

News from the World Of Spices

June 2022



Chairman's Note

Greetings from WSO!!!

A short summary of the activities undertaken by WSO in the last quarter is given below.

National Spice Conference

As you know, there has been a steady increase in global spice trade and a growing competition from emerging spice producing countries over the years though India remains the largest exporter of spices. However, as India is also the largest producer and consumer of spices with about 85% of the total spices produced in India being consumed in the domestic market, it is important to ensure the quality and safety of spices traded within India. There is a rising awareness about food safety and quality among the consumers and the stringent regulations set in place in the export and domestic markets has further enhanced the importance of sustainable and food safe spice production .

WSO felt that given the crucial importance of Food safety and Sustainability in spices it would be useful if a **National Spice Conference (NSC)** was held this year which would cover topics of interest for the Indian spice industry and help in meeting the challenges being faced by it. All stakeholders of the Indian spice industry such as farmers, FPOs, exporters, traders, regulatory authorities, machinery manufacturers, laboratories, spice research institutes would be the participants.

The first edition of the conference is planned to be held as a two day event in Mumbai which will address the main challenges being faced by the stakeholders and the opportunities that will be available to the stakeholders. The details of the Conference are as follows :-

Date: 6th and 7th October 2022

Venue: Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport, Andheri East, Mumbai

Theme: “Food Safe Spices: Getting the Basics Right”.

The conference will have the following sessions:

- Emerging Trends & Challenges in Food Safety Regulations
- Changing Consumer & Demand Pattern
- Sustainability, Biodiversity with Ground Challenges
- New Innovation and trend of value chain partners
- Sustainability & Sourcing with key role driven by FPO’s

The participation of all the major players in the spice industry and allied sectors along with the heads of national regulatory authorities like FSSAI, State regulatory bodies as speakers is keenly awaited . Representatives from the farming community and Financing organizations such as NABARD will also be taking part in the event.

The event is intended to serve as a platform not only to address the concerns of stakeholders and facilitate interaction among the stakeholders but to seek solutions also . Sessions are planned to ensure ample networking, branding & engagement opportunities for all participants.

We shall keep all our members informed about the latest updates on the conference so that you can ensure your participation in NSC-2022.

National Sustainable Spice Program (NSSP)

Rainforest Alliance has joined NSSP as a collaborator. A meeting of all NSSP Collaborators was organized on 31st May 2022 and Mr. Cherian Xavier (in his capacity as Chairman- AISEF) was elected as the first Chairperson of NSSP.

An FPO Conclave was also held on 15th June 2022 as an orientation exercise for the FPOs prior to the beginning of the forthcoming crop season. Representatives from IDH and Rainforest Alliance gave talks on integrating sustainability aspects into business models and certification processes respectively. The meeting was attended by most of the FPOs participating in the NSSP program and they shared their experiences of working with the platform.

The production plan for the next season was collected from the chilli and cumin FPOs. Training programmes for FPOs will start shortly and we aim to provide at least one round of ToT for all the FPOs who have committed to produce IPM quality spices under NSSP. Under NSSP, we also have plans to develop model farms to demonstrate the benefits of following sustainable practices in cultivation and are working closely with FPOs and organizations like Nestle , Rainforest Alliance and GIZ to implement this.

General Mills: 'Regenerative agriculture is the most promising solution to reach our climate goals'

As the largest natural and organic packaged food company in the US*, General Mills has the scale and resources to drive positive change in the food system through its work in regenerative agriculture, sustainable ingredient sourcing, and nutrition access. So how much has the company moved the needle in these areas?

In its [2022 Global Responsibility Report](#) which tracks the company's social and environmental goals in 2021 fiscal year ending May 30, 2021, General Mills shared key progress made in several areas including 115,000 acres of land enrolled in the company's regenerative agriculture program, 89% of the company's total global packaging being recyclable, \$318m spent diversifying suppliers to include more minority women, veteran, disability, and LGBTQ+-owned businesses, and more progress made towards sustainable ingredient sourcing.

