



GFSI CONFERENCE 2025

**DUBLIN, IRELAND
31 MAR — 3 APR 2025**

Executive Summary





600+
PARTICIPANTS

340+
COMPANIES

40+
COUNTRIES

88
SPEAKERS

28
PARTNERS

Contents

1 Introduction	p.3
2 Addressing Global Food Safety Challenges and Building Resilience	p.5
3 The Convergence of Food Safety and Sustainability	p.8
4 The Importance of Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement	p.12
5 Strengthening Trust and Reliability in Food Safety Systems	p.15
6 Leveraging Technology and Digitalisation for Food Safety Advancement	p.18
7 Enhancing Food Safety Through Education and Training	p.21
8 Conclusions	p.24
9 Thank You	p.26
10 About Us	p.29

1

Imagine a world where cutting-edge technology seamlessly enhances food safety across the entire supply chain, where robust education and training enable both industry professionals and consumers to make the right choices, and where food safety systems are effective and trustworthy.

Introduction



At the heart of GFSI's vision lies the principle of 'safe food for all'. The 2025 Conference has once again demonstrated the power of our global community uniting under a shared purpose. The collective insights showcased here are catalysing crucial advancements in food safety practices and technologies, forging a safer and more secure food supply for generations to come.

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

What could be more important than ensuring that our food is safe?

Picture a landscape where harmonised standards build unshakeable trust across every border and every link in the food chain. This isn't a fantasy; it's the driving force behind the GFSI Conference 2025 in Dublin, where over 600 delegates from around the world have converged.

The conference theme, "Global Resilience: Forging a Sustainable Food Safety Future," speaks to the proactive and forward-thinking nature of this community. With a keen focus on the nexus of food safety and sustainability, delegates and speakers in Dublin delved into practical strategies for achieving global resilience, embracing innovation and collaboration to ensure a safer and more sustainable future for the global food ecosystem.

The collective energy they generated underscores a profound understanding that upholding the highest standards is a continuous endeavour. Food safety is indeed a journey, a path of constant learning, adaptation, and collaboration.

“

We never, ever take food safety as a given. We ultimately strive to maintain the very highest of standards. Food safety is a journey. It's not a destination.

Noel KEELEY, Group Chief Executive Officer, Musgrave



Key Themes

Join us as we delve into the critical dialogues, innovative solutions, and shared commitments around the six key topics that are shaping the future of food safety:

- Addressing Global Food Safety Challenges and Building Resilience
- The Convergence of Food Safety and Sustainability
- The Importance of Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement
- Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships and Dialogue
- Leveraging Technology and Digitalisation for Food Safety Advancement
- Enhancing Food Safety Through Education and Training

2

Addressing global food safety challenges and building resilience



“
Transparency, honesty, and openness
are essential, because while it can
take 40 years to build a reputation,
you can lose it in just 40 seconds.

Sean **SUMMERS**, Group CEO, Pick n Pay



The global landscape of food safety is undergoing a dynamic evolution, with a clear and pressing need to bolster business sustainability across the food ecosystem.

Nurturing a robust food safety culture within every organisation, coupled with empowering consumers through education and clear, consistent messaging are indispensable catalysts for driving long-term, sustainable improvements in food safety. Making safety personal and ensuring everyone feels ownership is key.



Takeaways

- The cornerstone of a secure food future lies in building global resilience, a commitment demanding a unified front to anticipate, prevent, and manage the spectrum of food safety risks. This requires a **shift from reactive to preventative measures**.
- Effectively confronting complex food safety challenges – from the risks of foodborne illnesses and tricky pathogens to the critical management of allergens and potential chemical contaminants – necessitates the development of **comprehensive and dynamically adaptive strategies**.
- The sheer complexity of today's global supply networks underscores the vital need for **increased transparency, end-to-end traceability, and robust collaboration** across all players to effectively pinpoint and neutralise potential risks.
- Adopting a proactive stance on food safety is paramount. This involves embedding preventative controls at every stage, implementing rigorous monitoring systems that leverage data insights, and fostering a culture of continuous learning from both successes and setbacks. **Even near misses should be analysed to prevent larger issues.**
- **The smart deployment of technological innovation is proving to be a game-changer**, with data analytics providing deeper insights. Artificial Intelligence offers new solutions and sophisticated traceability tools illuminate the supply chain. These advancements hold immense promise for revolutionising food safety practices and bolstering resilience from farm to fork. Nevertheless, people remain key to food safety and technology should be seen as a tool to aid them.
- **Cultivating unwavering trust throughout the entire food ecosystem**, from the dedicated producers to the empowered consumers, **is key**. This requires fostering open communication channels, ensuring transparency in all practices, and nurturing a shared, commitment to achieving food safety excellence.



