

GHI MATTERS

Vol. 06 - June 2026

Welcome to our GHI newsletter

June arrives with a sense of acceleration across the Global Harmonization Initiative, as new collaborations, expanding activities, and growing member engagement push our work into an exciting new phase. With more than 2,000 professionals now connected through our network, GHI is entering a moment where ideas move faster, partnerships deepen, and science-based food safety gains fresh momentum around the world.

This month, we're seeing how collective action can reshape global conversations. Ambassadors are strengthening ties across regions, new scientific partnerships are emerging, and preparations for the 2025 GHI World Congress are increasing the pace. Each initiative – whether local outreach or international coordination – contributes to a broader effort to build food systems that are safer, more resilient, and grounded in shared scientific principles.

June also brings updates on ongoing projects, new opportunities for members to participate, and strategic priorities guiding our work for the rest of the year. As our community grows, so does our capacity to connect experts, exchange knowledge, and support practical solutions that make a real difference.

At GHI, we believe progress is powered by people coming together. We invite our members, partners, and collaborators to stay active, explore new pathways for cooperation, and continue strengthening a global movement dedicated to advancing food safety through science.

GHI President's message

Dear Members of the Global Harmonization Initiative,

June has been a month defined by visibility, engagement, and collective purpose across the GHI community. As food safety advocates around the world celebrated World Food Safety Day, GHI was present in full force - hosting virtual events, contributing to on-site activities, and reinforcing the message that safe food is a shared responsibility. These celebrations highlighted the strength of our network and the dedication of our ambassadors, partners, and members who continue to champion science-based approaches to food safety in every region.

Preparations for the 2027 GHI World Congress are progressing with great momentum. New program elements are taking shape, and international interest continues to grow. Both the Organising Committee and the Local Organising Committee at Selçuk University are demonstrating exceptional leadership, ensuring that our gathering in Konya will be scientifically rich, globally inclusive, and deeply collaborative. We are also pleased to confirm that a new keynote speaker has joined the program, with additional announcements to follow in the coming months as the congress lineup continues to expand.

June also marked a significant expansion of our global ambassador network, with many new GHI Ambassadors joining from across regions. Their expertise and enthusiasm strengthen our ability to connect science, policy, and practice at local and international levels. Each new ambassador brings unique insights and professional experience, helping GHI deepen its presence in universities, regulatory bodies, industry forums, and community

initiatives. This growing team will play a vital role in advancing our mission, supporting outreach activities, and amplifying science-based food safety across borders.

June also provided opportunities to strengthen our organisational priorities. Our initiatives in capacity building, outreach, and rights-based food safety continue to advance, particularly through our grant program supporting researchers and organisations in Africa and the Caribbean. These efforts reinforce GHI's commitment to equity, access, and the fundamental right to safe food. For those preparing proposals, please remember that the submission deadline is 15 July - we encourage you to apply and not miss this opportunity.

As we move into the second half of the year, I encourage all members to stay engaged, share their expertise, and explore new avenues for collaboration. Our strength lies in the diversity of our community and the willingness of each member to contribute to a safer global food system.

Thank you for your continued dedication and for the energy you bring to GHI's mission. Together, we are shaping a future where science guides decisions, cooperation drives progress, and safe food is a reality for all.

With appreciation,

Dr. Diana Bogueva

President, Global Harmonization Initiative



For more information:

Website: <https://www.globalharmonization.net>

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/global-harmonization-initiative/posts/?feedView=all>

🔥 One Year to Go: The Global Food Safety Community Is Gathering Will Your Research Be There?

The countdown has officially begun.

Exactly one year from now — 5–7 July 2027 — the world's leading voices in food safety, security, nutrition, regulatory science, sustainability, consumer perception and policymakers from around the world will gather in Konya, Türkiye for the 3rd GHI World Congress. The momentum is already building, and the next 12 months will shape the scientific conversations that define the future of global food systems.

And here's the part that matters most:
Your research deserves to be part of that future.

The energy is rising. The program is taking shape. The keynote speakers are stepping into the spotlight. And the stage is opening for the work that will influence how nations regulate, innovate, and protect their food supply for years to come.

This is the moment to step forward — not later, not eventually, but now.
👉 Submit your abstract and claim your place in the scientific conversation of 2027: <https://www.ghiworldcongress.org/abstract-submission/>

📄 Two Special Issues, Zero APC, and More on the Way

The 3rd GHI World Congress isn't just a place to present your research — it's a launchpad for publishing it. This year, delegates gain access to two exclusive special journal issues, with more publication opportunities coming soon. Even better: all accepted papers will be published completely free of Article Processing Charges (APC).

