritising outreach to consumers and advancing scientific research on sustainability to align with consumer expectations.
- › Emphasised the need for collaboration between industry and government given concerns about trade-offs between food safety and sustainability.

Innovations and Educational Strategies

- › Highlighted microbial perspectives and limitations of UV light treatments in indoor farming. Explored risks of pathogen contamination in systems, with concerns about sustainability methods introducing potential risks.
- › Discussed foresight, advocacy, and supplier quality assurance to standardise audit protocols and evaluate suppliers based on sustainability factors.
- › Called for basic food safety education for stakeholders and realistic expectations from regulators.
- › Underlined One Health approach to address food safety, sustainability, and diet-related diseases.





Digitising Food Safety: Navigating Challenges and Digital Upskilling in the Industry

Natalie DYENSON

Chief Food Safety & Regulatory Officer, International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA)

Hannes POUSEELE

Global Solutions Architect for Data and Genomics, bioMérieux

Cronan McNAMARA

Founder & CEO, Creme Global & Adjunct Professor, University College Dublin (UCD), Creme Global & University College Dublin

Boris BOLSHCHIKOV

Head of Food Safety Science and the Global Food Safety Center, Mars Incorporated

Key Points

Digitisation Simplifies Food Safety Management

- › Emphasised the need for upskilling talent to leverage digital tools effectively.
- › Digitalisation initiatives focus on mycotoxin and microbial risk management, integrating genomics and data lakes for better decision-making.
- › Understanding business problems and ensuring concrete outcomes are essential for successful digitisation projects.

Talent Development and Organisational Change

- › Attracting and integrating new talent, focussing on softer skills and hands-on experience, is vital for advancing digital food safety management.



- › Organisational development, change management, and leadership upskilling are necessary for implementing effective digital food safety systems.
- › Collaboration between government, industry, and academia is crucial for upskilling digitalisation capabilities and building trust in data sharing.

Collaboration and Data Sharing

- › Collaboration is crucial for building predictive models and improving food safety systems.
- › Enabling data sharing for food safety and traceability requires understanding the problem, building confidence, and addressing concerns about data security and privacy.
- › Key takeaways include expecting value from digitisation, emphasising data organisation and standardisation, and addressing challenges through collaboration and partnerships.





Navigating the Intersection of Food Safety & Plastics

David LOVELL

Director, Regulatory Compliance, DSL Consulting

Cédric DEVER

Director, Sustainability, The Consumer Goods Forum

Dr. Miao GUO

Food Safety and Quality Assurance Director, Great China Region, PepsiCo

John FIELD

Chief of the Chemical Health Hazards Assessment Division, Packaging and Contaminants, Health Canada / Government of Canada

The panel provided an insightful discussion on the intersection of food safety and plastic waste. They addressed challenges like unintended recalls and navigating the use of recycled plastics within the regulatory landscape which play a crucial role in ensuring food safety amidst growing concern over plastic waste. It highlighted the need to balance food safety with sustainability, and emphasised harmonising recycling regulations and establishing comprehensive food safety management frameworks as essential steps towards managing plastic effectively. The panel underscored the critical link between maintaining safety standards and promoting environmental sustainability in the context of plastic usage.

Key Points

Scale and Regulatory Response to Plastic Pollution

- Plastic pollution's global impact is significant, with vast quantities produced annually and growing over time, necessitating urgent action to address plastic waste.
- Health Canada is actively working on nanoplastic regulations to ensure food safety, with industry playing a crucial role in preventing impingement.
- Harmonising global rules for plastic waste is essential to avoid a patchwork of regulations, with calls for consistent regulations and monetisation strategies to phase out harmful plastics globally.

Health Concerns and Safety Measures for Plastics

- Research on microplastics' effects on human health is ongoing, highlighting gaps in understanding and the need for standardised studies to assess their impacts.
- Organisations are taking measures to ensure the safety of recycled plastics in food packaging through rigorous supplier management, decontamination processes, and testing for contamination.

Recycling Challenges and Food Safety Management

- Challenges and opportunities in recycling plastics include the availability of suitable feedstock for food-grade plastics, the slow



transition to a circular economy, and the need for regulation, collaboration, and education for successful recycling systems.