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3

The convergence of food safety and sustainability



Climate and food are at the centre of COP30. The best-case scenario would be moving this to the top of the international political agenda.

Tom ARNOLD, Chair, Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee (IARDC)

The safety of our food supply is inextricably linked to environmentally sound practices, demanding a holistic approach that diligently considers both consumer health and the long-term well-being of our planet. This perspective recognises that food safety and sustainability are not competing priorities, but rather interdependent pillars in building a responsible food future.

Discussions at the Conference highlighted the growing understanding that the way food is produced, packaged, and distributed has profound implications for both the safety of what we eat and the health of the environment, just as the changing climate has an important impact on food safety and security. To future-proof our global food system, this interconnectedness requires stakeholders across the industry to adopt a proactive and forward-thinking mindset and demands a shift towards integrated solutions that avoid creating trade-offs.

The Conference addressed the potential impacts of sustainable packaging solutions and the need to carefully manage chemical contaminants like PFAS, especially within the context of promoting circularity in material usage. The role of regenerative agriculture in fostering environmentally responsible and safe food production was explored, alongside the underscored importance of robust research and comprehensive data to understand the impacts of sustainable food production on food safety.



What is critical is to avoid fragmented regulation on plastic waste: the consumer goods industry needs global rules.

Cédric DEVER, Director, Sustainability, The Consumer Goods Forum

Takeaways

- The pursuit of **environmental sustainability directly influences food safety** considerations. Conversely, effective food safety measures can contribute to sustainability by reducing food waste and optimising resource utilisation.
- **Technological advancements serve as a critical enabler for this convergence**, offering tools for enhancing traceability and transparency across supply chains. Digitalisation can help combine standardisation with agility in managing food safety and sustainability data.
- With increasing attention being paid to policies that encourage both safe and sustainable food production and consumption practices, **clarity in regulations is important for the industry to deliver on safety and sustainability targets effectively.**

3 The convergence of food safety and sustainability

A growing emphasis on corporate responsibility sees businesses increasingly integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations alongside food safety management systems, reflecting a holistic commitment to responsible practices.

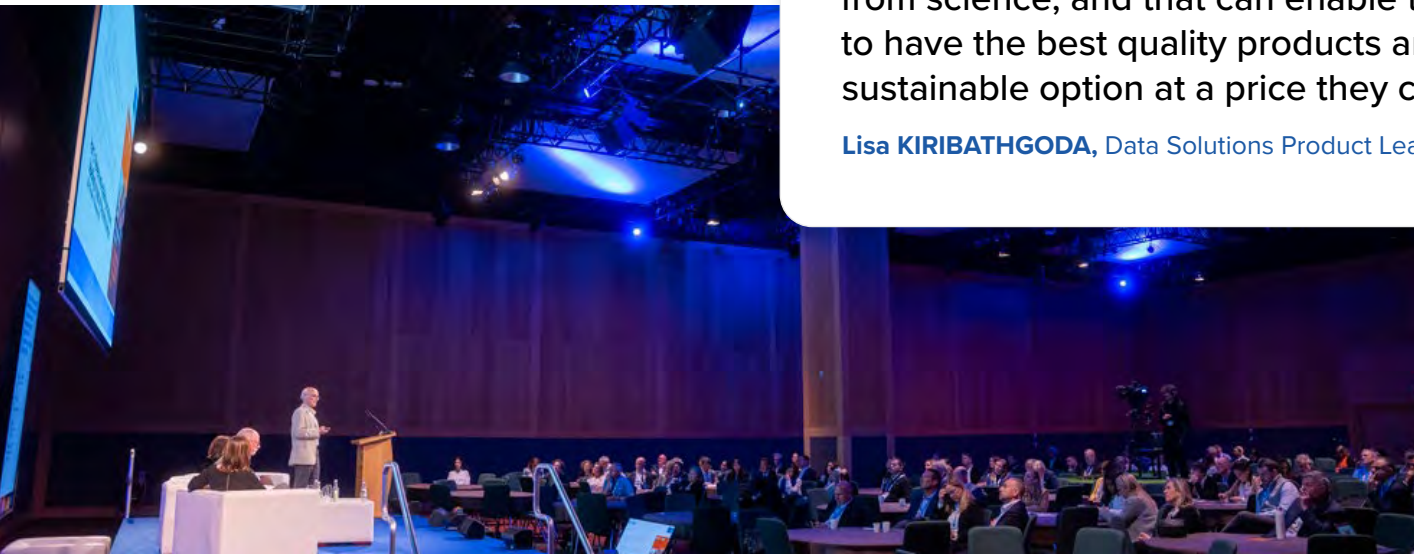
Effective risk assessment and data quality are crucial for navigating the complexities of this convergence, particularly in areas like allergen management and the potential impacts of sustainable alternatives on food safety.