"We're investing beyond our supply chain and working in key areas where we source our ingredients to drive meaningful impact. We believe regenerative agriculture is the most promising solution to reach our climate goals and create positive planet outcomes, and we're committed to further advancing this work," said Mary Jane Melendez, chief sustainability and global impact officer, General Mills.

[Read more](#)

British agencies propose changes to import checks

By [News Desk](#) on April 24, 2022

Food agencies in Great Britain are looking at changing the rate of checks on certain products being imported into the region.

Separate comment periods have been launched by Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) for England and Wales, to cover high risk food and feed of non-animal origin.

Before the United Kingdom left the European Union, routine updates to EU imported food legislation, made by the European Commission, applied in the UK. The latest decisions on EU control rates can be found in [this earlier article](#).

Authorities in Great Britain are now responsible for reviewing and amending the legislation. Ministers will make risk management decisions based on the FSA and FSS recommendations. Changes will not apply in Northern Ireland because of the Northern Ireland protocol.

Detail on proposed changes

Removal of three products from the scope of controls has been proposed in the first review since the UK exited the EU. The FSA said data indicates that the level of risk has reduced significantly. Checks on five products will be scaled back because there is increasing confidence that compliance is improving.

[Read more](#)

Nutrient profiling – scientific advice for EU Farm to Fork initiative

Intakes of energy, saturated fats, sodium and added sugars/free sugars are too high in Europe, so reducing them would help to combat chronic diseases linked to unhealthy diets. Dietary fibre and potassium intakes, however, are too low in most European adult populations, so increasing them would also contribute to improved health.

These are among the main findings of EFSA's scientific advice related to nutrient profiling, published today. Our nutrition experts have identified the nutrients and non-nutrient food components of public health importance for Europeans, the food groups with important roles in European diets, and scientific criteria to guide the choice of nutrients for nutrient profiling.

The European Commission requested EFSA's scientific advice to inform both the development of a future EU-wide system for front-of-pack nutrition labelling and conditions for restricting nutrition and health claims on foods. Importantly, EFSA did not evaluate or propose a particular nutrient profiling model for either of these purposes. (See more about the opinion in the FAQs below.)

Extensive engagement during consultation

EFSA held a public consultation on the draft opinion from November 2021 to January 2022. This generated 529 comments from 83 organisations and individuals in 21 countries.

[Read more](#)

8 notable achievements of the Indian Government in agriculture sector

The Indian government along with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has brought in various reforms, new policies and schemes to support farmers. These reforms, policies and schemes have been made keeping in mind even small land holding farmers as they are the ones who are usually missed out in availing benefits provided by the government.

Out of numerous new reforms, policies and schemes launched by the government, we are sharing the top 8 which have benefited the farmers in a big way.

1. Increase in agriculture budget allocation
2. Record food grains and horticulture production
3. Fixing of MSP at 1.5 times the cost of production
4. Income support to farmers through PM KISAN
5. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)
6. Institutional credit for agriculture sector
7. Agri Infrastructure Fund (AIF)
8. Promotion of FPOs

[Read more](#)

FSA dealing with staffing and data gaps after Brexit

Recruitment and a loss of access to data and networks are some of the challenges facing the Food Standards Agency now that the UK has left the EU, according to a report by the National Audit Office (NAO).

Nearly 18 months after the end of the transition period when the United Kingdom left the European Union, the analysis assessed how agencies have managed and their response to the opportunities and challenges.

The NAO looked at three regulators that have taken on functions previously carried out by the EU, including the Food Standards Agency (FSA), which now has more responsibility for assessing human food and animal feed safety risks.

The report found the FSA is building capability to meet the increased responsibilities but is facing operational challenges that need to be addressed as it moves away from interim arrangements.

Out of the EU loop

Researchers revealed that at the end of 2021, the UK was told to leave the Heads of Food Safety Agencies, a group of EU bodies that meet biannually to encourage cooperation and share good practices. The UK left the group in February 2022. The FSA had been involved in several working groups and co-chaired one on food fraud.