- › Establishing a food safety management framework for packaging materials is crucial, with guidelines in place for recycled content and considerations for use, along with proposals for international guidelines on food packaging using recycled materials.



“The main challenge, I would say, is that we are still too slow in order to move from a linear economy to a circular economy for plastic packaging.”

Cédric Dever



DAY TWO APRIL 10TH



Leadership Talk: Steve Wearne, UK Food Standards Agency & Codex Alimentarius Commission

Steve WEARNE,
Director, Global Affairs, UK Food
Standards Agency and Chairperson,
Codex Alimentarius Commission,
Food Standards Agency & Codex
Alimentarius Commission

Day 2 welcomed Conference veteran Steve Wearne who offered updates on Codex and shared thoughts on future collaborative initiatives with USAID. He discussed GFSI's role in helping small and medium food business operators in Africa understand and address specific capability-building needs in the region. This effort aims to enhance food safety and operational effectiveness among

these businesses, ensuring they can meet the necessary standards and improve overall food security.

Key Points

Leadership and Collaboration in Food Safety

- › Urged future leaders to be vigilant, inquisitive and collaborative in managing risks and to be vocal in organisations regarding food safety.
- › Emphasised multilateralism in addressing food safety challenges, pointing to the collaboration among 188 member countries and over 240 observed organisations.
- › The industry must continue incorporating input from Codex observers, including independent science-based and broad-based consumer organisations.



Innovation and Standards for Food Security

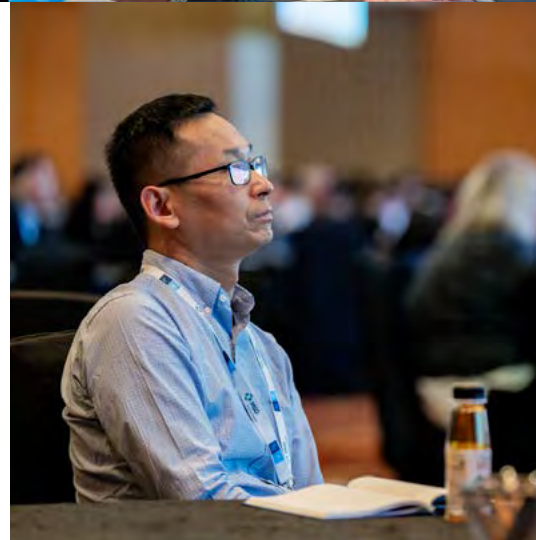
- › Underlined the massive need for innovation, science, and clear standards for food security. Professionals must prioritise work that has an impact beyond Codex's scope of standards to protect consumers and facilitate trade.
- › Called for guidelines to mitigate the implications of using recycled materials in food packaging, underscoring the need for standards that ensure safety without compromising sustainability.

Balancing Safety, Security and Sustainability

- › The industry must find a way to find and maintain that delicate balance between the priorities of food safety, food security, and sustainability.
- › Achieving this balance requires continuous innovation, pertinent standards, and collaborative efforts across the food industry to address challenges and protect public health.

“We must ensure that we rely on science to produce more and better food. It should be available to answer the needs of poor and rich people alike.”

Steve Wearne





Food Safety & Navigating the Tech Frontier: Regulatory Insights from the Asia-Pacific Region

Bobby KRISHNA

Senior Food Safety Specialist, Food Safety Department, Dubai Municipality

Jim DODDS

Chief Executive Officer, Safe Food Production Queensland

Richard KHAW

Deputy Director, School of Applied Science, Nanyang Polytechnic

In this session, panellists bridged the gap between technological advancements and regulatory frameworks while sharing regional perspectives on the current regulatory ecosystem that governs the ever-evolving field of food tech. They highlighted the significance of data in developing predictive models for the food industry, the challenges of implementing data collection systems, and the necessity of collaboration between various sectors for improved food safety.

Key Points

Regulatory Perspectives on Food Safety Technology

- › Highlighted the need to collaborate to achieve quality data sets, develop predictive models and risk assessment tools for regulatory purposes.
- › Expressed the need to leverage existing data sources across government agencies to enhance transparency and accuracy in food safety decision-making.

Data-Driven Approaches in the Food Industry

- › Collaborating with universities to analyse and structure variable data, and improving data acquisition by hiring analysts and launching new programs essential for developing models.