There’s a difference between being consumer-centric and human-centric, essentially meaning giving the consumer what they want (vs.) what they need.

Mahirwan BHAGIA, Vice President, Global Food Safety, PepsiCo

People want to make decisions that are better for themselves, better for their families, better for the animals that are producing meat, ultimately, and also for the environment. The answer can come from science, and that can enable the consumer to have the best quality products and the most sustainable option at a price they can afford.

Lisa KIRIBATHGODA, Data Solutions Product Lead, MSD Animal Health



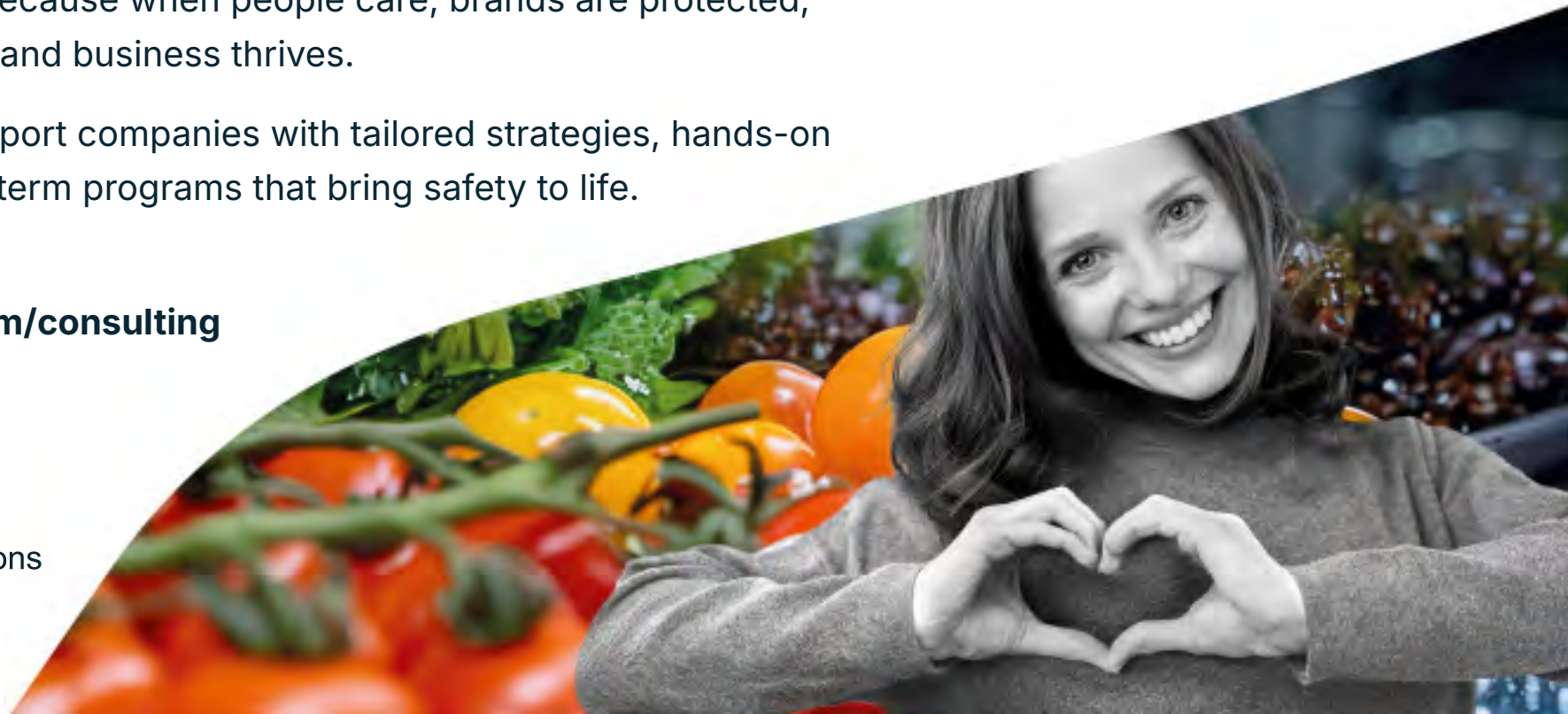
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The importance of collaboration and stakeholder engagement