Selcuk Journal of Agriculture and Food Sciences — Congress Special Issue

A dedicated issue showcasing the most innovative work presented at the Congress, featuring research in:

- Food safety and toxicology
- Food quality and traceability
- Risk assessment & management
- Sustainability and regulatory science
- Innovations in processing and packaging

This special issue is open exclusively to Congress delegates — a rare chance to spotlight your work in a focused, high-visibility publication.

Akademik Gıda (Academic Food Journal) - Scopus-Indexed Special Issue

This is a second opportunity to publish in a respected, peer-reviewed journal indexed in Scopus, TR Dizin, and other international databases. Congress-aligned papers that pass peer review will be published free of charge, offering global reach and academic impact.

And this is just the beginning

More special issues are already in preparation, making the 3rd GHI World Congress one of the richest publication opportunities in GHI's history. If you're aiming to elevate your research, expand your academic footprint, or reach international audiences, this is your moment. Your abstract isn't just a conference submission — it's the first step toward high-impact, APC-free publication.

Submit your abstract now and secure your place in these special issues.

🌟 Meet our Second Keynote: Dr. Richard Khaw - A Powerhouse of ASEAN Food Safety Leadership

To keep the momentum rising, we are thrilled to spotlight our second keynote speaker Dr. Richard Khaw Min Cheh, who is joining Dr. Betül Vazgeçer, the Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission — the FAO/WHO authority that sets global food standards and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye.

Richard is one of ASEAN's most influential voices in food safety management, laboratory accreditation, and regulatory governance. With more than 25 years shaping standards and policy across the region, Richard brings a perspective that is both global and deeply practical.

As President of The Federation of The Institutes of Food Science and Technology in ASEAN (FIFSTA), Immediate Past President of SIFST, and consultant to National University of Singapore's Agri Tech A2FT Centre of Excellence, he has helped define how food safety is taught, regulated, and defended. His leadership in ISO 17025 accreditation, CODEX representation, and national standards development has influenced thousands of professionals and countless institutions. His achievements — including an Honorary Doctorate in Food Safety & Food Science (2025) — reflect a career dedicated to scientific integrity, regulatory defensibility, and mentoring the next generation.



Richard's keynote will be one of the defining moments of the Congress. Your abstract could be part of the conversation he inspires.

Together, Dr. Vazgeçer and Dr. Khaw represent two powerful pillars of global food safety: Codex leadership on the international stage, and ASEAN excellence in regulatory science and accreditation. Their combined presence signals a congress program designed for impact, insight, and real-world relevance — and it's only the beginning of what's to come.

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT



GHI AMBASSADORS NEWS



GLOBAL HARMONIZATION INITIATIVE



RIGHT TO FOOD X RIGHT TO HEALTH SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

HEDPAC AND GHI ARE CREATING A SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM THAT SUPPORTS A SELECT NUMBER OF GRANTEES IN CONDUCTING NEW SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT BETTER DEMONSTRATE THE LINKS BETWEEN FOOD, HEALTH AND WELLBEING, AND THE INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS TO FOOD AND HEALTH

REQUIREMENTS:

- EITHER EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS OR MASTER'S/PHD STUDENTS
- APPLICANTS FROM UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY.
- PROPOSALS THAT INCORPORATE AN EQUITY & INCLUSION LENS OR ADDRESS DISPARITIES IN ACCESS TO FOOD, NUTRITION, OR HEALTH WILL BE PRIORITISED.
- RESEARCHERS AND THEIR INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE BASED IN AFRICA OR THE CARIBBEAN REGION.

Why This Matters

Food and nutrition sit at the heart of human wellbeing — and the Right to Food and Right to Health are deeply interconnected. Each strengthens the other and realizing both is crucial for advancing gender equity and health equity. Yet a survey of GHI Congress participants revealed a clear gap in current research: very few policy-focused studies look at these rights together. This initiative aims to close that gap by empowering researchers to build the next wave of evidence and practical solutions.

Application Package

Applicants must submit a single PDF including:

- Research proposal (max 1500 words)
- Budget & justification (up to USD 10,000) 12-month timeline
- CVs (max 3 pages each) and two recommendation letters
- Optional references

All submissions must be sent to: 2027@ghiworldcongress.org by 15 July 2027.

Deliverables

Grantees will produce:

- A working paper or draft article suitable for peer-review
- Participation in a HeDPAC/GHI knowledge-sharing event (GHI Congress and other appropriate venue)
- A final report (max 10 pages)
- Engagement in mentorship and networking opportunities

We have already begun receiving proposals, and submissions will remain open until 15 July 2026.