- › Underlined efforts to train staff in effective data utilisation, collaborate across sectors for risk management, and develop predictive models for the egg industry and animal harvesting with GPS data, with potential collaboration in the horticulture industry.

Transforming the Food Supply Chain with Data

- › Emphasised the crucial role of data in enhancing transparency and preventing foodborne illness, particularly in Southeast Asia.
- › Collaboration between the food industry, regulatory agencies, and academia was highlighted to leverage technology and data, with a focus on new tools like AI and robotics.



Strengthening Global Capabilities for Food Safety Risk Assessment in the Green Transition

How do we harmonise language around a sustainable food system? What does the regulatory landscape look like that makes safe and sustainable food possible? In a rare moment of consensus, the panel spoke in one voice: safety and sustainability are not trade-offs. We need – and must have – both.

Panellists praised a proactive strategy based on everyone working together and – not least – agreeing on a common language and definitions. They cautioned

Cliona MURPHY

Consultant, Senior Business Leader & Board Director

Dr. Markus LIPP

Senior Food Safety Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Roy KIRBY

Partner, FoodsafERM

Diego VARELA MAINO

Director, Chilean Food Safety and Quality Agency, ACHIPIA

Jeff FOWLES

Principal Advisor Toxicology, Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), New Zealand

that we should not try to move the needle too fast. Whilst we need to respond to the challenges around risk-based regulation at pace, going too fast risks leaving SMEs in middle-income countries behind.

considering the consequences for various stakeholders.

Connecting Food Safety with Broader Health and Sustainability Goals

› Reframed the dialogue, calling for a narrative that connects food safety, food system sustainability, food security, and the potential for a one-health approach in regulation.

› Shared potential benefits of a national biomonitoring programme in New Zealand for food safety as an example to push for more cross-disciplinary work to connect environmental risks, risk assessment, and health outcomes.

› Discussed various collaborative initiatives, including the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Latin America Risk Assessment Symposium.

Key Points

Regulatory Integration and Risk Management

› Focused attention on regulatory capabilities: without creating a burden for the food sector, institutional changes need to be made to incorporate climate change into food safety risk assessment effectively.

› Underscored the need for a nuanced, risk-based approach to regulation on climate change and collaborative partnerships, acknowledging the potential market reactions and



Charting the Digital Journey for Food Safety: AI in Focus

The Science & Technology Advisory Group (STAG), established by GFSI, discussed AI, big data, and machine learning's potential impact on food safety. Panellists highlighted issues surrounding the use of digital tools, exploring both the benefits and potential pitfalls of adopting these new approaches. They provided concrete examples of AI applications, such as predictive models and monitoring systems, and offered an overview of regulatory perspectives in this evolving field. The discussion emphasised the importance of technology in enhancing food safety measures and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Dave CREAM

Director, STRIDE Food R&D Consultancy Ltd.

Francisco DIEZ-GONZALEZ, Ph.D.

Director and Professor, Center for Food Safety, University of Georgia

Kaye BURGESS

Senior Research Officer and Principal Investigator, Teagasc Food Research Centre - Food Safety Department

Robert SCHARFF

Professor, Department of Human Sciences, The Ohio State University

Susan MATTHEWS, Ph.D.

Director, Future Forward

Lise KORSTEN

Professor in Plant Health and Food Safety, President - Africa Academy of Science, Co-Director of the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security, University of Pretoria

Key Points

Who and What of AI in Food Safety

- GFSI's Sciences Tech and Advisory group focuses on AI for food safety risk prediction, monitoring optimisation, and improving health systems.
- AI is used across academia, regulatory bodies, government institutions, and research centres, impacting all aspects of the food safety community.

Impact of AI on Food Safety

- Boosting productivity and efficiency, AI lowers the cost of food safety monitoring and interventions. Over time, off-the-shelf AI products will be available to SMEs.

- AI helps identify risk assessments, but quality input data and continuous validation are crucial to ensure accurate and relevant outcomes.

Data and AI Integration

- Effective AI use requires high-quality input data, continuous validation, and breaking barriers for better data utilisation.
- Collaboration in solution creation benefits all, with data management being crucial for sensible predictions and mitigating vulnerabilities. AI's effectiveness depends on actions taken with mined data, emphasising the need for spot-on algorithm quality.