Collectively committing to strengthening food safety culture will be important for all of us, whether you're government or industry.

Dr Pamela BYRNE, Former Chief Executive, Food Safety Authority of Ireland



The complexities that the food safety ecosystem faces simply cannot be navigated in isolation.

Unified action and the engagement of all interested parties are essential in the pursuit of a robust and trustworthy global food system.

A spirit of partnership and open communication is absolutely vital for making meaningful progress. This collaborative ethos fuels innovation, fosters trust, and allows for the sharing of vital knowledge and resources, ultimately strengthening our collective ability to tackle shared challenges effectively.

Open dialogue and the sharing of information between regulators and the food industry build trust and enable proactive approaches to risk management. This includes sharing best practices and understanding how initiatives like GFSI fit into regulatory risk-based approaches.

Collaborative efforts, including guidance and support from more established players and access to free tools, can help smaller businesses meet evolving standards.

Building trust requires a willingness to share information, even when things go wrong. Openness about incidents and a commitment to learning are key to strengthening trust across the industry and with consumers.

Food safety is a shared responsibility amongst all of us, so having the forums to come together and talk with the regulators is really important.

Deann AKINS-LEWENTHAL,
Ph.D., Senior Director of Global Food Safety and Quality Systems, Mondeľ International

Takeaways

- A fundamental understanding is that **the global food system is inherently interconnected**. Working together allows for the development and implementation of impactful solutions that no single company can achieve alone.
- **Effective collaboration at all levels** – national, multilateral, international, industry-wide – **can drive significant impact**. International cooperation is particularly important when addressing emerging food safety challenges.





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5

Strengthening trust and reliability in food safety systems



CGF brings together about 400 companies, including the largest food retailers and manufacturers. Food safety is a top priority for the whole food industry. GFSI has two decades of experience in supporting the industry on its food safety journey, and there is no better place to oversee third-party food safety standards for food business operators globally, with a common methodology. GFSI has built credibility over years and remains of critical importance for the food sector.

Dirk Van de Put, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mondeľz International.



The food industry widely acknowledges that food safety is a non-compete issue; when food safety audits fail to identify risks and incidents occur, they don't just affect one part of the industry, but damage the reputation of all. Ensuring the reliability of food safety audits is paramount.

This shared understanding drives a collective interest in strengthening food safety systems. A central tenet is the critical importance of building and maintaining trust. This necessitates constant efforts to ensure audits are robust and trustworthy.

Transparency is a cornerstone of building trust. This includes making information accessible about where audits are conducted, who issues certifications, and when they are given.



Reliable third-party audits conducted under the GFSI benchmark are the currency that allow the entire global food safety system to unlock value.

