



GHI Meetings in Anaheim, CA (USA) 7-9 June 2009

During the Institute of Food Technologists' (IFT) Annual Meeting & Food Expo in Anaheim, California in June, several meetings were held to accommodate GHI members' varying schedules and duties. This report is a summary of all of these meetings and it is hoped that this report will update everybody involved about what they have missed.

Participants

Aneta Cholewinska	Poland	aneta.cholewinska@wur.nl
Atef Idriss	Lebanon	atef@idriss.net
Beth Ann Crozier-Dodson	USA	bethann@ksu.edu
Christine Boisrobert	USA	christine.boisrobert@airliquide.com
Cindy Stewart	USA	cynthia.stewart@silliker.com
Daryl Lund	USA	dlund@cals.wisc.edu
Harmke Klunder	Netherlands	harmke.klunder@wur.nl
Huub Lelieveld	Netherlands	huub.lelieveld@inter.nl.net
James How	China	james_how@cargill.com
John Surak	USA	jgsurak@yahoo.com
Julie Larson Bricher	USA	julie@quidditycommunications.com
Kenneth Marsh	USA	ken@drkenmarsh.com
Larry Keener	USA	lkeener@aol.com
Marco Léon Felix	Mexico	lefix@prodigy.net.mx
Meg Barth	USA	mbarth@responsiblesource.net
Rick Stier	USA	rickstier4@aol.com
Robert Soliva	Spain	rsoliva@tecal.udl.es
Sangsuk Oh	Korea	ssoh71@yahoo.com
Shirley Jankowski	USA	shirley.jankowski@gmail.com
Vishweshwaraiah Prakash	India	prakashvish@gmail.com
Yadira Tejada	Mexico	yadira.tejada@wur.nl
Yao Olive Li	Canada	olive.li@utoronto.ca

The first GHI Book

Under the dedicated lead-editorship of Christine Boisrobert (GHI ExCo member), the book entitled "Ensuring Global Food Safety: Exploring Global Harmonization" has been completed a few weeks ago and is now in production at Elsevier / Academic Press. The intended publication date is the first week of November 2009, in time for the EFFoST Conference in Budapest (11-13 November, see <http://www.fffost-conference.elsevier.com/>). The book has 24 chapters that demonstrate why global harmonization is needed, the importance to consider not only risks, but also benefits, and emphasizes the need for scientific consensus to buttress such regulations.

GHI Supervisory Board

The duty of the Supervisory Board (SB) is to watch the scientific consensus process, ensuring that it is, and remains, impartial. The Chair of the SB is Roland Poms of ICC in Vienna. Currently, he is building up the board, ensuring that it will be truly global. Marco Felix, Chair of the Quality Assurance Division of IFT and John Surak, member of that division, have developed ideas of how to ensure such a process and will communicate this to Roland Poms (roland.poms@icc.or.at).

Relationship with IFT

On Monday, 8 June, a delegation of GHI (Larry, Huub, Cindy, Sangsuk, Christine) had a meeting with a delegation of IFT (Barbara Byrd Keenan, Martin Cole, Herbert Stone) to discuss the recognition of GHI by IFT (details discussed were expressed in a letter to IFT about a year ago). Barbara explained that the concern of IFT is mainly duplication of efforts. It was explained that GHI does not duplicate work of others, such as *Codex Alimentarius* but rather, uses the results of such organizations as a potential basis for global harmonization. The main difference being that GHI tries to obtain consensus between individual scientists, not GOs or NGOs, but with the support of scientifically independent organizations such as many divisions of IFT, IUFoST, EFFoST and universities.

Timing for formalizing GHI's relationship with IFT is right. The Global Strategy Advisory Panel was created to define IFT's global strategy. Global regulations have been identified as one of the top 5 key issues: IFT's membership recognizes that food laws and regulations will be one of the challenges facing the food industry, and according to the 2008 IFT Member Survey, members are requesting more information on global food science and about complying with government regulations across various countries, as well as more international member involvement.