The Intersection of Food Security, Food Safety & Climate Change

Expert panellists discussed the interplay of climate change, food insecurity, and food safety, emphasising a holistic approach to these interconnected challenges. They explored climate change's impact on food production and nutrition in vulnerable regions. The experts stressed the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to improve efficiency, food safety, and governance. The discussion concluded with a call to action for all parties to implement strategies enhancing the resilience and sustainability of global food systems.

Dr. Francesco BRANCA

Director, Department of Nutrition and Food Safety World Health Organization (WHO)

Natalie DYENSON

Chief Food Safety & Regulatory Officer, International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA)

Dr. Markus LIPP

Senior Food Safety Officer, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Bobby KRISHNA

Senior Food Safety Specialist, Food Safety Department Dubai Municipality

Key Points

Climate Change, Food Insecurity, and Food Safety

- Highlighted the impact of climate change on food production and nutrition, especially in developing countries.
- Discussed challenges such as nutrient changes in soil, plant disease pressures, and disruptions caused by conflicts, emphasising a holistic approach to interconnected issues.

Sustainable Food Production and Self-Sufficiency

- The International Fresh Produce Association promotes sustainable practices, responsible stewardship, and reduced carbon footprint, partnering with organisations to address food waste and improve packaging.

- Emphasised the potential of vertical farming and other technological solutions for self-sufficiency, but warned of the risks of relying on a single supply source and potential price fluctuations.issues.

Food System Resilience and Surveillance

- Highlighted the need to invest in surveillance for food system resilience to support research into soil health and sustainability, including traditional agricultural methods and regenerative agriculture.
- Presented WHO's food safety strategy aiming to reduce foodborne diseases through improved surveillance and emergency response, stressing the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration.



The Role of AI in Tackling Food Fraud

Chong NYET CHIN

Director of Food Safety & Quality, FairPrice Group

Cameron SCADDING

Founder & Managing Director, Source Certain

Dr. Yinqing MA

Director of Compliance Policy Staff, Office of Compliance, CFSAN, FDA

This panel discussion showcased great examples of AI to tackle food fraud across various stakeholders such as Regulators or Industry members. The importance of data quality and accuracy was highlighted in effectively detecting fraud issues and ensuring compliance. Integrating AI in food safety management systems to address food fraud has enabled the identification of trends and changed the pattern of supply; which in turn allowed the food industry and regulators to make more effective decisions.

“Food fraud is not only an economic issue, depending on the specific incident, it can also lead to serious food safety hazards.”

Dr. Yinqing Ma

Key Points

Challenges and Regulatory Responses to Food Fraud

- > Food fraud and safety issues include different layers of complexity, such as the challenges faced in the supply chain and regulatory landscape, but also economic adulteration, including various deceptive practices such as substitution.
- > Shared insight on the FDA's efforts to combat it through regulatory oversight and technological advancements like machine learning.

AI's role in Enhancing Food Safety

- > Addressing AI detecting food fraud, panellists emphasised robust detection systems and regulatory compliance

in designing algorithms for targeting food fraud in the supply chain to ensure food safety with a focus on clear scope.

- > AI emerges as a valuable tool with applications such as comparing product images throughout the supply chain and facilitating collaboration between upstream and downstream actors.

Transparency and Resilience

- > AI can also be leveraged to mediate transparency efforts and improve stakeholder communication.
- > AI can improve seafood safety and traceability, as well as prioritise surveillance efforts, but challenges like siloed data and lack of digitization remain.



Singapore Standards and Regulations in Food Safety

Richard KHAW

Deputy Director, School of Applied Science, Nanyang Polytechnic

Singapore Standards are consensus-based documents that set out specifications and procedures for various materials, products, and services, aiming to enhance product quality and Singapore's branding. Richard Khaw emphasised the shared responsibility among regulatory bodies, industry, and consumers in ensuring food safety. As Singaporean consumers are now more willing to pay a premium for higher quality and sustainable products, the industry is taking this into account when developing standards.

“In Singapore, or anywhere in the world, we know that food safety is a joint responsibility. It's not just regulations; responsibility is not just for the industry; consumers play a part as well.”