Dr. Donald A. PRATER, Principal Associate Commissioner for Human Foods, U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Takeaways

- When food safety incidents occur, **openly acknowledging what went wrong and conducting thorough root cause analyses are crucial for rebuilding trust.** Attempting to cover up issues further undermines confidence. Learning from these incidents is essential to prevent recurrence.
- **Harmonisation of food safety standards is key to ensuring a level playing field and bolstering trust in audit schemes.** GFSI's role in benchmarking food safety audit programmes against international standards like Codex is vital in this regard.
- **Technological innovation plays a significant role in enhancing trust and reliability.** Track and trace systems allow for verification of food product provenance. Digital tools can also improve the efficiency and accuracy of food safety management.
- Collaboration across the food safety ecosystem – including suppliers, certification bodies, certification programme owners, retailers, and regulators – is essential for ensuring trust and driving continuous improvement. **Public-private partnerships and dialogues with regulators are crucial for progressing food safety.**
- Consumer trust is paramount, and the GFSI ecosystem plays a role in enabling businesses to earn and maintain that trust. **Transparency and courageous communication from the food industry are vital for fighting misinformation and rebuilding consumer trust.**
- Recognising that food safety is a continuous journey, means that **ongoing efforts and a commitment to continuous improvement are necessary to strengthen trust and reliability.**

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Leveraging technology and digitalisation for food safety advancement



“Digitalisation is the critical enabler that allows us to combine standardisation, agility and a fit-for-purpose approach.

Olivier MIGNOT, Vice President, Global Head of Quality Management, Nestlé

Specific examples of how new technologies are being implemented to enhance monitoring, improve traceability, and create more efficient food safety management systems were shared at #gfsi25.

Technological advancements are transforming food safety practices. This includes the development of digital HACCP and risk assessment tools, leveraging data and advanced analytics, using whole genome sequencing for traceability, applying AI for risk prediction and pattern detection, and utilising supplier data to enhance risk management across the supply chain. These new tools are already delivering increased compliance, ushering in a new era of precision and responsiveness in food safety, enabling giant steps forward.



Takeaways

- **Companies are increasingly depending on data connectivity, sensors, and signals** in their food safety and quality teams, as well as manufacturing teams. This allows them to monitor the product being made in real-time, steering the system towards the intended target and reducing waste. This real-time data also helps in ensuring that consumers get the product they expect.
- **Digital HACCP systems are emerging as a revolutionary approach**, aiming for predictive capabilities, enhanced connectivity, and end-to-end integration of food safety knowledge and processes across organisations. Nestlé’s move from manual, paper-based systems to digital HACCP is seen as setting a new standard in food safety.
- **Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) is identified as a powerful technological advancement** allowing for the very specific connection of foodborne illness outbreaks with strains found in the processing environment or the food itself. This enables more proactive action in managing food safety risks.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being applied to various aspects of food safety**, including recipe creation, allergen management with multiple validation checks, and the detection of patterns indicative of food fraud. AI and machine learning are also being used to predict risks and to wrestle the abundance of available data into good decision-making.
- **The effectiveness of digital tools in food safety heavily relies on the quality, transparency, and accessibility of data** throughout the supply chain.