Since its inception within IFT, GHI has benefited from a strong support from several IFT divisions (e.g. International, Nonthermal, Food Laws and Regulations). Now is the time to define and articulate how GHI activities would dovetail with IFT's global strategy. IFT will have internal discussions and will respond later this year. In particular, once Barbara will receive the preliminary recommendations from the Global Regulations and Policy Task Force, chaired by Martin, a phone conference call will be set up with GHI. The Global Strategy Advisory Panel will meet next on September 9th. Final report to IFT Board will be presented in December 2009.

During the IFT International Division meeting in New Orleans in 2008, a Special Interest Group (SIG) in GHI was formed, with Pablo Juliano as the Chair. Recently, however, Pablo moved back to Food Science Australia. He is willing to remain active in this SIG, but would appreciate somebody else to take over as Chair, due to the inherent difficulty in arranging meetings in the USA while being in Australia. Rick Stier is willing to take over this responsibility.

Progress with Working Groups

- **Listeria in RTE foods.** A Workshop titled "Controlling *Listeria* in Ready-to-Eat Foods: Working Towards Global Scientific Consensus and Harmonization" was held at the Elsevier headquarters in Amsterdam on May 5-7, 2009. Ewen Todd, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA; Cindy Stewart, Silliker Food Science Center and the Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI), Chicago, USA; Huub Lelieveld, GHI and EFFoST, Bilthoven, The Netherlands, organized the workshop, with Wilma Methorst (EFFoST) serving as the local organizer along with Lyndon Driscoll (Elsevier). Elsevier generously provided, at no cost, several meeting rooms over the 3 day period. The Workshop was funded via a CSREES USDA grant, on which Professor Todd was the Principle Investigator. As you are all aware, *Listeria monocytogenes* is a major pathogen affecting world trade, and the Codex Alimentarius Commission and governments of Member States have been wrestling with a suitable approach to its control over many years. Although progress has been made through Codex (CAC) and its Food Hygiene Committee to achieve a consensus, some questions are still open. The purpose of the Workshop was to generate useful data to pursue consensus and harmonization for controlling *Listeria* in RTE foods and to discuss scientific issues

relating to the worldwide regulation of this pathogen in RTE foods. The plan was to have a limited attendance of about 40 persons, some of whom delivered short presentations to initiate the discussion and consensus building, and led a consensus-building process; we had 38 scientists in attendance. The presentations, working groups and ultimately the papers focused on 1) outlining the problem; 2) how governments control RTE food contamination by *Listeria monocytogenes*: strengths and weaknesses; 3) industry approaches to control; 4) setting microbiological criteria, their interpretation and meaning; and 5) involving consumers. A final outcome of the Workshop will be a special edition of *Food Control*, which will include short summary papers from each of the 15 presenters as well as a White Paper to summarize the current discussion, recommendations, and scientific consensus for better control and harmonized standards.

- **Antibiotic residues.** This is another one of the four working groups formed during the GHI meeting in Lisbon, in November 2007. The Chair, Dr. Jan Kwakman, will probably organize a meeting during GOAL 2009 (see <http://www.gaalliance.org/goal09/>), Seattle, USA, 27-30 October 2009.

Functioning of GHI and Support Needed

GHI consists of an Executive Committee (ExCo) of six members, but also counts many other members who are willing to be active. Because they are all volunteers, they have other responsibilities and can only donate part of their time to GHI tasks. During the meetings, actions are agreed but often forgotten until the next meeting. GHI has an Honorary Secretary General (SG), Laura-Isabelle Dudet. The SG will keep track of all actions and communicate with everybody who has assumed responsibility for an action. This way it is considerably more likely that actions are completed as agreed, essential for GHI to make progress.