As the EU is no longer required to share intelligence with the UK, there is a risk of less information being shared about food fraud risks, according to the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU).

[Read more](#)

Food safety actions are key to build trust, says Yiannas

Actions on food safety speak loudest when it comes to building trust, according to the deputy commissioner for food policy and response at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

“What we say about food safety matters, what we write about food safety matters but most important is what we do,” said Frank Yiannas at the ONE – Health, Environment, Society – Conference in Brussels and online.

Yiannas gave two examples of what the FDA is doing to increase consumer trust.

“The first one is food traceability, we are in the process of issuing a final rule later this year. We know from a food safety perspective, if there is a food scare, tracing that food back to source quickly can allow us to remove product from the market and shorten the epidemic curve, perform a secondary intervention and prevent additional illnesses. We believe better food traceability is about transparency and increasing this in the food system will breed trust,” he said.

Data and consumer trust issues

The second action involves data, said Yiannas.

“I often say better food safety will begin and end with better quality data. We have the possibility of using tools to convert large volumes of big data that exists into actionable, preventive information. [Read more](#)

UNIDO and FSSC hope to reduce foodborne disease; ISO updates standards

UNIDO and the Foundation FSSC have signed an agreement to promote food safety in low- and middle-income countries.

The partnership between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the non-profit that manages the FSSC 22000 certification is to run for an initial period of three years.

The aim is to develop food safety systems in some low- and middle-income countries through capacity-building to reduce the socio-economic impact of foodborne diseases.

Every year, two countries will receive support in creating a food safety culture. It will involve food safety practitioners, small and medium enterprises, national associations and food safety authorities to ensure that the food they make or control is safe for local consumption.

Reduce foodborne infection impact

Bernardo Calzadilla-Sarmiento, managing director of UNIDO's Directorate of Digitalization, Technology and Agri-Business, said the agency has a record of promoting food safety along the value chain through capacity-building initiatives.

"We are committed to our strategic partnership with FSSC to reduce the socio-economic impact of foodborne diseases in selected low- and middle-income countries: global food safety is a shared responsibility that requires international collaboration and partnerships," he said. [Read more](#)

Choosing sustainability over organic farming to ensure food security and ecological balance

As the agriculture sector progressively adopts more eco-friendly practices, especially given the threat of global warming and climate change, one of the most common misconceptions arises regarding organic and sustainable farming. At first glance, both organic and sustainable agriculture appear homogeneous concepts that, at the minimum, are working towards the same goal of meeting society's agriculture-related needs without harming the environment. Both approaches are gradually becoming widely popular in the corridors of farmers and world leaders.

For instance, last year, during the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow, 45 countries, including India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, Ghana, and Vietnam, pledged over \$4 billion to support sustainable farming. Similarly, the organic farming land areas in the European Union (EU) countries continuously increase with promising prospects.

However, despite the increasing popularity of organic and sustainable farming in the global ecosystem, these two concepts are significantly different except for a few indistinguishable factors. Organic foods are grown without inorganic pesticides, synthetic inputs, or chemically induced fertilisers. Organic farming also does not include using genetically modified plants. [Read more](#)

Alliance to Prevent Foodborne Illness Develops Food Safety Culture Toolkit

Food safety culture is one of the most powerful change agents in the food industry. A mature and positive food safety culture, by definition, consists of shared values, norms, and beliefs that influence mindsets and behaviours toward food safety in, across, and throughout the organization.

To assist companies in maturing their food safety cultures, the Alliance to Stop Foodborne Illness has developed an evolving food safety culture toolkit tailored to small and medium-sized food businesses. Stop Foodborne Illness (STOP) and industry-leading food safety practitioners from Fortune 500 companies comprise the Alliance.

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Leaders in mature and positive cultures demonstrate ownership and recognize that [food safety](#) is critical to both the consumer and the company's success.