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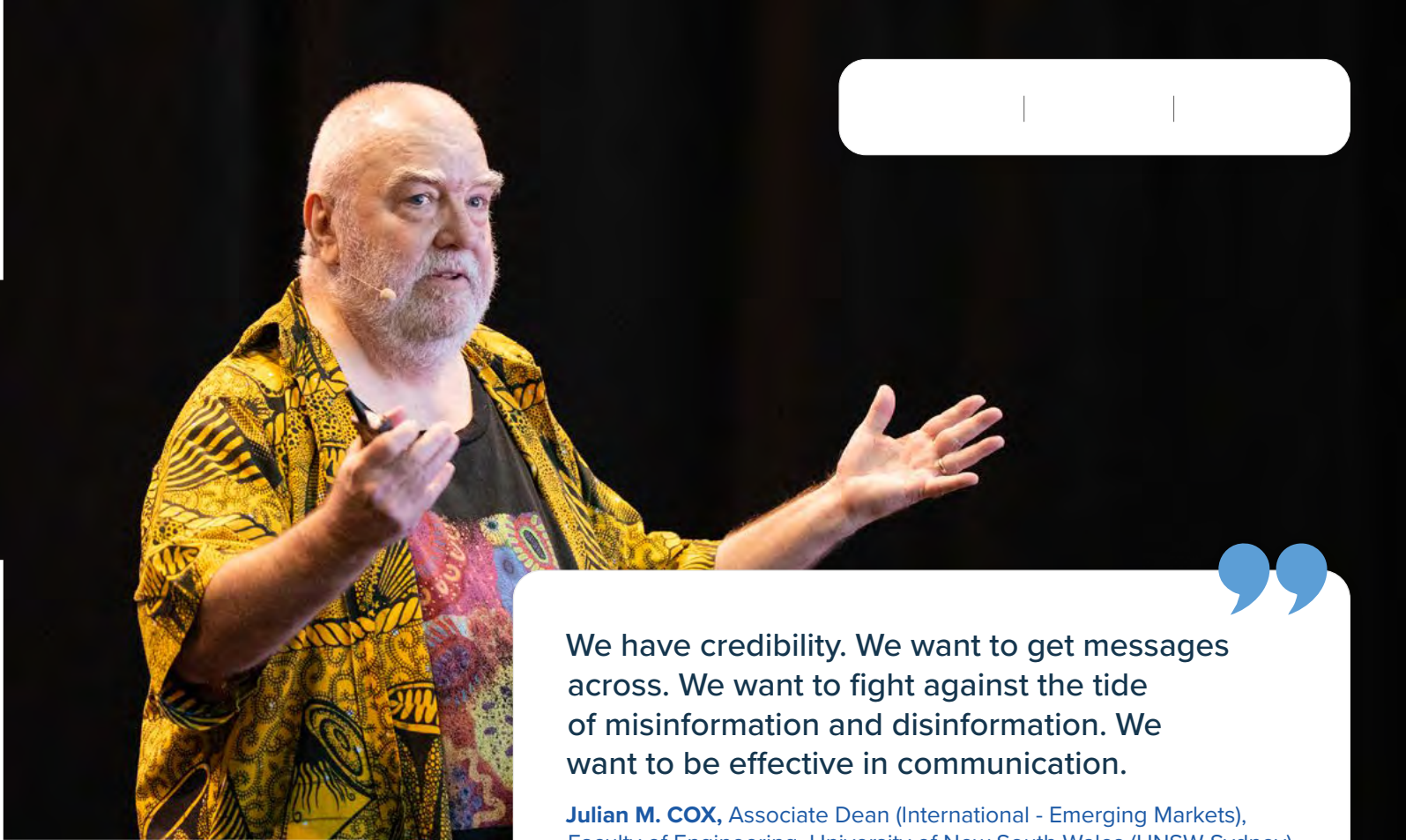
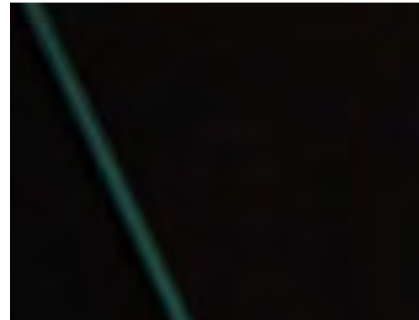