Celebrating Our Growing Global Network of GHI Ambassadors

The Global Harmonization Initiative is proud to share an exciting milestone in our journey toward advancing science-based food safety and regulatory harmonization worldwide. Our Ambassador Network is growing with new dedicated leaders across the globe, each contributing their expertise, passion, and regional insight to strengthen GHI's mission. This diverse community of professionals represents the heart of our global outreach — building bridges between countries, fostering scientific collaboration, and championing harmonized approaches to food safety and nutrition. We are delighted to welcome several new ambassadors who will further enrich our international network:

The appointment of Dr. Abdelrahman Elamin as the second Japan Ambassador brings renewed energy to our work in the region. He joins Prof. Dr. Jun Nishihira in advancing harmonized food-safety practices and strengthening scientific collaboration across Japan.



The appointment of Fiston Alex Twagirimana as an additional Rwanda Ambassador strengthens our presence in East Africa. He will work closely with our existing ambassador, Mr. Edouard Bugingo, bringing valuable regional expertise and a strong commitment to capacity-building in support of GHI's mission across Rwanda and the wider East African region.

Our first Oman Ambassador, Ms. Reeham Noreldeen Abdo, will play a key role in strengthening GHI's growing presence in the Middle East. Her leadership will help foster deeper regional collaboration and support our mission to advance harmonized food-safety and nutrition practices across the region.



Our second Thailand Ambassador Nirmal Nilesch will work alongside our existing ambassador, Dr. Athisaya Krakau Buranasompob, to further expand scientific dialogue and promote harmonized regulatory approaches throughout Southeast Asia. Together, they will strengthen GHI's regional engagement and support our mission across this dynamic part of the world.

In the Nordic region we appointed Azmi Namrah as our Ambassador for Norway. Her arrival brings a welcome spark of momentum, adding Nordic insight and strengthening GHI's presence in a part of the world known for its leadership in food innovation and sustainability. Azmi's experience positions her to build meaningful connections with researchers, institutions,



and industry partners across Norway and the wider Nordic community. Her role will help expand collaboration, support harmonized food-safety practices, and amplify GHI's mission in a region that plays an influential role in shaping global food policy. With Azmi Namrah joining our ambassador network, GHI continues to grow its international reach and deepen its commitment to science-based cooperation worldwide.

These new ambassadors join a vibrant and fast-growing global community dedicated to expanding GHI's reach and strengthening cooperation across borders, disciplines, and cultures. Their work contributes to a network that is not only advancing harmonized food-safety practices, but also nurturing the next generation of leaders in nutrition, consumer perception, packaging, and emerging technologies. With each new ambassador, GHI becomes an even more dynamic international movement — one defined by scientific excellence, diversity of expertise, and a shared commitment to improving food systems worldwide.

From By-Products to High-Value Biotics

At the "Science for Business" Forum — a national event showcasing technological solutions and industry-focused research from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences — Prof. Svetla Danova, GHI's Bulgaria Ambassador, delivered one of the standout presentations. Her talk bridged cutting-edge Bulgarian innovation with GHI's global mission to promote and advance safe, sustainable, and science-driven food systems worldwide, demonstrating how research can directly support both national development and international harmonization efforts.

Prof. Danova presented breakthrough results from a project under Bulgaria's Recovery and Development Plan, demonstrating how bio- and agro-industry side streams can be transformed into high-value functional additives using eco-friendly fermentation technologies. This approach embodies the principles of the circular economy: turning low-cost by-products into valuable resources rather than waste.

Central to this innovation is the development of a new type of biotic additive derived from the beneficial potential of Bulgarian lactic acid bacteria, long recognized for their unique functional properties. Designed for incorporation into a wide range of functional food products, this additive reflects both scientific rigor and practical applicability, offering a modern way to harness Bulgaria's microbial heritage. The achievement lies not only in the environmentally conscious production method, which relies on inexpensive raw materials, but also in the scientifically proven health benefits of the resulting ingredients, demonstrating how sustainable biotechnology can transform overlooked by-products into high-value nutritional solutions that deliver real advantages for consumers and industry.



Prof. Svetla Danova, from Bulgarian Academy of Science and GHI ambassador for Bulgaria (left in white jacket) with the Bulgarian President Mrs. Iliana Yotova



GHI WORKING GROUP NEWS

New Insights on Nutraceuticals and Blood Pressure – Featuring Work by GHI’s own Dr. Viduranga Waisundara

What if everyday nutritional compounds could meaningfully support blood-pressure control — not as replacements for medication, but as smart physiological partners? That’s the question explored in a new review article co-authored by Dr. Viduranga Waisundara, who serves both as GHI’s Sri Lanka Ambassador and Co-Chair of the Nutrition Working Group.