Richard Khaw

Key Points

Exploring Singapore National Standards

- › Gave an overview of the different types of Singapore National Standards, including SS, technical references and workshop agreements.
- › Explained the significance of the standards in ensuring transparency, consensus, and market relevance in the food industry.
- › Underlined the importance of adhering to specific standards in terms of implementation, such as SS 672, to mitigate negative media coverage during the pandemic.

Enhancements and Applications of Food Safety Standards

- › Shared examples of how standards promote food safety across sectors, including food delivery, e-commerce and urban farming.
- › Focused on developing standards tailored to local food products and enhanced food safety management systems based on HACCP principles.
- › Emphasised code chain management guidelines for ensuring food safety and transparency in the supply chain and industry-led initiatives for validation and verification studies to measure the effectiveness of new food safety standards.



Supporting Businesses in Building Food Safety Capabilities

In this breakout session, panellists concurred on the importance of collaboration coupled with innovation, the need for trust in the Global Markets Program (GMaP) and the importance of a unified approach to address confusion over the role that GFSI plays in building food safety capabilities.

Howard POPOOLA

Vice President - Corporate Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory Compliance & GFSI Steering Committee Co-Chair, The Kroger Co.

Erica SHEWARD

Director of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), The Consumer Goods Forum

Cindy JENKS

General Manager, Pick n Pay

Eduardo Martinez DEBEZA

Head Quality Assurance International, Restaurant Brands International

Mick McDONALD

Senior Director Corporate Q&FS Center of Expertise, Mars, Inc.

Key Points

GFSI's Global Markets Program

- › Discussed its relaunch of the GFSI Global Markets Program to address trust issues through cooperation and digitalisation and highlighted efforts to prevent misuse and increase trust through a unified approach.
 - › Delved into the development and deployment of the new GMaP and the changes in the new version, such as a scoring system and nonconformances.
 - › Called attention to plans to build a cloud-based portal for better guidelines to stakeholders, focusing on co-creation and cooperation with industry and USAID.
- ### Capability building for small and medium-sized food businesses
- › Pointed to initiatives such as the USAID partnership to upskill and grow food businesses in Africa for improved food safety and nutrition.
 - › Underlined the strategic next steps to address trustworthy certificates in developing the Online Repository of Certificates (ORC).



Special Keynote Speech

What business are you in?: Redefining Health Professionals: The Role of the Food Industry in Wellness

Patrick WALL

Professor of Public Health,
University College Dublin

Professor Patrick Wall, Professor of Public Health, University College Dublin, rewired our thinking on the relationship between food safety and health. Notably, his view is that doctors and nurses are rather sickness professionals, and those in the business of food or exercise are the true health professionals. Dr. Wall emphasised that appropriate nutrition for age, gender, and lifestyle is absolutely imperative and can lead to a long and healthy life.

Key Points

Importance of Nutrition in Healthcare and Disease Prevention

- › Praising the integration of food as part of healthcare, he underscored the importance of emphasising nutrition in medical education to address chronic diseases alongside acute foodborne diseases and the need to promote health rather than just treat illness.
- › Examined research findings on the benefits of good nutrition for healthy ageing; the link between diet and disease prevention and the role of nanotechnology in food science research.
- › Gave insight into nutritional research focusing on different life stages, drawing attention to tailored diets that meet specific needs like bioavailable protein for the elderly.

Innovative Solutions and Priorities in Food Safety and Nutrition

- › Explored innovative solutions, such as algal oil to feed wild fish to provide sustainable sources of Omega-3 fatty acids.
- › Called for prioritising food safety and nutrition in the food industry, which is fundamental to life and the consumer demand for affordable and nutritious food.

“Doctors and nurses are not health professionals. They’re sickness professionals. People in the food business or the exercise business are the true health professionals.”

Patrick WALL

DAY THREE APRIL 11TH



“Food Safety has to become a strategic priority, and Food Safety culture has to be embedded in the corporate culture and decision-making.”

Vikas Gupta, President and Global Head
R&D, Tata Consumer Products



Leadership Talk: Vikas Gupta, Tata Consumer Products

Vikas GUPTA

President and Global Head - R&D,
Tata Consumer Products

Day 3 welcomed Vikas Gupta for a Leadership Talk focusing on the complex challenges and opportunities in ensuring food safety in India and the evolving regulatory landscape in Asia. He stressed the need to address various factors, including the informality of the food market and the rapid evolution of the ecosystem. He underlined the importance of ensuring food safety in a vast and populous country like India, which has diverse economic conditions and unique regulatory challenges.