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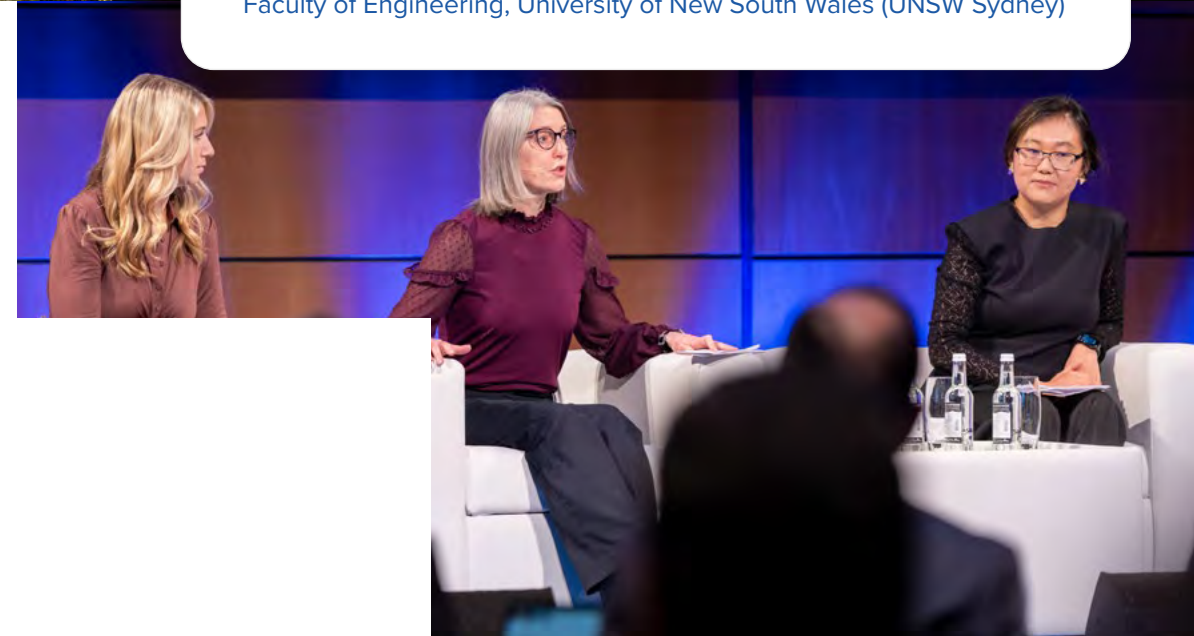
7

Enhancing food safety through education and training



We have credibility. We want to get messages across. We want to fight against the tide of misinformation and disinformation. We want to be effective in communication.

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



Encompassing both consumer awareness and industry proficiency, education and training were recognised as fundamental pillars for strengthening food safety.

Discussions highlighted the complexities of communicating food safety effectively to consumers amidst an environment of pervasive information, particularly on social media, where misinformation can easily spread. The need for innovative communication strategies, including engaging storytelling and the strategic use of social media platforms, was emphasised to promote informed decision-making.

Delegates and speakers focused on the critical importance of continuous and adaptable training programmes for employees to foster a strong food safety culture and ensure adherence to best practices. The potential of technology integration to deliver timely training, facilitate corrective actions, and address the challenges of staff turnover was also a significant point of discussion.



Takeaways

- **The conference addressed the challenge of consumer misinformation on food safety, advocating for tailored communication strategies** that use engaging narratives and leverage social media to convey accurate, evidence-based messages effectively.
- **For food industry employees, the emphasis was on moving beyond basic training to cultivate a strong food safety culture** through continuous learning, incorporating practical demonstrations alongside online resources for better knowledge retention and behavioural change.
- **Technology was identified as a crucial enabler for dynamic and real-time food safety training**, providing opportunities for alert-based messaging, guidance on corrective actions, and the collection of data to inform ongoing improvements in training programmes.
- Recognising the impact of high staff turnover, **the conference stressed the need for easily accessible and potentially multilingual training resources** to ensure consistent food safety knowledge and practices across all personnel.
- **Examples of initiatives to bring together industry professionals and regulators to exchange best practices in food safety education and training were highlighted.** This underscores the importance of collaboration and shared learning to truly drive impact in food safety.
- **A holistic approach to food safety education and training, tailored to diverse audiences and leveraging modern tools were deemed indispensable catalysts** for driving long-term improvements.

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Conclusion

The energy and engagement witnessed at the GFSI Conference 2025 in Dublin were a clear testament to the shared vision and collective effort driving progress in food safety. The deep-seated commitment of the global food safety community to safeguarding consumers' lives and employees' livelihoods was indeed palpable throughout the conference.

This gathering of over 600 delegates –food suppliers, certification bodies, certification programme owners, retailers, regulators and more– reinforced the understanding that food safety is a non-competitive imperative within the industry that fundamentally transcends individual business interests.

