

News from the World Of Spices

Apr May Jun 2018



From Chairman's desk:

Dear Members,

The first quarter of the new financial year 2018 – 19 which just got over witnessed a great deal of activity during this period. As you are all aware, our WSO is the technical partner of the All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF) and has now been tasked with undertaking various programmes which have been sanctioned by the latter commencing from the farm and field level. During the course of this year, starting from this month, we will be conducting Training for Trainers programmes for the field staff of our members involved in IPM cultivation of Chilli and Cumin. Besides this we will also be taking up Awareness programmes for farmers wherein our experts will inform them about the quality requirements of both the domestic and export markets. We could also take this opportunity to update farmers about the latest package of practices in spice cultivation and involve seed and pesticide companies in the programme. Besides this we intend moving further up the supply chain and interact with traders supplying spices to our members so that they become aware of the quality standards of buyers as well as the international and domestic regulatory requirements.

We constituted a Technical Committee of the WSO comprising of Quality Assurance personnel as well as those involved in IPM / Sustainability operations of our member companies and sought their recommendations and suggestions for implementing the tasks outlined by AISEF. The programme we have developed for this financial year is based mainly on the inputs received from them.

AISEF has also taken an important step towards supporting Sustainability of spice farmers by allocating funds for CSR initiatives in the villages and areas where our members have set up their IPM programmes. This will go a long way in creating a rapport between the industry and the farming community and will ensure an environment of trust and cooperation which is essential for achieving our objectives of Food Safety and Sustainability in the spice sector. We request the members to actively participate in the programmes being implemented this year since we strongly believe that your close involvement in all these activities will be crucial for its success. The WSO Secretariat will keep you informed about the developments in this regard.

The last financial year ending March 31, 2018 saw the Indian Spice industry crossing another milestone. India exported a record 10,28,060 tons of spices and spice products valued at US Dollars 2.78 billion (Rs 17930 crores) in fiscal year 2017 -18 as against 9,47,790 tons valued at US Dollars 2.63 billion (Rs 17665 crores). Chilli was once again the leader of the pack both in terms of value and volume. Mint products and Spice Oils and Oleoresins came second and third respectively in terms of value while Cumin and Turmeric were in these positions in volume. We commend our exporters for this achievement and are sure that they will take spice exports to still further heights.

No Such Thing as Simple Food Labeling: Changes Ahead in 2018

Significant statutory and regulatory changes are on the horizon this year in the world of food labeling as regulators and lawmakers introduce rules that can potentially impact the food industry and its compliance obligations.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is expected to release its long-awaited bioengineered (GMO) disclosure label rules in the next several days or weeks, which will establish a national standard for labeling foods containing GMO ingredients. Meanwhile, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) confirmed that it is pressing ahead with many label issues and initiatives, such as conducting a review to modernize standards of identity, ingredient statement requirements, and food label claims, such as creating a definition for the term “healthy” with a corresponding label symbol. Further, Congress has stepped into the conversation. Recently, the House of Representatives passed a bill called the “Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act”^[1] to weaken menu label requirements for restaurants and retailers as was mandated by the Affordable Care Act.^[2]

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Testing Inspection and Certification Market is Anticipated to Reach US\$ 299,628.6 Mn by 2025:

According to a new market research report published by Transparency Market Research entitled "Global [By Service Type - Testing & Inspection and Certification; By Sourcing Type - In-house Sourcing and Outsourcing; By Industry -Infrastructure & Construction, Transformational & Contract Manufacturing, Food & Beverages, Agriculture & Forest, Information Technologies, Chemical, Healthcare & Pharmaceutical, Transportation & Logistics, Travel & Tourism, Energy & Utilities, Water & Wastewater Management, Government, Education, Textile, Cosmetics and Others] - Global Industry Analysis, Size, Share, Growth, Trends and Forecast, 2017 - 2025," the global testing, inspection and certification market is projected to reach US\$ 299,628.6 Mn by 2025. The market is expected to expand at a CAGR of 5.8% during the period from 2017 to 2025.