Key Points

Integrating Food Safety into Corporate Culture

- Praised food safety as a strategic priority in corporate culture, emphasising a “Go beyond profits” approach. This promotes long-term sustainability and consumer trust.

- Integrated food safety principles into corporate culture, ensuring they guide decision-making processes across all organisational levels. This fosters a unified commitment to maintaining high standards.

Enhancing Transparency and Traceability

- Called attention to the need for transparency and traceability, underscoring the importance of bolstering consumer awareness and industry accountability.
- Highlighted technology solutions, such as barcodes, to enhance transparency in the food supply chain, allowing consumers to trace product origins and access reliable product information.

Proactive Collaboration with Policymakers and Stakeholders

- Emphasised the imperative of proactive collaboration with policymakers and stakeholders to create a robust food safety ecosystem.
- Stressed the need for the industry to develop and implement rigorous regulations for product design, testing, and risk assessment, anticipating emerging challenges and investing in proactive measures to enhance food safety standards.



Tech in Focus: Remote Auditing in Food Safety

Panellists explored cutting-edge technological solutions to redefine industry standards and ensure food supply chain integrity. They emphasised auditor capability development and discussed the challenges and evolution of remote auditing. The use of Google Glass in Italy during COVID-19 highlighted remote audit benefits and the importance of training. They also addressed balancing audit efficiency with privacy concerns and the need to replicate human intuition and emotional intelligence through technology.

Mary GERTZ

Chief Food Safety & Quality Officer, Yum! Brands, Inc.

Professor Julian M. COX

Associate Dean (International - Emerging Markets), Faculty of Engineering, University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney)

Adam ZAMORSKI

Director of Global Quality Auditing, Mondelēz International

Linda QUEK

Co-chair, Technical Committee on Food Safety, Singapore Standardisation Programme

Dave CREAN

Director, STRIDE Food R&D Consultancy Ltd.

Key Points

Evolution of Remote Audits since COVID-19

- The shift to remote audits highlighted both benefits and challenges, including technological limitations and differences in scoring between remote and on-site audits.
- Despite these issues, hybrid audits, which combine remote and in-person elements, are preferred for ensuring comprehensive and accurate audit results.

Integration of Technology and Human Factors in Remote Audits

- Future audits will leverage advanced technologies such as AI, drones, and digitised records, though concerns about data integrity and privacy remain.

- Human factors, including emotional intelligence and trust, are essential for successful remote audits, ensuring that the human aspect is not lost.

Enhanced Food Safety Culture Through Remote Audit

- Remote audits can enhance food safety culture by emphasising human connection and trust, along with fostering psychological safety and addressing mistakes.
- Key strategies include providing comprehensive training, promoting collaboration, and integrating advanced technologies, with a focus on auditor well-being to maintain high audit standards.



Navigating Uncertainty: Revolutionising Food Safety in a Turbulent World

Deirdre RYAN

Director of Quality Assurance and Sustainability, Bord Bia – the Irish Food Board

Zoltan SYPOSS

Senior Vice President, Chief Quality, Safety and Environment (QSE) Officer, The Coca-Cola Company

Ricky LIN

CEO & Founder, Life3 Biotech

“In an uncertain world, it’s about having this ‘just in case’ plan rather than the ‘just in time’ one.”

Ricky Lin

“We cannot solve today’s food safety problems with yesterday’s tools.”

Zoltan Syposs

Panellists offered a compelling look at how digital innovations can provide stability and safety assurances amidst global unpredictability. They delved into the transformative potential of digital technologies like AI and explored their role in creating more resilience, and discussed integrating digital solutions for food safety and quality, acknowledging challenges in the face of potential unemployment. They called for balancing technology with social welfare policies and endorsed education and training for job readiness.

Key Points

Food Security and Supply Chain Resilience in a VUCA World

> Outlined Singapore’s challenges due to its small size and limited agricultural land, emphasising the need to develop resilience capabilities and reduce dependence on imports.

> The strategy includes diversifying food sources and investing in local production innovations to ensure a stable food supply.