The paper, “Nutraceutical Strategies for Blood Pressure Control: Mechanisms, Evidence, and Clinical Implications,” explores how everyday nutritional compounds may meaningfully support blood-pressure control when used alongside conventional therapy. The article examines minerals, polyphenols, omega-3s, probiotics, coenzyme Q10, and L-arginine, showing how these compounds act through shared physiological pathways — often mediated by metabolic transformations and microbiota-derived metabolites.

The review highlights why responses vary between individuals, pointing to metabolic phenotype and gut microbiota composition as key factors shaping effectiveness. Despite consistent evidence, the authors note that nutraceuticals remain underutilized in clinical practice. Integrated with medication and lifestyle change, they may help patients engage more actively in long-term cardiovascular prevention. This publication showcases the scientific leadership within GHI’s Nutrition Working Group and the growing role of evidence-based nutraceutical strategies in global health. More about the article here: <https://www.mdpi.com/1661-3821/6/2/36>

GHI Announces New Vice Chair for the Food Packaging Materials Working Group

GHI is pleased to welcome Dr. Adebukola Tolulope Omidiran as the new Vice Chair of the Food Packaging Materials Working Group, joining Prof. Alejandro Ariosti in leading one of GHI’s most forward-looking and fast-evolving areas.

Food packaging is undergoing major transformation as sustainability, safety, and consumer expectations reshape the field. Dr. Omidiran brings a powerful combination of scientific expertise and practical leadership to this moment. As a Senior Lecturer in Food Science and Technology at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Nigeria she has built a career focused on improving food quality, nutrition, safety, and value addition — work that directly connects to the challenges and opportunities in modern packaging. Her influence extends well beyond academia. She is an Agricultural Research and Innovation Fellowship for Africa (ARIFA) Fellow, Programme Leader at FUNAAB’s Centre of



Excellence in Agricultural Development and Sustainable Environment (CEADESE), and Vice-Chairperson of Nigeria’s National Food Fortification Program Technical Committee. She is also an active member of several scientific communities, including Organisation for Woman in Science for the Developing world, the International Society for Tropical Root Crops, the Nigerian Institute of Food Science and Technology, and GHI’s own Consumer Perception Working Group. Dr. Omidiran’s appointment brings fresh momentum to the Food Packaging Materials Working Group, strengthening its mission to advance harmonized, science-based global packaging standards.

GHI Working Groups Continue Their Publishing Momentum – Fresh Research Across Food Safety, Ethics, Consumer Perception, and Emerging Proteins

GHI Working Group members have been exceptionally active, contributing fresh scientific insights that push global food systems toward greater safety, sustainability, and clarity. Their latest publications span cutting-edge technologies, emerging protein sources, and even the language we use to describe new foods.

AI Is Reshaping Food Safety and GHI Researchers Are Leading the Conversation

Food safety is entering a new era where contamination can be anticipated before it occurs, pathogens can be identified with remarkable precision, and supply chains can be monitored in real time. A recent study dives into how artificial intelligence - from machine learning and computer vision to IoT sensors and blockchain — is reshaping traditional food safety systems and accelerating the shift toward proactive, predictive control. The research doesn’t shy away from the complexities: while AI can dramatically enhance detection speed, shelf-life forecasting, and traceability, it also introduces challenges related to data ethics, algorithmic bias, transparency, and the essential role of human oversight. This forward-looking work “Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Food Safety and Quality: New Approach, Advantages, and Disadvantages” was authored by Associate Prof. Risto Uzunov, an active member of the Food Safety Ethics Working Group, and published in the Italian Journal of Food Science.

Alternative Proteins Are Rising – But Will Consumers Embrace Them?

As global protein demand grows and environmental pressures intensify, researchers are exploring whether next-generation meat and dairy analogues can truly become viable consumer options. Their review namely “Alternative Proteins, Meat and Dairy Analogues: Are They Viable Consumer Options?” examines everything from upcycled plant materials and fermentation-derived proteins to algae, fungi, cultured cells, and insect-based ingredients. The key message: technological innovation alone would not drive a protein transition - consumers must be engaged early, clearly, and convincingly. The study emphasizes that communication strategies will be just as important as scientific breakthroughs.