Testing, inspection, and certification services are aimed at providing assurance to the end users that the product is accredited with international and national regulations and industry standards pertaining to quality and safety. The testing, inspection, and certification market is dependent on a mix of international and local rules and regulations

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World's hottest chilli pepper gives man 'thunderclap' headaches



PARIS: Doctors issued a chilli warning Tuesday after an American man who ate the world's hottest pepper was struck by excruciating "thunderclap" headaches.

The 34-year-old man's symptoms began with dry heaves "immediately after participation in a hot pepper contest where he ate one Carolina Reaper," in 2016, said an article published in medical journal BMJ Case Reports.

The man then developed intense neck and head pain, and for several days experienced brief but intense "thunderclap" headaches. Each lasted several seconds.

After seeking emergency care, tests for various neurological conditions came back negative.

In the end, doctors diagnosed him with a temporary brain condition called "reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome" (RCVS), characterised by the temporary narrowing of blood vessels to the brain.

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Pepper minimum import price will lead to closure of export units, says AISEF

The recent government notification imposing Rs 500 per kg minimum import price on black pepper will create negative perception for the Make in India initiative and would impact all investments in setting up of import-re-export businesses in future, unless it is reversed, said All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF).

Describing it as a death blow to 100% EOUs and SEZs, Prakash Namboodiri, AISEF chairman said the notification practically bans the entry of pepper in all forms from outside and anyone procuring pepper at global market price will face penalty at 70 per cent duty on differential price and surcharge.

Some of the 100% EOU and advance licence holders whose shipment has hit the Indian shores since last two weeks have been slapped with notices of Rs 2.5 to 2.7 lakh penalty for not providing Rs 500 as per the new notification, he said.

Manufacturing in India with the higher import rates fixed by the country would lead to the closure of export units. The export units have entered into various international supply contracts for private retail labels and bulk supply packs. At stake is the reputation of Indian importers and exporters as the contracts cannot be revised and the terms cannot be breached.

Also, most of the contracts are for mixed spices like pepper, chillies, ginger, turmeric, etc in assorted lots. Without pepper in the portfolio,

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What's Next for Agriculture in the World Trade Organization?



Following the conclusion of the 11th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference last month, it's time for WTO members to reflect, reset, and reinvigorate the agriculture negotiations to tackle the real-world international trade concerns that face agriculture today.

At the Buenos Aires ministerial, commonly called "MC11," trade ministers and other high-level representatives from 164 WTO member economies were unable to reach consensus on any new agricultural provisions or post-MC11 work plans. This simply underscores the fact that WTO members' current negotiating strategies are not working. We need a new approach that involves the development of a more market-oriented agricultural trading system. Such an approach would be in line with the core objective of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture: establishing fundamental reforms to achieve substantial, progressive reductions in support and protection. The United States remains fully committed to this objective.

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Food Safety/Regulatory Issues for 2018

FDA has reviewed the top food safety and regulatory issues of 2017. This month, we look into our crystal ball to bring you our predictions for this still-new year.

Following are our "8 for '18" – subjects compiled from The Acheson Group's customer interactions, experiences and expertise

- The FDA increased environmental swabbing as it began focusing in on its Preventive Controls inspections in 2017. Thus, a new term assailed the industry: **swab-a-thons**. We don't see the agency's focus on this form of environmental monitoring decreasing any too soon. Rather, we'd expect an increase in 2018 as FDA's requirement. Additionally, don't expect to always be notified. We started seeing surprise swab-a-thons in 2017 and fully expect those to continue as well. As we have discussed before, any *Listeria monocytogenes* or *Salmonella* isolates are being sequenced and added to the international database of genomes. So the risks of implicating a facility with illness just keep going up for inspections increases as well.
- Compliance dates arrive in September for the **Preventive Controls rule for human foods** for very small establishments, and for animal foods for small (subpart B) and very small (subpart C) establishments.