Digital Solutions for Food Safety and Quality

> Underlined digital solutions such as greenhouse production and advanced supply chain management to navigate food industry challenges.



- › Cited the use of social media listening, data analytics, AI, and genome testing to monitor and improve food safety and quality, particularly in the meat industry, ensuring that standards are met consistently.

Digital Transformation for Agriculture

- › Focused on engaging farmers with user-friendly digital tools to enhance productivity.
- › Highlighted a person-centric approach to address challenges like job displacement and the need for education in the agricultural sector, ensuring that digital transformation benefits all stakeholders and promotes sustainable practices across the industry.





Foodborne Pathogens as Adulterants: Is this the way to play the food safety game?

Professor Julian M. COX

Associate Dean (International - Emerging Markets), Faculty of Engineering, University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney)

Prof. Julian Cox led an enlightening discussion that challenged current perceptions and urged a reevaluation of safety standards in light of recent scientific developments. He emphasised balancing food safety and security, addressing public health concerns alongside economic feasibility. Prof. Cox highlighted the importance of enhanced public education on food safety and responsible food handling practices. He also recognised that risks can be managed effectively across the entire food chain, promoting a more comprehensive approach to food safety.

“All of us in this room, among our family, our friends, our communities, can communicate what we know in bite-sized chunks of consumable terms accessible to make sure people grow in their food safety knowledge.”

Professor Julian M. Cox

Key Points

Proposed Regulation and Public Education

- › Urged that scientific input must inform final policies like the USDA's proposed rules regarding Salmonella as an adulterant in poultry.
- › Emphasised the role of public education in communicating food safety responsibilities to consumers. By informing the public, consumers can better understand how to handle and prepare food safely, reducing the risk of foodborne illnesses.

Food Safety Labelling and Risk Management

- › Advocated for more visible and straightforward food safety labelling on packaging to enhance consumer awareness.

Clear labelling helps consumers make informed decisions about the products they purchase and consume.

- › Underlined the importance of understanding and managing risks in food production and consumption across the food chain.

Public Health and Personal Responsibility

- › Considered effective public health interventions that go beyond declaring pathogens as adulterants.
- › Promoted transparency and communication among all stakeholders on food safety policies and practices. Ensuring that all parties involved are informed and engaged helps create a more robust and reliable food safety system.



THIS IS FOR YOU

Turning Stories Into Actions

Nigel SUTTON

Special Keynote Speaker - Director, Creative Learning and Audience Engagement, NDS Productions

Nigel Sutton focussed on turning narratives into a powerful tool for change, illustrating how stories can shape policy, perception, and practice in business. He highlighted the essential role of play in adult life as it fosters discovery, learning, and innovation. Nigel illustrated the way imagination shapes actions and decisions by sharing personal experiences. He emphasised the need to turn imaginary ideas into real actions to create a better world.

Key Points

Collaboration and Concrete Action for Safe Food Access

- > Sharing data and information fosters collaboration among stakeholders, allowing for a united effort in tackling food safety challenges.
- > Taking tangible actions to make safe food accessible goes beyond discussion, implementing practical measures to ensure everyone has access to nutritious food.

Human Connection and Empathy in Communication

- > Genuine human connection through eye contact and empathy is essential in building trust and rapport.

- > Focusing on others' needs and interests creates understanding and connection, addressing concerns and fostering a supportive environment.

Turning Ideas into Reality Through Play and Innovation

- > Tapping into natural human curiosity and creativity is key to transforming ideas and possibilities into action. Encouraging playful exploration and innovation leads to new solutions and advancements.
- > Implementing these innovative ideas can drive real-world change. By embracing creativity and play, individuals and organisations can develop practical applications that make a significant impact on food safety and accessibility.





“I hope you all learned something this week (...) and I hope you would share the pride and positivity of being part of an industry that has the capacity to shape the health, wellness and security of the entire world. This is for you.”

Erica SHEWARD.

Conference Closing Remarks

Erica SHEWARD

Director of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), The Consumer Goods Forum

Dirk Van de PUT

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mondelēz International
Co-chair of The Consumer Goods Forum

Erica and Dirk concluded the conference with heartfelt closing remarks acknowledging the palpable shift amongst participants towards actionable reform. Erica emphasised the urgency of leveraging technological innovation and promoting evidence-based research to address food safety challenges. The insights and collaborations garnered throughout the 2024 Conference are poised to propel the food safety agenda, ensuring GFSI’s legacy through its ecosystem of partners, allies, and participants. The evident consensus at the closing of the conference was that it served not only as a hub of innovation and insight but a pivotal event that will shape the future of food safety.