This comprehensive analysis was published in the Journal of Applied Food Technology (JAFT) by GHI members: Prof. Dora Marinova (Curtin University, Australia), Dr Esra Çelik (Afyon University, Türkiye), Dr İsmail Hakkı Tekiner (Independent researcher, Türkiye) and Dr Diana Bogueva (Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, Australia) and colleagues from German universities: Prof. Christina Rehagel from Hochschule Niederrhein, University of Applied Sciences, Mönchengladbach and Prof. Ömer Akineden from Justus Liebig University Gießen. More info: <https://ejournal2.undip.ac.id/index.php/jaft/article/view/31815>

What Do We Call Insect-Based Ingredients? GHI Ambassador Helps Clarify the Confusion

With edible insects gaining traction in food technology and nutrition, terminology has become surprisingly tangled. Are we talking about insect flour, insect powder, or insect meal? A bibliometric and regulatory analysis led by Associate Prof. Agnieszka Orkus, Wrocław University of Business and Economics, Poland and GHI’s Polish Ambassador and member of the Consumer Perception WG, shows that these terms are used inconsistently across scientific literature, EU regulations, and Polish-language sources. The findings suggest that instead of forcing a single unified term, clearer and more consistent usage within each context is the most practical path forward. More info: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-3417/16/11/5541>

New Global Book Project: Call for Contributors

Exploring the Real Stories Behind Food Safety and Sustainability Culture

Across the food system, every professional has a moment they never forget – a decision that had consequences, a near-miss that changed how a team worked, or an ethical dilemma that forced deeper reflection. These moments shape the culture of food safety and sustainability far more than any policy document ever could.

A new book, “Food Safety and Sustainability Culture,” is now in development, and it aims to capture exactly these kinds of stories. The project will bring together around 100 real-world accounts from contributors across the globe – people working in industry, government, academia, and every corner of the food chain. Each story will explore not just what happened, but how decisions were made, and whether those decisions reflected the organization’s underlying culture... or exposed gaps that needed attention.

This upcoming volume will follow the successful format of the earlier collection, “Food Safety Short Stories: 87 Real-Life Cases” by Peter Overbosch, Yasmine Motarjemi, and Huub Lelieveld (Ethics International Press, 2023). If you have not explored that book yet, it is worth a look – the new project builds on the same spirit of honesty, learning, and practical insight.

What the new stories will include

Each contribution (300–1000 words) will consist of:

The Story — what happened, who was involved, and what triggered the event
Discussion and Key Learnings — what the situation revealed about culture, decision-making, and organizational values
Relevant References — supporting literature, frameworks, or standards



FOOD SAFETY
SHORT STORIES
87 Real-Life Cases

Peter Overbosch,
Yasmine Motarjemi and Huub Lelieveld

To encourage openness, all contributing authors’ names will be listed in the book, but stories themselves will be anonymized – no link between individual stories and contributors, no product names, no company names and no individual country names.

The book will be edited by Sarah Blanchard, Peter Overbosch and John Carter. Together, they aim to create a resource that is not only informative but transformative – a global snapshot of how culture shapes decisions in real food-system environments.

How to contribute

If you have a story that others could learn from – a moment that revealed something important about food safety or sustainability culture – the editors would love to hear from you. Please contact Sarah at sarah@figureoutfood.net before 15 September 2026 to express your interest. This is a rare opportunity to help shape a book that captures the lived experience of professionals worldwide and deepens our collective understanding of what culture really looks like in practice.

A Creative Spotlight from GHI’s Food Ethics Working Group

Science is not the only place where members of our GHI community excel. Peter Overbosch, Chair of the Ethics in Food Safety Practices Working Group, has earned recognition for one of his passions outside the lab: award-winning photography.



Peter’s work often captures the quiet beauty of the natural world – a fitting complement to his ethical focus on how food systems connect to the environment. One of his celebrated images features a delicately poised butterfly, a moment of stillness and precision that mirrors the thoughtful approach he brings to ethical discussions within GHI. His achievement is a reminder that the GHI community is rich not only in scientific expertise but also in creativity, curiosity, and the many talents that shape our shared work.

GHI Leadership Showcased at European Deep-Tech Conference

Leading voices from across Europe came together to discuss the role of women in deep-tech and the future of science-driven innovation during the Women in Deep-Tech: Driving Innovation and Leadership in Europe panel at the Spinoff EUROPA Conference 2026 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Prof. Dr. Mükerrerem Betül Yerer Aycan, GHI Ambassador for Türkiye and Vice Chair of the GHI Nanotechnology and Food Working Group, participated in her individual capacity, contributing to the broader exchange of perspectives on innovation, leadership, and research collaboration.

For GHI, the themes addressed in this panel are closely aligned with its strategic priorities in biotechnology, nanotechnology, and food systems innovation. The discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening international cooperation, supporting inclusive scientific leadership, and enhancing university–industry partnerships across Europe. These insights further underline the relevance of GHI’s ongoing efforts to foster cross-border scientific exchange and to build stronger links within the European research and innovation ecosystem, including with Türkiye’s rapidly developing scientific community.