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Opinion: Invasive species the hidden threat to sustainable development



In laying out the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community set itself an ambitious set of targets to achieve by the end of the next decade. But the challenge of realizing the 17 SDGs means that development organizations often only focus on supporting the operationalizing of a particular subset of the goals. If you're focused on poverty, health or water, why should you care about a few bugs or weeds cropping up where they shouldn't? The reality is that millions of the world's most vulnerable people face problems with invasive weeds, insects, plant diseases, and animals, which are out of control and have major economic, social, and environmental impact.

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Highlights of the 2018 Food Safety Summit

For the 20th year the Food Safety Summit will be providing an in-depth schedule of education sessions when it returns to the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, IL May 7 - 10, 2018. Professionals from every part of the food safety supply chain will have the opportunity to take advantage of seven certification courses, two dozen education sessions, a dynamic keynote presentation, interactive town hall, case studies, discussion groups, several networking events and a trade show floor featuring 200+ exhibitors. Registration is open now for the 2018 Food Safety Summit at www.foodsafetysummit.com.

"This year the Food Safety Summit has organized a show that focuses on addressing food safety throughout the supply chain by hosting a program that emphasizes how each community that makes up the ecosystem is connected. It is vital to understand not only the specific roles and responsibilities that make up the industry but also those in the rest of the process," said Scott Wolters, Director, Tradeshows & Conferences, BNP Media, Producers of the event. "We are working with leaders in each of the four areas of the supply chain that we are focusing on to provide extraordinary content in the education sessions and terrific networking opportunities with subject matter experts on the trade show floor."

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To end hunger in 2020 not realistic'

Hopes of eradicating hunger in the country may be delayed much longer. This is because the structures and parameters for expanding food production are not adequate yet, says the Registrar and Chief Executive, Nigeria Institute of Animal Science (NIAS), Prof. Eustace Iyayi. The Institute was established by the National Assembly Act No. 26 of 2007, under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. In this interview with DANIEL ESSIET, Iyayi speaks on issues affecting the agricultural sector in Nigeria.

Are we prepared to feed 250 million people in 2020?

We certainly will have to feed them. But now is the time to prepare for that huge task because 2020 is just three years from now.

Inadequate funding, poor rural infrastructure, neglected agricultural research and adverse effects of climate change have led to the nation experiencing some challenges in exploiting its potential to increase food and agricultural production. Can we end hunger and half poverty by 2020?

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Consumers want gluten-free products with extra health benefits

Gluten-free products are already widely perceived as a better-for-you option, but occasional gluten-free shoppers would like to see additional health claims added to the label, new consumer research reveals.

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The Arab Food Safety Initiative for Trade Facilitation

The Arab region has one of the lowest levels of intraregional trade in food and agricultural commodities, despite preferential market access provided under the Pan Arab Free Trade Agreement. Nearly 54 percent of non-tariff measures in the Arab region are mainly related to technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, contributing to impediments in intraregional trade, especially for food and agricultural products.

Although several countries in the Arab region have taken steps to upgrade their food safety systems, the capacity and efficiency of many countries must still be enhanced to ensure an adequate oversight for locally produced and imported food, as well as to demonstrate compliance with food standards in export markets.

In efforts to address this challenge, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization is implementing the Arab Food Safety Initiative for Trade Facilitation, known as the "SAFE Initiative." In a nutshell, the SAFE Initiative is a regional initiative led by the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies: the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development. It is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The key objective of the SAFE Initiative is to facilitate regional trade in food/agri-based products and improved integration through strengthening the regional coordination and harmonization mechanisms on conformity assessment and Food Safety systems following international best practices (TBT and SPS).

To that end, a key vehicle was identified: setting up a regional approach for common food safety standards development, based on robust risk assessments and taking into account the requirements of the Arab region. Foundational initiatives were begun and cover a broad spectrum of food safety interventions including the enhancement of competencies in risk assessment, the development of an Arab Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, and the development of common inspection certificates and associated protocols for food imports/exports in the Arab region. Through the creation of the Arab Taskforce on Food Safety, SAFE is also targeting the establishment of a sustainable mechanism for coordination of food safety measures in the Arab region.