"Every company has a food safety culture — good, bad, or indifferent — but how do you work to improve when you don't know where to begin?"
According to the Alliance.

The Alliance is providing the toolkit for free because they believe that even one person affected by foodborne illness is too many. [Read more](#)

Safer food, better health

The World Health Organization estimates that 600 million – almost 1 in 10 people in the world – fall ill after eating contaminated food and 420 000 die every year, resulting in the loss of 33 million healthy life years (DALYs). More than US\$ 110 billion is lost each year in productivity and medical expenses resulting from unsafe food in low- and middle-income countries.

Globally, children under five years of age bear 40% of the foodborne disease burden and 143,000 die every year (2015 data); 149.2 million children under 5 were stunted (in 2020) and 45.4 million children under 5 were wasted of which 13.6 million were severely wasted (in 2020). In Tanzania there has been good progress in the reduction of malnutrition especially in children. The prevalence of acute malnutrition had gone down from 4% in 2005 to 3.5% in 2018. However, the prevalence of stunting among children under five years is still off target with a very small reduction from 34% in 2015 to 32% in 2018.

Food-borne diseases are still a challenge in our country. For example, an anthrax outbreak occurred in the Momba District of the Songwe region between December 2018 and January 2019, whereby 81 human cases and four deaths were reported. Similarly, from 2015 to January 2018, a cholera outbreak led to a total of 33,421 cases including 542 deaths which were reported across all 26 regions of the United Republic of Tanzania. Recently, cholera outbreaks have occurred in Kigoma and Katavi regions with a cumulative total of 226 cases. [Read more](#)

Microplastics on the menu: Why everyone should find Maine's sludge-spreading ban palatable

Maine made headlines in April as the nation's first state to ban the spreading of sludge and sludge-based compost. Supporters of the law recognized an urgent need — in the Act's language — “to prevent further contamination of the soils and waters of the State with so-called forever chemicals.”

Few who endorsed that measure realized they were scoring a twofer. By restricting the spread of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), enduring synthetical chemicals linked to many health risks, Maine unwittingly reduced the threat from another insidious contaminant threatening ecosystems and food safety: microplastics.

Here's to inadvertent foresight. The sludge-spreading ban is a critical first step in a long-term effort needed to address ubiquitous microplastic pollution.

Filtering out problematic microplastics and then broadcasting them

Microplastics (under 5 mm in size) come in two flavors: primary ones released directly in manufacturing or use of plastics (like the microbeads found in some cleansers and paints), and secondary ones from plastic degradation.

A steady stream of these secondary microplastics — much of them synthetic clothing fibers and tire wear particles — enter wastewater. Most treatment plants do an impressive job removing microplastics, often filtering out more than 90 percent, but the smallest nanoplastics still remain in effluent water. [Read more](#)

McCain India Releases the Second Edition of India Sustainability Report 2021 - Together- Towards Planet-Friendly Food

Key Highlights

- 16% reduction in pesticide use
- 13% reduction in absolute emissions (Scope 1 & 2) | 1% reduction in Scope 3
- 23% electricity from renewable sources
- +1000 direct beneficiaries under Project Shakti
- 400 beneficiaries added since 2020 under Project Utthan

In line with its sustainable strategy and alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals, McCain Food (India) launches the second edition of the India Sustainability Report 2021 titled- 'Together-Towards Planet-Friendly Food'. The report showcases McCain's commitment to celebrate real connections through delicious planet-friendly food while leveraging its ecosystem and partners to encourage sustainability - today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

Commenting on the launch of the Indian Edition of Sustainability Report 2021, Mr. Debadatta Baxi, Regional Director at McCain Foods said, “Being a responsible food manufacturer, our key focus is on preserving the planet, encouraging the use of sustainable practices including the use of renewable sources, maintaining the quality of food in line with nutritional benefits and environment protection and helping communities thrive to facilitate a sustainable livelihood. [Read more](#)

Food safety trends

The past two years have brought rapid and relentless change to the food chain and this shows no signs of slackening.