Celebrating Excellence: Charles Aworh Receives Special Recognition at TETFund Capacity-Building Workshop

A moment of surprise and pride marked the opening of TETFund Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Capacity-Building Workshop held in June, where Prof. Charles Aworh received an unexpected award following his two presentations as a Resource Person. The recognition highlighted not only his contributions during the workshop, but also his long-standing leadership in strengthening Nigeria's academic publishing landscape.

Emeritus Prof. Aworh served as Chairman of the Nigerian Tertiary Education Trust Fund Technical Advisory Group (TETFund TAG) from 2019 to 2023, a period defined by a clear national mandate: to promote indigenous authorship and expand the availability of high-quality textbooks written by Nigerian academics for Nigerian universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Under his guidance, the initiative achieved remarkable success – 202 TETFund-sponsored academic books have now been published across diverse disciplines, enriching classrooms and strengthening Nigeria's intellectual self-reliance.

His recognition at the workshop reflects the impact of this work and the respect he continues to command within Nigeria's higher-education community. It also resonates with the values championed by the GHI, where Prof. Aworh is part



of a global network committed to advancing science-based knowledge, strengthening education, and supporting capacity building across regions.

Emeritus Prof. Aworh's award is a celebration of leadership, dedication, and the lasting influence of initiatives that empower local scholars and elevate national academic standards - a contribution that aligns strongly with GHI's mission to foster global collaboration and scientific excellence. His recognition at the workshop serves as a reminder of how sustained leadership can shape national academic progress and inspire future initiatives. His contributions continue to strengthen Nigeria's knowledge ecosystem, elevate indigenous scholarship, and support the development of high-quality educational resources. As part of the wider GHI community, his achievements reflect the shared commitment to advancing science, fostering capacity building, and empowering local expertise within global frameworks.

International Partners Join Forces for World Food Safety Day 2026 Webinar

An international consortium of universities, scientific associations, and global organizations came together on 8 June 2026 to mark World Food Safety Day 2026 with a high-level scientific webinar. The event was jointly organized by the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI), FAO's Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (FAO RNE), the International Society for Precision Health (ISPH), the Lebanese Association of Food Scientists and Technologists (LAFST), Modern University for Business and Science (MUBS), Lebanon, Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR), Rentokil Boecker, and several academic partners, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing food-safety knowledge and collaboration across borders.

The program opened with a keynote contribution from Dr. Diana Bogueva, President of GHI, who introduced the organization and the *GHI perspective* on food safety and the need of safe food for everyone. She emphasized the importance of harmonized standards, transparent communication, and alignment with global regulatory trends, reinforcing GHI's leadership in shaping international food-safety dialogue. GHI's scientific influence continued throughout the event, with Prof. Chin-Kun Wang (GHI, ISPH, UN Goodwill Ambassador) offering a global overview of foodborne disease challenges in his talk *"World Food Safety Issues: Lessons from Accumulated Cases and Experiences,"* followed by Rob Kooijmans (GHI), who delivered an in-depth

analysis of the 2026 Cereulide in Infant Formula incident and highlighted the need for rapid, coordinated responses to protect vulnerable populations. These contributions underscored GHI's role as a trusted source of evidence-based expertise and a driver of international harmonization.

Complementing GHI's global perspective, experts from partner organizations addressed emerging risks and regional priorities: Dr. Moustapha Mohamed (FAO RNE) discussed resilient agrifood systems and integrated food-safety governance; Prof. Mahmoud Halablab (LAFST) examined microbiological risks linked to environmental contamination; Prof. Hussein Hassan (Lebanese American University) presented findings on hidden gluten in products labeled gluten-free; and Dr. Paula Hage Boutros (MUBS) explored the public-health implications of rising ultra-processed food consumption.

Together, these presentations highlighted the interconnected nature of food-safety challenges and the need for coordinated, science-based solutions. The webinar concluded with Prof. Randall K. Phebus (Kansas State University), whose talk *"Real Food Safety - Know, Understand, Execute"* emphasized the importance of translating scientific knowledge into practical action — a message that echoed GHI's long-standing commitment to strengthening food-safety culture across all sectors. The event closed with a clear sense of direction: continued collaboration, scientific rigor, and open communication will be essential as global food systems face new challenges and opportunities.



Food Safety Day: The Numbers Behind a Global Challenge

Food Safety Day is more than a symbolic reminder - the statistics behind it reveal the scale of a worldwide public-health issue and why science-driven organizations like GHI continue to push for stronger harmonization and safer food systems. Every year, unsafe food causes an estimated 600 million illnesses, meaning almost 1 in 10 people worldwide are affected. Of those cases, 420,000 result in death, including 125,000 children under five, making foodborne disease one of the most preventable yet persistent global health burdens. The economic impact is equally staggering: low- and middle-income countries lose over USD 110 billion annually in productivity and medical expenses due to contaminated food.