During the past year it has become evident (but not a surprise) that it is impossible for the six ExCo members to do everything that has to be done for a well-functioning organization. It was therefore decided to invite six "officers" to assume responsibilities for specific tasks, including the function of the SG. The Executive Committee is pleased to be able to announce the following functions as a result of this week's meetings:

- Julie Larson Bricher has been involved from the start of GHI and since then produced several documents for GHI. She also took care of the development of the GHI logo and stationary. Julie accepted the position of Honorary Communications Director. She will be supported by Athisaya Krakau-Buranasompob, GHI's Public Relations Officer.
- Rick Stier, who developed a course on Global Harmonization, accepted the function of Honorary Course Director.
- Beth Ann Crozier-Dodson, who has a global experience with organizing scientific meetings, has agreed to be Honorary Working Group Coordinator.

It was agreed that GHI also needs a Webmaster and a Membership Officer. Currently, Gerhard Schleining (ExCo) is investigating how to organize the website such that it can be updated easily and frequently, without undue delays. Julie Larson Bricher has experience with developing content for websites and shall discuss the subject with Gerhard Schleining. Dr. Venkatesh (ventsh@gmail.com) at CFTRI in Mysore, of which Prakash is the director, will have responsibility for the membership database.

We hope to have confirmation of these positions within two weeks.

Forthcoming GHI Meetings

Copenhagen, Denmark

Workshop during EuroFoodChem XV - Food for the Future: The Contribution of Chemistry to Improvement of Food Quality, **5-9 July 2009**.

Mumbai, India

Workshop during the 5th Nutraceutical Summit, **28-30 October 2009**.

Budapest, Hungary

Workshop during the EFFoST Annual Conference, "New Challenges in Food Preservation: Processing - Safety – Sustainability", **11-13 November 2009**.

GHI Ambassadors

A significant percentage of scientists throughout the world are not fluent in English, and in many areas, they do not know English at all. For effective communication, it will be essential to translate GHI

documents in local languages. It is also to be expected that discussions of issues are easier if they take place in peoples' own languages. When a consensus document has been published, it will be essential that the stakeholders, including the governments, will understand it and that again requires translation. To make local scientists aware of the existence of GHI, publications about GHI in local magazines and journals is also essential. To communicate effectively, the GHI webpages will have to be translated into many languages. Because of all of this, it was concluded that GHI needs ambassadors in all countries.

Kenneth Marsh accepted the position as GHI Ambassadors Coordinator.

Initial GHI Ambassadors list:

MENA*	Atef Idriss (accepted during the meeting)
Iran	Hamid Ezzatpanah (to be confirmed, he agreed initially with Huub in Shanghai, in 2008)
Mexico	Marco Felix (accepted during the meeting)
China	James How (or someone to be invited by him, possibly Rao Ping-Fan)
Africa	Aubrey Parsons, R&D Director, University Research, Auckland Park, South Africa (to be invited)

*Middle East & North Africa

Action: Huub - to circulate among the ExCo members a list of countries with candidates, before the end of June, for approval / completion before the end of July.

The task of the Ambassadors will be:

- translation of important GHI messages into local languages and distribution;
- publish own or translated articles in local publications;
- organize local meetings, usually as an add-on to conferences, congresses and symposia.

The Ambassadors need a short, clear summary of the goal and objectives of GHI that they can translate into their local languages and then publish and distribute in their countries. Julie agreed to produce such a summary. There is also a need for a "Welcome Pack" for GHI members, to bring them up-to-date and provide all basic information on GHI. The pack, which will be available in PDF format so it can be sent electronically and printed out by users, will include:

- Welcome Letter from Directors
- One-page questions-and-answers (Q&A) formatted sheet providing basic description of GHI mission, structure and state of current working group activities
- Responsibilities of members and how to enroll as a member (via website?)
- Link to website and relevant contact data

Action: Julie - to develop the Summary and the Welcome Pack (July 2009, in concert with website re-engineering launch)

It was also discussed that a set of two or three slides about GHI should be developed for members to use in appropriate presentations. Julie will work with Larry and Huub to develop these for members' use.

*Julie Bricher
Christine Boisrobert
Huub Lelieveld*