While the pandemic may be abating - at least for the summer months - the long-term impacts of Brexit are continuing and the shock of the Ukraine conflict has put inevitable pressures on the food supply chain.

Combine that with the soaring ingredients costs and the skills crisis and food manufacturers are facing real challenges not only with operations but with managing food safety.

The recent spate of food safety scares that have dogged the headlines have put the issue back in the spotlight.

Salmonella

Earlier this year Salmonella contamination sparked recalls of infant formula, pork snack products and frozen raw dog foods.

Meat processor Cranswick has confirmed an outbreak of salmonella at its poultry facility in Hull, in a 'limited number' of cooked chicken products, which it found during a routine internal inspection. And the surprise outbreak at Ferrero saw the recall of selected batches of Kinder Surprise. It's not just salmonella as an ongoing listeria outbreak earlier this year was linked to smoked fish.

Public trust in food safety

But despite the continuing recalls and food safety concerns, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) revealed earlier this year that public trust in food safety, the food supply chain and authenticity remains high. [Read more](#)

A sustainable food system must give priority to safety

Following World Safety Day which took place on 7 June 2022, Anne Gerardi, Senior Manager, Global Food Safety Initiative, examines the true meaning of sustainable food.

The geopolitical and economic crisis and the sustainability challenges that are impacting food systems are making us all reflect on what it takes to put a good, healthy meal on the table for our family. This crisis is global: all over the world, prices are going up and some staples are becoming more difficult to obtain. These pressures are unlikely to decrease any time soon.

The crisis has made it even more urgent to redouble our efforts to build a sustainable food system that works for everyone. But sustainable does not only mean making sure every person has access to food, it also means ensuring that food is safe to eat.

Our starting point for this is simple: if it isn't safe to eat, it isn't food. Around the world, an estimated 600 million people – almost one in 10 – fall ill after eating contaminated food each year and concerns over food safety have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Sustainable food also means safe food

World Food Safety Day has just taken place as an important moment to boost awareness and engagement with food safety – but of course, continued effort and collaboration is vital to make sure that food safety is everyone's business. [Read more](#)

Long-standing systems for sustainable farming could feed people and the planet — if industry is willing to step back

Global food systems are at a breaking point. Not only are they responsible for roughly a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions, they are also the top contributors to water pollution and biodiversity collapse.

On top of that, many aspects of our food systems are extremely vulnerable to disruptions from climate change and other shocks, as we saw in the first months of the pandemic.

Agroecology — an approach to farming long practised by Indigenous and peasant communities around the world — could transform our food systems for the better. And agribusinesses in the Global North are actively looking to agroecology to rebrand and build new markets under the banners of carbon farming and regenerative agriculture.

But, a relentless focus on single outcomes, such as carbon, coupled with industry's instinct to define and standardize, threatens the transformative potential of agroecology.

Win-win food systems

In addition to their immense ecological costs, our food systems are also tremendously unjust. As many as one in four people experience moderate or severe food insecurity. The global expansion of industrial agriculture continues to be a vehicle for the violent spread of colonialism. [Read more](#)

Adopt smart farming towards sustainable food security

IN the 21st century, agriculture has to respond to challenges. With the goal to feed the ever-growing global population sustainably, the next green revolution shifts toward climate-smart farming.

Agriculture today needs to sustain ecosystem health and drive restoration by reversing soil degradation and overcoming environmental problems from the intensive use of chemicals in modern agriculture. Environmental-friendly organic farming should be encouraged among smallholder farms.

An integrated pest management system with biological controls can ensure sustainability, while intercropping with complementary plants such as legumes keeps soil good and fertile with minimal chemical inputs.

However, most farmers are discouraged by extra labour and time required for agro-ecological practices. Therefore, incentives should be provided to organic farmers to help in promoting their farm produce with subsidies.

Beyond food security, agriculture is central to addressing poverty, water, biodiversity, sustainable cities, sustainable energy, as well as climate change for being the major contributor to greenhouse gases. [Read more](#)