Behind these numbers are patterns that highlight where action is most needed. Bacterial hazards remain the leading cause of foodborne illness, but chemical contaminants and emerging risks linked to climate change are rising sharply. As temperatures increase, pathogens spread more easily, supply chains become more vulnerable, and traditional preservation methods face new stressors. At the same time, globalized trade means a single safety failure can ripple across multiple countries within hours. Yet the statistics also show progress. Countries that invest in coordinated surveillance, modernized food-safety systems, and science-based regulation see significant reductions in outbreaks. Consumer awareness is climbing, and innovations in packaging, microbiome science, and digital traceability are helping close long-standing gaps.

Food Safety Day is a reminder that safe food is not a luxury - it is a shared responsibility. And with global networks like GHI working to harmonize standards, strengthen scientific collaboration, and support capacity building, the numbers can shift in the right direction.

World Food Safety Day 2026: GHI Experts Drive Innovation Through Two Biotechnology Workshops at USAMV Bucharest

World Food Safety Day 2026 was marked with exceptional energy and expertise as GHI Ambassadors and GHI Members led two high-impact biotechnology workshops at USAMV Bucharest. These events showcased how science, education, and hands-on practice come together to strengthen food-safety culture – not just in Romania, but across the global GHI community. Organized by the USAMV Bucharest, Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI), and Diamedix Diagnostica, the workshops highlighted the leadership of GHI experts who continue to advance evidence-based food safety, sustainability, and inclusion.



SECTION 6 – BIOTECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP “Food Safety in Action: Allergen Awareness and Practical Demonstration”

June 4, 2026

Organizers: USAMV Bucharest, Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI), and Diamedix Diagnostica

The Food Safety in Action: Allergen Awareness and Practical Demonstration workshop opened under the guidance of Associate Prof. Mihaela Geicu-Cristea, whose long-standing ambassador commitment to GHI and dedication to food-safety education set a strong foundation for the session. As part of the World Food Safety Day 2026 biotechnology program, the workshop quickly drew a full room of students, researchers, industry professionals, and GHI members. Participants were eager to explore one of the most pressing topics in today’s food systems: allergen awareness. The atmosphere was lively from the start, with attendees leaning forward, taking notes, asking questions, and actively engaging with the speakers.



Associate Prof. Mihaela Geicu-Cristea opened the session with “Building Safer Food Systems through Allergen Awareness and Innovation,” highlighting why allergen control remains one of the most critical responsibilities in today’s food systems. She connected scientific principles with the everyday challenges faced by producers and regulators, prompting thoughtful questions from the audience on labeling, cross-contamination, and the importance of a strong food-safety culture.

Building on this foundation, Dr. Simona Rotaru-Boicu from Diamedix Diagnostica delivered “Food Safety in Practice: Modern Approaches to Allergen Detection.” Her presentation offered a clear and practical overview of current diagnostic technologies.

Participants appreciated how she broke down complex testing methods into understandable steps, sparking discussions about how these tools could be implemented across different types of food businesses.

The workshop concluded with a hands-on demonstration, giving attendees the opportunity to work directly with allergen-testing tools. This practical component generated strong engagement – participants compared results, asked technical questions, and explored how these methods could be applied in real production environments. The interactive format helped translate theory into practice, reinforcing the importance of accurate allergen detection.

Overall, the workshop made a meaningful contribution to World Food Safety Day, equipping participants with both knowledge and practical skills. Through expert presentations and active participation, the session underscored a shared message: Food safety is strengthened when awareness, science, and hands-on experience come together.

Between the two sessions, the World Food Safety Day program at USAMV Bucharest continued to build momentum. The strong engagement and practical focus of the first workshop carried over into the second day, where participants returned with the same enthusiasm to explore broader themes of food safety, security, sustainability, and inclusion. The continuity between the two days helped reinforce the value of bringing together diverse perspectives – from biotechnology and diagnostics to education, policy, and engineering – creating a cohesive learning experience that highlighted the interconnected nature of modern food systems.





SECTION 6 – BIOTECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP



Food Safety, Security and Inclusion in Romania

05.06.2026

Faculty of Biotechnologies, Aula Magna "Prof. dr. Gheorghe Câmpeanu" - First Floor
Chairperson: Prof. Ph.D. Mona Elena POPA

The second biotechnology workshop continued the World Food Safety Day 2026 program with a strong focus on food safety, security, sustainability, and inclusion.