Unparalleled networking opportunities and the acquisition of cutting-edge knowledge


Bringing together key actors within the food industry, #gfsi25 fostered an environment ripe for connecting with peers, building new relationships, and expanding professional networks.

Through the exchange of innovative ideas, best practices, and the sharing of vital knowledge and resources, the 2025 Conference empowered participants to translate their collective dedication into tangible strategies and meaningful progress in food safety throughout the world.

Strengthened Resolve for Global Food Safety

The Conference served as a powerful catalyst, igniting a renewed ambition within GFSI to further its critical work in bolstering food safety globally. The valuable knowledge exchanged and the strong partnerships forged at #gfsi25 will be instrumental in driving further advancements in food safety management systems.

We are honoured to have witnessed once again the tireless commitment of the food safety community, and reinvigorated by the collective ambition and collaborative spirit of the Dublin conference.



Food safety is a non-competitive area. The single most important person is not even in this room today is the consumer. That is our duty and our responsibility at the end of the day.

Sean SUMMERS, Group CEO, Pick n Pay



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A special thank you to our speakers

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Deann AKINS-LEWENTHAL, Ph.D., Senior Director of Global Food Safety and Quality Systems, Mondelēz International. GFSI Steering Committee Vice Co Chair

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Cédric DEVER, Director, Sustainability, The Consumer Goods Forum

Francisco DIEZ-GONZALEZ, Ph.D., Director and Professor, Center for Food Safety, University of Georgia

John DONAGHY, Global Head of Food Safety at Corporate Quality, Nestlé S.A.

Paul DONEGAN, SVP of Digital Innovation, Rentokil Initial

Liz DUFFY, Global Food Safety & Compliance VP, Walmart

Kresimir DURACIC, Founder & CEO, ENSESO

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

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Jeffrey FARBER, Adjunct Professor, Canadian Research Institute for Food Safety (CRIFS), University of Guelph

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Dan FONE, Vice President – Food Safety, Quality & Sanitation, Dollar Tree Inc.

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Hank KARAYAN, Global Head of FSMA, Cosmetics & Pharma Assurance, SGS

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Lisa KIRIBATHGODA, Data Solutions Product Lead, MSD Animal Health

Dr. Laura KIRWAN, Sustainability Lead, Nutritics

Lise KORSTEN, Professor in Plant Health and Food Safety, President - African Academy of Sciences, Co-Director of the DSTI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security, University of Pretoria

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Jasmine LACIS-LEE, President and Board Chair, Allergen Bureau

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Christine SCHINDLER, Co-Founder and CEO, PathSpot

David SCHMITT, Product Manager for Digital Food Safety Solutions, Testo Saveris GmbH

Margot SLATTERY, Global Group Head of Social Sustainability, ISS World Services

Dr. Giannis STOITSIS, CTO & Partner, Agroknow

Rebecca SUDWORTH, Director of Policy, Food Standards Agency

Sean SUMMERS, Group CEO, Pick n Pay, CGF Board Co Sponsor of GFSI

Trish TWOHIG, Director of Food Safety, safefood

Dirk Van de PUT, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mondelēz International CGF Board Co Sponsor of GFSI

Patrick WALL, Professor of Public Health, University College Dublin

Dr. Carol WALLACE, Emeritus Professor of Food Safety Management, University of Central Lancashire (UK)

Steve WEARNE OBE, Past chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (2021-2024)

Dr. Martin WIEDMANN, Gellert Family Professor in Food Safety, Cornell University

Tom WIESTER, Vice President, Global Product Safety & Quality, Starbucks Coffee Company GFSI Steering Committee Vice Co Chair

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About Us



The Consumer Goods Forum

We are a global, parity-based industry network that is driven by its members to encourage the global adoption of practices and standards that serve 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 the planet and help members secure long-term, sustainable business growth.

www.theconsumergoodsforum.com



The Global Food Safety Initiative

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) brings together key actors of the food industry to collaboratively drive continuous improvement in food safety management systems around the world. With a vision of safe food for consumers everywhere, food industry leaders created GFSI in 2000 to find collaborative solutions to collective concerns, notably to reduce food safety risks, audit duplication and costs while building trust throughout the supply chain. GFSI is powered by The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF).

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