For more information on the SAFE Initiative, please visit the official [SAFE website](#) as well as the [SAFE Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

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Traceability Today in a Global Food System

Traceability is a term that has become a common part of the food industry's vocabulary over the last 15 years. The Bioterrorism Act of 2002 requires food to be able to be traced one forward and one back in the supply chain. Since 2002, there continues to be great interest from both consumers and the food industry in food traceability and the ability to track and access information about a product at any point in the supply chain, from the farm through processing to retail. Consumers want to know more and more about the food they are purchasing and they expect that this information will be provided to them. Grocers are committed to providing more information to their customers.

The Institute of Food Technologist (IFT) has been involved in food traceability for many years and in 2013 launched the [Global Food Traceability Center \(GFTC\)](#). GFTC is the global resource and voice on food traceability. GFTC serves stakeholders from the entire food system, by providing traceability resources through education and training, expertise, and research for industry, academia, government agencies, and consumer groups. The [FMI Foundation](#) is a founding sponsor of the GFTC and since its inception, has supported the GFTC to be *the* thought leader for the food industry on food traceability.

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Social Responsibility Influence Over Food Safety and Quality

The concept of [social responsibility](#) has saturated social media over the last few years and crept into the organizational pillars of many corporations. In its infancy, green/responsibility initiatives were often placed with the quality leaders, which was a fairly intuitive decision. Whether trying to make a better product or make the world a better place, social responsibility and food safety/quality (FSQ) share the common roots of striving to “do the right thing.”

Social responsibility initiatives have evolved, and today, many large companies have separate corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments. CSR encompasses a variety of facets: environmental conservation, community outreach, sustainable sourcing/animal welfare, good labor practices, etc. As this concept of “doing the right thing” has expanded over the years, its influence over FSQ objectives continues. Often, one will pay dividends for the other, although there are definitely circumstances where they come into conflict.

Food Insecurity vs. Expiration Dates

One of the most pressing problems facing our country continues to be hunger, and Golden State Foods' director of CSR, Anna Lisa Lukes, shed some light on the true extent of this problem. “Hunger is a rampant and real problem for so many Americans that finding a solution to avoid food waste while at the same time feed children and families who would otherwise turn to food banks should be an ambitious aspiration for those who are in a position to make a difference.”

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Foodborne Illnesses and Recalls on the Rise

The last word a manufacturer wants to hear is “recall”. During 2017, recalls involved everything from salad mix contaminated with a dead bat to hash browns infused with shredded golf balls.

Not all recalls are created equal. Both the USDA and the FDA have three classifications of recalls to indicate the relative degree of health hazard presented by the product being recalled:

- **Class I:** A Class I recall is the most serious classification, involving a health hazard situation in which there is a reasonable probability that eating the food will cause health problems or death.
- **Class II:** A Class II recall involves a potential health hazard situation in which there is a remote probability of adverse health consequences from eating the food.
- **Class III:** A Class III recall involves a situation in which eating the food will not cause adverse health consequences.
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During 2017, there were 456 recalls recorded in the United States. The number one reason for those recalls was undeclared allergens.

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FDA updates spice risk profile; 7,200 samples analyzed



Four years ago, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration released a draft risk profile on the public health dangers associated with spices, identifying the presence of pathogens such as Salmonella and filth in general. It described efforts to reduce the public health risk posed by consumption of contaminated spices and identified control options to prevent contamination.

Earlier this month, the FDA announced the availability of an updated risk profile on pathogens and filth in spice. The 2017 [Risk Profile: Pathogens and Filth in Spices \(2017\)](#) includes data from an FDA survey that evaluated Salmonella prevalence and aerobic plate counts in packaged dried spices offered for sale at retail establishments in the U.S.

The survey showed that the prevalence of Salmonella in nine out of 11 types of retail spices in the U.S. was significantly lower than that for shipments of spices at import, according to a summary published by the National Law Review.

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