Under the leadership of Prof. Mona Elena Popa, a very active GHI member, the session brought together GHI Ambassadors, GHI members, academics, and practitioners who were eager to explore how science-based approaches can strengthen Romania's food system. Her coordination helped create a focused and collaborative atmosphere, ensuring that each contribution built meaningfully on the themes of food safety, sustainability, and inclusion.



A strong opening grounded in global perspective

Before the technical sessions began, participants were joined online by Dr. Diana Bogueva, President of GHI, who offered a global perspective that set the stage for the discussions that followed. Diana opened the workshop with "Advancing Science-Based Food Safety and Inclusion: A Perspective from GHI." Her presentation highlighted the importance of harmonized standards, transparent communication, and the need to stay aligned with global trends and regulatory developments – key principles that guide GHI's mission and international collaboration in food safety.



Education as a Driver of Long-Term Food Safety

Next, GHI Romanian Ambassador Associate Prof. Mihaela Geicu-Cristea and colleagues presented "STEAM Activities in Schools: Promoting Food Safety, Security and Inclusion." The talk highlighted how early education can shape future food-system leaders by integrating food-safety concepts into school programs and community activities. The presentation underscored the long-term value of building awareness from a young age and demonstrated how STEAM-based approaches can support a more informed and responsible next generation.

Urban Food Systems and Sustainability in Action

A multidisciplinary team – GHI Ambassador in Romania Prof. Liviu Gaceu, Associate Prof. Ioana Sonia Comănescu, and GHI member Prof. Mona Elena Popa, and collaborators – followed with "Integrated Urban Food Policies and Sustainability Co-Benefits: Insights from the FoodCLIC Living Lab Braşov." Their contribution illustrated how cities can develop resilient food environments, reduce waste, and support healthier communities. Participants appreciated the practical examples drawn from the Living Lab, which showed how research, policy, and community engagement can work together to strengthen urban food systems.

Engineering Solutions for Safer Production

The workshop concluded with "Hygienic Engineering in Modern Food Processing," presented by Prof. Mona Elena Popa and Prof. Liviu Gaceu. Their session emphasized how engineering principles, equipment design, and facility layout contribute to safer and more efficient production environments. The practical examples shared during the talk were relevant for both small and large food businesses seeking to strengthen their hygiene practices.



Africa's Nutritional Goldmine: Why Science-Based Standards Matter Now More Than Ever



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OGUGUA AWORH

**EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF FOOD TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF FOOD SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**



Despite a great diversity of lesser-known indigenous crops, wild food plants, and traditional foods with unique nutritional and nutraceutical properties that are part of the continent's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, Africa remains the most food insecure continent where poverty, hunger and malnutrition are widespread. New initiatives and approaches are required in addressing the challenges of food and nutrition insecurity in Africa. Re-developing African traditional foods through innovation, research and development, and the institution of food safety risk assessment and science-based safety standards and quality assurance will promote food and nutrition security, food safety, and wellness in Africa.

Across Africa, a powerful opportunity is emerging: the continent holds an extraordinary diversity of indigenous crops, wild food plants, and traditional foods with remarkable nutritional and functional potential. These foods represent centuries of knowledge and some of the richest biodiversity anywhere in the world — yet their promise remains largely untapped.

Despite this natural abundance, food insecurity continues to challenge millions across the continent, revealing a critical gap between Africa's heritage foods and the modern systems needed to bring them safely and confidently to consumers.

It is within this landscape that Distinguished Emeritus Professor Ogugua Aworh, one of our 2024 Top Agri-Food Pioneers, is championing a transformative vision. He argues that Africa's traditional foods can only achieve their full impact through innovation, research, and the adoption of rigorous food safety risk assessment, science-based standards, and strong quality assurance systems.

These tools, he emphasizes, are essential for unlocking the value of foods with exceptional nutritional and nutraceutical properties — foods that are part of Africa's cultural identity and ecological wealth. By pairing heritage with science,

Prof. Aworh envisions a future where traditional African foods are not only preserved, but elevated, commercialized, and positioned as powerful drivers of food security, wellness, and economic growth across the continent.

Share Your News With Us

Our global strength comes from our members' work. Have updates on projects, events, publications, regional activities, or food safety and harmonization news?

Send them to us — your contributions keep the GHI community informed, connected, and inspired.

NEW!

The official GHI journal:
Quality Assurance and Safety of Crops & Foods (QASCF)

published by:



Discounts and Waivers - 25% APC discount to GHI members. Additional waivers or discounts for authors from low-income countries or for special GHI-led initiatives.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Prof. Joe Regenstein for editing and content review, and Mark Sandow for the newsletter design and for the distribution of the newsletter.

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