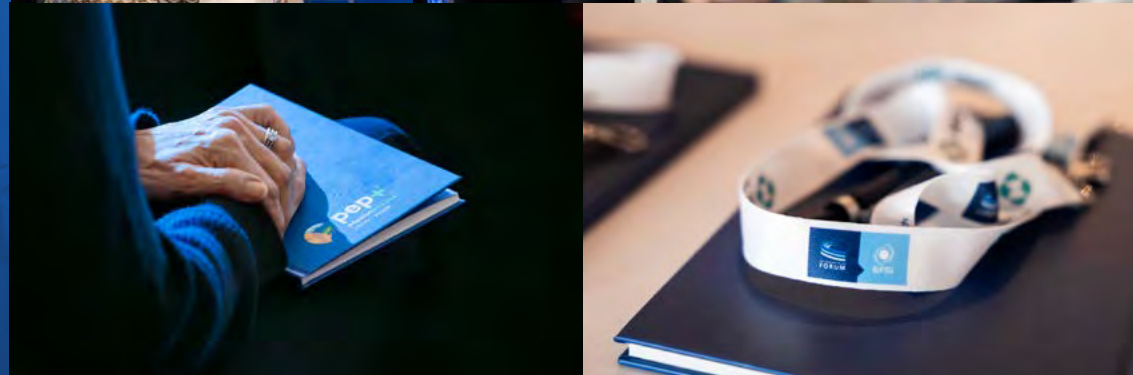
Tech Talks

During networking breaks and lunches, the Presentation Theatre at the heart of the Exhibition Area came alive with Tech Talks – 15-minute presentations of cutting-edge food safety tech solutions. The casual setting allowed for an easy flow of interactivity and included some of the leading lights in tech, showcasing the potential of data, tech and generative AI in food safety risk prevention, mitigation and environmental integrity.



Special Sessions

The GFSI Conference's Diamond Sponsors hosted expert panel discussions that shared actionable solutions to some of the food system's most pressing challenges. The special sessions covered topics including food system resilience, the impact of climate change on pest risks, and digital technologies with the potential to improve food safety.



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About The Consumer Goods Forum

The Consumer Goods Forum is a global, parity-based industry network that is driven by its members to encourage the global adoption of practices and standards that serves the consumer goods industry worldwide. Uniquely positioned as the organisation bringing consumer goods retailers, manufacturers and their service providers together globally, the organisation is expertly placed to drive positive change across the industry to benefit both people and planet, and help members secure long-term, sustainable business growth.

www.theconsumergoodsforum.com



About GFSI

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI; the Coalition) is a CEO-led Coalition of Action from The Consumer Goods Forum, bringing together 44 retailers and manufacturers and an extended food safety community to help oversee food safety standards for businesses and help provide access to safe food for people everywhere. As one of the world's largest networks to help achieve safe food, GFSI is committed to making food safety everyone's business and the Coalition members are addressing challenges facing food safety systems in their supply chains and the markets they operate in, and are helping to raise the food safety bar globally. Its ambition is to strengthen and harmonise food safety systems so they are able to feed the growing, global population and develop markets that can deliver food safely, no matter where in the world the consumer is.

www.mygfsi.com



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You came. You shared and learned. You left the GFSI Conference inspired — so did we.

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As one of the largest food safety companies in the world, we aim to partner in your efforts to meet the needs and face the challenges of the evolving food safety landscape. Neogen offers data-enabled solutions for proactive risk management and holistic environmental monitoring, supported by a global network of food safety experts.

Together, we can fuel a brighter future for global food security — a purpose we wholeheartedly uphold.

Neogen is proudly partnered with GFSI.

info.neogen.com/GFSI

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Let's Build Trust Together

From the GFSI Conference and onwards, united in our pursuit of delivering safe food to consumers worldwide, we look forward to working with you.

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- Sustainability
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We look forward to working with you on our shared commitment to provide safe food globally.

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